2 Why and How It Happened

Orange Ukraine Chooses the West, but Without the East

Dominique Arel, University of Ottawa

The Orange Revolution was the single most momentous political event in Eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall,[1] but it rests on a paradox. The Revolution was about the creation of a political nation, about changing the nature of the political regime in Ukraine, and redirecting the flow of political development towards an 'open society,' which, in the current political vocabulary, is synonymous with one word: Europe. And yet, the Orange Revolution owes its existence to a strong national movement in Ukraine – *national* as in nationalism.

The 'minority faith,' to use the title of a well-known book by Andrew Wilson, has not, in fact, led 'nowhere,' to use the title of a rather infamous article by a former American diplomat.[2] The national faith actually became an electoral majority, albeit in unexpected ways, and its success in achieving the hardest of feats, organized and sustained collective action, cracked the old regime down the middle. We have come a long way since Hans Kohn, for whom nationalism in the East was all emotion and irrationality, and a threat to

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1 The chapter is based on the Third Annual Stasiuk-Cambridge Lecture on Contemporary Ukraine delivered at Cambridge University on February 25, 2005. The author wishes to thank David R. Marples, Hubertus F. Jahn and Alex Orlov for their kind invitation, as well as Natalka Patsiurko and Sarah Malik for their assistance.

2 Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism: A Minority Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jack F. Matlock, 'The Nowhere Nation.' *The New York Review of Books* 47:3 (24 February 2000): 41-45.

open society.[3] The Orange Revolution took place in what for Kohn was the deep East, as his East began at the French-German border. And yet, if Ukraine is now on the road to an open society, it is largely thanks to the strength of its nationalism.

The complicating factor is that Ukrainian society is suffering a severe crisis of legitimacy. The non-Orange part of the electorate – 44 percent, in the final round of elections on December 26 – refused to accept that the popular uprising in Kyiv's Central Square (the Maidan) was legitimate. The Orange electorate – just a touch over the majority threshold, at 52% – refused to accept non-Orange grievances as legitimate. This could be dismissed as the normal dynamics of a winner/loser electoral outcome, except for the fact that the Orange and non-Orange constituencies are strikingly geographically polarized.

Ukraine had been geographically polarized once before, during the last round of presidential election that brought Leonid Kuchma to power in 1994.[4] The fact of the matter is, Ukraine is far more polarized now than it was in 1994. At the same time – and this is no contradiction, as I will explain later – the huge level of rejection of Viktor Yushchenko in Eastern Ukraine is virtually identical to that of Leonid Kravchuk in 1994, at a time when there was no Orange Revolution. I would venture that there is something deeper at work, namely, the fear of exclusion. In this respect, the fact that the first Orange Cabinet of Ministers, appointed in January 2005, virtually excluded Eastern Ukraine, a first since the creation of Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s, is quite significant.

The Orange Revolution began on November 22, 2004, when it became clear that the old regime had stolen the election. Falsifying an electoral outcome in a competitive context is an art, but there was nothing artful in how Donetsk, the power base of then Prime Minister Yanukovych, falsified the results. Donetsk reported an overwhelming majority for Yanukovych (96 percent), which was not entirely implausible, as similar near-unanimous support for Yushchenko could be found in the Galician provinces of Western

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3 Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origin and Background* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944).

4 Dominique Arel and Valeri Khmelko, 'The Russian Factor and Territorial Polarization in Ukraine.' *The Harriman Review* 9:1-2 (Spring 1996): 81-91.

Ukraine. Where Donetsk overreached was in reporting an enormous turnout of 97 percent, 10 percent higher than any other oblast outside of the Donbas, 16 percent higher than the national average, and 19 percent higher than the turnout obtained in the same Donetsk oblast just three weeks earlier.

What a statistician would cautiously call implausible, the Maidan and, in quick succession, Western governments called impossible. At least three-quarters of a million votes had been fabricated in Donbas (Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk) and that alone called into question the small official lead (2.9 percent) enjoyed by Yanukovych in the national results.[5] Sure enough, there were also allegations of thousands of violations throughout eastern and southern Ukraine. In a large country, the impact of these violations in local precincts on the aggregate national result is difficult to assess. Evidence soon surfaced based on taped phone conversations that the Presidential Administration had intercepted results sent by territorial electoral commissions and altered them before they were eventually received by the Central Electoral Commission.[6] Establishing the authenticity of taped conversations, however, takes time.

What jolted Western governments and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) such that they refused to recognize the result of the second round,[7] and most likely served as the initial impetus for people to fill the Maidan, was the obvious and gross violation in Donetsk. One Russian in Donetsk, who was observing the election in Yanukovych country for a European organization, was shocked less by the violations themselves, than by the fact that they were committed so openly and brazenly.[8] This

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5 On voting fraud in the 2004 presidential election, see Mikhail Myagkov, Peter C. Ordeshook and Dimitry Shakin, ‘Fraud or Fairytales: Russia and Ukraine’s Electoral Experience.’ *Post-Soviet Affairs* 21:2 (April-June 2005): 91-131.

6 Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine’s Orange Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005): 1-6.

7 The OSCE’s International Election Observation Mission in its ‘Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions,’ issued on November 22, 2004, announced that the second round ‘did not meet a considerable number of OSCE commitments and Council of Europe standards for democratic elections,’ adding that ‘Overall, State executive authorities and the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) displayed a lack of will to conduct a genuine democratic election process’. The report is available at http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/11/3811_en.pdf.

8 Aleksandr Kynev, ‘Vybory po poniatiiam.’ *Agentstvo politicheskikh novostei*, 25 November 2004, translated as ‘Elections According to “The Rules”.’ *The Ukraine*

arrogance – let's call it the hubris of incompetence – ultimately doomed the regime.

This occurrence, however, required sustained social pressure. It is precisely on this point that absolutely everyone, beginning with Yushchenko, was in the dark. This is why, although they do contain a grain of truth, stories about the Orange Revolution being the result of Western intervention ultimately miss the point by a wide margin.[9] The backbone of Orange, the PORA student movement, was indeed impressively organized, and no doubt greatly benefited from the training it received from Serbian and Georgian colleagues, as well as from American foundations. Sustaining a Tent City in downtown Kyiv costs money, and a fair amount of it, but it is far more likely that these resources came from a group of wealthy Yushchenko allies, who, incidentally, later formed the core of Tymoshenko's Cabinet, than from the ubiquitous Uncle Sam. There was a lot of money circulating in Ukraine, and not all in the camp of the Yanukovych-aligned oligarchs.[10]

Yet what everybody expected was for a relatively small following to disrupt business as usual in the center, much like the small demonstrations of 'Ukraine Without Kuchma' four years earlier, during the Gongadze crisis, with pressure placed on Western powers not to recognize the election.[11] What happened instead was a mass outpouring into the streets and swelling instead of diminishing numbers. One can dispute how many exactly there were in the streets, but one had only to look at the Maidan to think Berlin, Prague and Bucharest 1989. Or Belgrade 2000, and Tbilisi 2003. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.

In the perspective of rational choice analysts, the 'tipping point' had been reached, the point after which the benefits of engaging in collective action surpass the costs. That, no one could foresee. It was not supposed to

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List 285 (26 November 2004). [Note by the editors: UKL is an email newsletter compiled by Dominique Arel.]

9 For a detailed analysis, see Graeme P. Herd, 'Colorful Revolutions and the CIS: 'Manufactured' Versus "Managed" Democracy?' *Problems of Post-Communism* 52:2 (March/April 2005): 3-18.

10 Lucan Way, 'Ukraine's Orange Revolution. Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism.' *Journal of Democracy* 16:2 (April 2005): 131-45.

11 The best account of the Ukraine Without Kuchma movement can be found in Myroslava Gongadze and Serhii Kudelia, *Rozirvanyi nerv* (Kyiv: Fundatsiia 'Vidkryte suspil'stvo', 2004).

happen in Ukraine. All the seminars in Ukrainian studies in the past few years, including one hosted by the author a month before the second round agreed on one thing: civil society in Ukraine was too weak to stand up to the rise of a post-Soviet authoritarian regime. Prague 1989 in Kyiv? Not in your wildest dreams. And yet it happened. The Revolution was first and foremost a revelation: that Ukrainian society had, in fact, profoundly changed since independence.

With a mass, but peaceful uprising in downtown Kyiv, the nerve center of the government, the old regime elites, rather than Western governments, were the ones who came under massive pressure. With so many people in the streets, and the obvious falsification in Donetsk, the decision by the West not to recognize results was far easier to make, even though France and Germany, ever mindful of their oil interests in Orange-challenged Russia, could have lived without the problem. From that point, with the tipping point passed in terms of street demonstrations, and with Ukraine shunned by the West, the fate of the Orange Revolution rested on the cohesion of the old regime elite.

As Darden argues in his much-cited conceptualization of Kuchma's Ukraine as the 'Blackmail State,' the old regime (which I use here as a shorthand, but was not, in fact, that old, rather the peculiar creation of a post-Soviet environment) was all about the subversion of state institutions (security, fiscal, regional, educational) to the benefit of one particular leader and of his coterie.[12]

In one sense, the rise of Our Ukraine, Yushchenko's political vehicle, is the story of individual officials who served the Kuchma regime and were either forced out, or became disillusioned, and then banded together to challenge the regime, beginning with Yushchenko himself, followed by Yulia Tymoshenko, one-time Vice-Premier Anatolii Kinakh, and so on. The Orange Revolution, on the other hand, is the story of high-powered elites who defected from the Kuchma regime while still in control of their institutions. Prior to the first round, only Volodymyr Lytvyn, a former Kuchma Chief of Staff who was supposed to have become his henchman as parliamentary

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12 Keith A. Darden, 'Blackmail as a Tool of State Domination: Ukraine under Kuchma.' *East European Constitutional Review* 10:2/3 (Spring/Summer 2001): 67-71. Available at http://www.law.nyu.edu/eecr/vol10num2_3/focus/darden.html.

Speaker, was on the verge of defecting, a predilection that was sealed on November 27, when parliament voted not to recognize the second round.[13]

Under street pressure, the defections snowballed. University rectors challenged the regime and allowed their students to demonstrate. Regional councils proclaimed they would not acknowledge the results. Diplomats posted abroad denounced the falsification. Media magnates, the so-called ‘oligarchs,’ began to loosen the administration’s control of their news broadcasts. Crucially, the security forces refused to follow orders to use force. The Western media reported that such an order had been given, when the Revolution was a week-old, and that the SBU made it clear that it would confront Army or Interior Ministry troops if it had to.[14] Whether an order was actually given remains unclear, yet, by all indications, the regime knew, by the second week, that it could no longer count on the support of its security service. The last straw was the decision of the Supreme Court invalidating the second round and ordering a third one, in defiance of the expressed preference of President Kuchma.[15]

Before Orange, Ukraine watchers knew the probability that Ukraine could ‘turn the corner’ was contingent on a critical mass of elites defecting from the old regime. What would trigger this spiral of defections was impossible to predict. Which is another way of saying that Orange was impossible to predict. What is Orange? The Orange Revolution was not about policy issues that are normally front and center in electoral contests, but pertained to a process. It was neither about a joyful acceptance of the neo-liberal economic model, nor about American geostrategic interests, but rather about the systemic abuse of executive power in Ukraine, and the disingenuousness of proclaiming a strategic course of European integration, while regressing on all political, economic, and legal indicators of Europeanness. The Orange Revolution was about the creation of a civil society in real time, in front of our eyes, in the sense that, for the first time in Ukrainian history, an organized society acted as a counter-weight to the state.

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13 On Lytvyn’s role during the Orange Revolution, see Peter Savodnik, ‘Ukraine: The Washington Connection.’ *The New York Review of Books* (10 February 2005).

14 C. J. Chivers, ‘Back Channels: A Crackdown Averted. How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation’s Path.’ *New York Times* (17 January 2005).

15 The ruling of the Supreme Court, in the original Ukrainian, can be accessed at http://pravda.com.ua/news/2004/12/3/14476.htm.

Twelve days of huge demonstrations, between November 22 and December 3 (the day the Court ruled), cannot be fabricated.

But where did that civil society come from? We still know little about the social foundations of Orange, and, no doubt, sociological and anthropological studies will do much to inform our understanding in the years ahead. But two factors appear to have played a critical role: the generational and the national. Orange began with PORA, a group of students who were children or teenagers at the time of independence, and ended with the nomination of what appeared to be the youngest Cabinet since the Bolshevik Revolution, with an average age of 44. To be sure, people of all ages were on Maidan. Nevertheless, it seems fair to point out that the driving force, both at ground level and at central command, was a generation that had not been in a position of authority during the Soviet era. That generation, it could very well be, is anything but *homo sovieticus* in how it views the state. This is most disturbing to neighboring autocrats, beginning with Russia, in their assessment of the export potential of the Orange Revolution. Given a similar opportunity, why would post-Soviet youth in Russia behave any differently?

The mitigating factor, however, is nationalism. Nationalism is a term of opprobrium to many, and is very often used selectively (in the sense that nationalism always seen to define what the *other* group is doing, not the one we are identifying with). Yet it has value as a concept of comparative political analysis. Let me be very clear as to what I mean here. Nationalism is a claim of political sovereignty based on a claim of cultural distinctiveness. The French model of the nation is generally presented as contradicting this assertion but, in the last analysis, the French defined the French as whoever spoke French and nothing else.[16] They were, and remain, quite intolerant on the issue of linguistic diversity. In Ukraine, nationalism is a factor, because one constituency is far more cohesive than another in its vision of the nature of Ukrainian cultural distinctiveness. That constituency is strongest in Western Ukraine, territories that were not part of a Russian Imperial or Soviet

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16 Legally and politically, France recognizes only a French 'national' identity, and the collection of data on the basis of race, ethnicity, or language is prohibited. In practice, the ability to speak French became a *sine qua non* of French national identity. Moreover, as riots in the cités (the 'outer' ghettos) revealed to the world in Fall 2005, the formal equality of all within the nation appears to mask a reality of social exclusion based on ethnic origins.

state until the Second World War (with one regional semi-exception).[17] Western Ukrainians did not fill the square on their own, but there is little doubt that they, Galicians in particular, were overrepresented, in the backbone of Maidan, particularly in the crowds that were blocking government buildings and Kuchma's dacha. Remove them from the equation and you have a serious organizational problem.

But leave them alone on the square and you have an even bigger problem. The Orange Revolution is not a Galician coup. It is rather about Western Ukrainians and Central Ukrainians *really* coming together for the first time, not simply symbolically, as happened in 1919.[18] In electoral arithmetic, there is no question, as I will show in a moment, that Yushchenko's breakthrough was specifically in Central Ukraine. On Maidan, one has to assume, based on various testimonies, that the bulk of non-Western Ukrainian demonstrators were from areas of Central Ukraine. At the elite level, the composition of the first Orange Ukrainian Cabinet, until Tymoshenko's dismissal is September 2005, is once again instructive. Of the 23 ministers, only four were from the East, but only four were from the West. Nearly two-thirds were from Central Ukraine. The Donbas media has frequently raised the specter of Galicia taking over Ukraine, but only a single minister was actually from Galicia (the Minister of Culture, not exactly a 'power' ministry). It is Central Ukraine that dominated post-Orange Ukrainian politics.

Why is this important? The civil society revealed by the Orange Revolution has taken root precisely in the areas where Ukrainian national consciousness is more cohesive. Historically, of course, nationalism can graft

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17 Five of the seven provinces of Western Ukraine were not part of a Russian or Soviet state until 1939. Two others, Volyn' and Rivne, were annexed by Imperial Russia after the Partition of Poland in the 1790s, before reverting to a Polish state in the interwar period.

18 On January 22, 1919, the Kyiv-based Ukrainian National Republic, which had declared independence from Bolshevik Russia a year before, and the L'viv-based West Ukrainian National Republic, which had declared independence from a restored Poland, solemnly proclaimed the unity (sobornist') of all Ukrainian lands in a ceremony held in Kyiv. The declaration had no practical effect, since the territory claimed by the West Ukrainian National Republic was eventually annexed by Poland, while the lands claimed by the Ukrainian National Republican became part of Soviet Ukraine. See Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996): 495.

itself on any political ideology. In interwar Western Ukraine, Ukrainian nationalism had appropriated for itself an authoritarian model of society that was rampant in Central Europe.[19] In the early years of independence, mainstream nationalists appeared to be more interested in the trappings of statehood than in substantive reforms. But the Kuchmagate scandal, four years ago, revealed that the only constituency capable of presenting an organized resistance to the subversion of democracy, even if unsuccessful at the time, were the nationalists. The fringe elements notwithstanding, the nationalists, in that defining moment, revealed themselves to be democrats, in fact, the only democrats.[20]

The question we have to ask ourselves is why is it that people mobilized, then and now, in some regions (West and Center), and not others (East and South)? My answer has to do with how people relate to their national identity. Ukrainians in Central and Western Ukraine have a more cohesive view of their identity, and this greater sense of solidarity is a facilitating factor in their ability to undertake collective action. Nationalism acts a vehicle for the realization of a project, and that project has become that of an open society, as we know it in Europe. It is high time for us to leave the experience of 'integral' nationalism in the closet, in the historical closet—once again, fringe outbursts notwithstanding. Nationalism produced the Orange Revolution which, as I said at the outset, took the form of a popular uprising for an open society.

But Orange conquered only half of the country, and that half is highly geographically concentrated. What are the facts about that polarization? Ukraine is divided into twenty-seven territories: twenty-four provinces or *oblasts*, one autonomous republic (Crimea), and two cities with a special territorial status (Kyiv, the capital, and the naval port of Sevastopol, whose facilities are leased to the Russian Fleet). In the final round of December 26, Yanukovych won in ten territories, comprising just under half of the national electorate (48 percent). Yushchenko won in seventeen territories, comprising

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19 Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Developments of Ukrainian Nationalism* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1980).

20 Dominique Arel, 'Kuchmagate and the Demise of Ukraine's Geopolitical Bluff.' *East European Constitutional Review*. 10:2/3 (Spring/Summer 2001): 54-59. Available at http://www.law.nyu.edu/eecr/vol10num2_3/focus/arel.html.

just over the other half (52 percent). In the territories that he carried, Yanukovych received 75 percent of the vote. In the territories carried by Yushchenko, his score was 80 percent. In only one of all twenty-seven territories was the vote relatively close: the Southern oblast of Kherson, where Yanukovych beat Yushchenko 51 percent to 43 percent. In all other twenty-six territories, the margin of victory by one or the other candidate was enormous. After Kherson, the closest race in the whole country was in Kirovohrad, a Central Ukrainian oblast which straddles the Center and the South (partly located in an area that was historically known as Novorossia), where Yushchenko defeated Yanukovych by 31 percentage points, 63 percent to 32 percent, which in any country would be considered a landslide.

Another way to look at it is to divide Ukraine into regions. There is an interesting debate in the literature as to how best to delineate Ukraine's regions, but for the sake of continuity, let me resort to a dividing principle that I have been using for a decade, focused on five regions, with Kyiv in brackets. In that grouping, the Yanukovych zone is divided into an industrial East and a semi-industrial, semi-agricultural South, while the predominantly agricultural Yushchenko zone is divided into three regions according to their distinct periods of incorporations into a Moscow-dominated state: the Left Bank (1640s), the Right Bank (1790s), and the West (1940s).[21] The Kyiv metropolis, as an industrial magnet, is a huge exception in this agricultural landscape. On December 26, Yanukovych carried 79 percent of the East and 70 percent of the South, while Yushchenko carried 72 percent of the Left Bank, 78 percent of Kyiv, 78 percent of the Right Bank, and 89 percent of the West.

The geographical polarization is stark, and it is starker than it was ten years ago. In the presidential election of July 1994, former Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma unexpectedly edged incumbent Leonid Kravchuk by six percentage points, 51 percent to 45 percent. The election was not about

21 As Ihor Shevchenko pointed out during a discussion of a talk based on this chapter at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute in April 2005, the geographical line between the Yanukovych zone (East/South) and the Yushchenko zone (Left Bank/Right Bank/West) happens to correspond to the historic frontier of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In other words, Kharkiv (*Slobodanshzhyna*) and Donbas may have had very different historical trajectories, but what they have in common, other than being heavily industrialized, is the fact that never belonged to a Polish-dominated state.

democracy, as it took place in a relatively fair and free fashion, and the legitimacy of Kuchma's victory was not contested. A comparison of the regional breakdown of the vote with the 2004 election is instructive. The support for Kuchma and Kravchuk, compared to Yanukovych and Yushchenko, was virtually the same in 1994 and 2004 for the East, South, and West: 75 percent for the winner in the East and South, 90 percent for the winner in the West. Nearly all the changes took place at the Center—Left and Right Bank, and in the capital. The Left Bank declared itself two to one in favor of Kuchma (66 percent to 31 percent), and that was the biggest puzzle at the time, since pre-election polls had forecast a pro-Kravchuk in these provinces. In 2004, however, it voted for Yushchenko three to one (72 percent to 24 percent). The Right Bank evolved from a relatively close contest (54 percent to 42 percent in favor of Kravchuk) into a sweep, four to one (78 percent to 19 percent) for Yushchenko. Critics of the polarization model argued back then that Central Ukraine (Right Bank and Left Bank) acted as a buffer between the polarized East and West. But there is no such buffer anymore, except for tiny Kherson (Table 1).[22]

Between 1994 and 2004, one social stratum significantly altered its electoral orientation: the peasantry. Until recently, the peasantry was nationally-oriented only in Western Ukraine, that is, in areas that did not experience the social cataclysms of collectivization and famine in the 1930s. In the agricultural heartland of Central Ukraine, the peasantry tended to vote Socialist or Communist. It was 1917-1918 all over again: the national movement conquered the West, the capital and some urban areas of the Center, but could not penetrate the countryside. Yushchenko's greatest achievement was his capacity to rally rural Ukraine under his banner. This began with the parliamentary elections of 2002 and became nearly hegemonic with the final round of the 2004 presidential saga.[23]

What we do not know yet is how exactly the peasantry became Orange.

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22 Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the New Political Geography of Europe* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997): 19.

23 Aleksei Popov, 'Gde proizoshel perelom. Ekspress-analiz 3-ogo tura.' *Analitik.org* (30 December 2004), translated as 'Where Did the Sudden Change Happen?' *The Ukraine List* 332 (11 January 2005). Available at http://www.ukrainian studies.uottawa.ca/ukraine_list/ukl332_7.html.

Once again, serious field research is required. There are three possible story lines. The first is the activation of a social class that had essentially been broken in the 1930s with the collectivization and famine. In the past decade, the peasantry may have developed a political consciousness which makes it critical of the authorities and receptive to the Orange message. The peasantry may not have been stomping the ground on Maidan in November-December, but it is its determination to vote for change that sealed the fate of the Old Regime. For the first time in Ukrainian history, the peasantry may have become a politically active component of the emerging political nation.

A second explanation focuses on elites. Perhaps the peasantry, as a legacy of the 1930s, and as a reflection of its economic dependence, is still, on the whole, largely obedient to local authorities, but what changed in the past decade is how local authorities orient themselves. With all the talk about how 'administrative resources,' that is, the improper use of local administrative offices to promote the candidate of the regime, distorted the results of the first round of election in October 2004 – a round that already produced a geographically polarized result, with the polarization increasing in each round – no one could satisfactorily explain to me why *adminresursy* would allegedly work in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, but not elsewhere. Particularly under conditions where all local administrations were under massive pressure from the center to produce results favoring Yanukovych, and where Yushchenko was shut out from the main TV channels that are broadcast nationally, i.e. in all regions. Why couldn't the *blackmail stat*e blackmail everybody, especially in remote rural areas?

In a perceptive paper, Allina-Pisano has pointed to the breakdown of social control in the countryside as the key to understand peasant electoral behavior. For her, the decline of the state as a provider of social services has been far more acute in rural areas, with the demise of collective farms, than in cities of the industrial heartland. Left to their own devices, the peasantry had little to lose in eliciting a protest vote.[24] Still, the psychological hold that rural elites may have on a peasantry having experienced seven decades of a

24 Jessica Allina-Pisano, 'Informal Institutional Challenges to Democracy: Administrative Resource in Kuchma's Ukraine.' Paper presented at the First Annual Danyliw Seminar in Contemporary Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, September 2005.

quasi-feudal system may go beyond institutional decline. How elites communicate among themselves, and to their constituencies (in that case, the peasantry), may be of paramount importance in this case.

This is the route taken by Way, who argued that the project of autocratic restoration in post-Soviet republics in the 1990s, seemingly successful in Putin Russia, faced a structural problem in Ukraine, namely the division of its elites along the national question. In spite of the *blackmail state*, before Orange, Ukraine had a relatively more autonomous parliament and relatively more contested electoral process than Russia. For Way, Ukraine had developed as a case of 'democracy by default,' a democracy whose rules were constantly assaulted by the executive branch, but which was strong enough to prevent the regime from safely controlling the results of an election in its favor.[25]

Back in October 2004, no one could predict the Orange Revolution, but no one either, including the regime itself, could predict exactly how the election would play out. (The doomsayers of the Ukrainian intelligentsia were predicting a dark apocalypse, and they were proven spectacularly wrong).[26] This was the real story, pre-Orange: despite the Herculean efforts by the Kuchma regime to subvert the election, they could not prevent a challenger from making a credible bid to win. That degree of pluralism in the system, annihilated in Belarus, considerably enfeebled in Russia, but intriguingly potent in Moldova and Ukraine, Way ascribed to the existence of a structural division at the elite level over nationalism. The neo-Soviet state was unable to fully re-centralize, to re-establish what Russians and Ukrainians call the 'vertikal' of state power, because of an incentive for elites to coalesce around two poles, an incentive that instilled a degree of pluralism in the system, 'by default.'

Why were elites in rural Ukraine able to withstand the infamous '*adminresursy'* pressures from the center? Is it because they sensed a profound change of allegiance among their constituents? Or is there

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25 Lucan Way, 'Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave: The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine.' *World Politics* 57:2 (January 2005): 231-61.

26 For an incisive critique of pre-election apocalyptic appeals, see John Paul Himka, 'Apocalypse Tomorrow: Some Remarks on Two Texts on the Ukrainian Elections.' *The Ukraine List* 254 (27 October 2004).

something else at work that makes them receptive to the Orange discourse? This is where I would like to introduce the variable of language. Ukraine is a bilingual country – not as a matter of state policy, but in terms of sociological observations – whose inhabitants have a complex relationship with language. Ukrainians make distinctions between the language they identify with, the language they actually prefer to speak when given the opportunity, and the language they would like their children to learn in school.[27] What we know is that there is a remarkable correlation between language of preference and support for Yanukovych or Yushchenko in regions. In Central and Western Ukraine, the proportion of people using Ukrainian as their language of preference is within the range of 75-80 percent, and their support for Yushchenko is within the same range. In Eastern and Southern Ukraine, 75 to 80 percent of the people prefer to speak Russian, and the support for Yanukovych is similarly within that range. The Orange Revolution caught fire in Ukrainian-speaking areas, where 'speaking' refers to empirical behaviour, rather than symbolic attachment. Using the empirical criteria, the peasantry in Central Ukraine, the group that brought Yushchenko to victory, is 99 percent Ukrainian-speaking. Which brings us back to our question: What makes the peasantry and/or the rural elite recipient to an Orange message? Could it have to do with the fact their world is predominantly Ukrainian-speaking?

Between the second and third rounds of election, the national media opened up, as observers noted that the coverage of the two campaigns became balanced, and Yanukovych, suddenly on leave from his post of Prime Minister, lost the support of the much-vaunted administrative resources. Remarkably enough, three weeks of Orange fever had no discernable effect in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. The fabricated turnout of Donetsk was readjusted, to be sure, plunging from 97 percent to 84 percent, still seven percent higher than the national average, but this time with plausibility. Support for Yanukovych remained virtually the same in these predominantly urban areas and what little change there was occurred, once again, in rural areas. In Central Ukraine, however, the Yanukovych vote, already quite low, collapsed. Once the turnout falsification in Donetsk was accounted for, the main difference between the second and third round was

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27 Dominique Arel, 'Interpreting "Nationality" and "Language" in the 2001 Ukrainian Census.' *Post-Soviet Affairs* 18:3 (July-September 2002): 213-49.

the Orange zone becoming even more Orange, furthering the polarization.[28]

What should we make of that polarization? One approach in Ukrainian studies is to dismiss it as illegitimate, that is to say, to consider, on the one hand, the vote for Yushchenko in the third round as reflecting the true preferences of his electors, while, on the other hand, refusing to consider the vote for Yanukovych as reflecting the true preferences of his own electors.[29] In other words, the Yushchenko vote is valid, but the Yanukovych vote is questionable. But what exactly is the point of sending planeloads of foreign observers (more than 12,000, apparently), deploying them predominantly in the Yanukovych zone, having the international monitoring organizations they were working with, and even the indigenous Committee of Voters, declare the process fair and free, yet still somehow cling to the notion that the Yanukovych vote was illegitimately inflated?[30] By any reasonable standards, no systematic pattern of falsification, enough to significantly impact on the national vote, was uncovered in the third round. Nevertheless, once turnout was accounted for, the preference for Yanukovych in the East and South remained identical to what it had been on November 21.

A variation of the argument, one that appears to animate Yulia Tymoshenko and probably Viktor Yushchenko, is as follows: while the voting count in the third round was legitimate, the conditions that led people to vote the way they did were not. Civil society has not taken root in Eastern and

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28 Between the second (November 21) and third (December 26) round of elections, support for Yanukovych decreased by only 2.6 percent in the East (from 81.7 to 79.1 percent) and by only 1.1 percent in the South (from 71.0 to 69.9 percent). In 'Orange County,' on the other hand, the Yanukovych vote plunged by 6.8 percent in the Left Bank (from 30.6 to 23.8 percent), 8.2 percent in the Right Bank (from 27.1 to 18.9 percent), and 4.6 percent in the West (from 13.3 to 8.7 percent). The Orange effect of Maidan, in other words, was limited to the already massively Orange areas. In Kharkiv oblast, in Eastern Ukraine, Popov, *op.cit.,* shows that Yushchenko's small progression between the two rounds was limited to the countryside and that his vote in the capital remained the same.

29 Stephen Velychenko, 'Behind the Scenes in the Provinces (The Final Phase). Why We Must Remember.' *The Ukraine List* 332 (11 January 2005), available at http://www.ukrainianstudies.uottawa.ca/ukraine_list/ukl332_8.html.

30 The Committee of Voters of Ukraine (*Komitet vybortsiv Ukraïny*) announced, on December 27, that it recorded 'relatively few violations' on election day, in complete contrast with its report issued following the November 21 vote. See 'Holovni fal'syfikatory buly u Shcherbania i u votchiny Yanukovycha.' *Ukraïns'ka pravda* (27 December 2004), translated as 'Main Election Violators were from Shcherban and in the Yanukovych Region.' *The Ukraine List* 328 (27 December 2004).

Southern Ukraine and people are far more vulnerable to being manipulated by their elites. The Yanukovych vote is illegitimate because it is the product of a closed society. Opening up the system will alter significantly popular preferences in the East and this will take care of the polarization. Since the drive for an open society originates from Central and Western Ukraine, systemic reform must be imposed from outside Eastern Ukraine. The corollary of this premise is the formation of a Cabinet which mostly excludes Eastern Ukrainians, something that has never happened in the past. Politicians recognized by the Eastern electorate as representing them were virtually absent from the Cabinet in the first year after the Orange Revolution.

This approach certainly has merits, as one is struck by how asymmetrical the Yanukovych and Yushchenko zones are in terms of their capacity for social organization. If civil society revealed itself in Central Ukraine during the Orange Revolution, it hardly exists in the East and South. It is as if Ukraine is inhabited by two different worlds: one aiming to break with the Soviet societal model, the other, even if undergoing profound economic changes, still devoid of initiative vis-à-vis the state. What makes its population so resistant to change? After all, we are talking about a highly educated population, by world standards. What makes its younger generation apparently less open to change than its counterpart in Central and Western Ukraine?

I would suggest that we look beyond the assumption of people not yet realizing what their true interests are and factor in the national question. The geographical polarization in Ukraine is not ethnic. The majority of the population in Eastern and Southern Ukraine has internalized a Ukrainian identity, as promoted by Soviet nationality policy.[31] This is why the specter of separatism is nonsense, since it is hard to imagine why people who self-identify as Ukrainians would want to separate from a territory called Ukraine, and which they have essentially run for eighty years. The one exception here is Crimea, where ethnic Russians still form the majority, and where a

31 According to the 2001 Ukrainian census, ethnic Ukrainians form majorities in eight of the nine oblasts of the East and South – the exception being Crimea, with only 24.3 percent. Ukrainian majorities vary from 56.9 percent in Donetsk and 58.0 percent in Luhansk, the two oblasts of the Donbas, to 81.9 percent in Mykolaiv and 82.0 percent in Kherson, the two relatively more agricultural oblasts of the South.

secessionist movement had real potential in the 1990s.[32] But Crimea remained passive throughout Orange and its turnout, contrary to the Donbas, was lower than the national average.

Eastern Ukrainians call themselves Ukrainians, but not in the same way as Western Ukrainians do.[33] Eastern Ukrainians tend not to think of identity in exclusive terms. In the Soviet era, they felt simultaneously Ukrainian *and* Soviet.[34] With the disappearance of the Soviet identity, they feel adrift, unsure of where to affix their Ukrainian identity. Western Ukrainians, by contrast, think far more in exclusive terms. And the last decade may very well have crystallized Ukrainian identity in Central Ukraine. What I am emphasizing here is national identity cohesion, how people situate their identity in the larger whole. Cohesion breeds self-confidence. And self-confidence generates an entirely unique manner of dealing with Russia, something the Russian government, and Russians more generally, are not accustomed to, and something Eastern Ukrainians are not comfortable with.

Eastern Ukrainians are not Russians, but in their interpretations of their past and future they feel intimately connected to Russia. Western Ukrainians do not feel that connection, or, if they do, they do so to a far lesser degree. The crux of the matter is this: Western Ukrainians tend to believe that this two-layered sense of identity in the East can be reshaped. This is what could be called 'nation-building' in the ethnic sense; in the language of national activists: making 'true' Ukrainians out of Eastern Ukrainians. But it could very well be that there is something resilient in the Eastern regional experience that makes this project illusory. This is not a matter of language per se, but of language situated in a given historical region. Eastern Ukrainians look at the Orange Revolution through the prism of their perceived regional experience, and the language they speak, Russian, becomes a symbol of that self-

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32 Edward Ozhiganov, 'The Crimean Republic: Rivalries for Control.' In: Alexei Arbatov, Abram Chayes, Antonia Hanfler Chayes, and Lara Olson, eds., *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997): 83-136.

33 As a shorthand, for this concluding section, 'Eastern' refers to Eastern and Southern Ukrainians, while 'Western' refers to Central and Western Ukrainians

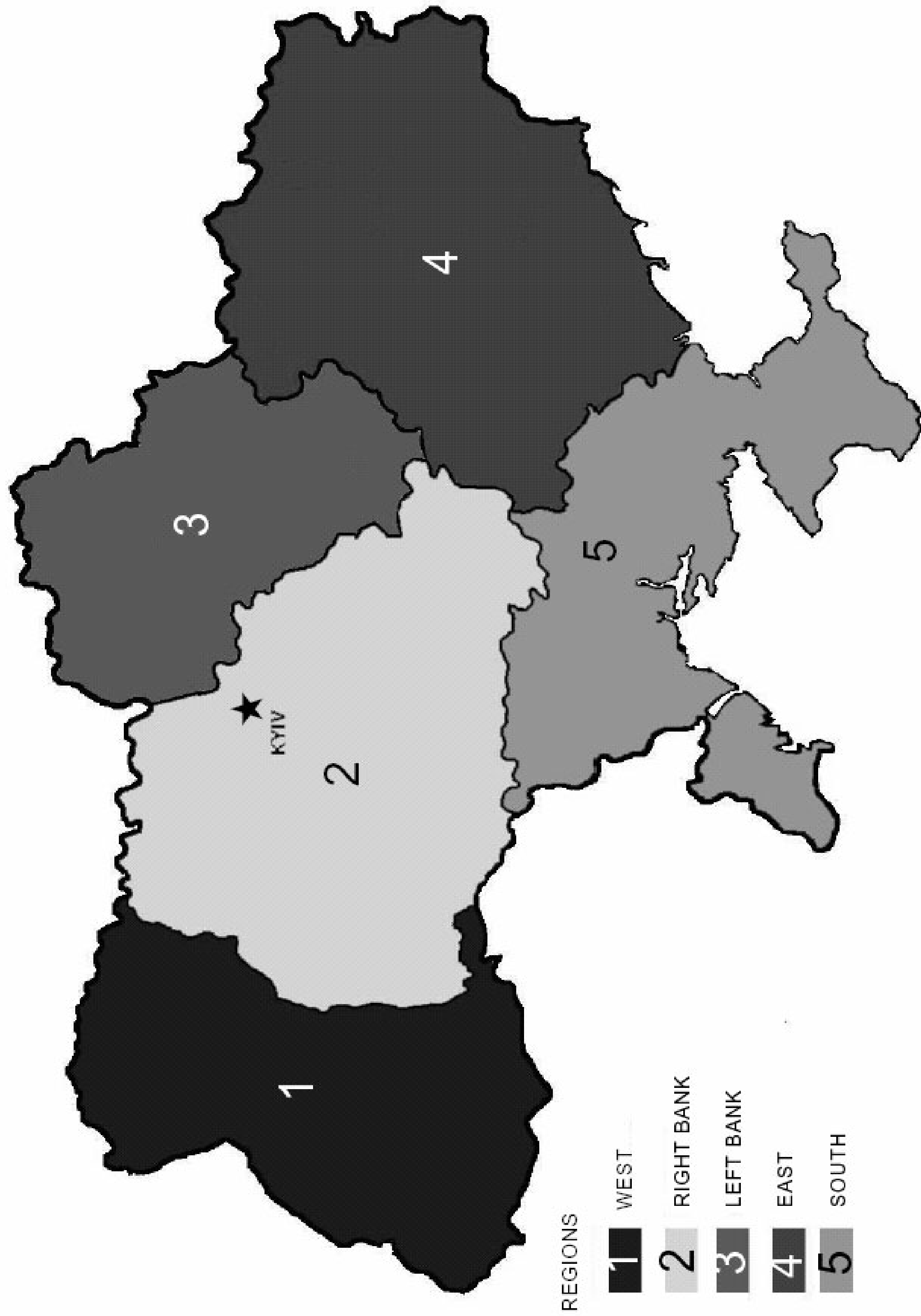
34 Yaroslav Hrytsak, 'National Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The Case of Lviv and Donetsk.' In: Zvi Gitelman, Lubomyr Hajda, John Paul Himka and Roman Solchanyk, eds., *Cultures and Nations in Central and Eastern Europe. Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2001): 263-81.

perception. They reject Orange, not because they are innately inimical to the project of an open society, but because of a sense that this is a project that excludes them.

The Orange Revolution was about the birth of the Ukrainian political nation, that is, of the capacity for a population to organize independently of the state and, in times of crisis, to defy the state. Yet this political nation is, as of yet, circumscribed to specific historical regions: the West and the Center. Ukraine's biggest challenge, in the years ahead, is to extend the political nation to the East and South, to make that population feel that it belongs to Ukraine in an *active* sense, to put substance to their citizenship (or civic identity). But inclusion in the political nation can hardly come from a unilateral vision of how national identity ought to be construed. If Russians in Russia have to understand that they cannot unilaterally impose their vision of Ukrainian identity on Ukrainians, Western Ukrainians [again, used as a shorthand for Western and Central] cannot unilaterally impose their vision of Ukrainian identity on Eastern Ukrainians. This is all about accommodating identity-based differences. Perhaps we should begin deciphering all these claims for 'federalism' in the East as a codeword for accommodation. What we need to bear in mind is that Eastern Ukrainians most likely interpreted the signals of the post-Orange era – with Yushchenko associating the very word 'federalism' with a criminal act and the Tymoshenko Cabinet including no one deemed by the East as representative of the region – as a self-fulfilling prophecy: the heroes of the Orange Revolution are bent on excluding them.

Table 1: Regional Polarization, 1994-2004 (in %)

	1994		2004	
	Kuchma	**Kravchuk**	**Yanukovych**	**Yushchenko**
East	76	22	79	17
South	73	25	70	26
Left Bank	66	31	24	72
Kiev City	36	60	18	78
Right Bank	42	54	19	78
West	10	87	09	89
Ukraine	**51**	**45**	**44**	**52**


1
2
3
4
5
KYIV
REGIONS
1 WEST
2 RIGHT BANK
3 LEFT BANK
4 EAST
5 SOUTH