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The Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives

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Abstract

Ukraine has experienced two popular uprisings in a decade (2004, 2013–2014), which took place in four different circumstances. Firstly, the Orange Revolution began as a protest against election fraud during an election cycle while the Euromaidan began in protest at the abrupt end to European integration and was outside an election cycle. Secondly, whether the incumbent was leaving office (Leonid Kuchma, 2004) or seeking to be re-elected and remain in power indefinitely (Viktor Yanukovych, 2013–2014) had a direct bearing on regime strategies against the protestors. Thirdly, Russian intervention was limited to finances, the supply of political technologists and diplomatic support in the former whereas during the latter, Russia used its intelligence, special forces and military to intervene in the protests, annex territory and invade Ukraine. Fourthly, the type of leader which was in power (former Soviet *nomenklatura* versus thuggish and criminalized Donetsk clan) had a direct impact on whether the authorities would seek compromise and non-violence (Kuchma, 2004) or reject compromise and resort to violence through vigilantes, Berkut riot police and the Security Service (Yanukovch, 2013–2014).

Key Words: Rose Revolution, Orange Revolution, Euromaidan Revolution of Dignity, Viktor Yanukovych, Vladimir Putin, Vigilantes, Nationalism, European Integration.



Introduction

This article is divided into four sections. The first provides a theoretical and comparative perspective of Ukraine's Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions with democratic revolutions in other post-communist states, such as Georgia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovakia. The second section analyses competitive authoritarian hybrid regimes, civic nationalism, and deep political crisis as sources for democratic revolutions. The third section investigates domestically inspired and externally driven counter-revolution focusing on regional diversity and minorities and Russia as an external hegemon. The final section analyses the sources of non-violence and violence in Ukraine's two revolutions through the use of state repression, vigilantes and the *sylovyky* (security forces).

Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives

Since Ukraine became an independent state in 1991 Western and Russian scholars have predicted that inter-ethnic and regional conflict was imminent in Ukraine and yet it only took place following the Euromaidan and only then following Russia's intervention. That no conflict took place, both in 1994 and in the 2004 elections, suggested that these predictions were based on incorrect assumptions.¹ Ethnic tension in the Crimea, the only Ukrainian region with an ethnic Russian majority, proved short lived but was inflamed after 2006. After the presidency was abolished in March 1995, and the Russian nationalist camp was engulfed by bitter disputes, separatists were progressively marginalized during the next decade by policies pursued under President Leonid Kuchma.

Kyiv's policies toward the Crimea changed under Party of Regions leader Viktor Yanukovich when he was prime minister (2006–2007) and Party of Regions leader (2003–2010) and when he was president (2010–2014). From 2006, the Party of Regions aligned with Russian nationalists and separatists in the Crimea, the Russian Bloc and Russian Community of the Crimea (ROK) in the For Yanukovich! bloc that won the 2006 Crimean parliamentary elections. The Russian bloc was financed by former Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov and had close links to Russian intelligence. ROK, led by the former First Deputy Speaker of the Crimean Parliament, Sergei Tsekov, was the most influential Russian nationalist group in the peninsula. In September 2008, the Party of Regions and Communist Party voted in support of Russia's position of recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia but the resolution failed to muster sufficient support in the Ukrainian parliament. A similar resolution, supported by the same two parties and Russian nationalists, was adopted in the Crimean parliament. Yanukovich's support for separatism in neighboring countries was unprecedented in reversing Ukraine's traditional support for the territorial integrity of states; thankfully, the Ukrainian parliament did not support the Party of Regions and Communist Party although the Crimean parliament did. Russia was the only country in the CIS that supported separatism in Georgia with pro-Russian Belarus, Armenia and Kazakhstan refusing to support Moscow. Outside the CIS, Nicaragua, Venezuela and the Palestinian Hamas recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.¹

Separatism in other regions of Ukraine never became a threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity until the Euromaidan. The "directed chaos" strategy used by the authorities in 2004 had attempted to inflame regional tension by turning Russophones, based overwhelmingly in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, against Viktor Yushchenko. Portraying President Leonid Kravchuk as an "anti-Russian nationalist" in 1994 was therefore repeated to a greater extent a decade later against Yushchenko. Besides being depicted as "anti-Russian nationalist," Yushchenko was also portrayed as an American and CIA satrap. The threat of inter-regional conflict arising out of a "directed chaos" strategy was therefore far greater in 2004 than in 1994.

Why then did violent conflict not take place?

1 An exception is Craig A. Weller, "Mass Attitudes and Ethnic Conflict in Ukraine," in *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building in Ukraine*, ed. Taras Kuzio and Paul D'Anieri (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 71–102.

Western scholars had predicted that prior to the Euromaidan, Russophones would develop a coherent identity outside Russia whereas in reality, Russophones have been notoriously difficult to mobilize throughout the former USSR.² The only Russophone revolt took place in Moldova's Trans-Dniestr region, but there it had more to do with Soviet identity than ethnic Russian nationalism — in a similar manner to the Crimea and Donbas where Soviet identity is strong. Russophones in Eastern Ukraine and even in the Crimea have weaker mobilization resources than Ukrainophones and during the Orange Revolution, Eastern Ukraine could not match the mobilization resources of pro-Yushchenko supporters from Western and Central Ukraine.³ During the Euromaidan, Yanukovich and the Party of Regions paid people to support them⁴ and organized vigilantes to act as the *Berkut* riot police paramilitary auxiliaries. Counter-revolutionary violence in the Donbas was both pre-planned and a product of external Russian support.⁵ Russian citizens, “Prime Minister” Aleksandr Borodai and military commander Igor Girkin (“Strelkov” or “Igor the Shooter”), who both had ties to Russian intelligence, ran the so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic” in its embryonic stage.⁶

Until the 2008 Georgian-Russian war, Russian interference had not translated into successful strategies of supporting separatism in Ukraine. Russia failed to come to the assistance of Crimean separatists in the mid-1990s, one reason being Russia was itself involved in battling Chechen separatists. Meanwhile, Russian nationalist parties had been unable to establish a presence in Ukraine. The “pro-Russian” vote traditionally went to the Communist Party of Ukraine and from the 2004–2012 elections it went to the Party of Regions and Yanukovich. Russia’s direct intervention in the 2004 elections in support of Yanukovich failed and backfired and Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visits to Ukraine on the eve of rounds one and two assisted in mobilizing support for Yushchenko in Kyiv.

Russian support for separatism in the Crimea and Odesa escalated in 2008–2009 in a strategy to de-rail Ukraine’s drive to join NATO, leading to a deterioration in Kyiv’s relations with Moscow. Putin told the NATO-Russia Council in April 2008 that Ukraine was a “fragile” state that would disintegrate if the country joined NATO.⁷ Russian policy became more interventionist under Yanukovich, controlling Ukraine’s security forces, infiltrating the offices

2 David Laitin, *Identity in Formation. The Russian-Speaking Population in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

3 Taras Kuzio, “Nationalism, Identity and Civil Society in Ukraine: Understanding the Orange Revolution,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 43.3 (2010): 285–96.

4 After the rally of pro-Yanukovich supporters in December 2013 on European Square walked to the Euromaidan to receive free hot food and drink and watch a concert by the hugely popular Okean Elzy.

5 “Na territorii Donetskoi oblasti deistvovali voennye lageria DNR s polnym vooruzheniem s 2009 goda,” *Novosti Donbassa*, July 20, 2014, accessed October 13, 2014, <http://novosti.dn.ua/details/230206/>.

6 The US State Department outlined extensive details of Russian involvement at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/17/fact-sheet-ukraine-related-sanctions> and <http://www.state.gov/t/pa/prs/ps/2014/07/229270.htm>.

7 Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine Tightens the Screw in Sevastopol,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 23, 2009; “Russia-Ukraine Diplomatic War,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 31, 2009. (<http://www.jamestown.org/>

of the cabinet ministers, installing sleepers in the Donbas and openly and covertly intervening after the Euromaidan.

Theories of inter-ethnic relations also believe that new states are more likely to adopt what Rogers Brubaker describes as a “nationalizing” policy towards national minorities. His framework was readily adopted by Dominique Arel, Andrew Wilson and other Western scholars to explain Ukraine’s nationality policies. I criticized the “nationalizing” concept as applying double standards to Eastern Europe because the same policies but dubbed as “nation-building,” were viewed as positive by Brubaker in North America and Western Europe. Ukraine’s nationality policies, were also moderate and evolutionary, and therefore it was misleading to describe them in a negative way as “nationalizing.”⁸ Policies promoting ethnic Ukrainian identity and the Ukrainian language pursued by President Yushchenko were condemned by the Party of Regions and were over-turned during Yanukovich’s presidency.⁹

Ukraine’s moderate nationality policies were both a product of centrists being in power and of the reality facing policy makers in dealing with the large number of Russophones in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Eastern Ukrainian elites were given the option of “voice” in the Ukrainian political system that gave them a stake in the newly independent state explaining why many chose to support Ukraine in 2014 during the Russian-backed conflict in the Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*). The option of “exit” (i.e. separatism) was therefore not seriously considered until Russian intervention following the Euromaidan.¹⁰ The election of Kuchma in 1994 led to an influx of officials from his home region of Dnipropetrovsk and in 2002 when Yanukovich was appointed Prime Minister the Donetsk clan moved to the national stage. The Donbas was permitted a degree of self-rule through Free Economic Zones that allowed local elites to enrich themselves during Yanukovich’s governorship of the *oblast* in 1997–2002. Oligarch Rinat Akhmetov emerged as Ukraine’s wealthiest oligarch when Yanukovich was governor of Donetsk and expanded his wealth under his political patronage.¹¹

single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35304&no_cache=1#.VEVpG4vF9IU; http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35347&no_cache=1#.VEVpW4vF9IU.)

- 8 Rogers Brubaker, “National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External Homelands in the New Europe,” *Daedalus* 124.2 (1995): 107–32; Taras Kuzio, “Nationalising States’ or Nation Building: A Review of the Theoretical Literature and Empirical Evidence,” *Nations and Nationalism* 7.2 (2001): 135–54.
- 9 Taras Kuzio, “Ukrainian Nationalism Again under Attack in Ukraine,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 19, 2010; “Shift to Soviet-Russian National Identity in Ukraine,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, September 16, 2010; “Ukrainian Education Minister Tabachnyk Confirms His Russian Nationalist Credentials,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, October 1, 2010. (http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36643&no_cache=1#.VEVppovF9IU; http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36861&no_cache=1#.VEVpuovF9IU; http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36985&no_cache=1#.VEVp2IvF9IU.)
- 10 Paul D’Anieri, “Ethnic Tensions and State Strategies: Understanding the Survival of the Ukrainian State,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 23.1 (2007): 4–29.
- 11 Taras Kuzio, “Viktor Yanukovich — Mr 50 Per Cent,” *Financial Times*, March 24, 2014, accessed May 1, 2014, <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2014/03/24/guest-post-viktor-yanukovich-mr-50-percent/>.

Ukraine followed thirteen of the fifteen former Soviet republics in adopting the “zero option” of automatically granting citizenship to everybody resident in Ukraine in January 1992. Ukraine consistently opposed the introduction of dual citizenship but in the 2004 and subsequent elections Yanukovich raised the issue of dual citizenship with Russia. In 1989 the Ukrainian language was made the “state language” while granting Russian the right to be used locally, a status that was reinforced in the 1996 constitution. Language policies had always been moderate in Ukraine and were applied sensitively and differently across regions. In the Donbas and in the Crimea there was little attempt to introduce Ukrainian making a mockery of complaints of allegations of forcible “Ukrainianization.” Demands to elevate Russian to an “official language,” while keeping Ukrainian as the sole “state language,” have been mainly raised during election campaigns.

State strength is another area that is often raised in theoretical discussions of inter-ethnic relations as it is assumed that weak states are more likely to undertake violent policies against national minorities.¹² Such violence never took place in Ukraine when it successfully defused the Crimean separatist threat using non-violent methods. This made Ukraine’s non-violent strategy towards its national minorities different from the violent policies that were used — and failed — in Georgia (South Ossetia, Abkhazia), Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Moldova (Trans-Dniestr).

Another factor that Western scholars assumed would apply to Ukraine was border conflict with Russia. Although it took Russia until 1997–1999 to legally recognize Ukraine’s borders at the executive and parliamentary levels, the border issue was always an externally provoked question. Both houses of the Russian parliament laid claim to the Crimea and Sevastopol throughout the 1990s and to the Tuzla Island lying off the Crimean coast in 2003. Within Ukraine the issue of territorial integrity was only briefly threatened by separatists in 1994–1995 in the Crimea and the entire spectrum of Ukraine’s political parties, from Communists through democrats to nationalists, supported the country’s territorial integrity. Parliamentary constitutional majorities adopted resolutions protesting against Russian territorial claims. Within the Crimea itself, two of the three political forces (centrists and Communists) were staunch opponents of separatism under Kuchma. Following Yushchenko’s election, the Communist Party became a Party of Regions satellite party and they together with Crimean Russian nationalists supported Russian policies in Eurasian frozen conflicts and in Ukraine.

Cross party and cross-regional support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity has its origins in the legacy of Soviet nationality policies. The non-Russian republics came to be seen by their ruling Communist and economic elites and populations as “homelands” which complimented and competed with the Soviet “homeland.” The borders of these non-Russian republican “homelands” were therefore seen as sacrosanct. Of the thirty per cent who participated in the dubious March 2014 Crimean “referendum” only fifteen per cent backed union with Russia.¹³

¹² Taras Kuzio et al., eds., *State and Institution Building in Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

¹³ According to a leak by the President of Russia’s Council on Civil Society and Human Rights (shortened to President’s Human Rights Council), accessed October 3, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2014/05/05/putins-human-rights-council-accidentally-posts-real-crimean-election-results-only-15-voted-for-annexation/>.

An additional important factor to discuss is the choice of non-violent strategy undertaken by the opposition and civil society to counter violence unleashed against them by the authorities. In the Orange Revolution the opposition certainly had the resources with which to strike back because the military, the Security Service and a majority of the Interior Ministry (MVS) were sympathetic towards them. A violent backlash by the opposition may have taken place if Yushchenko had died from poisoning in September 2005. On 28 November 2004 MVS Internal Troops were dispatched to Kyiv and if they had not turned around they could have clashed with Ukrainian troops and Orange Revolution protestors with the ensuing bloodshed destroying hopes for a negotiated compromise. Reluctance to follow through on a violent clampdown was even present among MVS Internal Troops, some of whose children were in the Orange Revolution. In the Euromaidan, the police, *Berkut* riot police and SBU continued to remain loyal to Yanukovich until the sniper murders on 18–20 February 2014.

In an exhaustive study of “people power” two key factors are pointed to as important for the success of democratic revolutions. First, the need for broad based coalitions that are important in organizing training, building consensus, consolidating and self-disciplining disparate groups, for mobilization and to ensure a broad swathe of society is represented. A wide coalition was vital for the success of the opposition but would likely disintegrate after it came to power.¹⁴ Second, the state is less likely to use violence, the study concluded, if the opposition used non-violent tactics. This is because “the appeal of a violent response to the state is diminished when a strong and cohesive nonviolent coalition is a major presence in the period leading up to the political opening.”¹⁵ Clearly, a non-violent strategy proved to be impossible in the Euromaidan as protesters used Molotov cocktails and other homemade implements after they themselves were abducted, tortured and murdered by the authorities.

Non-violent tactics used by NGOs in the Orange Revolution, such as *Pora* (*It's Time*), were influenced by two factors. First, Serbia's *Otpor* (*Resistance*) and Georgia's *Kmara* (*Enough*) youth NGOs provided successful examples for *Pora*. Second, violent methods were used to discredit pro-orange youth NGOs by portraying them in the media as violent extremists. In March 2001, the same strategy had been used by the authorities when agents provocateurs provoked a riot, which was blamed on UNA-UNSO (Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian People's Self Defense Forces). 20 UNA-UNSO members were sentenced and imprisoned.

Democratic Revolutions

Competitive Authoritarian Regimes

The replacement of authoritarian regimes in Slovakia (1998) and Croatia (1999–2000), and democratic revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003), and Ukraine (2004, 2013–2014) occurred in five “competitive authoritarian” hybrid regimes that combined elements of both

14 Mark A. Beissinger, “The Semblance of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine's Orange Revolution,” *American Political Science Review* 107.3 (2013): 574–92.

15 Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Acherman, *How Freedom is Won. From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy* (New York: Freedom House, 2005), 14.

authoritarianism and democracy.¹⁶ Slovakia and Croatia exhibited some similarities to Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine in 2004 where civil society mobilized to get out the vote and reduce election fraud.¹⁷ But, there are also four crucial differences. First, the Slovak and Croatian regimes did not undertake mass fraud and did not plan to refuse to recognize a victory by the democratic opposition. The absence of these two factors, in turn, meant there was no need for the opposition and civil society to organize street protests. In Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine (2004) election fraud and an unwillingness to accept an opposition victory were instrumental in leading to mass protests. Ukraine in 2013–2014 confounded Western political scientists because a democratic revolution took place outside an election cycle. Second, the Slovak and Croatian regimes were unlikely to use violence to suppress the opposition or crush street protests. The bloated internal security forces had, in the case of Serbia, committed war crimes in neighboring territories and in Ukraine undertaken violence against journalists and imprisoned opposition leaders. In these three countries the interior ministries also had strong links to organized crime. Third, external factors played a different role in all five cases, with the EU playing a positive role encouraging a democratic victory in Slovakia and Croatia by holding out the “carrot” of membership. Russia played a negative role in freezing two conflicts and invading Georgia, heavily intervening in Ukraine’s 2004 election and undertaking military aggression in support of counter-revolution in 2014.

The presence of competitive authoritarian regimes has profound implications for the likely success of the democratic opposition in elections. Competitive authoritarian regimes provide space for the opposition, civil society, a limited number of media outlets, democratic opposition, the ability of the opposition to participate in state institutions (i.e. parliament and local government) and the ability of international organizations to freely operate in the country. Competitive authoritarian regimes are vulnerable during elections and succession crises as it is then that the regime can either tip towards democratic breakthrough, as in these five countries, or towards authoritarian consolidation (if the democratic opposition had failed). The democratic opposition will find it difficult to organize a democratic breakthrough in a consolidated authoritarian regime such as Russia and Azerbaijan where the democratic opposition will be thwarted in its ability to mobilize protests against election fraud. This explains the predominance of authoritarian regimes in Eurasia and failure of democratic revolutions in Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Uzbekistan. Ukraine’s Euromaidan began two years prior to presidential elections but uppermost on the minds of protesters and opposition leaders was the likelihood of massive election fraud to maintain an unpopular Yanukovich in power. If there had been no Euromaidan there would have been violence in 2015 when fraud would have been used to ensure his re-election for a second term. Yanukovich was a serial election fraudster

16 Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 13.2 (2002): 51–65; Lucan Way, “The Sources and Dynamics of Competitive Authoritarianism in Ukraine,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 20.1 (2004): 143–61.

17 Taras Kuzio, Guest Editor, Special issue on “Democratic Revolutions in Post-Communist States,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39.3 (2006); Damjan de Krnjec-Miskovic, “Serbia’s Prudent Revolution,” *Journal of Democracy* 12.3 (2001): 96–110; Charles H. Fairbanks, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution,” *Journal of Democracy* 15.2 (2004): 110–24.

when he was Donetsk governor (1999, 2002), Prime Minister (2004) and President (2012) and he never contemplated being voted out of office and serving only one term. The *Mezhyhyria* palace was a sign of the planned consolidation of a long-term authoritarian leader.

Civic Nationalism

Civic nationalism mobilized the democratic opposition and civil society in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine, particularly among young people. The civic nationalism of the democratic opposition in Slovakia and Croatia competed with the regimes' own brand of extreme right ethnic nationalism. In Slovakia, the Vladimir Meciar regime had built an authoritarian-populist regime whose nationalism was directed against the Czechs and the country's Hungarian minority. In Croatia, the Franjo Tudjman regime had established a political regime built on extreme right nationalism that drew its inspiration from the World War II Ustaše Nazi puppet state.

In Serbia, the democratic opposition associated a break with the Slobodan Milosevic regime with returning Serbia to a European path. Nevertheless, in Serbia and Ukraine, counter-revolutionary anti-European forces remained popular. In Georgia and Ukraine, civic nationalism sought to integrate their countries with NATO and the EU and moving away from the vacuous multi-vector foreign policies of the Eduard Shevardnadze and Kuchma eras. Georgian and Ukrainian civic nationalism placed their countries within "Europe" and outside Eurasia. The ethnic Georgian nationalism of the early 1990s, when the country was briefly ruled by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, had been replaced by the civic nationalism of opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili, who worked to rebuild trust among Georgians in the state and its institutions to inject national pride without making it ethnic pride.

Soviet and Great Power nationalism are supportive of authoritarian regimes, nostalgic of the past and anti-European in their orientation. Yanukovich and the Party of Regions neo-Soviet nationalism brought them into an alliance with Crimean Russian nationalists and antagonized Ukrainian democratic patriots and ethnic nationalists.¹⁸ Soviet Belarusian nationalism has a stronger support base than that of pro-European civic nationalism promoted by the democratic opposition. Putin's regime is propped up by Great Power nationalism; an eclectic fusion of Soviet, Tsarist and Eurasian symbolism and nostalgia coupled with anti-Western xenophobia.

Deep Political Crisis

The nature of competitive authoritarian regimes inevitably produces an unstable political environment that can tip towards democratic breakthrough or authoritarian consolidation. Prior to the elections there were scandals and crises of varying types in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine. The use of violence, kidnapping, and murder against citizens led to growing protests and a desire to thwart the further consolidation of an authoritarian regime by the incumbent in Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine. In Croatia, the Tudjman regime had been involved

¹⁸ Taras Kuzio, "Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15.1 (2015): 158–69.

in ethnic cleansing of Serbs and other war crimes during the war of independence. In Serbia, the Milosevic regime had lost three nationalist wars in Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo after committing untold war crimes. Serbia's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 became a prelude to the democratic revolution a year later under the opposition slogan "Gotov Je" (He is finished).

In Georgia, Shevardnadze's decade in office had led to stagnation with a large part of the economy pushed underground where it built ties with organized crime. Two frozen conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia had been ignored and Ajaria had been granted *de facto* autonomy in exchange for political loyalty to Shevardnadze. In Ukraine it was to be the Kuchmagate crisis and backing away from European integration that led respectively to the Orange and Euromaidan revolutions.

Kuchma was exposed by the Kuchmagate crisis and a decade of corrupt oligarch politics. Kleptocracy, neo-Soviet and Ukrainophobic nationality policies and political repression fuelled popular grievances that were ignited when Yanukovich turned away from Europe and were then further inflamed by heavy-handed police repression. Democratic breakthroughs and revolutions in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine in 2004 had an unpopular incumbent and a popular opposition.

The Meciar regime in Slovakia exhibited similar characteristics to those found in Croatian, Serbian, Georgian and Ukrainian hybrid regimes. An executive seeking to concentrate power, statist economic policies, no separation of the ruling party of power from the state, clientelism during privatization, interference in the media and attempts to marginalize the opposition. The urgency of halting this entrenchment of an authoritarian regime mobilized civil society in all of these countries out of concern that authoritarianism would become consolidated and in the case of Slovakia this would have threatened its ability to integrate into the EU and NATO.

The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and Tudjman claimed credit for a successful war of independence, maintaining the country's territorial integrity and removing the Serbian threat. The death of Tudjman in 1999, on the eve of the January 2000 elections, opened up divisions in the HDZ between hardliners and softliners over the need to preserve the nationalist regime or accept democratization as a precondition for EU membership. Ethnic nationalism was discredited in Slovakia, Serbia and Georgia and has never been electorally popular in Ukraine.

Georgia and Ukraine are examples of the failure of competitive authoritarian regimes to establish ruling parties of power under Shevardnadze and Kuchma respectively. In Slovakia, Croatia and Yanukovich's Ukraine the ruling HZDS, HDZ and Party of Regions respectively failed in their bids to monopolize power and capture the state. In Russia and Azerbaijan, ruling parties of power have assisted in the regimes authoritarian consolidation while Belarus is the Eurasian outlier where Aliaksandr Lukashenka has consolidated authoritarianism without a ruling party.

In authoritarian Russia, Belarus and Azerbaijan, the incumbent remains popular while the democratic opposition has been marginalized through what Vitali Silitski terms "preemptive strikes" or "preemptive authoritarianism."¹⁹ Democratic breakthroughs and revolutions are impossible where there are popular incumbents and marginalized oppositions who are accused of being part of "Western conspiracies."

19 Vitali Silitski, "Preempting Democracy: The Case of Belarus," *Journal of Democracy* 16.4 (2005): 83–97.

Counter-Revolutions

Regional Diversity and Minorities

Regionalism can be an inhibitor in democratic breakthroughs and revolutions when they can be manipulated by a foreign hegemon. The democratic opposition and national minorities rallied against Meciár, Tudjman and Milošević's ethnic nationalism. Gamsakhurdia's ethnic nationalism had led to defeat in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and these regions becoming frozen conflicts and an attempt by Saakashvili to militarily retake the latter provoked a Russian invasion and the declaration of independence of the two enclaves. Ukraine's regional diversity had prevented sweeping landslides for democratic forces and inhibited the monopolization of power by Kuchma in 2002–2004 and Yanukovich during his presidency. Following his ouster and the disintegration of the Party of Regions, pro-European political forces won a constitutional majority in the October 2014 parliamentary elections.

Slovakia's democratic opposition promoted an alternative inclusive civic nationalism that included the Hungarians. Aside from the region of Vojvodina and Kosovo, Serbia has few national minorities and political divisions rested over whether to support a greater Serbia. The majority of Russia's democratic opposition supported the annexation of the Crimea and Serbian democratic parties such as Vuk Drasković's Serbian Renewal Movement and Vojislav Koštunica Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) had supported the uniting of Serbs into a greater Serbia. Ethnic nationalism can trump democracy in some post-communist states.

In Ukraine, the Donetsk clan lost the 2004 elections but unlike in Georgia, Yushchenko never attempted to take on the Donetsk clan and remove its political, economic and administrative grip on the region. The Party of Regions won pluralities in the next 3 elections (2006, 2007 and 2012) and the presidency in 2010 but disintegrated into oblivion in 2014.

Regional divisions had led to tension in 2004 without violence and the Crimean separatist challenge had been resolved peacefully in Ukraine. In Kosovo, where ethnic conflict led to ethnic cleansing, it was the actions of NATO and other international organizations that gave independence to the region. After Yanukovich fled from office, Russia annexed the Crimea on a falsified pretext of the threat of "Ukrainian nationalism." The separatist conflict in the Donbas was artificially inflamed by the introduction of Russian intelligence officers and *spetsnaz* and the supply of weapons. Russian intervention prevented the defeat of the separatists and produced a far bigger violent conflict.

Russia as an External Hegemon

Foreign interventions in election campaigns and popular protests can be either benign or negative. The former can take the form of the EU intervening in support of the democratic opposition during democratic breakthroughs and revolutions such as in Slovakia and Croatia where it held out the "carrot" of membership. In Serbia, NATO bombed the regime in 1999 and the US government and democracy promotion foundations trained and financed the Serbian democratic opposition in the Bulldozer Revolution with the goal of removing Milošević from power.

In the Georgian and Serbian democratic revolutions three factors were missing that existed in Ukraine, there were no Russian political technologists employed by the authorities and the democratic challenger was not the target of assassination attempts by the authorities. Russia's intervention in Ukraine in 2004 was the greatest it had undertaken in the region but this was dwarfed by its covert and overt operations during Yanukovich's presidency and after his downfall in the Crimea and Donbas.

Russia had frozen two conflicts, then militarily invaded and recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia intervened in a massive manner in the 2004 Ukrainian elections, providing political technologists and \$300 million for the Yanukovich election campaign as well as the assassins who sought to remove Yushchenko through poisoning and bombings. In 2014, Russia annexed the Crimea and launched a hybrid war with goals of removing pro-Western Euromaidan leaders and through continued conflict and economic and military pressure creating conditions for the failure of reforms and thereby of Ukraine's European integration.

Non-Violence and Violence

The Euromaidan Revolution took place outside of Ukraine's election cycles and therefore had different characteristics to that of the Orange Revolution and democratic revolutions in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia and Georgia. The Yanukovich regime emerged from a violent transition in the Donbas in the 1990s and the Party of Regions integrated former organized crime leaders and drew on vigilantes for election fraud, corporate raiding and political intimidation of opponents and civil society. This violent operating culture deepened during the four-year Yanukovich presidency when opponents were imprisoned, the state itself became the target for corporate raiding and there was a return to neo-Soviet nationality policies and policies directed against ethnic Ukrainian national identity. These factors culminated in a more frustrated population and as Petro Poroshenko's former Chief of Staff Borys Lozhkin wrote, "gave the protests a national liberation bent."²⁰ Yanukovich and "The Family" were meanwhile afraid of leaving office and expected to remain in power until at least 2020. Violence was therefore inevitable. Indeed, the authorities responded with violence from the beginning of the Euromaidan protests through savage beatings by the *Berkut* riot police, abductions, torture and murders by vigilantes, adoption of anti-democratic laws on "Black Thursday" (16 January 2014) and the murder of unarmed protesters. A round-table appeared far later in the Euromaidan than the Orange Revolution and only after the murder of over 100 protesters, thereby failing to provide a pacted transition to pre-term elections. The fleeing of Yanukovich was viewed in the Donbas and other parts of Eastern Ukraine as an unconstitutional "putsch" and ensuing counter-revolutionary protests were used by Russia as a cover for the annexation of the Crimea and support for separatism in the Donbas.

20 Borys Lozhkin, *The Fourth Republic. Why Europe Needs Ukraine and Ukraine Needs Europe* (Kyiv: Novyi druk, 2016), 23.

State Repression

Ukraine's presidential election and Orange Revolution (July 2004 — January 2005) could have become violent on a number of occasions. Two Ukrainian political consultants working for the Yushchenko campaign described the authorities' strategy as "directed chaos."²¹ The authorities pursued violence on some occasions as a political strategy and a violent crackdown of the Orange Revolution was also lobbied by the authorities' candidate, Yanukovich.

There were three separate attempts to eliminate Yushchenko, two during the 2004 election campaign and one during the Orange Revolution. Planned violence against Yushchenko had failed on two out of three occasions but had succeeded when Yushchenko was poisoned. The SBU investigated a possible link between the poisoning and the two Russian bombers arrested two months later pointing to a Russian connection in at least two of three assassination attempts on Yushchenko. Yushchenko lost a month of campaign time in the crucial two months ahead of round one of the election on 31 October, when Yanukovich's popularity caught up with Yushchenko. In December 2004, Western European medical experts pointed to a poison cocktail of dioxin and alpha-fetoprotein that assisted the diffusion of the dioxin acting as the poison.

Investigation of the poisoning never led to criminal charges under Yushchenko and the case was shelved under Yanukovich. It therefore continues to remain unclear if the strategy aimed to assassinate Yushchenko or to incapacitate him. Likewise, it remains unclear if the poisoning took place on 5 September 2005 during the dinner with then SBU chairman Ihor Smeshko and SBU deputy chairman Volodymyr Satsiuk.²² The source of the poisoning came from former Soviet biological-chemical warfare laboratories that were located in Russia.

The second attempt involved bombing Yushchenko's election headquarters on the second round on 21 November 2004. Two men arrested in connection with this plot possessed false Russian passports, driving a car with Russian license plates. The two claimed the 3 kilos of plastic explosives in their car were part of an attempt to fake a terrorist attack and increase Yushchenko's popularity. SBU chairman Smeshko discounted this explanation because a small portion of the plastic explosive had been tested, common procedure before a bomb is planted.²³

The third attempt included snipers who aimed to assassinate Yushchenko while he addressed the Orange Revolution crowds from the Maidan stage in central Kyiv. Whether the sniper squad was arrested or fled abroad, and if they were Ukrainian or foreign citizens, was never disclosed. Yushchenko's official bodyguard Petro Pliuta confided, "There was a group of people who had been especially prepared for this."²⁴ Ukrainian and Russian snipers played a prominent role in the murder of unarmed protesters on the Euromaidan.

All three attempts (poisoning, explosives, and snipers) aimed to remove Yushchenko from the election campaign and, if successful, could have led to counter violence by Yushchenko's supporters, a civil war and state of emergency. Yushchenko's official and unofficial bodyguards' professional work and the leaking of information from sympathizers in the security forces foiled

21 *Ukrainska pravda*, October 27, 2004.

22 *Ukrainska pravda*, June 13–14, 2005.

23 *Fakty i komentarii*, May 27, 2005.

24 *Ukraina moloda*, March 25, 2005.

two plots with explosives and snipers. Pliuta confided “honest (SBU) officers” “tried to inform us to enable us to take relevant measures. Unfortunately, their actions ran counter to their superior’s position.”²⁵ SBU dissidents also taped Yanukovich’s election headquarters seeking evidence of election fraud. No dissident sources in the SBU appeared during the Euromaidan because Ukraine’s intelligence services had been infiltrated and taken under the control of the FSB and GRU during Yanukovich’s presidency.

Vigilantes

Oligarch Ihor Kolomoiskyi, often described as Ukraine’s biggest corporate raider, the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine united (SDPUo) and the Party of Regions had a long record of drawing on organized crime vigilantes for corporate raiding, election fraud and violence against civil society NGOs, journalists and opposition politicians. Vigilantes were unleashed in the provinces during the 2004 elections but although transported to Kyiv, President Kuchma refused to allow them to be used. Vigilantes were used extensively during the Euromaidan by President Yanukovich, RNBO (National Security and Defense Council) Secretary Andrii Kluiev and Interior Minister Vitalii Zakharchenko.

Violence was planned in Uzhorod two days before the RNBO meeting on 28 November 2004 to discuss the crisis in Ukraine. The violence was organized by local SDPUo leader and Governor Ivan Rizak. The planned provocation aimed to lead to a RNBO decision to introduce a state of emergency that Viktor Medvedchuk, Donetsk governor Anatolii Blyzniuk and Odesa Mayor Ruslan Bodelan lobbied for.²⁶

The Uzhorod provocation was to have taken place in an environment where the rule of law had already *de facto* broken down as it had during the Euromaidan when state and government buildings were captured by protesters. SDPUo leader and Governor Rizak conspired with the head of the Trans-Carpathian MVS to prevent the holding of a free and fair election. The planned provocation was only halted, as in the case of the attempted crackdown in Kyiv, by elements within the security forces intervening to prevent bloodshed. In the Euromaidan the security forces remained loyal until political support ebbed away in parliament in response to the murder of protesters.

Organized crime vigilantes gathered in Uzhorod’s Avenguard football stadium to plan the provocation. These members of organized crime had long worked for the local authorities and were actively involved in orchestrating violence in April 2004 in the mayoral election in Mukachevo. The planned provocation aimed to use organized crime vigilantes to attack peaceful protestors supporting the Orange Revolution to “teach them a lesson.” While senior MVS officials ignored the planned provocation, medium level MVS officers opted to independently act to thwart it. *Sokil* Special Forces from the MVS Directorate to Combat Organized Crime and *Berkut* riot police intervened to halt the provocation. In the Euromaidan, the *Berkut* riot police became the regime’s praetorian guard “Robo cops” who extensively used violence against protesters. The first group of organized crime vigilantes were arrested near the Avenguard stadium when forty

25 *Ukraina moloda*, March 25, 2005.

26 *Ukrainska pravda*, December 22, 2004.

unarmed police officers confronted 150 heavily armed organized crime vigilantes who refused to give up their weapons. The leader of the local organized crime clan ordered them to shoot the police officers and eight shots were fired but nobody was injured.

All 150 organized crime vigilantes dispersed, with a third of them concealing themselves in the Trans-Carpathian state administration building and at night were smuggled abroad. The local governor and Trans-Carpathian MVS head Vasyl Vartsab protected the organized crime vigilantes from prosecution and refused to provide weapons for police units who refused to join the provocations.²⁷ Police officers confiscated a wide array of lethal objects such as Kalashnikov rifles, explosives, hand pistols, grenades, police uniforms and identification documents, gas masks, and baseball bats. These were the typical weapons used by vigilantes during the Euromaidan. Large amounts of Yanukovich election campaign materials were also confiscated.²⁸ 28 cars were confiscated and impounded in the MVS Automobile Inspectorate, but Governor Rizak and MVS leaders interceded and ordered their release.

The planned provocation showed the degree to which organized crime and pro-presidential parties of power closely worked together during Kuchma's and Yanukovich's presidencies. Volodymyr Paulo ("Chalyi"), president of the Uzhorod-based football club "Zakarpattia" based in the Avenguard stadium, had close business links to Governor Rizak. Local organized crime boss Paulo was the father-in-law of First Deputy Governor Ivan Chubirka who is married to the sister of Medvedchuk's spouse.²⁹ Such criminal connections were even more deeply entrenched in the Party of Regions controlled Donbas and Crimea.

Yanukovich and Party of Regions sent vigilantes, coalminers and voters to Kyiv in 2004 and again in 2013–2014 as paid "political tourists."³⁰ This could be seen by the dried military meals illegally "sold" by the Ministry of Defense at a cost of 300,000 *hryvni* to Yanukovich voters in the Orange Revolution.³¹ A similar balance of forces emerged during the Euromaidan when those who had been paid to do so attended pro-presidential rallies.

Two factors accounted for the difference between Yushchenko and Yanukovich voters. First, civil society is far weaker in Eastern Ukraine, which voted largely for Yanukovich, than in Western and Central Ukraine, which voted for Yushchenko. 62 per cent of Yushchenko voters believed that NGOs were necessary for civil society, while only 35 per cent of Yanukovich voters did. Only 10 per cent of Yanukovich voters and 30 per cent of Yushchenko voters believed

27 See: www.maydan.org.ua, March 5, 2005.

28 *Ukrainska pravda*, December 25, 2004.

29 See: www.obozrevatel.com, January 13, 2005.

30 Taras Kuzio, "'Political Tourism' and Managed Civil Society in Ukraine," *Eurasian Daily Monitor*, May 22, 2007, accessed May 13, 2015, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=32759&no_cache=1#.VEVq9YvF9IU.

31 *Ukrainska pravda*, May 13, 2005.

citizens should take action to protect their rights.³² Demonstrations in Donetsk “are organized by the authorities.”³³

The Party of Regions established a monopoly of power first in the Donbas and then in 2005–2013 in Eastern and Southern Ukraine through “top-down managed democracy.” In the Orange Revolution, Yanukovich threatened Yushchenko that his supporters would arrive in Kyiv en masse to block his election and prevent an alleged Western conspiracy. “If this legal nihilism continues, I will not be able to stop people,” Yanukovich warned.³⁴ These were empty threats because Yanukovich voters would only descend on Kyiv if they were paid to do so. When the crowds are mobilized “they have no life of their own” one commentator wrote in 2004 foreseeing developments in that region by a decade:

Donetsk is actually fascist. There is one party, people get beaten for opposition views, information is controlled, nationalist sentiment is inflamed with insane rhetoric about American/NATO plots to enslave Ukraine, and fear is the motivating factor.³⁵

Fewer Yanukovich voters travelled to Kyiv than Yushchenko voters because of the average age of both groups of voters. Yushchenko voters were younger and more highly educated and therefore those who are more mobile and active in civil society and able to withstand the winter cold in Kyiv. Yanukovich voters meanwhile, were on average over 55 and with lower levels of education, groups who are far less active in civil society.³⁶ Serhii Tyhipko, head of the official Yanukovich campaign, threatened Polish negotiators with the sending of 20,000 miners to Kyiv, “to disperse the blockades of ministries and enable the work of the nationally elected President Yanukovich.”³⁷ The strategy aimed to provoke violence between Yushchenko and Yanukovich voters leading to President Kuchma intervening and acting as the final arbiter.³⁸ In reality, the threat to transport 20–35,000 Yanukovich supporters to Kyiv was in reality a “bluff.” Tyhipko fled abroad in 2005 but returned and stood as a candidate in the 2010 elections coming in third place. After the 2010 elections, he joined the Nikolai Azarov government and merged his Sylna Ukraina (Strong Ukraine) party with the Party of Regions. Tyhipko’s attempt at bouncing back into Ukrainian politics a second time in 2014 failed miserably.

32 Karen Buerkle et al., *Public Opinion in Ukraine After the Orange Revolution*, Washington DC: International Foundation for Electoral Systems, April, 2005, accessed April 15, 2016, <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Survey/2005/Public-Opinion-in-Ukraine-After-the-Orange-Revolution-2005.aspx>.

33 *La Presse*, December 7, 2004.

34 *Washington Post*, December 17, 2004.

35 Jake Rudnitsky, “Donetsk Paper Tiger,” *Ukraine List*, December 10, 2004, accessed October 2, 2015, <http://www.ukrainianstudies.uottawa.ca/>.

36 Buerkle et al., *Public Opinion in Ukraine*.

37 *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 3, 2005.

38 *Expres*, December 22, 2004.

Few of Yanukovich's supporters stayed long enough in Kyiv because there were no organized provisions for them, such as accommodation and food (unlike facilities provided for Orange Revolution and a decade later for Euromaidan protestors). Yanukovich's supporters defected to the Orange Revolution and to the Euromaidan.³⁹ A Russian reporter found them during the Orange Revolution to be, "Hungry, tired, partly drunk, they were quickly pacified by the Kyivan crowd — mainly women handing out food, warm tea and convincing them of the Orange Revolution."⁴⁰

In the Orange Revolution no violence took place between both groups of supporters. In contrast, in Donetsk there were repeated violent attacks against individuals wearing orange and Yushchenko symbols and against supporters of the Euromaidan.⁴¹ Prime Minister Yanukovich lobbied President Kuchma to use force to break the blockades of government buildings as he could not gain access to the Cabinet of Ministers building. Yanukovich's allies asked him, "Why do we not go to the Maidan and finally smash in the faces of the 'orangites'?"⁴²

Although Yanukovich presented himself as a "hard man" able to make tough decisions he felt threatened by large crowds and the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan showed he lacked the intellectual and cultural depth to respond to both popular protests. Yanukovich and his Donetsk thuggish team believed that the brutal clubbing of students on 30 November 2013 would lead — as in Donetsk — to people going home and no longer protesting. Instead, on the following day half a million people took control of the *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* (Independence Square). "If we stood to the end, then blood would have flowed. We were not ready for this."⁴³ Kuchma and Yanukovich were surprised by the very large number of participants in the Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions. Any attempt at squashing the Orange Revolution would have only been successful in the first two days after the second round of the elections when people had not yet arrived from Western Ukraine. From 23–24 November 2014, hundreds of thousands began to arrive in Kyiv to join local protestors and organizers. In the Euromaidan, the low numbers of protestors quickly grew and protests spread throughout Ukraine in response to brutal police tactics and the authorities' unwillingness to compromise.

Yanukovich was officially declared President by the TsVK on 24 November but would not become President until the results were published in the official parliamentary and government newspapers, *Holos Ukrainy* and *Uriadovyi Kurier*. Throughout the week Yanukovich called upon Kuchma to take decisive action acting, "as a typical Soviet *khazain* who finds it difficult to adopt any kind of political decision..."⁴⁴ On 27 November, at the RNBO meeting Yanukovich gathered governors from Eastern and Southern Ukraine where he had won pluralities in rounds 1 and 2 and demanded to know from Kuchma:

39 *Ukrainska pravda*, December 16, 2014.

40 *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 3, 2005.

41 Examples of violence by Yanukovich vigilantes against Yushchenko's supporters can be found in *La Presse*, December 7, 2014; *UNIAN*, December 15, 2014.

42 *Segodnia*, November 21, 2005.

43 *Segodnia*, November 21, 2005.

44 *Segodnia*, November 21, 2005.

Leonid Danylovyh, here are the governors who fulfilled your instructions. We won the presidential elections; this was your aim and that of your team which they fulfilled. And so why are you inactive? What, have you betrayed our team? [...] If you have “dumped” us then say so!⁴⁵

Prime Minister Yanukovych gave the order for MVS Internal Troops to be sent to Kyiv but it ultimately failed to achieve their objectives of unblocking government buildings or dispersing the Orange Revolution. Kuchma refused to implement Yanukovych’s demand to inaugurate him President which would have been in defiance of a Supreme Court ruling that suspended the TsVK official result pending an investigation of election fraud. The self-confidence of participants in the Orange Revolution increased as the crowds grew to over a million and they were met by no violent response from the authorities. During the Euromaidan a combination of higher levels of public anger, repressive policies coupled with an unwillingness to compromise by replacing Prime Minister Azarov, RNBO secretary Kluiev and Interior Minister Zakharchenko. Whereas Azarov was forced to resign on 28 January 2014, the latter two remained in power until Yanukovych fled from Ukraine.

Sylovyky

Ukraine’s security forces rapidly disintegrated during the Orange Revolution and they therefore could not be used to suppress the protests. During the Serbian Bulldozer and Georgian Rose revolutions the security forces either defected to the opposition or declared their neutrality. During Ukraine’s Orange Revolution, parliamentary speaker Lytvyn promised not to use force against demonstrators and during the 27 November 2004 meeting of the RNBO, SBU Chairman Smeshko argued against using force because, he believed, it would lead to greater unrest that would constitute a threat to Ukraine’s national security. During the Euromaidan the police and SBU remained loyal to Yanukovych while the armed forces proved to be unwilling to be dragged into politics.

In the Orange Revolution, the Yushchenko camp was buoyed by secret negotiations with the MVS and the military, elements of whom stated their willingness to defend protesters if the authorities attempted a violent clampdown. No such negotiations are known to have taken place in the Euromaidan between opposition and the security forces.

During the first three days following the 21 November 2004 vote, a breakdown in command and control left most MVS officers confused as to who was in charge. A similar breakdown took place on 20–21 February 2014 when parliament, echoing international shock and horror at the murders of protesters, began to demand an end to bloodshed. In the Orange Revolution, a *Berkut* riot police officer guarding the presidential administration replied, “I don’t know whether Kuchma or Yushchenko is now president.”⁴⁶ On 26–27 November 2004, MVS cadets and officers were seen arguing with *Berkut* riot police guarding the presidential administration telling them

45 *Ukraina moloda*, November 29, 2005.

46 *Kyiv Post*, November 25, 2004.

the elections had been fraudulent and encouraging them to join the Orange Revolution.⁴⁷ Relations with the *Berkut* riot police were completely different and more violent during the Euromaidan.

President Kuchma's distrust of the political sympathies of MVS special forces in Kyiv led him to order 17,000⁴⁸ loyal units from the Crimean and Donetsk MVS *Bars*, *Tytan* (who had transported organized crime vigilantes to Kyiv), and *Sokil* special forces to be stationed at the presidential administration.⁴⁹ Crimean and Donetsk MVS special forces were hostile to the "nationalist Yushchenko" and Our Ukraine's alliance with Crimean Tatars.⁵⁰ Crimean and Donetsk special forces, who were mistaken for Russian special forces sent to protect Kuchma, prevented the presidential administration from falling into the hands of Orange Revolution protestors. A similar policy was used during the Euromaidan when *Berkut* riot police were brought from Eastern Ukraine and Crimea to Kyiv. They withdrew from Kyiv when Yanukovych fled and many joined the Crimean Militia under Russian occupation rule where they were given heroes' welcome, or they joined the Donbas separatist forces.⁵¹

Tymoshenko and the *Pora* (It's Time) NGO prepared three separate plans to storm the presidential administration. Taras Stetskiv, one of the Maidan commanders, claimed he had 4,000 volunteers, "ready for everything and only waiting for a signal" to storm the presidential administration who "were ready to take any risk and were perfectly aware of any consequences."⁵² Three factors held the radicals back from storming the presidential administration. First, it would have strengthened views in Eastern Ukraine that Orange Revolutionaries were "aggressive Western Ukrainian nationalists."⁵³ Stetskiv admitted that Ukraine's Orange Revolution was restrained in comparison to the Serbian and Georgian revolutions, "by the fear of the division of Ukraine."⁵⁴ Such fears were reinforced by the separatist congress of Eastern Ukrainian council leaders and politicians supporting Yanukovych that took place in Severodonetsk over the weekend of 27–28 November 2004. Such fears were surprisingly less prominent during the Euromaidan when they were overshadowed by the determination and anger of protestors.

Yushchenko opposed the forcible takeover of the presidential administration claiming he supported, "a complete legal and peaceful method of gaining power."⁵⁵ Opposition leaders Arsenii Yatseniuk (*Batkivshchyna*), Oleh Tiahnybok (*Svoboda*), and Vitalii Klychko (Klitschko) (Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms) never controlled the Euromaidan. Although Tymoshenko was in prison, Yanukovych's conspiracy mind-set made him nevertheless believe

47 *Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, November 20–26, 2004.

48 UNIAN, October 30, 2004.

49 *Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, December 11–17, 2004; *Ukrainska pravda*, April 12, 2005.

50 *Segodnia*, November 21, 2005.

51 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUWOZwT46wk&chroma=off>.

52 *Dzerkalo tyzhnya*, December 11–17, 2004.

53 *Dzerkalo tyzhnya*, December 11–17, 2004.

54 *Dzerkalo tyzhnya*, December 11–17, 2004.

55 *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 3, 2005.

that she was behind the protests. When Klychko and Poroshenko attempted to calm protesters they were heckled or (in the case of Klychko) sprayed with a fire extinguisher.⁵⁶

Various psychological strategies were used on MVS special forces stationed at the Presidential Administration, such as bringing flowers and adorning their shields, to weaken their resolve to use force. No such tactics were possible during the Euromaidan because of very strained relations with the authorities who believed they were fighting for their very survival. *Pora* youth activists used psychological pressure against President Kuchma when they surrounded his dacha in the exclusive Kyiv suburb of Koncha Zaspia preventing his daughter (oligarch Pinchuk's spouse) from leaving. Elite homes in the suburbs of Kyiv were secret in Soviet times and have remained so in post-Soviet Ukraine and it was a huge shock to Ukrainian leaders that this was no longer the case and their security was therefore no longer assured. The blockade took place during round-table negotiations and when Kuchma was advised that his dacha was being blockaded with his daughter isolated inside, he was visibly angry. During the Euromaidan the AutoMaidan drove protesters to Yanukovich's palace (*Mezhyhiria*) and the palaces of other members of the elite.⁵⁷ In the Orange Revolution, civil society pressure was important in convincing Kuchma, "that we could get him physically, that a few thousand hot tempered guys could climb over his fence," Stetskiy recalled.⁵⁸ Such psychological pressure influenced Kuchma to pursue moderate policies towards the protestors out of fear that repression could backfire and he could be arrested. The AutoMaidan inflamed the Yanukovich regime because their corrupt private lives which were inconsistent with their state salaries (the most egregious example being *Mezhyhiria*) had become public knowledge.

In the Orange Revolution the military stayed neutral or supported Yushchenko. During the Euromaidan, Ukraine's army again declined to donate *spetsnaz* and paratroopers to "Operation Boomerang" to suppress the protesters and install a state of emergency. General Mykhailo Kutsyn, commander of Ukraine's Western Operational Command, was unwilling to use his military units against the "people" and his units declared their loyalty for Yushchenko. Defense Minister Oleksandr Kuzmuk reassured protestors they should, "Have no doubts that the army will always defend the interests of the people."⁵⁹ He complained about deputies visiting military garrisons and agitating officers to not obey "criminal orders."⁶⁰ By the Euromaidan, Kuzmuk was a Party of Regions deputy. On 25 November 2004, Kuzmuk's predecessor, General Yevhen Marchuk, a former SBU chairman and secretary of the RNBO, made a stunning statement to Channel 5 television calling upon the SBU, MVS, and military to not obey "orders given by word of mouth" if they were aimed at suppressing protestors. General Vitalii Radetskyi, Defense

56 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjUWYKaVRAU>.

57 Video's of the AutoMaidan protests outside *Mezhyhiria*, Zakharchenko's and Medvedchuk's palaces: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYqunpRvf7E&list=PLvEECEpNAKLz0NFhkzyYmms_5S5uVCHEh; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAlLcBB5NVk>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=af34qJWHSBw&list=PL6UedopJ5ztBT6jXSp0OUpCdxFnaca7t_.

58 *Dzerkalo tyzhnya*, December 11–17, 2004.

59 *Financial Times*, November 25, 2004.

60 *Inter TV*, November 26, 2004.

Minister in the 1990s, also told Orange Revolution protestors, the “Slogan for today is the Army is with the people!”⁶¹ Both Marchuk and Radetskyi called upon President Kuchma to admit that widespread vote fraud had taken place.

A decade of extensive cooperation by Ukraine in NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme had transformed the Ukrainian military officer class. The Yushchenko election team had established close ties to the SBU and Ministry of Defense, including the ground forces command and military intelligence during the 18 months prior to the 2004 election when a “special contact unit” had worked to build bridges and establish contacts with senior officers.⁶² Tymoshenko, Yevhen Zhovtiak, and Yuri Lutsenko were in charge of liaison with the security forces. Contacts between opposition leaders and MVS special forces did not exist during the Euromaidan.

The advance on 28 November 2004 of MVS Internal Troops in Kyiv was largely halted due to, “The leadership of the infantry of the armed forces of Ukraine (who) warned they were ready to stand between the people and the ranks of Internal Troops moving on Kyiv.”⁶³ General Mykola Petruk, commander of Ukraine’s ground forces, telephoned a senior MVS officer and threatened if the Internal Troops moved one kilometer towards the Maidan, “62 per cent of the army throughout Ukraine’s territory will rise up in defense of the *narod*.”⁶⁴ Petruk was elected to parliament in the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT) in the March 2006 elections. Petruk’s contribution to the success of the non-violent nature of the Orange Revolution rested on his courage in siding with the Orange Revolution, Tymoshenko recalled:

When Kuchma and his entourage gave the order to distribute weapons to MVS Internal Troops and move on Kyiv, I said on the Maidan that women and children should leave, and only men should remain. After this I went to pick up those generals who were ready to defend the people of Ukraine with weapons (in hand).

The SBU (led by Chairman Smeshko), military intelligence (led by Oleksandr Halaka and Mykola Melnyk) and military counter-intelligence (led by Vitalii Romanchenko) cooperated with the Yushchenko election team to prevent bloodshed and provided them with intelligence on the Kuchma administration and Yanukovich election team. “The main aim was not to permit violent conflict where power would be transferred with bloodshed, even though it was a difficult political situation,” General Halaka explained.⁶⁵ Following the Orange Revolution, Yanukovich distrusted Ukraine’s intelligence services and during his presidency he placed Russian citizens in charge of his bodyguards, the SBU and military.⁶⁶ Similar cooperation between the security

61 See: www.razom.org.ua, November 29, 2004.

62 *The Guardian*, May 27, 2005.

63 *Ukrainska pravda*, April 12, 2005.

64 Yulia Tymoshenko quoted in *Ukrainska pravda*, December 7, 2005.

65 *Segodnya*, November 19, 2005.

66 Taras Kuzio, “Russians Control Yanukovich,” *Jamestown Foundation blog*, October 13, 2010; “Russia Takes Control of Ukraine’s Security Forces,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, March 19, 2012; “Ukraine’s

forces and the opposition proved impossible under Yanukovich as the intelligence services and *Berkut* riot police had been privatized by “The Family” and infiltrated by Russian intelligence.

Although the SBU officially stayed neutral they leaned towards Yushchenko for whom 80 per cent of officers enrolled in the SBU Academy in Kyiv voted for.⁶⁷ Throughout the election campaign the staff of Yushchenko’s election campaign had excellent contacts with the SBU who leaked them internal documents from the Yanukovich election campaign and some SBU officers illicitly taped Yanukovich’s headquarters and passed these to the Yushchenko election campaign. On 25 November 2004, the SBU issued a statement affirming their opposition to the official results that had declared Yanukovich to be elected and stating their readiness to defend peaceful protestors.

Yanukovich and his allies demanded a tough response to what they viewed as a betrayal of his election victory and Western conspiracy to deny him the presidency. Despite widespread international condemnation of election fraud, Yanukovich continued to insist to the very end of his presidency there was never any election fraud. “We won the elections in 2004. It’s a lie that was spread about some falsifications. That is a lie. We went through the courts, which didn’t find significant violations,” President Yanukovich told Ukrainian television channels.⁶⁸ Ironically, Yanukovich’s 2010 election has also come under scrutiny following the release of documents found in the burnout Party of Regions headquarters that purported to show massive bribery of state officials. Following the 2004 elections many diplomatic cables from the US Embassy in Kyiv testified to Yanukovich believing the Orange Revolution was orchestrated by the West to deny him his “victory.”⁶⁹ Similar views of the Euromaidan led by “extremists” who in league with the West which had fomented a “putsch” remains commonplace with Yanukovich, Putin and their Eurasian supporters.⁷⁰

Yanukovich repeatedly complained Kuchma had not used force to clear government buildings and reintroduce “constitutional order.”⁷¹ Kuchma understood if he had fulfilled Yanukovich’s demands it would be him, as the sitting president who would have had to take responsibility for the inevitable bloodshed. In the Euromaidan, Yanukovich and “The Family” also refused to take responsibility for violence by the security forces and vigilantes. “Operation

(Russian) Defence Minister and Selective Justice,” *Jamestown Foundation blog*, April 16, 2012.

(<http://jamestownfoundation.blogspot.ca/2010/10/russians-control-yanukovich.html>; http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39154&no_cache=1#.VEVsd4vF9IU; and <http://jamestownfoundation.blogspot.ca/2012/04/ukraines-russian-defense-minister-and.html>.)

67 *Dzerkalo tyzhnya*, November 20–26, 2004.

68 Video of the interview can be watched at: <http://fakty.ictv.ua/ua/index/read-news/id/1442413#main>.

69 “Ukraine: Region’s Party Congress: A Handshake, A Communist, and the Russians,” US Embassy Kyiv, August 8, 2007, accessed August 27, 2015, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/08/07KYIV1940.html>.

70 Pavel Felgenhauer, “Kremlin Sees Ukraine Crisis as Part of Overall US-Led Assault on Russia,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, September 11, 2014, accessed October 1, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42820&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=19cac77615443542f4a5dcbfd3281001#.VEVt5ovF9IU.

71 *Washington Post*, December 17, 2004.

Boomerang,” prepared with Russian advice, would if it had been implemented have led to the deaths of thousands of protesters.

Yanukovych’s denial that he lobbied for the use of force is not consistent with the recollections of other participants of the RNBO meeting. Smeshko remembered that Yanukovych had been lobbying Kuchma since 24 November, the day the TsVK had declared him elected president and five days ahead of the RNBO meeting, to introduce “constitutional order.” Yanukovych was backed by ten governors from Eastern Ukraine who also demanded that Kuchma, “reintroduce the power of the authorities and introduce order” through the introduction of a state of emergency.⁷² This confirmed Yanukovych’s preference for resorting to the use of violent tactics that were used in the Euromaidan when there were no restraints to his thuggish and criminal behavior.

Explosives, specialist weapons and crowd control equipment arrived in Kyiv on 26 December 2013 and 6 January 2014 to assist the SBU and FSB planning and implementing repression of the Euromaidan. It was planned that during the final stage of “Operation Boomerang” Yanukovych was to request from his Kharkiv base Russia to intervene into Ukraine to protect Russophones. Putin was to receive the Crimea in exchange for Russian support to prop up Yanukovych in power.⁷³

The SBU’s Anti-Terrorist Centre planned “Operation Boomerang” as “steps to neutralize extremist activities by protest members” that would draw on 10,000 MVS Internal Troops, 12,000 Militia and 2,000 *Berkut* riot police. As these units sealed off the Maidan, Interior Ministry *Sokil* special forces and SBU Alpha snipers would target key protesters while other SBU Alpha units would storm surrounding buildings. Yanukovych half-heartedly implemented “Operation Boomerang” because there was insufficient support within the security forces for a larger bloodbath that would have run into the thousands. Support within the Party of Regions began to crumble after the death of over one hundred protesters. The Euromaidan rejected the EU-brokered agreement that permitted Yanukovych to remain in power until December and he and his close allies fled with their stolen loot. Ukrainians woke up the following day to find they had no president, a bankrupt country and a Russian neighbor ready to use the chaos to annex the Crimea and foment violent separatism in the Donbas.

The Party of Regions condemned in a 23 February 2014 statement Yanukovych’s “cowardly flight” and “betrayal” saying “Ukraine was deceived and robbed” and a “Party with a million members actually became a hostage of one corrupt Family.” They “strongly condemned the criminal orders that led to the loss of human life, an empty treasury, huge debts, shame in the eyes of the Ukrainian people and the world, bringing our country to the brink, threats to split the country and the loss of national sovereignty.” The duplicity of Party of Regions deputies in castigating Yanukovych after he fled is palpable when they had enriched themselves and supported his violent kleptocracy during his four-year presidency. Attempting to absolve

72 Yevhen Marchuk interviewed in *Den*, 19 February 2005.

73 Serhii Leshchenko, *Mezhyhirskiy syndrom. Diahnoz Vladi Viktora Yanukovycha [The Mezhyhiria Syndrome: A Diagnosis of Viktor Yanukovych’s Rule]* (Kyiv: Bright Star Publishing, 2014), 214.

themselves of responsibility Party of Regions deputies said: “All responsibility for this lies with Yanukovych and his immediate environment.”⁷⁴

Conclusions

This article has discussed Ukraine’s Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions in comparison with democratic revolutions in post-communist Central-Eastern Europe and how externally-backed counter-revolution has hindered reforms and European integration. Slovakia re-joined “Europe” relatively quickly following the 1998 democratic breakthrough. This, in of itself, showed that Meciar’s populist nationalism was more of an aberration than a factor that could permanently de-rail Slovakia’s democratization. Croatia also quickly moved forward in capitalizing on its 1999–2000 democratic breakthrough that has led to NATO and EU membership.

The record is though, very mixed in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine where counter-revolution has been supported by domestic nationalists and external hegemons. Only in the former is there a distant “carrot” of future EU membership that could encourage democratic political forces. Ukraine and Georgia are handicapped between a weak EU and aggressive Russia. In Georgia and Ukraine, reforms are made more difficult by the lack of offer of EU membership in the Eastern Partnership’s Association Agreement. This is made doubly complicated by Russian-backed counter-revolutionary forces in Georgia’s two frozen conflicts and Ukraine’s Donbas and the annexation of the Crimea.

The role of the *sylovyky* is crucial in understanding why the Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions turned out to be non-violent and violent respectively. In the Orange Revolution the *sylovyky* sided with the opposition or remained neutral whereas during the Euromaidan they backed Yanukovych until he fled from Kyiv. The army was an exception as it was reluctant to act as an agent of state repression in *both* revolutions. In addition, the Party of Regions was a formidable and disciplined party of power that Kuchma lacked.⁷⁵ Bearing in mind it was Yanukovych who lobbied for the use of force in both revolutions the likelihood of violence was inevitable if Yanukovych had remained in power until the 2015 elections.⁷⁶ The type of leader who is in power — senior *nomenklatura* (Kuchma) or thuggish ex-criminal (Yanukovych) — proved to be decisive in whether violence took place. Yanukovych added to this by inviting Russia to militarily intervene in the Crimea⁷⁷ and together with some oligarchs and Party of Regions local leaders, financing and encouraging counter-revolution fervor in the Donbas.

74 Appeal by the Party of Regions parliamentary faction of February 23, 2014, accessed September 12, 2016, <http://partyofregions.ua/ua/news/5309dfdf620d2f70b000031>.

75 Serhiy Kudelia and Taras Kuzio, “Nothing Personal: Explaining the Rise and Decline of Political Machines in Ukraine,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 30.6 (2014): 1–29; Taras Kuzio, “The Rise and Fall of the Party of Regions Political Machine,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 62.3 (2015): 174–86.

76 Taras Kuzio, “Operation stop Orange Revolution-2,” *UPI*, July 27, 2012, accessed May 1, 2015, http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Analysis/Outside-View/2012/07/27/Outside-View-Operation-stop-Orange-Revolution-2/UPI-43151343393099/#ixzz21r78xxPK.

77 “Ukraine’s Yanukovych Asked for Troops, Russia Tells UN,” *BBC*, March 4, 2014, accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26427848>.

Ukraine was close to violence on a number of occasions during the 2004 election campaign and Orange Revolution when President Kuchma repeatedly professed his interest in a free and fair election but did little to promote this step. The five key factors why the Orange and Euromaidan Revolutions turned out different were: (1) whether former senior *nomenklatura* Kuchma or the more criminal and thuggish Yanukovych were in power; (2) whether the protests were tied to an election cycle. In 2004, Kuchma was leaving office while after 2010, Yanukovych believed he was in power for the long-term and the paramount concern for him was the survival of his regime; (3) ability of the security forces to resist orders to repress protesters in the Orange Revolution but not in the Euromaidan; (4) willingness to compromise that existed in the Orange Revolution but not in the Euromaidan; and (5) Russia's intervention which took place in 2004 through financial and diplomatic support but was far more extensive and aggressive in 2010–2014. Putin's Russia in 2004 and 2014 were very different.

Violent provocations leading to a state of emergency were attempted in both revolutions but they failed. Yanukovych sent tens of thousands of vigilantes to Kyiv in the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan but Kuchma prevented their use in the former while in the Euromaidan they were unleashed against protesters. Yanukovych's thuggish and criminal character came through in both revolutions when he lobbied for the use of force. The Yanukovych presidency privatized the security force and permitted key positions to be staffed by Russian officers ensuring they remained loyal until the mass bloodshed on 18–20 February 2014.

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