

This article was downloaded by: [University of Toronto Libraries]

On: 20 April 2012, At: 14:07

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Journal of Contemporary European Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjea20>

### Democratic Revolutions from a Different Angle: Social Populism and National Identity in Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution

Taras Kuzio<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Johns Hopkins University, USA

Available online: 23 Mar 2012

To cite this article: Taras Kuzio (2012): Democratic Revolutions from a Different Angle: Social Populism and National Identity in Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 20:1, 41-54

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2012.656951>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# Democratic Revolutions from a Different Angle: Social Populism and National Identity in Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution

TARAS KUZIO\*

*Johns Hopkins University, USA*

**ABSTRACT** *This article discusses the three factors that lay behind democratic revolutions by adding two new facilitators, social populism and nationalism (in addition to election fraud), to our understanding of the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Most scholarly studies of this seminal event in contemporary Ukrainian history have focused on protests against election fraud while ignoring these two important factors. Scholars who have placed the struggle for democratic rights in post-communist states in the forefront of their analysis within a 'transitology paradigm' have argued that a 'fourth wave' of democratisation in the post-communist world took place in two stages, 1989–1991 and from 1996–2004. This article argues that placing Ukraine together with other Central-Eastern countries in the second stage ignores the different role played by social populism and nationalism in mobilizing protestors in Ukraine, two factors that played a far smaller or non-existent role in Central-Eastern Europe.*

**KEY WORDS:** democratic revolutions, Ukraine, Orange Revolution, populism, nationalism, democracy

This article contributes to the debate on the factors that lay behind democratic revolutions by adding two new facilitators: social populism and nationalism. Scholars who have placed the struggle for democratic rights in post-communist states in the forefront of their analysis within what Zherebkin (2009) defines as the 'transitology paradigm',<sup>1</sup> argue that a 'fourth wave' of democratisation in the post-communist world took place in two stages (Huntington, 1991; McFaul, 2002). The first stage of the 'fourth wave' took place in 1989–1991 in countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the three Baltic states while the second stage took place from 1996–2004. In the second stage democratic breakthroughs and revolutions occurred where the legacy of communist rule was deeper and the democratic opposition had been too weak to remove communist leaders in the late 1980s. After the collapse of communist regimes, and between the first and second stages of the 'fourth wave', former communist leaders reinvented themselves as social democrats, centrists or nationalists and managed to retain power. The second stage of the 'fourth

---

\*Correspondence Address: Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation Visiting Fellow, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, USA. Email: tkuzio1@jhu.edu

wave', where the former communists were removed from power, is purported to have begun with Romania in 1996, followed by Bulgaria (1997), Slovakia (1998), Croatia and Serbia (1999–2000), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004). Although similar in some respects, these democratic revolutions and breakthroughs had many more differences, as will be shown in this article.

This article goes beyond the standard presentation of Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution as a popular protest against democratic erosion and election fraud by placing social populism and nationalism in the forefront of our understanding of the factors that facilitated these mass protests. The article therefore agrees with Zhrebkin (2009, p. 202) that, 'the mechanisms of the formation of collective agency, the "collective will" around which the enthusiasm, expectations and hopes of the participants were concentrated, remain outside the scope of the majority of existing studies'. Social populism and national identity differentiate the two former Soviet republics of Georgia and Ukraine from the five Central-Eastern European countries which underwent democratic change in the second half of the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Social populism and especially national identity have been largely ignored in academic discussions of democratic revolutions and breakthroughs that have been overwhelmingly dominated by a focus on the 'transition paradigm'; that is, a focus on democratic breakthroughs and revolutions leading to a country's democratic progress towards a western political system. This has led to an over-focus on the 'democratic' nature of the revolutions as seen through protests against electoral fraud, human rights violations and threats to democratisation.<sup>3</sup> As Zhrebkin (2009, p. 202) writes,

the vast majority of existing studies on the 'Colour revolutions' explore them from a methodological perspective that became known as the 'transition paradigm.' This discourse about political transformation has a long tradition of modeling the 'transitions to democracy' through the game-theoretic lens as interactions between the elites.

The mistake in seeing the Orange Revolution in such a light could be seen in the election of Viktor Yanukovich in 2010, the candidate behind election fraud in the 2004 elections, and democratic regression in his first two years in office.<sup>4</sup>

Fournier argues that it is wrong to have seen the Orange Revolution as a radical break with the Soviet past as many of the cultural norms of that era have been maintained by Ukrainians and therefore the Orange Revolution, she argues, should be seen as a restoration of Soviet and western 'order'. Fournier's originality is in pointing to protestors having both political and economic reasons for participating in the Orange Revolution. The political-economic factors that mobilised Orange Revolution protestors, Fournier (2010, p. 111) argues, were, 'linked partially with economic expectations developed under Soviet rule'. These included factors such as demands for social justice, anger at economic inequality and demand for 'order' which was understood as a return to normality in the form of honest government, stability, salaries paid on time, respect for the constitution and rule of law, accountability of elites and non-interference in business affairs. Fournier (2010, p. 115) describes this integration of Soviet and democratic values as a 'double becoming of Western and Soviet modernities'. Fournier also found in her Ukrainian surveys conducted in 2004 a large degree of anger at illegal, unrestrained and unaccountable plunder by elites. 'What emerged from the double becoming of Soviet and Western European modernities was the articulation of "the state" through the idioms of morality, responsibility, and care,' Fournier (2010, p. 126) writes. Fournier discusses the

feelings of Orange Revolution protestors who demanded a European democratic contract between rulers and citizens, a halt to the theft from the people and social paternalism (that is, the Government should care for its citizens).

Electoral fraud was undoubtedly crucial in acting as the ‘trigger’ that brought millions of Ukrainians on to the streets of Kyiv and provincial Ukrainian cities in the Orange Revolution. But, threats to democratisation, human rights and electoral fraud in, of themselves, do not provide sufficient mobilisation power to bring large numbers on to the streets. During the late Soviet era the largest democratic movements were fuelled by a mixture of anti-Soviet and anti-Russian nationalism together with calls for democratic rights and hence participants in these movements were defined as ‘national democrats’. The ‘Ukraine without Kuchma’ (2000–2001), Arise Ukraine! protests (2001–2003) and the 2004 Ukrainian election campaign mobilised between 30,000 and 150,000 core opposition activists. The 2004 Orange Revolution proved to be different: it was attended by the highest number of participants of any democratic revolution (one in five Ukrainians, amounting to millions of protestors) and lasted for the longest period of time (seventeen days).

Threats to democracy and election fraud were the ‘tripwire’ that brought people on to the streets but the incubators of the protest movement were social populism and nationalism. Ukraine’s preceding decade of transition to a market economy had increased crime and social inequality producing a rapacious (Way, 2005a) oligarch class which had progressively built up anti-elite sentiments. The potential election of Prime Minister Yanukovich from Donetsk, a Russian speaking region with a neo-Soviet political culture (see later), also represented a threat to the form of Ukrainian national identity dominant in Ukrainophone Western-Central Ukraine, thereby reinforcing the mobilisation of Ukrainophone civil society in the 2004 elections.

### **Social Populism**

Former Soviet republics experienced a different and fundamentally more complicated economic and social transition to that experienced in Central-Eastern Europe and the three Baltic states. The USSR was a totalitarian state and empire and these two factors led to a ‘quadruple transition’ combining democratisation (in most cases unsuccessfully in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)) with the creation of a market economy that was accompanied by state-institution and nation-building (Kuzio, 2001). ‘Quadruple transitions’ resemble post-colonial transitions that are more fundamental in the change that is required in comparison to the dual transitions of democratisation and marketisation that took place in Latin America and Southern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s during the ‘third wave’ of democratisation. They are also deeper transitions than in most of the ‘fourth wave’ transitions in Central-Eastern Europe in the 1990s. There are some exceptions where nation-building played a role in these transitions, such as Spain and the former Yugoslavia, but these pale in comparison with the ‘quadruple transitions’ undertaken in post-Soviet states. The EU played a facilitating role for democratisation in Spain and is playing a post-conflict democratising role in the former Yugoslavia through the provision of incentives of future membership, but the EU has failed to play such a role in Ukraine and the CIS.

The creation of a market economy from a fully command-administrative economic system that had existed throughout the USSR, in contrast to a transition from ‘goulash (semi-market) communism’ to a market economy found in most of Central-Eastern Europe, was qualitatively different. Ukraine’s economy was one of the worst affected by

the disintegration of the USSR and its deep recession lasted from 1989–1999. The economic transition in Ukraine, Russia and elsewhere in the former USSR produced a small clique of super wealthy oligarchs, generated widespread public anger and anti-elite sentiments and a populist desire for ‘justice’. Ukraine’s population declined by five million in the thirteen year transition from 1991–2004 and millions of Ukrainians became migrant workers in Russia and the EU. Annual surveys produced by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences between 1994 and 2004 that asked which social group was most influential in Ukrainian society found that a majority of Ukrainians believed the most influential group to be ‘organised crime’ (Panina, 2005).<sup>5</sup> With Yanukovich the authorities’ candidate in the 2004 elections, a large number of Ukrainian voters believed that this was the final stage in ‘organised crime’s’ take-over of the country. Yanukovich had a twice criminal record and was a leading member of Ukraine’s powerful Donetsk clan.<sup>6</sup> This view was reinforced by the violent and thuggish tactics used by the authorities in the 2004 elections leading to a level of election fraud that was unprecedented in any of the seven countries in the second stage of the ‘fourth wave’ of democratisation (Kuzio, 2005a).

Widespread social anger at a decade of economic transition provided the means for Vladimir Putin, after he was elected Russian President in March 2000, to turn Russians against democracy by negatively equating the chaos and oligarchisation during Russia’s 1990s transition to a market economy with ‘democracy’. Russians largely applauded his campaign against oligarchs and supported Mikhail Khodorokovsky’s imprisonment, the exile abroad of other oligarchs and re-nationalisations of their assets (Kryshtanovskaya, 2008, p. 589). In Ukraine, the democratic opposition channelled social anger *against* the oligarchs and corrupt ruling elites from the November 2000 Kuchmagate crisis through to the 2004 Orange Revolution.<sup>7</sup>

Lane (2008, p. 526) downplays ‘people power’ and civil society in Ukraine and introduces the social question through what he defines as ‘decremental relative deprivation’. Lane (2008, p. 545) argues that the influence of ‘people power’ has been exaggerated in democratic revolutions such as Ukraine because the ‘revolutionary coup’ replaced elites rather than undertaking ‘significant social and political systematic change’. Anti-oligarch and elite sentiment that mobilised large numbers of protestors was led by counter-elites who never desired a ‘revolution’ in the sense of radical system change (Lane, 2009). Lane’s assertion that the elite-led nature of the Orange Revolution therefore led to minimal political change downplays the constitutional reforms voted through in December 2004 and introduced following the 2006 elections.<sup>8</sup>

Lane stresses the significance of the deterioration of social conditions in all of the countries that underwent democratic revolutions and found a relationship between high numbers of protestors and large numbers of people angry over social inequalities. Mykhnenko (2009, p. 290) argues that the Orange Revolution ‘was broadly a product of real economic grievances and “decremental relative deprivation” suffered by the majority of the Ukrainian electorate during the transition’. Democratic revolutions, Lane believes, were fuelled by protests against corrupt elites and modernisation using western models.<sup>9</sup>

Analysis of populism in Ukraine has focused on Yulia Tymoshenko as the embodiment of such a trait while ignoring two factors.<sup>10</sup> First, populism is common to all Ukrainian political parties, as seen in the 2004 election programmes of Yanukovich and Yushchenko. Second, populism was to be found in the 2004 Ukrainian elections within the election programme and policies of the authorities candidate (Yanukovich), whose government more than doubled pensions on the eve of the elections and promised to support a sleuth of

pro-Russian policies, as well as the opposition (Yushchenko backed by Tymoshenko), whose programme also promised a large number of socio-economic benefits.

Populists are often defined as politicians without a clear ideology, as catch-all politicians who seek to throw out a wide net during election campaigns to attract a large number of diverse voters. This has advantages in winning elections but disadvantages after coming to power, as seen in the incessant in-fighting between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko throughout his presidency, in terms of policy formulation and government coherence. The orange 2004 opposition coalition was broad and ranged from the Yushchenko centre-right to the centre-left Tymoshenko and Socialist Party, whose leader, Oleksandr Moroz, supported Yushchenko in the second round. The opposition's populist programme included routine election appeals to the people and fighting evil elites, who were described as 'bandits' in Ukraine's 2004 elections, is typical of populist leaders. Although anti-elite populism was quickly dropped by Yushchenko after he was elected, it became the standard operating strategy of Tymoshenko in subsequent elections; in the 2006 parliamentary elections she described her bloc's ideology as 'solidarism'. Populists are often defined as politicians who are demagogic in their appeals to the people whose interests are portrayed as different to corrupt elites. Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (2008, p. 3) define populism as an ideology that 'pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous "others" who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice'. Yushchenko's political force was called *Our Ukraine*, a name which was understood as seeking to take back *Our Ukraine* from non-patriotic Ukrainian and corrupt elites. The most widely heard call by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko during the 2004 election campaign was 'Bandits to jail!', understood as meaning Ukraine's elites should be criminally charged for a decade of abuse of office. Fournier found in her surveys that Orange Revolution protestors wanted to be treated as citizens, not slaves (subjects), and the authorities were repeatedly referred to as 'bandits' and *bandytska vlada* (*bandit authorities*). 'The opposition discourse relied mainly upon the denunciation of injustice and of immorality of the government and its representatives', Shukan (2010, p. 97) argues, quoting Yushchenko's first campaign speech in July 2004 that attacked oligarchs. Shukan states that the Yushchenko campaign deliberately portrayed him as a 'people's candidate' who was counter-posed against the *bandytska vlada*.

Yushchenko's depiction as a liberal who is usually contrasted to populist Tymoshenko ignores the importance of social populism in his 2004 election programme and the influence of populism in all Ukraine's political parties (Kuzio, 2010a). The Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies think tank developed Yushchenko's 'Ten Steps' 2004 election programme and fourteen draft decrees released in autumn 2004. The 'Ten Steps' and fourteen decrees became the basis for the Tymoshenko government programme approved by 373 parliamentary deputies in February 2005. The programme's preamble stated, 'The government programme is based on, and develops the basis of, the programme of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko's "Ten Steps towards the People".' The 'Ten Steps' and fourteen draft decrees are replete with what can be considered to be populist policies.<sup>11</sup> The 'Ten Steps' explain that, 'Social programmes are not a devastation of the budget, but investments in the people, in the country and the nation's future.' Yushchenko pledged in Step two that if he is elected, 'My Action Plan will ensure priority funding of social programmes. The way of finding budgetary money for this purpose is easy: not to steal, not to build luxurious palaces and not to buy expensive automobiles.' The 'Ten Steps' and fourteen

decrees include a large number of social populist promises to increase the number of jobs by five million, 'ensure priority funding for social programmes', battle corruption, 'create safe living conditions', 'take steps to ensure the return of lost savings to citizens', increase child allowance, reduce taxes and reduce the length of military conscription (see Appendix).<sup>12</sup>

Yanukovich's election populism stemmed from his electoral base which looked favourably at the 'statist national welfare regime' (Lane, 2009, p. 129) because it has a popular base of support in the more patrimonial culture (Zon, 2005) of Eastern Ukraine. Stephen Shulman's 'eastern Slavic' identity in Eastern Ukraine also found evidence of support for state protectionist welfare policies that ameliorated the market economy. The Party of Regions has attracted a large proportion of former Communist Party of Ukraine voters who seek 'statist national welfare' policies from their elected leaders. The Communist Party of Ukraine has been twice included within parliamentary coalitions headed by the Party of Regions in 2006–2007 (Anti-Crisis coalition) and since 2010 (Stability and Reforms coalition). In October 2009 the Party of Regions put forward social legislation in a populist move to win votes in the upcoming presidential elections that had the aim of de-railing the 2008 IMF Stand-by Agreement, thereby damaging Prime Minister Tymoshenko, while higher social payments amounted to populist electioneering by the Party of Regions ahead of the 2010 elections.<sup>13</sup>

Anti-elite populism mobilised Yushchenko's supporters against the Kuchma regime, elites, oligarchs and the authorities' candidate, Prime Minister Yanukovich, who had close ties to Ukraine's most powerful Donetsk oligarchic clan. Yanukovich had been governor of Donetsk from 1997 to 2002 when the regional oligarchs consolidated power and established their political machine, the Party of Regions. Nikolai Azarov first led the party in 2001–2003, from 2003–2010 it was led by Yanukovich and since 2010 it has been led by Prime Minister Azarov.

### **Nationalism and National Identity**

Nationalism and national identity are virtually absent in scholarly discussions of democratic revolutions and breakthroughs as these studies have continued a commonplace practice of focusing on institutional, democratic and economic factors. Most discussions within what became known as the field of 'transitology', with some notable exceptions, had not raised the question of nationality as an additional issue that complicated post-communist (especially post-Soviet) transitions. Nationalism did not play a uniform role in post-communist transitions; in some case, such as the Balkans, it played a negative role, while in others, such as Poland and the three Baltic states, it played a positive role in support of reforms and a foreign policy agenda of 'returning to Europe'.<sup>14</sup>

The national question was important in sustaining democratic movements in the late 1980s.<sup>15</sup> In the late 1980s, as Beissinger (2002) and other scholars have long noted, anti-Soviet mobilisation proved to be strongest in the USSR and Central-Eastern Europe *only* when nationalism and democratisation fused together, such as in Poland, the three Baltic states, Western-Central Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Democratic mobilisation proved to be weak in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (SFSR) outside of the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, in Russophone Eastern Ukraine and Belarus and in Sovietised Central Asia. In Russia, Belarus, Eastern Ukraine and Central Asia, democratisation processes have either never sunk deep roots or have quickly regressed to authoritarianism; more importantly, these countries and regions have been bastions of counter-(democratic) revolution.

The weakness of the national-democratic movement in the Russian SFSR was seen in it being unable to establish an all-republican Popular Front. Russian democrats did not focus on the nationality question, unlike their counterparts in the non-Russian republics, as they had not led dissident campaigns in defence of national rights because Russian culture and language was never threatened by Soviet nationality policies. Russian dissidents were never therefore national democrats. In the USSR the non-Russian capital cities and elites held dual loyalties to institutions in the Soviet centre (Moscow) and their Soviet republics. Russians, in contrast, held loyalties to only one set of institutions—Soviet—as the Russian SFSR was alone of the fifteen Soviet republics in not possessing republican institutions (these were only established in 1990 after Borys Yeltsin was elected Russian President, but this was only a year before the USSR disintegrated). Soviet and Russian identities were therefore merged by the USSR. This policy led to Russian dissidents never, with a few exceptions to call for the independence of their republic from the USSR and Russia becoming the only Soviet republic to not declare independence from the USSR following the failed hard-line August 1991 *coup d'état*.<sup>16</sup> Nationalism in Russia was strong but it was also Soviet and has therefore never been of the national democratic type found in the non-Russian republics of the USSR. Russian nationalists did not seek their countries' independence as they were not nationalists but imperialists who sought to maintain the Soviet empire, not liberate Russia from it. They consequently supported the hard-line August 1991 coup plotters who opposed the break-up of the USSR. National democrats in the non-Russian republics opposed the coup d'état and backed the independence of their republics after the coup failed.

Western studies of democratic revolutions have ignored nationalism and national identity as a factor that facilitated mobilisation of the opposition movements.<sup>17</sup> McFaul's (2005) seven factors that he believes facilitated the 2000 Serbian Bulldozer, 2003 Georgian Rose, 2004 Ukrainian Orange and 2005 Kyrgyz Tulip revolutions do not incorporate nationalism. Way's (2008) 'The real causes of the Color revolutions' does not introduce nationalism as an additional factor, despite the article's over-confident title. Four responses to Way debate his criticism of frameworks to discuss democratic revolutions but they also continue to ignore the role of nationalism.<sup>18</sup> In his response to his critics, Way (2009) does not discuss nationalism as supportive of, or opposed to, democratic revolutions but he does credit mobilisation in the Orange Revolution as having, 'tapped into widely shared anti-Russian nationalist sentiments dominant in the west of the country'.<sup>19</sup>

Ukraine's 2004 presidential elections were not only a contest about the future direction of Ukraine but also a contest over national identity (Shulman, 2005) in a regionally divided country. The 'pro-western' candidate, Yushchenko, won electoral majorities in the West and Centre (as Our Ukraine had in 2002) while Yanukovych, the 'pro-Russian' candidate supported by the authorities, won pluralities in the East and South, an electoral map that was not repeated in any of the other six countries in the first or second stages of the 'fourth wave' of democratisation. The majority of the participants in the Orange Revolution came from Western and Central Ukraine, itself showing the degree to which Ukrainianophone national identity and civil society came together to mobilise protestors.<sup>20</sup> Civic nationalism therefore played a positive role in Ukraine's Orange Revolution in defence of free elections and in support of democratic change, repeating what had taken place two decades earlier in Ukraine when, as Beissinger pointed out, Ukrainian nationalism gradually moved from Western to Central Ukraine and came to, 'dominate the agenda of public protest' (Beissinger, 2002, p. 193).



Anti-elite populism in the opposition heartland of Western-Central Ukraine integrated anti-oligarch sentiment with the national identity question in three areas. The first of these was the regional concentration of oligarchs in Russophone Eastern Ukraine based in the country's largest urban centres and industrial sectors. Regional divisions were decisive within the Ukrainian titular nationality over how the democratic revolution was viewed. Russophone Ukrainians and national minorities supported the anti-Orange candidate, Yanukovich, which was different to the experience of Central-Eastern Europe. National minorities in Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia and Serbia supported the democratic oppositions *against* the nationalist and post-communist regimes. The Abkhaz and South Ossetians did not participate in Georgia's elections since the early 1990s as they remained beyond the central government's control in frozen conflicts. Since the 2008 Georgian-Russian war, South Ossetia and Abkhazia have become quasi-independent states under Russian military protection.

The second factor is that the oligarchs are Russian-speakers and support political forces that represent Ukraine's Russophone voters, such as the Party of Regions. Many of the oligarchs are also from Ukraine's national minorities, such as Jews, a situation resembling that of Russia, while the wealthiest, Rinat Akhmetov, is Tatar. Only one oligarch comes from more rural Western Ukraine, Dmytro Firtash, but he is also Russophone and his links to the opaque gas trade have always given him a pro-Russian image. Ukraine's oligarchs finance Russian-language newspapers,<sup>21</sup> and hold 'pro-Russian' views on national identity, such as the need for Russian to become a second state language.<sup>22</sup> Firtash is the only Ukrainian oligarch who has donated to Ukrainian studies in Cambridge University and Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv (Oleshko, 2010).

For political parties with support bases in Western Ukraine, such as Our Ukraine it was therefore not difficult to unite opposition to the authorities with opposition to political and economic elites that were popularly perceived as unpatriotic and corrupt. This was accentuated, even in Kyiv, a Russian speaking city that traditionally has voted for national democratic parties, by visits to Kyiv on the eves of the first and second rounds of the 2004 elections by Russian President Putin to give his public endorsement to Yanukovich's candidacy. Besides visiting Ukraine during the 2004 elections, Putin congratulated Yanukovich on his election victory a day before the results were released by the Central Election Commission. To many Kyivites and patriotic Ukrainians, this smacked of the USSR when a Soviet leader would travel to Kyiv to give instructions to his regional satraps.

Shulman (2005), writing before the Orange Revolution, introduced a useful framework that contrasted two competing identities in Ukraine: 'ethnic Ukraine' (that roughly conformed to the Yushchenko opposition) and 'eastern Slavic' (that corresponded to Yanukovich and especially regional identities in Donetsk and Crimea, the two Party of Regions strongholds). Ukrainian surveys have shown that Donetsk (37.1 per cent) and the Crimea (32.2 per cent), Party of Regions strongholds, hold the greatest attachment to Soviet political culture. Another 22.5 per cent and 30 per cent in these two regions associate themselves with Russian culture giving an overarching non-Ukrainian cultural identity to Yanukovich and the Party of Regions.<sup>23</sup> Attachment to Ukrainian language and culture is weak in these two Russophone strongholds of the Party of Regions.

A third factor was that oligarchs and their political forces, as seen in Ukraine's re-orientation towards Russia on the eve of the 2004 elections, are perceived to hold 'pro-Russian' views on foreign policy. These political forces oppose foreign policies,

such as NATO membership, that are popular among political parties with support bases in Western Ukraine (NATO membership is seen as 'anti-Russian' in Eastern Ukraine and in Moscow). In the 2004 elections the pro-Russian foreign policy orientations of the Yanukovich election campaign could be contrasted with the opposition's view of Russia as Ukraine's 'Other'. Yushchenko was viewed as a candidate who would 'return Ukraine to Europe', which was especially prevalent among the younger generation who played an important role in the Orange Revolution, as in all democratic revolutions (Kuzio, 2006b).

### Post-Orange, Post-Mortem or Why Yushchenko Failed

Yushchenko's record in office is poor, a conclusion which was reflected in the 2010 elections where Ukrainian voters gave him only 5 per cent support and a fifth place finish. President Leonid Kravchuk, who also only served one term, went through to the second round in the 1994 elections where he was defeated with 44 per cent of the vote by Kuchma. Yushchenko's poor record in implementing populist promises in his 2004 election programme, particularly the demand for 'justice', was one of the main factors that had the greatest negative effect on his popularity. Yushchenko undermined the 2005 and 2007–2010 Tymoshenko governments at every opportunity (Aslund, 2009, pp. 222–223) even though half of the cabinet members were from *his* Our Ukraine political force and although the two Tymoshenko governments sought to implement many of the populist policies found in Yushchenko's 2004 election programme. The second of Yushchenko's fourteen draft decrees promising to repay lost Soviet bank deposits was included in the Tymoshenko Bloc's 2007 election programme. The Tymoshenko government sought to implement the policy in 2008 but, obviously having forgotten his own election programme, it was blocked by the president who denounced it as 'populist'.

'Bandits', understood by opposition supporters in 2004 to be senior members of the *ancien regime*, such as Kuchma and the oligarchs, were never criminally charged and imprisoned during Yushchenko's presidency. Those allegedly involved in abuse of office under Kuchma were not exiled, as in Russia, but managed to flee abroad, especially to Russia where they were given sanctuary as a pro-Russian 'opposition government' in waiting. Donetsk businessman and senior Party of Regions leader Borys Kolesnykov was briefly imprisoned in 2005 on extortion charges but quickly released. Three years later his accuser, Borys Penchuk, who unveiled a large volume of documentation on crimes committed in Donetsk during the 1990s, was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment.<sup>24</sup> Only one re-nationalisation of an oligarch controlled plant took place, that of the Kryvorizhstal plant,<sup>25</sup> despite calls in the 2004 election for a review of corrupt privatisations that had taken place during Ukraine's transition in the 1990s to a market economy. Ukraine's elites continued to remain above the law and politicians unaccountable, two factors leading to very low public trust in state institutions and a demoralised and disillusioned civil society. Disillusionment with politicians has been advantageous to Yanukovich by reducing opposition to his roll back of democracy. While Ukrainians are angry at many of the policies under Yanukovich this anger has no leaders to channel it into a powerful opposition movement, unlike in 2001–2004, because of low trust in opposition leaders who were discredited during the Yushchenko presidency.

## Conclusion

A combination of populist, nationalist and democratic factors mobilised the largest and longest of the democratic revolutions in the ‘fourth wave’ of post-communist democratisation.<sup>26</sup> This article has integrated two factors (social populism and national identity) into discussions of democratic breakthroughs and revolutions in the second stage of the ‘fourth wave’ of democratisation between 1996 and 2005. Yushchenko’s 2004 election programme combined national, social and democratic objectives and in seeking these three goals it was no different to that of left-wing and right-wing Ukrainian nationalist movements in 1917–1920 and in the 1940s. Social populism and national identity were the main forces that facilitated mobilisation in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution with defence of democratic rights acting as the ‘trigger’ that brought large numbers of Ukrainians on to the streets.

The Orange Revolution was triggered by the worst election fraud in the ‘fourth wave’ of post-communist democratisation; no other post-communist state experienced such levels of fraud even remotely similar to that which took place in Ukraine. No assassination attempt was made against any opposition leader in the ‘fourth wave’ of democratisation, except that of Yushchenko in September 2004. But, populist and national identity issues provided a strong base of energy and anger which increased the numbers of Ukrainians protesting about the threat to democratic rights from election fraud. Social issues had emerged over the course of Ukraine’s fourteen year transition to a market economy that had led to widespread anti-elite and anti-oligarch sentiments.

The national question became an important factor because the opposition’s core base of support lay in Ukrainophone Western-Central Ukraine, as seen by the 2002 election results,<sup>27</sup> and because the opposition was dominated by centre-right, national-democratic parties who had led the drive to Ukraine’s independence in the late Soviet era (Kuzio, 2002a). The revival of neo-Soviet political culture in the late Kuchma era, and especially by Yanukovich’s 2004 election campaign,<sup>28</sup> was buttressed by Russia’s overt and covert intervention (Kuzio, 2005b). These factors were perceived as a threat to not only Ukraine’s democratisation but also to the country’s national identity and independence.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Lane (2009) is critical of the ‘simplistic version of events promoting democratic change in terms of electoral revolutions’ (p. 131).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Not only was this the most significant and complex of the coloured revolutions, it has also been the most contested’ (cited from White & McAllister, 2009, p. 228).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Ihor Zhdanov, Kyiv, 15 May 2009. Zhdanov was one of the Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies authors of Yushchenko’s 2004 programme.

<sup>4</sup> In February 2011, Freedom House downgraded Ukraine to ‘Partly Free’, six months after the Yanukovich administration pressured the Constitutional Court to annul the constitutional reforms that reverted Ukraine to the 1996 semi-presidential system. See Freedom House (2010).

<sup>5</sup> Social conditions and public views of the Kuchma regime are explored in Kuzio (2006a).

<sup>6</sup> On the Donetsk clan see Zimmer (2005).

<sup>7</sup> Ihor Koliushko, head of the Centre for Political and Legal Reforms, a Kyiv think tank, believed that the slogan was always ‘social populist’. Interview, Kyiv, 21 May 2009.

<sup>8</sup> For an alternative view that argues in favour of the importance of Ukraine’s transition from presidential to parliamentary system see Hale (2005).

<sup>9</sup> Mykhnenko (2009) describes Ukraine’s choice in 2004 as one between liberal and oligarchic capitalism. For an alternative view of Yushchenko as a liberal reformer in 2004 see Aslund (2009).

- <sup>10</sup> One of the very few studies of populism in Ukraine is by Kuzio (2010a).
- <sup>11</sup> Yushchenko's populist programmatic documents were prepared for his election campaign by Anatoliy Grytsenko, President of the Razumkov Centre ([www.uceps.com.ua](http://www.uceps.com.ua)), who became head of the campaign's analytical-research department, and Razumkov researchers Zhdanov and Yuriy Yakymenko. Grytsenko was Defence Minister from 2005 to 2007 and from 2008 to 2012 the head of parliament's committee on national security and defence. He is leader of the Civic Position political party. See [www.grytsenko.com.ua](http://www.grytsenko.com.ua).
- <sup>12</sup> The 'Ten Steps' and fourteen decrees are reproduced in Yanevskyi (2005, pp. 40–87).
- <sup>13</sup> The legislation de-railed *the release by the IMF of the fourth tranche of the October 2008 Stand-by Agreement* because increased budgetary costs from higher social and pension costs would have de-railed the 2010 budget deficit ceiling that had been agreed with the IMF.
- <sup>14</sup> A survey of scholarly views on the link between nationalism and democracy in post-communist transitions can be found in 'The national factor in Ukraine's quadruple transition' (pp. 96–125) and 'National identity and democratic transition in post-Soviet Ukraine and Belarus: a theoretical and comparative perspective' (pp. 126–150), both in Kuzio (2007).
- <sup>15</sup> The nationality question was ignored by a majority of western scholars in the field of Sovietology (as this author recalls in debates with professors in the mid-1980s at the University of London where he studied for an MA in Area Studies [USSR/East Europe]). See Subtelny (1994).
- <sup>16</sup> Russia celebrates its 'independence day' on 12 June when the Russian SFSR declared republican sovereignty in 1990. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) also declared sovereignty in 1990 (on 16 July) but went on to declare independence on 24 August 1991, which is annually celebrated as Ukraine's independence day. In August–September 1991 the Russian SFSR did not follow fourteen other Soviet republics in declaring independence from the USSR.
- <sup>17</sup> Nationalism and national identity are ignored in discussions of post-communist transitions and democratic revolutions by Bunce and Wolchik (2006a, 2006b, 2006c), Karatnycky (2005) and Tucker (2007). Most of the articles ignore nationalism in the special issue entitled 'Rethinking the "Coloured revolutions"', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2–3) with the exception of Cheterian (2009). Fairbanks (2004, 2007) does not introduce nationalism in his discussions of Georgia, except to criticise nationalism as the antithesis to democratisation. On Ukraine, social populism and national identity are ignored in Copey (2005) and Hesli (2006). On Serbia, see Birch (2002).
- <sup>18</sup> See the ensuing debate to Way in Beissinger (2009), Bunce & Wolchik (2009), Fairbanks (2009) and Silitski (2009).
- <sup>19</sup> This viewpoint is earlier developed by Way (2005b).
- <sup>20</sup> On regionalism in Ukraine see Birch (2000), Kubicek (2000) and Barrington & Herron (2004). On Georgia see Broers (2008) and George (2008).
- <sup>21</sup> The mass circulation Russian-language dailies *Segodnya* ([www.segodnya.ua](http://www.segodnya.ua)) and *Fakty* (<http://www.facts.kiev.ua>) are financed by Russophone, Ukrainian oligarchs Rinat Akhmetov and Viktor Pinchuk respectfully.
- <sup>22</sup> Yanukovich's 2004 and 2010 election programmes and the Party of Regions 2006 and 2007 election programmes included support for making Russian a state language. All four programmes can be found at [www.cvk.gov.ua](http://www.cvk.gov.ua).
- <sup>23</sup> Razumkov Centre monthly magazine *Natsionalna Bezpeka i Oborona*, 9, 2009. Available at [www.uceps.com.ua](http://www.uceps.com.ua).
- <sup>24</sup> Borys Penchuk is one of the editors of Borys Penchuk *et al.* (2007) *Donetska Mafiya*.
- <sup>25</sup> Kryvorizhstal, Ukraine's largest integrated steel producing plant, was privatised in July 2004 by oligarchs Akhmetov and Pinchuk for \$800 million. In October 2005, it was nationalised and re-privatised for \$4.8 billion.
- <sup>26</sup> This issue is developed further in Kuzio (2006c, 2010b).
- <sup>27</sup> Yushchenko's Our Ukraine bloc came first in every Western-Central Ukrainian region in the proportional half of the 2002 parliamentary elections and Yushchenko came first in Western-Central Ukraine in the 2004 presidential elections. In the 2006 and 2007 parliamentary elections the Yulia Tymoshenko bloc came first in this same region of Ukraine as did Tymoshenko in the 2010 presidential elections.
- <sup>28</sup> On the return to Soviet era policies against the opposition and revival of Soviet era political culture in general ahead of the 2004 elections and Orange Revolution see Kuzio (2002b, 2003).

## References

- Albertazzi, D. & McDonnell, D. (2008) *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Aslund, A. (2009) *How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy* (Washington, DC: Petersen Institute of International Economics).
- Barrington, L. W. & Herron, E. (2004) One Ukraine or many? Regionalism in Ukraine and its political consequences, *Nationalities Papers*, 32(1), pp. 53–86.
- Beissinger, M. R. (2002) *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Beissinger, M. R. (2009) An interrelated wave, *Journal of Democracy*, 20(1), pp. 74–77.
- Birch, S. (2000) Interpreting the regional effect in Ukrainian politics, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52(6), pp. 1017–1041.
- Birch, S. (2002) The 2000 elections in Yugoslavia: the ‘Bulldozer Revolution’, *Electoral Studies*, 21(3), pp. 499–511.
- Broers, L. (2008) Filling the void: ethnic politics and nationalities policies in post-conflict Georgia, *Nationalities Papers*, 36(2), pp. 275–304.
- Bunce, V. J. & Wolchik, S. L. (2006a) Favorable conditions and electoral revolutions, *Journal of Democracy*, 17(4), pp. 5–18.
- Bunce, V. J. & Wolchik, S. L. (2006b) Youth and electoral revolutions in Slovakia, Serbia and Georgia, *SAIS Review*, 26(2), pp. 55–65.
- Bunce, V. J. & Wolchik, S. L. (2006c) International diffusion and postcommunist electoral revolutions, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39(3), pp. 283–304.
- Bunce, V. & Wolchik, S. (2009) Getting real about ‘real causes’, *Journal of Democracy*, 20(1), pp. 69–73.
- Cheterian, V. (2009) From reform and transition to ‘Coloured Revolutions’, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2–3), pp. 136–160.
- Copsey, N. (2005) Popular politics and the Ukrainian presidential election of 2004, *Politics*, 25(2), pp. 99–106.
- Fairbanks, C. H. (2004) Georgia’s Rose Revolution, *Journal of Democracy*, 15(2), pp. 110–124.
- Fairbanks, C. H. (2007) Revolution reconsidered, *Journal of Democracy*, 18(1), pp. 42–57.
- Fairbanks, C. H. (2009) Necessary distinctions, *Journal of Democracy*, 20(1), pp. 82–85.
- Fournier, A. (2010) Ukraine’s Orange Revolution: beyond Soviet political culture, in: P. D’Anieri (Ed.) *Orange Revolution and Aftermath: Mobilization Apathy and the State*, pp. 110–128 (Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press).
- Freedom House (2010) *Sounding the Alarm: Protecting Democracy in Ukraine* (Washington, DC: Freedom House). Available online at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=137> (accessed 12 December 2011).
- George, J. A. (2008) Minority political inclusion in Mikheil Saakashvili’s Georgia, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62(7), pp. 1151–1175.
- Hale, H. (2005) Democracy and revolution in the post-communist world: from chasing events to building theory, *World Politics*, 58(5), pp. 133–165.
- Hesli, V. L. (2006) The Orange Revolution: 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine, *Electoral Studies*, 25(1), pp. 147–191.
- Huntington, S. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press).
- Karatnycky, A. (2005) Ukraine’s Orange Revolution, *Foreign Affairs*, 84(2), pp. 35–52.
- Kryshtanovskaya, O. (2008) The Russian elite in transition, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 24(4), pp. 585–603.
- Kubicek, P. (2000) Regional polarisation in Ukraine: public opinion, voting and legislative behaviour, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52(2), pp. 273–294.
- Kuzio, T. (2001) Transition in post-communist states: triple or quadruple? *Politics*, 21(3), pp. 169–178.
- Kuzio, T. (2002a) Our Ukraine as transformation of Rukh, *RFERL Poland, Belarus and Ukraine Report*, 4(12), 26 March. Available online at: [www.rferrl.org](http://www.rferrl.org) (accessed 12 December 2011).
- Kuzio, T. (2002b) Ukraine returns to Soviet-era tactics to subdue opposition, *RFERL Uncivil Societies*, 18 September. Available online at: [www.rferrl.org](http://www.rferrl.org)
- Kuzio, T. (2003) Back to the USSR? Ukraine holds Soviet-style ‘discussion’ of political reform, *RFERL Newline*, 28 April. Available online at: [www.rferrl.org](http://www.rferrl.org) (accessed 12 December 2011).
- Kuzio, T. (2005a) Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine’s 2004 elections and ‘Orange Revolution’, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52(2), pp. 29–44.

- Kuzio, T. (2005b) Russian policy to Ukraine during elections, *Demokratyzatsiya*, 13(4), pp. 491–517.
- Kuzio, T. (2006a) Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution, in: A. Aslund & M. McFaul (Eds) *Revolution in Orange*, pp. 45–68 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment).
- Kuzio, T. (2006b) Civil society, youth and societal mobilization in democratic revolutions, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39(3), pp. 365–386.
- Kuzio, T. (2006c) Post-Soviet Ukraine: the victory of civic nationalism, in: L. Barrington (Ed.) *Nationalism after Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*, pp. 187–224 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press).
- Kuzio, T. (2007) *Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives on Nationalism: New Directions in Cross-Cultural and Post-Communist Studies. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society Series 71* (Hannover: Ibidem-Verlag).
- Kuzio, T. (2010a) Populism in Ukraine in comparative European context, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 57(6), pp. 3–18.
- Kuzio, T. (2010b) Nationalism, identity and civil society in Ukraine: understanding the Orange Revolution, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 43(3), pp. 285–296.
- Lane, D. (2008) The Orange Revolution: ‘People’s Revolution’ or revolutionary coup?, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 10(4), pp. 525–549.
- Lane, D. (2009) ‘Coloured revolution’ as a political phenomenon, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2–3), pp. 113–135.
- McFaul, M. (2002) The fourth wave of democracy and dictatorship: noncooperative transitions in the postcommunist world, *World Politics*, 54(1), pp. 212–244.
- McFaul, M. (2005) Transitions from postcommunism, *Journal of Democracy*, 16(3), pp. 5–19.
- Mykhnenko, V. (2009) Class voting and the Orange Revolution: a cultural political economy perspective on Ukraine’s electoral geography, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2–3), pp. 278–296.
- Oleshko, O. (2010, September 24) Firtash donates \$6.7 million to Cambridge Ukrainian studies, *Kyiv Post*.
- Panina, N. V. (Ed.) (2005) *Ukrayinske Suspilstvo: Sotsioloichnyi Monitoring, 1994–2005* (Kyiv: National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology and Democratic Initiatives).
- Penchuk, B., Pantiuk, S., Zolotariov, Y., Yusov, A. and Zahaynyy, V. (Eds.) (2007) *Donetska Mafiya* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Serhii Pantiuk i Fund Antykoruptsiya and Pora).
- Shukan, I. (2010) Orchestrating a popular protest movement to conduct a revolution, in: P. D’Anieri (Ed.) *Orange Revolution and Aftermath: Mobilization Apathy and the State*, pp. 76–109 (Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press).
- Shulman, S. (2005) National identity and public support for political and economic reform in Ukraine, *Slavic Review*, 64(1), pp. 59–87.
- Silitki, V. (2009) What are we trying to explain? *Journal of Democracy*, 20(1), pp. 86–89.
- Subtelny, O. (1994) American Sovietology’s great blunder: the marginalization of the nationality issue, *Nationalities Papers*, 22(1), pp. 141–155.
- Tucker, J. A. (2007) Enough! Electoral fraud, collective action problems, and post-communist colored revolutions, *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(3), pp. 535–550.
- Way, L. A. (2005a) Rapacious individualism and competitive authoritarianism in Ukraine, 1992–2004, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 38(2), pp. 191–206.
- Way, L. A. (2005b) Authoritarian state-building and the sources of political liberalization in the western Former Soviet Union, 1992–2004, *World Politics*, 57(2), pp. 231–261.
- Way, L. A. (2008) The real causes of the Color revolutions, *Journal of Democracy*, 19(3), pp. 55–69.
- Way, L. A. (2009) A reply to my critics, *Journal of Democracy*, 20(1), pp. 90–97.
- White, S. & McAllister, I. (2009) Rethinking the ‘Orange Revolution’, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2–3), pp. 227–254.
- Yanevskiy, O. D. (2005) *Viktor Yushchenko. 100 dnyv prezidentstva: priama mova* (Kharkiv: Folio).
- Zherebkin, M. (2009) In search of a theoretical approach to the analysis of the ‘Colour revolutions’: transition studies and discourse theory, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 42(2), pp. 199–216.
- Zimmer, K. (2005) The comparative failure of machine politics, administrative resources and fraud, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 47(3–4), pp. 361–384.
- Zon, H. V. (2005) Political culture and neo-patrimonialism under Leonid Kuchma, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52(5), pp. 12–22.

## **Appendix: Viktor Yushchenko's 2004 Election Programme**

### *Ten Steps towards the People*

1. Create five million jobs.
2. Ensure priority funding for social programmes.
3. Increase the budget by decreasing taxation.
4. Force the Government to work for the people and battle corruption.
5. Create safe living conditions.
6. Protect family values, respect for parents and children's rights.
7. Promote spirituality and strengthen moral values.
8. Promote the development of the countryside.
9. Improve military capabilities and respect for the military.
10. Conduct foreign policy that benefits the Ukrainian people.

### *Fourteen Draft Decrees*

1. Promote social defence of citizens.
2. Take steps to ensure the return of lost savings to citizens.
3. Increase support for child allowance.
4. Establish the criteria for analysing the activities of heads of local state administrations.
5. Reduce the terms of military service.
6. Create a system of people's control of the activities of state authorities.
7. Struggle against corruption of high ranking state officials and civil servants in local governments.
8. Reduce the number of inspections of businesses and ease their registration process.
9. Withdraw peacekeeping troops from the Republic of Iraq.
10. Defend citizens' rights to use the Russian language and other minority languages in Ukraine.
11. Ensure the basis for good relations with Russia and Belarus.
12. Ensure the rights of the Opposition in Ukraine.
13. Adopt first steps to ensure individual security of citizens and to halt crime.
14. Strengthen local government.

Source: Yanevskyi (2005, pp. 40–87).