

3 Ukraine

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What was the Orange Revolution? Was it a ‘revolution’ at all? And, if so, why did a coloured revolution take place in Ukraine but not Russia or Belarus? Five years on from the dramatic events in Kiev’s Maidan square in 2004, and as another presidential election in Ukraine approaches, it is worth returning to those events and asking what actually happened in the context of regime change in the post-Soviet space as a whole. At the time, Ukraine’s coloured ‘revolution’ was, of course, hailed by many within the country and many more in the West as a decisive break with the past, with kleptocratic Kuchma-ism, with ‘managed’ or ‘virtual’ democracy (Wilson, 2005a): a sea change for the Ukrainian people that would lead them to the sunny uplands of liberal democracy, greater prosperity and swift integration into the Euro-Atlantic alliances. Some political scientists went a step further and implied that the promise of these glittering prizes could be a factor in explaining how the coloured revolution came about in the first place (Bunce and Wolchik 2006, p. 294). A significant part of Ukrainian society – the ‘blue camp’ that supported the defeated presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich – and commentators from the rest of the former Soviet space, particularly Russia, were derisive about the hubristic claims of the ‘orange camp’ and its Western supporters, and argued that the revolution was simply a Western *coup d’état*, masterminded by the US and its allies. Neither claim was entirely valid, but it is safe to conclude that for most Ukrainians, of all political persuasions, the Orange Revolution’s principal legacy was five years of disappointment, as the political elite sunk into a drawn-out feud punctuated by parliamentary elections that produced perpetual instability and inertia. When tectonic political shifts take place, through popular protest, the ballot box, by violent means – or indeed a mixture of these – disappointment always follows, which of course is only to be expected when there is so great a weight of public expectation.

The aim of this chapter within this comparative volume is to revisit the Orange Revolution as an example of a ‘successful’ (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 284) colour revolution, and to attempt to explain why events unfolded as they did by focusing in turn on different sections of Ukrainian society. By ‘successful’ colour revolution, I simply refer to the removal from power of an illiberal or authoritarian leadership through non-violent and/or democratic means (i.e. through the defeat of the incumbents at the ballot box combined with non-violent mass protest). ‘Success’

for the purposes of this chapter explicitly does not refer to the effectiveness of the post-revolutionary government or imply the achievement of a fully consolidated political system (on consolidated democracies, see Linz and Stepan 1996).

Why coloured revolutions were successful in removing the incumbent leadership within some post-Soviet states but not others is this volume's essential research question. Numerous scholars have investigated this matter, including, for example, Bunce and Wolchik (2006), who argued that the coloured revolutions between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s came about as the result of the international diffusion of revolutionary ideas and the methods needed to bring such a revolution about across the Central and East European region. Very briefly, the conditions for the export of coloured revolution can be summarized as: the 'persuasive power of success' (i.e. the encouragement for would-be revolutionaries provided by the fact that such revolutions had happened elsewhere); the consequences of the revolution (especially where states had gone on to join the European Union, most notably Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia); and, of undoubtedly the greatest importance, 'contexts where there were political opportunities for change' (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 294). As aspiring would-be political leaders are taught, politics is always local, and local conditions were emphasized by Polese (2009) who argues that the crucial factor in the Orange Revolution was the transformation of informal social networks into formalized civil society groupings/ NGOs that in turn mobilized the popular support and public protest that helped to prevent electoral fraud during the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections. Yet, of course, the outcome of the Orange Revolution cannot be explained through a description and analysis of the role of NGOs alone.

In keeping with the basic premise shared by Ó Beacháin and Polese (this volume) as well as Bunce and Wolchik (2006), the focus of this chapter is on the particularities of the Ukrainian case that help to explain why a coloured revolution took place in Ukraine, but not, for example, Russia or Belarus – the two eastern Slav states that could be described as most similar to Ukraine in terms of historical development and societal make-up. Thus this chapter investigates the different roles played by various political actors and segments of Ukrainian society in the run-up to, and during, the Orange Revolution. Its line of argument proceeds in five sections. Section I begins with the attitudes of the elite and explores how a 'revolution' could be allowed to occur in a society where, as Viktor Chudowsky and Taras Kuzio argued a year before the contested elections in 2003, 'passivity is the essential characteristic of the Ukrainian "public" as a whole' (Chudowsky and Kuzio 2003: 275). Section II turns to the opposition and asks whether it could be regarded as a unified whole or not and what the significance of this was. Section III examines the role played by external actors: Russia, the European Union and in particular its new Member States, and the US. Section IV investigates the role played by civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and section V looks at the population's attitude to the revolution by drawing on the fascinating public opinion data that has been recently collected and analyzed by White and McAllister (2009).

The Elite

In common with many other post-Soviet republics, during the course of the 1990s, Ukrainian politics came to be dominated by a small elite, a circle of billionaire businessmen gathered around the president of Ukraine, popularly termed oligarchs. They had ‘made’ or rather extracted their riches from Ukraine during the first years of the transition, largely in the commodities markets, particularly the gas industry (more generally, see Aslund and McFaull, 2006: 9–28). Then, as perhaps is still in the case in 2009, it was impossible to distinguish between big business and how its interests were represented and party politics as a whole. Oligarchs had effectively captured the state and it served the interests of this very narrow group over all others. Yet to imply that the political and business elite was homogenous and united in its opposition to political change, and therefore the Orange Revolution, is very misleading. Neither before nor since the Orange Revolution has the Ukrainian elite been particularly compact or monolithic in its nature (Polese and Ó Beacháin, this volume). Splits are not simply apparent between, say, different political parties, but within political parties themselves, even those such as the Party of Regions that are widely believed to represent the interests of industrialists within one region (Copsey and Shapovalova 2008).

These divisions within the Ukrainian elite were partly the result of a change in the Ukrainian business environment in the 1990s (Aslund and McFaull 2006: 23–25). As a result of the economic reforms introduced during Viktor Yushchenko’s premiership at the turn of the twenty-first century, the opportunities for rent-seeking and skimming from the sale of gas or other commodities by holding regional monopolies over the sale of those commodities had evaporated. By the time of the Orange Revolution, wealth was largely being generated for this group of billionaires through production, particularly of steel in the eastern regions of Ukraine. The oligarchs became engaged in even fiercer competition between each other, and thus could not unite around one candidate.

A key point that is worth noting here, that adds further grist to Ó Beacháin and Polese’s mill (Introduction, this volume), is that it is hard to make a clear division in Ukraine between who was the ‘opposition’ in 2004 and who was the ‘ruling elite’. All of the main Orange revolutionaries had served in high office during the Kuchma administration, including Viktor Yushchenko (as prime minister), Yulia Tymoshenko (as deputy prime minister), Borys Tarasyuk (as foreign minister) and so on. Tymoshenko is believed to have made her wealth in the gas industry in the 1990s and went into opposition to the regime when her former business partner and ally Pavlo Lazarenko (Ukraine’s most corrupt politician) fled the country in 1999. The men and women who broke the power of the Kuchma regime were not political outsiders like the leaders of Poland’s Solidarity movement in the 1980s; they were to a greater or lesser extent, creatures of the old regime as well. When they fell out of favour with President Kuchma, or when they felt that the distribution of political power no longer suited them, they formed into opposition groups that very gradually drew together in the run-up to the 2004 presidential elections.

Although President Kuchma had proven himself skillful in playing the oligarchs

off against one another in his second term as president (1999–2004) and had consolidated authority in the presidency, he was far from all-powerful (see Wilson 2005b: 25–5); Karatnycky 2006: 29–44). His power lay in acting as the arbiter of disputes between the oligarchs (a vital role in a state without the proper rule of law). His ultimate interest was in staying in power (and he obtained a decision from the Ukrainian constitutional court that would have allowed him a third term on the grounds that the first term was served under a different constitution), and if this could not be achieved given his single-digit poll ratings since the ‘Gongadzegate’ scandal of 2000, then at all costs he wished to avoid prosecution out of office. President Kuchma’s relative weakness was also apparent in his control of the media, which was very incomplete, and in essence amounted to control of state television channels – leaving ample room for opposition in the print media, private broadcast media and, of course, the internet (Prytula 103–22). Perhaps the ultimate proof of just how weak Kuchma was may be found in his bungled strategy for exiting the presidency. Kuchma did not rule out running for the presidency until 2004 (which is why he needed a constitutional court ruling that would allow him to run). Once he did decide not to run himself, of the two main contenders for the presidency, it is clear that he favoured Yanukovych over Yushchenko, but his support was not entirely wholehearted; as usual he hedged his bets to an extent that was not immediately apparent to the external observer at the time of the elections. His ideal outcome for the second round of the presidential elections would have been for them to be declared void so that he could remain in office for longer. Yet once protests began, his situation became more desperate and the aim shifted to avoiding the ‘Romanian scenario’ (Wilson 2005b): that his presidency would end in a summary execution.

The effect of all these numerous divisions within the elite, or elites more accurately, was to water down quite significantly the many benefits that Kuchma and Yanukovych enjoyed as the incumbent president and prime minister respectively. Had the business elite been united in its support for Yanukovych from the very outset, it would have been far harder for the Orange Revolutionaries to seize the initiative. Crucially, they were divided, some defected to Yushchenko’s camp before the election (such as Petro Poroshenko, see Aslund and McFaul, 2006: 19) and others when it became clear that an Orange victory was the more likely outcome.

The Opposition

By contrast, Ukraine’s opposition on the eve of the elections was united (see Karatnycky 2006: 29–44). The existence of a unified opposition had been many years in the making. One of the reasons why Kuchma and the oligarchs had been able to gather so much power around themselves in the 1990s was the absence of a broad-based opposition. As had been the case elsewhere in the Soviet Union, during the late 1980s a number of civic organizations had grown up across Ukraine, most notably Rukh (The People’s Movement of Ukraine), but they were not able to transform themselves into cohesive political parties, partly due to a lack of funding (which was not forthcoming from their impoverished supporters) and partly due

to their failure to mobilize effectively between election campaigns. Opposition to the president and the government tended to be co-opted into the political establishment in the 1990s under Kravchuk and Kuchma. Thus it is worth reiterating: the opposition that emerged and beat Viktor Yanukovich in 2004 overwhelmingly comprised individuals who had once worked for President Kuchma.

According to Karatnytsky (2006: 29–32), a broad-based opposition emerged in Ukraine by 2002 or 2004 as a result of three factors. First, the constitution of 1996 made it clear that ultimate responsibility for what was happening in Ukraine lay with the President. Second, insider privatization of large-scale enterprises and increased macroeconomic stability led to the emergence of oligarchs independent of the President, who were keen to compete for political power and the competitive advantage in the marketplace that it brought. Some of these oligarchs emerged as challengers to the presidential authority. The downfall of Pavlo Lazarenko in 1999 was a watershed that sent Yulia Tymoshenko into open opposition to the old regime. The third and most significant factor was ‘Gongadzegate’ or ‘Kuchmagate’, which fatally undermined President Kuchma’s credibility and which at one point threatened to eject him from power entirely. The effect of the Kuchmagate scandal was to unite a host of groups, including political parties (such as Tymoshenko’s then *Batkivshchyna* and Moroz’s Socialists) and civic groups, such as the *Pora* youth movement, under one banner: the ‘Ukraine without Kuchma’ campaign, which called for the President’s impeachment. The opposition did not topple Kuchma and the state fought back successfully, harassing its financial backers (using the tax police) and briefly imprisoning Yulia Tymoshenko (on charges of forging customs documents). The Communist Party also retained a large measure of support at this time, which was also a factor in the failure of the opposition.

As prime minister of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko had remained neutral during the ‘Ukraine without Kuchma’ campaign of 2000–01. His dismissal in 2001 and the subsequent harassment of his *Our Ukraine* party pushed him towards Yulia Tymoshenko and the more radical opposition. By the 2002 parliamentary elections, opposition parties were strong enough to win half the seats.

The opposition benefited from a number of advantages during the 2004 presidential election campaign, largely as a result of the negligence, arrogance or outright stupidity of the old regime. First, the coverage of Yushchenko’s campaign on state-controlled television was so biased and overly critical that the reportage was simply not credible. At this time, state media received so-called ‘temnyky’ or instructions from the Presidential Administration (or rather sources unknown) that would indicate how the news was to be covered. Second, the Yanukovich campaign was lacklustre and Soviet in style (including factory visits, a visit from the Russian President, redolent of the ‘General Secretary’ visiting in pre-1991 elections, and emphasizing Yanukovich’s official functions as the incumbent). Third, the opposition focused on the corruption of the old regime and the insider privatizations and offered a programme that appealed to the hopes of the electorate that things could be different. Fourth, the Yushchenko campaign had no choice but to ally with civic groups and fight an election at the grass-roots level since its

access to national media outlets, especially state television was both limited and unlikely to convey the desired election message.

Such were the factors that served the opposition during the earlier part of the campaign. In the later stages of the campaign, the poisoning of Yushchenko convinced the opposition that they had to mount an all-out campaign and that the election would be about political survival as much as winning political power. The final fillip that convinced the opposition that victory was within reach was the fact that Yushchenko topped the poll in the first round of the elections, from that point onwards, the sense of momentum was became overpowering, although of course the odds still appeared to be stacked against the opposition.

As a result of Kuchma having alienated a part of the political elite from 1999 onwards and the Kuchmagate scandal of 2000 that brought together disillusioned functionaries of the old regime and civic groups, the coalition of forces that faced Viktor Yanukovich in 2004 was considerable. It comprised the People's Power Coalition of Yulia Tymoshenko and Viktor Yushchenko, the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the Socialist Party and civic groups, and had sufficient financial resources to mount a serious campaign. Yushchenko also had the backing of the West, whose media portrayed him and his orange camp in a very favourable light. He did not, of course, benefit from the support of Ukraine's powerful neighbour to the North, Russia, and it is to the role of the Russian Federation in the 2004 election campaign that this chapter now turns.

External Actors

The role of external actors in the Orange Revolution is frequently overestimated. In part this is because in both Russia and the West, the election campaign was interpreted in foreign policy terms, with Ukraine deciding – once and for all – whether it would integrate more closely with Russia or with the European Union and NATO. In fact, Ukrainian voters tended to make their decisions based on domestic policy issues, after all politics is always local. International politics and foreign policy were not of prime concern to the opposing Ukrainian political forces that contested the election.

Yet it is undeniable that external actors played a role in the election, and an overt role at that. First, for all the protestations of neutrality, there was a strong sense that Yushchenko was the favoured candidate of the West. Second, as Polese (2008) has argued, the support of the West was clear in training civil society movements that were exclusively in opposition to the regime in knowledge transfer, experience sharing and networking (Polese 2008: 1). Russia did not trouble to hide its preference: it was for Viktor Yanukovich, pure and simple (which in turn was a part of its usual strategy of supporting the incumbent governing elite and undermining the opposition, see Polese 2008: 18). This section reviews the role of international actors to determine their contribution to the eventual outcome of the election campaign.

Russia

For Russia, the Ukrainian presidential election was of explicitly geopolitical and strategic importance (on Russia, see Petrov and Ryabov 2006: 145–62). The aim of the Putin and Medvedev presidencies over the first decade of the twenty-first century was to increase Russia's influence over the former Soviet Union as a means of boosting its relative standing in the world vis-à-vis the other the would-be super-powers: China, the US, India and the EU. It is a well-known aphorism that with Ukraine, Russia becomes an empire, and moreover that the origins of the Russian empire lie to a great extent in the conquest and colonization of Ukraine and its victory over Poland-Lithuania for influence in that region. Ukraine's participation in the Single Economic Space (SES), an economic union of former Soviet republics, was also felt to be essential to the relaunch of Russia as a regional hegemon. Thus Ukraine was a crucial test of Russia's foreign policy and its ability to exercise decisive influence over its former empire. As such the outcome of the presidential elections in Ukraine was a near-unmitigated disaster.

That Russia failed to achieve the result that it wanted was the result of clumsiness and a failure to take into account the national specificities of the Ukrainian political situation. In the eyes of the Kremlin (Petrov and Ryabov 2006: 148–51), the Ukrainian electorate would behave like their Russian neighbours and in consequence, the strategies deployed by the Russian authorities to secure the right outcome in elections could simply be applied without modification in the Ukrainian context. In short, the Kremlin picked its man, Viktor Yanukovich, following consultation with President Kuchma (at this time the Russian authorities had no inkling that Kuchma's support for Yanukovich was not wholehearted), and advised the Yanukovich campaign to put into play the tactics that had brought success in Russian elections.

So what did the Russian authorities actually provide? Their support came in the form of political advisers, the famed political technologists, such as Gleb Pavlovsky (although bizarrely his firm never had an official contract, a point he bemoaned himself), whose role was to provide tactical and campaign advice to the Yanukovich camp (see Petrov and Ryabov, 2006: 151–55). This advice was to make full use of the state's resources: the media (which should focus overwhelmingly on Yanukovich and blacken the image of Yushchenko in the crudest fashion); to maximize voter turnout in 'loyalist' regions of Ukraine; to employ vote-rigging techniques such as carousel voting (voting more than once) and the use of 'dead souls' (taking advantage of the fact that electoral rolls had not been updated to remove dead citizens – and using their votes); to apply the usual pressures to those who were dependent on the state to induce them to vote for Yanukovich; and to replace suspect bureaucrats in wavering provinces with officials who could be trusted to deliver the right result.

Some funding was supplied directly to the Yanukovich campaign from Russia, although probably nothing like as much as was reported in the Western media, where figures of US\$600 million were bandied about. It is unlikely that direct support from Russian businesses amounted to anything like this sum, but it is highly

likely that tens of millions of dollars did find their way into the Yanukovych election fund. The Russian state also agreed on a series of highly favourable economic concessions to Ukraine in the run up to the election: it reduced the gas debt from US\$2.2 billion to US\$1.4 billion (see Petrov and Ryabov, 2006:150) and abolished quotas for Ukrainian steel pipes. These measures came on top of the heavily subsidized energy that it already supplied to Ukraine. Indeed all this 'aid' from Russia to Ukraine in the 1990s and beyond amounted to far more than the country ever received from international donors. Yet these measures were not necessarily felt by ordinary voters, but perhaps this was not the intention and the aim was to buy the loyalty of the oligarchs, such as Viktor Pinchuk, who controlled much of the production of Ukrainian steel pipes.

Support also came from the Russian media, especially television – which was viewed by many eastern and southern Ukrainian voters – which broadcast a solidly pro-Yanukovych message (Copsey 2005). Yet the centrepiece of Russian intervention in the campaign was the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin, not long before the first round of voting. Putin was hugely popular in Ukraine at the time. Yet Yanukovych still came second in the first round.

Russia 'lost' Ukraine because it failed to contemplate the possibility of a Yushchenko victory or the possibility of a change of strategy following the first round. By insisting on simply 'more of the same' in campaigning for the second round, the Kremlin lost the chance to switch its support to Yushchenko or step gracefully aside from the fray. The Kremlin was simply too shocked by the protests that followed the fraudulent second round to respond adequately. That Putin congratulated Yanukovych three times on his victory in the fraudulent second round showed how out of touch he and his advisers were with the situation in Kiev.

The 'West'

Both the US and the EU (on Western influences, see Sushko and Prystayko 2006: 125–44), which together can be taken to represent the 'West', had a common interest in Ukraine's presidential elections in 2004 as well as the events of the Orange Revolution that followed. Certainly the Atlantic allies shared a common goal vis-à-vis Ukraine: the promotion of democracy and the election. How they proceeded with the promotion of this overarching goal reflected the division of labour between the two powers. The US was more rigorous and vocal, initially at least. The EU's approach was more nuanced and longer term, reflecting not only the variety of opinions of its Member States but also its preference for steady institution building, sustained over many years.

The principal contribution of the West came in monitoring the election campaign, mostly under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Development (OSCE). The mission sent by the OSCE was acknowledged as neutral and disinterested, which meant that its findings were treated seriously and the OSCE did not hesitate to condemn the conduct of the election in the strongest way (Copsey 2005). Without this condemnation, it would have been far harder to mobilize protestors following the close of the (first) second round of the election. It is also

very unlikely that the US and the EU would have rejected the election results without the OSCE report.

The United States

Beginning with the US, it was clear that the election of 2004 was viewed as a test of the strength of democracy in the region, in the face of an unexpressed concern about Russian expansion. The US government and its Ambassador to Ukraine, John E. Herbst, made it clear that what mattered was the election's 'honesty and transparency' (Sushko and Prystyko, 2006: 132). Both Congress and Government were swift to criticize the flagrant violations of the electoral process and President George W. Bush made it clear in a letter presented to President Kuchma ahead of the second round of the elections by Senator Richard G. Lugar, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that Kuchma was to be held responsible for a free and fair election. The US was equally blunt in its pledge to review relations with Ukraine if the elections were judged to be 'tarnished' (Sushko and Prystyko 2006: 133).

The European Union

As has remained the case until the present, the EU can be split into two camps when it comes to policy towards Ukraine (Copsey 2008). On the one hand, there is the Russia-first group, comprised in the main of older Member States from Western Europe, with France, Italy and to an extent Germany forming the vanguard of this group. They are sceptical about the 'European vocation' of Ukraine and very careful to avoid undertaking any activity that would be seen as offensive to Russia. At the same time, however, they are of course in favour of greater democratic progress in Ukraine.

The second group of EU Member States is composed primarily of the newer Member States, in particular, Poland and Lithuania, but also Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Romania. The UK and Sweden could also be added to this cluster, for different reasons: the UK is pro-enlargement because it hopes this will dilute the federal nature of the Union and Sweden is both mildly suspicious of Russia and genuinely anxious to improve the quality of Ukrainian citizens' lives through greater democracy. This grouping to a varying degree (although led by Poland) increasingly sees the potential for renewed Russian imperialism in Eastern Europe. It sees Ukraine in geopolitical and historical terms as a battleground, where competing worldviews clash.

Prior to the elections, the EU had not offered Ukraine a membership perspective and despite calls to do so after the revolution (for example, from the European Parliament), it did not do so then either – although it did improve the quality of bilateral relations with Ukraine and marginally increase what it is prepared to offer Ukraine immediately in the shape of development assistance and trade liberalization by bolstering the Action Plan it had already agreed with the Kuchma/ Yanukovych government prior to the elections. What the EU did offer that made

the Orange Revolution possible was mediation between the various actors, particularly on the part of the then Presidents of Lithuania and Poland, Valdas Adamkus and Aleksander Kwaśniewski, respectively. Kwaśniewski in particular brought a detailed knowledge of Ukraine and its politics with him to the negotiating table, which was crucial in paving the way for a deal to be brokered by the triumvirate of Solana, Kwaśniewski and Adamkus on behalf of the EU. The deal cleared the way for the repeat second round of the elections. Russia, as the preceding section showed, was too discredited to play much of a role as a mediator.

Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

In common with the birth of the political opposition to Kuchma, civil society in Ukraine was a long time in the making, but it received a great fillip from the Kuchmagate scandal of 2000 (on civil society and NGOs, see Diuk 2006: 69–84; Demes and Forbrig 2006: 85–102). Of particular importance were younger Ukrainians, who had grown up in the 1990s, with no direct experience of Soviet-era oppression of political opposition. This segment of society was not afraid to challenge the regime, although it did not organize and mobilize effectively until after the parliamentary elections of 2002.

The elections, with their widespread falsifications and malpractices, acted as a recruiting sergeant for anti-Kuchma youth movements such as Pora ('It is Time'), Chysta Ukraina ('A Clean Ukraine') and Znayu ('I Know'), and brought together a very wide range of individuals who felt that Kuchma had overstepped the limits of what was acceptable in a political leader. The violence, intimidation and blatant disregard for democratic process that marked the 'dry run' elections for the mayor of Mukachevo in March 2004 radicalized the youth movements further when it became clear that only direct action could prevent the falsification and stealing of the autumn presidential elections. This direct action would primarily take the form of monitoring (in addition to the international community) the election campaign as well as organizing protests against fraud and intimidation. Youth movements were originally intended to be non-partisan but they became increasingly associated with the Yushchenko ticket as the campaign progressed, since he seemed to offer a better chance of democracy than Yanukovich (who, after all, was responsible directly and indirectly for much of the electoral fraud that precipitated the Orange Revolution).

Much has been written about the civil society activists, in particular, Pora, and their alleged links to Western governments. There does not appear to be much evidence to support the notion that youth movements were sponsored overwhelmingly by Western, anti-Russian governments. In truth, they appear to be rather domestic in nature, Demes and Forbrig (2006: 97) estimate that only US\$130,000 out of a total of US\$1.56 million in Pora came from donors outside Ukraine), albeit drawing lessons from similar movements in Georgia and Serbia. Youth movements acted as a vanguard for the mobilization of Kiev (and the central and west Ukrainian population) in the first hours of the revolution.

Public Opinion

Public opinion about the nature of the Orange Revolution was split at the time of the events and has remained so since then, as studies that ask voters to reflect on what the events were and what they meant have consistently shown. Of course, there is no denying that the Orange Revolution was popular. On 26 November 2004, the *New York Times* estimated that around 500,000 people were protesting in Kiev. A staggering 18.4 per cent of Ukrainians claimed to have taken part in the revolution across Ukraine (Wilson 2005b: 127): quite something in a country of some 46 million people. Let us be clear: it was the popular protests that made the revolution and forced Kuchma to take action. Without protest, it is possible that the falsified initial result for the second round play-off would simply have been accepted domestically by the population, albeit with misgivings. The scale of the protests also meant that action by the security forces to remove protestors was simply impossible. A few hundred or a few thousand protestors can be ignored or moved along, with coercion if necessary. Half a million protestors cannot be moved and their demands must be taken seriously – unless the situation is to turn very ugly.

Why Did Ukrainians Become Willing to Protest?

Ukrainians did not simply switch from Soviet-style passivity to empowerment from one day to the next. Discontent with the old regime had been mounting for several years before the revolution of 2004. The long Kuchmagate crisis, which focused on whether the president of Ukraine had been implicated in the murder of journalist Hryhorii Gongadze, severely undermined the credibility of the regime. Corruption is, of course, undesirable but the notion that the President of Ukraine should potentially have given orders for a critical journalist to be killed was too much for many to bear. In 2002, the opposition to the President unexpectedly won half the seats in Verkhovna Rada elections. Cracks in the system were beginning to appear.

One factor behind the shift in public willingness to protest and an increasing sense that change was possible may lie in the argument put forward by Tocqueville in his analysis of the causes of the French revolution of 1789: the dramatic increase in prosperity in the run up to the revolution (1955 [1856]). Between 2000 and 2004, Ukrainian GDP was rising at a sharp pace. After the sharp contraction of the early 1990s and the decline that followed the Russian crisis of 1998, the economy expanded at 5.9 per cent in 2000, 9.2 per cent in 2001, 5.2 per cent in 2002, 9.4 per cent in 2003 and a huge 12.1 per cent in 2004 – no doubt aided by a marked pre-election boost in public spending that year (see Copsey 2005). In short, Ukrainians were becoming better off, and if not necessarily reaching even central European levels of income, many were at least being lifted out of severe poverty. In short, change for the better at least looked possible. Moreover, during these heady years of rising prosperity, the upper middle classes of Ukraine were swelling in numbers, particularly in Kiev, which of course was the centre of the protests. Ukraine's business people also sought a say in how their country was run, and a more equal

playing field on which their businesses could compete more fairly: a revolt of the millionaires against the billionaires. The author's own experiences in 2004 of how the thousands of extra election monitors were funded suggests that Kiev's business people, lawyers and professional people were willing to dip into their own pockets to ensure a fair repeat of the second round of the election.

As Kuzio argues (2006: 45), 'Ukraine's ruling elite had been living in a world separate from society', where they seldom needed to interact with ordinary people, and where elections could be manipulated. The public was, however, well aware of the manipulation and increasingly intolerant of it. In 2002, only 20 per cent of Ukrainians trusted the authorities to hold a free and fair election, with 58 per cent expressing the view that the government could not be trusted to follow democratic procedures. The Mukachevo mayoral elections in the spring of 2004 were a 'dry-run' for what was to be expected in the presidential campaign, where the state tested out its machinery for manipulating results before putting it to use in October. The blatant violations of voting procedures also tested the waters for what the public was likely to accept and not to accept. Kuzio (2006: 46) argues that the explanation for the shift in public opinion can be found in three factors: the poisoning of Yushchenko; the narrow victory of Yushchenko in round one, which produced the impression that he was capable of victory; and the increasing discontentment with Yanukovych as a possible president. Thus by the time of the election, some 84 per cent of Ukrainians voiced their belief that they had the right to protest.

The Revolution Begins

Protests to follow the announcement of the initial result from the second round play off between Yushchenko and Yanukovych were orchestrated in advance of the second round election result, just as the fraud in the election result had been well planned in advance (Wilson 2005b: 122). Plans were made at first for a post-election rally in Maidan square, which is why the stage from which the Orange Revolution leaders spoke to Ukraine and the world was already in place. Twenty-five tents were also erected in the square, one for each of the regions. Yet there was no 'tent city' in place and Yushchenko's supporters were expecting perhaps 40,000 protestors to turn out (the same number that had rallied in support of Yushchenko on 16 October 2004) (Wilson 2005b: 122). What took everyone by surprise was how many Kyivites turned out on the morning of Monday 22 November 2004, the day after polling, armed with leaflets printed and distributed by the 'Democratic Initiatives' foundation, announcing that Yushchenko had won – on the basis of its exit poll. By mid-morning 200,000 to 300,000 had arrived. It was at this point that the eyes of the international media turned towards Ukraine. That the protests were sustained was what forced the hand of the authorities and turned the elections into a revolution.

In 2004, what was happening in the Maidan certainly appeared to be a revolution or at the very least a quite remarkable event in the history of Ukraine, and it certainly raised the hopes and expectations of those Ukrainians who supported Yushchenko to a high level. But what did Ukrainians believe about the nature of

Table 2.1 What was the Orange Revolution (% of respondents)

	2005	2007
A coup d'état carried out with the support of the West	24	29
A coup d'état prepared by the political opposition	12	15
A spontaneous popular protest	12	18
A conscious struggle of citizens united in a struggle to protect their rights	33	27
Don't know/no answer	19	11

Source: White and McAllister (2009).

the events that followed the disputed second round of the Orange Revolution five years later?

Public Opinion Five Years On

This section draws heavily on the fascinating qualitative and quantitative study carried out in Ukraine from 2006–7 by White and McAllister, which investigated the public's attitude towards the Orange Revolution three years after it had taken place. Using both opinion polls and focus groups, they found that opinion about the nature of the change had barely shifted since 2004 and that the country remained divided along the same largely geographical lines that it had been at the time of the revolution. Table 2.1 summarizes the principal findings.

What is striking about these results is that the country remains almost equally divided on the question, with 36–44 per cent (2005, 2007) of respondents believing that the revolution was a cynical manipulation of the public and 45 per cent (2005, 2007) believing that the revolution was in earnest and represented a sort of popular uprising against tyranny. As the authors point out, these all-Ukraine results have serious limitations in a society that is as divided as Ukrainian society is. When the authors broke the results down into age, gender, education level, cultural identity (Russian or Ukrainian), family income and region, they found that two factors determine whether someone was likely to support the idea that the revolution was a 'pro-Western' coup or not: place of residence and age. Older people were far less likely to have taken part in the events of 2004 and viewed their significance with cynicism. Beyond that Ukrainians were divided along the line of centre/west vs south/east, which remains the principal determinant of how Ukrainians vote.

Conclusions

What then was the Orange 'Revolution'? Why did it happen in Ukraine and not, for example, Russia or Belarus? The latter question will hopefully be addressed by the other contributions to this volume, but as the preceding chapter has shown,

it was the combination of a number of factors that made the rather extraordinary events in Maidan square in 2004 possible. As to the question of whether it was a revolution or not, five years on, the balance would appear to suggest that the Orange Revolution was, in truth, just the non-violent transfer of power from an unpopular government to an opposition through elections. A democratic process in other words. The presidency and governments that replaced the old regime were perhaps better than the Kuchma administrations, but they did not bring a 'new dawn'. The weight of public expectations vested in the Yushchenko presidency by a large chunk of Ukrainian society in 2005 was so great that it is scant surprise that his administration proved a great disappointment. It is far less of a burden to be brought to office by the ballot box (which in truth is what happened) than at the head of a 'revolution', which is how the Orange victory in 2005 was spun at the time. As the segment of this chapter that dealt with the opposition has shown, it was too much of the old regime itself to bring true change. The Orange 'Revolution' essentially replaced one part of the Ukrainian post-Soviet elite with another.

A point that is worth underscoring is that the events of 2004, whilst they captured the attention of the world's media (at least until the horrific tsunami in the Indian Ocean on 26 December), were primarily domestic in nature. External observers may read the elections as a contest between Russia and the West for control of a territory in Europe that geostrategists regard as of profound importance. In this version, the Euro-Atlantic allies 'won' and Russia 'lost'. It is certain that Russia lost much face over the elections of 2004 and certainly there were many senior figures in the Russian administration who saw the Ukrainian presidential elections as a conflict with the West, rather like Vietnam or Afghanistan had been for the Soviet Union and the US during the cold war. Yet this contestation was largely irrelevant to explaining how the Orange 'Revolution' became possible or why it happened. It was the convergence of interests between a disparate opposition and civil society NGOs that mobilized the people of Ukraine. The characteristic that made the events in the Maidan most akin to a revolution was the presence of literally hundreds of thousands – in total millions – of demonstrators. Where the West played a role in the revolution was in supplying the evidence of wrong-doing that the Ukrainian NGOs and protestors needed: through the OSCE's monitoring mission. What forced the hand of the old regime and ushered in a not-so-new regime was the will of the Ukrainian people to cast their vote in a free and transparent election, and their desire to live in a better-governed society.

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