

Russia, the US, 'the others' and the '101 things to do to win a (colour) revolution': reflections on Georgia and Ukraine

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Mini glossary

Colour revolution (provisional definition): modular phenomenon limited to post soviet spaces that attempts to bring a regime change through the use of mass protests of pacific character and following a strategy of civil disobedience. It normally happens in the aftermath of (rigged) elections (and here the label 'electoral revolutions') as a synergy of forces that involve popular mobilization, the use of a non violent strategy and circulation of a message in a humoristic and positive form, possibly on coloured material that makes it more pleasant to see

Introduction

This contribution wants to discuss the importance, and effects, of external influences to the success of a colour revolution. It does so by drawing from the Georgian and Ukrainian cases to single out the main points that resulted favourable to the success of a mass protest movement.

A number of factors make Georgia and Ukraine very useful examples to understand the relevance of external influences. First, both revolutions were held in 'non suspicious times' that is when their importance had been largely underestimated by local elites and Russia. In addition, attention on local and international NGOs was not so focussed as it would become later, leading some authoritarian regimes like Belarus and Uzbekistan to further tightening control on international funding even of

grassroot movements. Another point is that both countries were open to Western influences and never hide their Western aspirations, whilst keeping decent relations with Moscow. For this reason both presidents were concerned with their reputation in the West and, given the post-totalitarian nature of the regimes, they tended to be more sensitive to Western criticisms.

The meaning of 'external influences' is conceived quite broadly in this paper. Influences are not only considered at governmental level but include NGO cooperation at grassroots level and influence of foreign NGO on politics. Those last two aspects have been largely underestimated by both researchers and politicians. In an interview (See Enough!) said that the role of NGO is much smaller than it has been depicted. However, this is based on the assumption that politicians communicate directly with the people, which is not always the case. When a message has to be circulated, including in the Ukrainian and Georgian case, there must be somebody who takes care of it.

Different importance attributed to NGOs is visible. Whereas the tendency by opposition politicians and the West in general has been to underestimate them, to stress the 'popular' and 'genuine' character of a protest movement (and it is still unclear why a movement cannot be 'genuine' but have some leaders and people who direct, or think to direct, masses), they have been demonized by toppled political figures and their supporters in Russia and the CIS.

Ultimately, this has led protest movements to be perceived as 'artificial' or 'manufactured'. NGOs and people have been not enough credited, but nonetheless punished, or at least accused, beyond their 'guilt'. In Ukraine and Georgia they have been portrayed as provoking collective hysteria, in Uzbekistan, Russia and Belarus have been dramatically limited in their activities when not shut down.

However, one should also consider that such actions of covered activism, unorganized or semi organized protests 'make no headlines' and thus tend to be ignored by historians, as long as they do not become very loud (Hobsbawm and Rude

1964). As a result, what Scott (1985) has called the 'silent struggle' of unorganized protesters and what Thompson has addressed to as the 'moment of madness' (2004) have been largely ignored by both scholars and politicians or, in the best case, considered not enough relevant (Enough 2004:)

Literature on colour revolutions considers external forces only at political level. That is diplomatic and financial support to democratic movements of a country, coming from both governmental and non governmental actors. I would also include know how transfer, experience sharing, and networking that has not necessarily been carried out, or engineered, by the US but has also happened at EU and grassroots level. In addition support came also from 'Eastern' countries and is less secret than it seems. External influences can also be considered the inflow of information affecting the elites' opposition's and peoples' attitude in a given country.

Trainings on civil disobedience carried out were not widely publicized. Nonetheless there is a whole work of international networking that has been done in the past years (Report Serbia, Report Pora) where Western and Eastern experiences met and integrated to produce real 'manual for the perfect *revolutionnaire*'.

This is all the more visible from the Western side the simple reason that Russian influences are so embedded in the history of former soviet countries that came to become part of the panorama. The Central European University is picking out what is alleged to become the elite of those countries, programmes of assistance to Ukrainian and Georgian students are well established in the US and in loco (see the Civic Education Project or the HESP network), but the quantity of students being formed in Russia is much higher and so implanted in daily life that few really remarked it.

I would suggest that external influences were present and strong, and 'the truth' probably lies in between the two positions of Moscow 'It was a pure project of politechnology' and Washington 'I was not there, and if I was there I was asleep'.

One could actually see each of what have been called 'colour revolutions' as an arm wrestling between Moscow and Washington, with the EU timidly trying to have a voice (not very loud, since the 25 were unable to agree on any position of foreign policy – I was very much in touch with Italian diplomacy in Kiev, before and during the orange revolution, and the picture I was given in informal talks with diplomats and the position of the EU was much more puzzled than it seemed from outside) (see O'Beachain and Polese 2008 for this position).

This, in turn, has pushed scholars to overemphasize the role of external forces in such movements or, at least, to devote much more attention to the role of the US (Aslund and MacFaul, Bounce and Wolchik, MacFaul) neglecting the role of common people and grassroot actors (Fennira 2005, Polese 2005). Surprisingly enough, scholarship has not explored, as much as American promotion of democracy, Russian promotion of its foreign policy and its effects on those revolutions. In an article ('How we lost Ukraine') it was made clear that the US had won Ukraine as much as Russia had lost it and that the US strategy of 'democracy promotion' (Bounce 2007) had resulted much more effective than Moscow foreign policy.

De facto, what has happened in post-soviet spaces has shown a radical change not only in US foreign policy but in the very way to do foreign policy and the 'civil society paradigm' (Tordjman 2008) has transformed any foreign funded entity, not necessarily NGO and regardless of its size and focus of activity, in a non democratic country, into a potential engine for regime change.

However, to see external influences as the one and only factor, or at least the determining one, means to ignore a number of other things that have been essential. For one thing, if external influences are so important, why a colour revolution has failed in Belarus at least twice?

In a kitchen language, I consider external influences as the salt of a protest movement in the CIS. They are to be there from the very first moment and are necessary to the final output. But they are not sufficient, with a lot of salt but no meat you have no

final dish and you have no colour revolution. It has been proposed (O’Beachain and Polese 2008, 2008b) that the output of a colour revolution depends on five main factors: attitude of current elites, compactness of the opposition, level of external influences, relevance and activism of civil society and population’s attitude.

To this one could add Bessinger’s argument of the revolutions as modular phenomena (2007) but there is another point and this is mainly connected with external forces.

Whilst contemporaneity was a main strength of the anti-soviet and anti-communists protests (Bessinger 2002), it seems to be a weakness of the colour revolutions. Bounce and Wolchik (2007) use the indicative expression ‘electoral revolutions’ as protests are attempted as a result of rigged elections and Tucker (2007) suggests that, among other points, rigged elections provide for a concrete argument and an emotional component (‘they have stolen our will’) that is decisive to push people into the streets.

Ultimately, all the colour revolutions attempted, with the exception of Uzbek ones, have happened in the aftermath of elections, be those rigged or not. But if we compare the dates of all the successful revolutions we will see that a successful revolution has to stand alone. What I mean is that, if more than a revolution is attempted at once, one is going to be overshadowed by the other or is not attempted at all. This has certainly something to see with the country itself, protests are more likely to have a resonance in Georgia than in Turkmenistan, but can also suggest that international diplomacy is unable to effectively concentrate on two countries (two revolutions) at once.

Table 1: dates of colour revolutions (source: O’Beachain and Polese 2008b)

	Elections	(Attempted) Revolution	Result
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Armenia	19 February and 5 March 2003, (presidential); 25 May 2003 (parliamentary); 27 November 2005 (only referendum);	April 2004	Opposition defeat
Georgia	2 November 2003 (parliamentary)	November 2003	Rose Revolution: President Shevardnadze deposed and replaced by Mikheil Saakashvili in January 2004 elections (96% for Saakashvili)
Russia	December 2003 (parliamentary) 14 March 2004 (presidential)	None	No change
Ukraine	2004(31 October)	November 2004	Orange Revolution: Defeat for Victor Yanukovich, Victor Yushchenko elected President (5-% for Yushchenko)
Uzbekistan	2004 (26 December) Parliamentary	Andijan, 13 May 2005	Massacre
Tajikistan	Tajikistan 27 February and 13 March 2005 (Parliamentary)	None	No change
Moldova	6 March 2005 (Parliamentary)	2003-5: Ruling communist party changes orientation from Russia to the West	"Silent revolution"
Kyrgyzstan	27 February and 13 March 2005 (parliamentary)	March 2005	Tulip Revolution: President Askar Akaev ousted and replaced by Kurmanbek Bakiev who presidency is confirmed in July 2005 election (89% for Bakiev)
Azerbaijan	15 October 2003 (presidential) 6 November 2005 (parliamentary)	October 2003, November 2005	Opposition defeat
Kazakhstan	19 September and 3 October 2004 (parliamentary), December 2005 (presidential)	None	No change
Belarus	13 and 17 October 2004 (parliamentary and referendum); 19 March 2006 (presidential)	12 April 2002 ("We can't live like this"); October 2004, March 2006	Opposition defeat
Turkmenistan	December 2004 (parliamentary)	None	No change

To assess the impact of external forces, and explain why Ukrainian oranges or Georgian roses grow bigger when watered by American whiskey, I shall assess the relevance of external forces to the five points mentioned above.

In a country there are some forces that operate at top political level and others that operate at bottom level. The first three points above mentioned (attitude of local elites, compactness of the opposition and external influences) are referred to as 'top', still acknowledging that they can be affected by some bottom forces. The last two points (civil society and population) are considered bottom forces. Top and bottom are not separated and present a high degree of interdependence. However, I have distinguished in this paper what I call top-top, top-bottom, bottom-top and bottom-bottom influences.

The first are the relations between politicians of the concerned countries. It is top-top the attempt of Russia to send Ivanov to mediate the Georgian crisis, EU pressures on Ukraine to hold fair elections and promise of financial assistance to encourage democratization of a country. Top-bottom are the influences of external forces to those forces at the bottom of the society, namely civil society and people, and can range from financial support to secret trainings in revolutionary techniques. Bottom-top are those events from the people or civil society of a foreign country that will ultimately affect top politics, like the training of Ukrainian politicians on mass management and the setting of a civic campaign. Finally bottom-bottom are those relations that do not depend at all on politics and range from international NGO networking to people's donation in favour of *revolutionaire*. It is all the more complicate to separate each factor from the others, they are rather interrelated, but for the sake of the analysis I shall try to define an (arbitrary) border between them and treat them separately.

Table 2: a tentative scheme of external influences (more elaborated in the conclusions)

	Top influences	Bottom
Elites	USA, EU, Russia, Neighbours, information on neighbour revolutions	Know how on how to smash down non violent protests. Handbook of the counterrevolutionaries
Opposition	Neighbour oppositions (like Yabluko or the Communist Party in Russia), US or EU support, know how by more politically developed countries galvanization thanks to other revolutions	NGO training on revolutions for politicians
External	Diplomacy	Protest movements in front of consulates and embassies
Civil society	Financial assistance that can come from governments also	International networking, physical support, petitions
People	Information, galvanization, material support (food and commodities during a revolution)	Mouth to mouth information, action of solidarity by the people for local people, travelling to the country to show support,

Local elites

A first main cluster of forces are external influences on local elites. Since pre-revolution regimes were quite dependent on Russia, the role of agencies in this respect can be summarized as the West working on the compactness of governmental forces, trying to weaken them and to prompt some main figures to ally with the opposition, and Russia trying to do the opposite.

Little doubt that throwing a couple of bombs and accept Russian soldiers to enter the country would solve the political crisis, and probably much quicker than it happened, but one should account that political elites are not always ready for this and external influences have a role in the setting up of the conditions for a colour revolution but also in the way of solving the political crisis once it happened.

In addition, regardless of Russia, had Ukraine and Georgia a deeper ideological commitment and were their elites convinced they had the legitimacy to be there and that the state monopoly on force could be used against some citizens for the good of

all the citizens (see Sharp 1991 on this point, also Gellner 1983 and??), both revolutions would have turned out much more red than orange or rose.

The starting point to analyse the way elites can be affected by external forces is their level of compactness. This can be measured by how committed they are to a common ideology that, in turn, is correlated with the kind of regime. I would suggest that post-totalitarian regimes are more 'at risk' because their ideological commitment is weaker than in totalitarian or authoritarian regimes (I rely on the classification by Linz and Stepan 1998). Being the pro-regime factions together more for convenience than for ideological commitment, it is easier to pull some forces out of the pro-presidential forces and undermine the regime.

In addition, current elites decide of the fate of the opposition, where the opposition is illegal, foreign powers cannot get in touch with them without risking of being accused of subversive activities, and thus losing trust of the local regime.

External influences can help diffusion of an alternative ideology that might sound enough appealing to pro-governmental forces and considering joining the opposition. In Ukraine an example is the 'conversion' of Poroshenko, an oligarch that joined Yushchenko after 2002 or with the restructuring of the Socialist Party of Ukraine and its commitment to 'European Socialism' in contrast with the Progressive Socialist Party strongly pro-Soviet. Those are not isolated cases, Tymoshenko and Yushchenko themselves were raised politically in a communist environment. In Georgia a similar tendency is visible, with Saakashvili, Zhvania and Burjanadze politically born under Shevardnadze and gradually forming an opposition.

Even more relevant is the presence of a potentially separatist party (Abashidze) as a time bomb in the Georgian parliament. Shevardnadze could count on Abashidze in moments of crisis but their relations were not ideal. Elite (stiff) competition transformed the political classes and made them more volatile, more ready to support the current wind than commit ideologically to a position.

This, in turn, played in favour of Western diplomats, for they were able to contact some part of the majority and undermine its stability. The role of Russia was

specular, supporting those political forces that were the best to preserve their interest in the country but as long as they did not pose an internal threat. For example Russia granted support to the communists in Ukraine only after they represented a lesser evil than Yushchenko, refraining from doing so before to limit the popularity of a communist ideology in Russia itself. In addition, maintaining close ties with oligarchs in both countries, Moscow secured some sort of affection and the tacit promise that they would not try to alter the status quo. This could also be done through the use of separatist regions, agitated in case of necessity (see mainly Abkhazia and Crimea) and used together with gas as stick and carrot to keep elites under control.

Another important point is the negotiating power of elites. Limited availability of natural resources generates dependence from other countries that gain in influence. Both Georgia and Ukraine depend on external assistance for provisioning. Russia was able to play with gas strongly enough to keep a hand in the countries. By the same token, EU and US were able to negotiate some democracy for some dollars and euro. In this respect both Ukraine and Georgia had kept a rather neutral position between East and West. Thanks to an ideology subordinated to pragmatism, they were accepting help from both sides and concerned by what both sides could think of them (which is not the case of 'oil democracies' like Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan or even Russia), allowing independent media, but controlling them, allowing foreign NGOs (in times when NGO were not so suspicious) and exerting little control (Belarus 2002 visit); enjoying advantages of being CIS countries but giving clear signals to the West that they were interested in them (or at least in Western money).

By the same token, this allowed OSCE and Enemo to send a crowd of external electoral observers, those who have not been allowed to Russia recently. By providing the electorate with an alternative vote count, the opposition was able to boost its popularity and increase public anger that ultimately brought hundred of thousands into the streets. This also proved a way to pressure the regime to refrain

from use the force to crash down demonstrations, as this would have been publicly stigmatized.

Even if the elite attitude depends mainly on top-politics factors, there are some things that can go bottom-top. The main one is probably information.

Information does not belong to any of the mentioned categories or better to all of them, but the more accurate, the more the elites are aware of what is happening.

A clear picture of what has happened in Serbia can give the elites a grasp of what might happen there. Should detailed information on what was behind the Serbian revolution arrive to the ears of the authorities, they would know much better how to deal with future protests.

This was not yet the case in 2003 and 2004 but those 'revolutionary' strategies have started to be used also by authorities so that know how on civil actions has prompted political elites to elaborate a counter-revolutionary strategy to deal with the protests. A timid attempt was seen in Georgia, with Ajara sending people to Tbilisi, in Ukraine with people from Donetsk dragged on trains to Kiev but the strategy has been perfected only later, when Kyrgyz authorities have created a clone of Kel Kel or even better, when Putin's children secure a pro-governmental force in case of street protests.

Another main point are expectations. Before the 'rose revolution' few people would expect to see such massive protests, and leading to the resignation of a president after parliamentary elections. As a result Moscow did little to influence the elections, for it seemed it still retained control over strategic places in Georgia, that was risking to be ripped apart from all sides.

Moscow had much more margin of manoeuvre in Ukraine than Georgia. Relations with Shevarnadze were not ideal but he was far better than his alter ego in the opposition strongly west-oriented, risking to worsen even more the Moscow-Tbilisi ties.

By contrast, in Ukraine, a tacit agreement made Russia support the governmental candidate quite openly. This is certainly due to closer ties between the countries but also to the fact that once 'lost Georgia' Moscow did not want to risk to loose a more strategic country like Ukraine.

Opposition

As a general tendency, the West was more interested in the opposition than the East; though there are some exceptions like Moldova in 2005, when Moscow made clear that anybody but Voronin would have been a good for them, or Georgia 2008, given the level of disagreement between Saakashvili and Putin.

On the compactness of the opposition there is little to say. It is up to politicians to form a coalition or not, external forces can only motivate them playing the stick and the carrot. They can suggest the opposition to ally, can make promises for the case in which the opposition outplays the regime but their role is limited.

Since majority and opposition are normally in competition, what is healthy for the majority is unhealthy for the opposition and vice versa. In the Georgian and Ukrainian cases it was the West to have more interest in supporting the opposition. Once Shevernadze's position got threatened, Russia showed a strong interest in backing the government and both Armenia and Azerbaijan expressed solidarity for the Georgian president. This was all the more visible in Ukraine, where Russia was acting in order to have the maximum gain from the elections.

The ultimate desire of each party is not to form an opposition but to have a major role in domestic politics. Thus it is possible to tempt it and prompt it to change its position, weakening the opposition, thing that happened in 2002 in Ukraine.

Apart from building relationships based on personal and ideological affinities, there is a discourse of convenience to do. The opposition in 2003 in Georgia was West-educated and West committed, the problem was that it had not succeeded to unite so far and risked not to do so even in 2003, before the elections and during the protests

with Saakashvili demanding the president's resignation and Zhvania and Burjanadze only a more honest recount. A similar discourse is doable for Ukraine, where the opposition had failed to compact in 2002, when they de facto defeated all other parties, allowing a coalition between the communists and a pro-presidential party to form a majority.

In 2004, European aspirations of three main parties were strong enough for uniting most of the opposition, while the communists refused to support the government. The opposition was also motivated by the awareness that their action would be supported by the West, at least implicitly, like happened both in the Georgian and Ukrainian case.

From its side, Russia had to play the opposite game, that is to undermine the formation of a coalition. Whilst it was too late to be done in Georgia, in Ukraine it started from the very beginning, with biased information on Yushchenko and the opposition delivered through Russian channels. In addition the fact that in Ukraine some broadcasting hours are rented to Russian channels helped circulation of an anti-Yushchenko discourse. Tymoshenko was also publicly accused of corruption and it was made public that, if travelling to Russia, she would face serious charges. There are suspects that external influences went as far as to help Yushchenko's poisoning, though the truth on the case will probably never be discovered.

Financial support is another issue. Whereas officially Russia did not support any fraction and the West did not send any money to an opposition party, several channels were susceptible to be used. Being the EU and US budget a bit more transparent than the Russian one, funding to the opposition had to come in the form of funding for democratic initiative, from which political parties and NGOs could tap, under condition that they were to use that money to top up their democratic standards.

Colour revolutions have a particularity that is interaction of politics, common people and civil society. They have a strong component of democratization not because the

'democratic' candidate is elected but because people are urged to have an active voice in the politics of a country, which is ultimately the very meaning of democracy. The opposition is supposed to coordinate with civil society and organize actions of civil disobedience. Colour revolutions are more difficult to understand, at least at the beginning, for the high level of coordination between politics and civil society. The Otpor experience in Serbia served politicians in Georgia and so did Kmara with some politicians of the opposition who start thinking of mobilizing masses as a way to change the political direction of a country. Not only NGO activists were in touch but, for the first time, NGO activists entered in strict contact with politicians and were working with them as peers.

However, to involve people in politics is not the easiest task on earth. Besides, people can be encouraged to take the streets but cannot be dragged out to the street. But once people are involved, technology on management of crowds helps at least to find the right way to address to people. True that such technology is to be used by civil society leaders who work closer to the people but there is evidence that politicians themselves (and this is definitely the Georgian and Ukrainian case) got interested in 'how to organize a revolution' and invited foreign experts to learn to do that. I could not find any direct involvement in Georgia as I did in Ukraine (Mostovskaya 2004) but the insistence with which several politicians wanted to go to the street suggests that they were aware of such methods (Interview Enough).

Thus I see at least two ways bottom-actors can influence top politics. One is to inform on the very fact that this kind of actions exist and get to the ears of the opposition, that learns of strategy of civil disobedience and that it works (information is again vital here), the other is to provide some leaders with knowledge in crowd management, both theoretical and practical, whereas the countermeasure is the creation and support of opposite movements. On the other hand those actions can be stigmatized by other forces like pro-governmental NGOs in neighbour countries (read Russia) producing counter-propaganda. (See interviews with Markovic, Svistovich)

Information is also present in this case. Previous events in Slovakia, but especially in Serbia (for Georgia) and in Georgia (for Ukraine), galvanized the opposition and made clear that regimes were not indestructible, which also undermined the confidence of pro-presidential elites that could consider passing to the opposition, as it happened in many cases.

External forces

This is the main focus of this paper and is dealt with throughout the whole analysis. I can only include what I have not analysed so far that is the moment when crisis erupts and more political actors are fully authorized to be involved, through diplomacy.

A main way to have a voice is to send key persons to take care of domestic policies and this is when OSCE, EU, US can have a main voice in domestic affairs. In Georgia there is less visible presence of Western forces with the US ambassador unable to connect with the negotiation table in the few days before Shevarnadze resignation. Pressure had been strong the previous days, when several statements condemning the elections and the way they had been organized made clear to Shevarnadze that he would not get away so easily; failure to propose an acceptable solution would have meant the end of his popularity in the West. Russia was less radical and sent its Foreign Minister Ivanov, who was well known in Georgia and knew all the political figures in the country, to help out negotiations.

The Ukrainian case is somehow more complicate with the EU that takes a leading role, under the guide of Poland and Lithuania. One should not forget that in May 2004 10 new countries entered the EU, 3 of which were former soviet republics, interested in the fate of their former fellow countries and eager to engage in such political dialogue. The other 7 countries were former Soviet satellites and also aware of the political dynamics of soviet politics.

This is why, once crisis was declared, the EU was able to negotiate as peer of Russia as Ukrainian neighbour. Solana was sent there, along with Kwasnieski (Poland) and Adamus (Lithuania).

In addition, Washington's radical position made difficult to include the US in the negotiation team. Having refused to acknowledge the election results and preparing a list of politicians whose entry into the US would be restricted should Yanukovich become president, Washington lost the right to act as a neutral mediator at the negotiation table.

A point worth exploring is violence, or better the absence of violence. Why people were arrested in Belarus or killed in Uzbekistan but not in Georgia or Ukraine? The option of violence was very realistically considered in both cases. Rumours that Russian tanks had passed the border circulated in Ukraine whereas in Georgia there was little need for that, given that Russian troops were already in the country (see Abkhazia). In both cases it was considered to send provokers into the crowd so that the police would be 'obliged' to intervene to stop riots buses full of Ajarian supporters arrived in Tbilisi and trains from Donetsk arrived in Kiev. The secret police considered intervening and this would have been the end of the protests, Russia would say that is its internal affair, and the status quo maintained.

However, there were several strong pressures on both presidents. Little doubt they were aware not to have the control of the whole defence forces and that such an order would have prompted widespread violence, risking to prompt a Ceucescu scenario. However both presidents had already shown that they cared about their reputation in the West, they had been searching recognition and credit, albeit to a limited extent, in the US and EU, and were not ready to risk their reputation, conversely from Karimov or Lukashenko.

This is also due to the limited availability of raw materials in Georgia and Ukraine that can not propose themselves as 'oil democracies' and have thus to show a commitment to democracy to target western financial assistance.

Two TV channels are to credit for their desire to provide impartial information and they both risked being shut down several times, though in the end survived. Attempts to close Rustavi 2 ended up with a major political scandal and Channel 5 went on hunger strike that eventually made the government revoke the order of shutting down the channel.

It is difficult to separate external influences from domestic forces. The more I write the more I understand that they are so linked that writing about external influences result into explaining domestic dynamics and vice versa. However it is important not to limit those revolutions to mere political events as the real revolution has happened to people who have radically changed their attitude. For one thing they are interested in politics and thus politicians have to reckon with their opinion as well.

Civil Society

The role of civil society in post-soviet societies had been largely underestimated until the rose revolution, at least by the East, while this became a main target of Western support. However, once the lesson was learnt civil society became also a point of confrontation, with specular East-oriented NGOs gathering people to counterbalance West-oriented NGOs. The importance of NGOs and civil society in general is enormous and external influences could go through several channels.

External influences on civil society in former soviet countries are traceable back to the 60s and 70s, when a green movement was proposed in a non-political form to avoid repression and some grassroot NGOs started working with local *konsomol* organizations for joint pioneer camps (Polese 2005). A further boost of civil movements was provided by the URSS ratification of the Helsinki convention in 1975 That allowed legal ground for protection of dissidents or of people politically active but not necessarily supporting the government.

External influences do not necessarily need to come from the 'West'. The wave of protests in 1989/1990 in the Soviet Union had a strong domestic component (though I

would not exclude a Western component, see Robertson 1993) and protest actions supported one another, morally or physically. Like in the Baltics, protests in Ukraine were peaceful and led to some results (albeit peaceful is not the word for Tbilisi protests), Prime Minister Vitaly Masol resigned, upon request of hunger strikers.

With the opening up of the country, foreign NGOs started mushrooming in Georgia and Ukraine, along with governmental programmes of support to civil society. The most famous are certainly Soros supported Renaissance Foundation or USAID but a growing number of NGOs of different sizes started working in Ukraine in the nineties and the tendency to be hassled by government officials was less strong than elsewhere. Ukraine and Georgia were far more easy a work environment than its neighbours. NGOs and Think Tanks were increasingly winning credibility and where the Civic Education Project (Open Society Institute) could work undisturbed while in Minsk was subject to tax inspections every other week. NGO activity was constantly expanding, both in the east and west of the country, and touching more and more aspects of people's daily life, from education to HIV, from orphanages to ecology.

Both Georgian and Ukrainian activists were in close contact with the Albert Einstein Institute in Boston and a Russian and Ukrainian version of Sharp's book *From Dictatorship to Democracy* was made available on its website.

In addition a 'revolution maker' like Markovic has been called to Kiev (Politique international), Otpor activists have helped setting up the Georgian scenario (Enough!) and then Kmara activists have passed this experience off to Ukrainian politicians (Rakhmanin).

Even if top-bottom (and bottom-bottom) influences on civil society have been largely overestimated and not publicized (Kaskiv, Mostovskaya), I would suggest they had a main role. A first point to start with would be the overall amount of financial assistance granted by foreign actors, and in particular the US, to programs of support to democracy. In this category we can have direct support for independent information (in Ukraine was *Ukrainska pravda* and *Zerkalo nedely*, in Georgia was..),

this also includes training in capacity building, democratic initiatives and support in local and foreign NGOs working in the country.

To some hardcore activists the fact that some non governmental initiatives were funded by the US government would sound at least ambiguous. By all means, the fact that some NGOs like the Open Society are partially funded by the US government raises the problem on whether consider them top or bottom forces.

The number of civic initiatives funded since the nineties is high, consistently higher than any other country in Georgia and Ukraine. To the extent that 'Soros' (the name with which the Open Society is identified) is also called '*vedro*' (bucket) by NGO workers.

An important point is the pressure of governmental forces on civil society to unite or stay united. This was more visible during the PORA campaign in Ukraine as merging of yellow and black PORA was a *conditio sine qua non* to have access to funding, but also in Georgia Kmara was encouraged to act jointly with other civic movements to maximize the impact on the population.

Even when money is not provided, a large number of programmes could boost human capital working in the third sector. Trainings must not be on revolution necessarily but at least provide an alternative conception of democracy and the awareness that people can change things, which I have experienced in a number of projects not necessarily related with western funding.

However, most important has revealed also the structuralization of activists' ideas. They have often declared that they had understood many things on civic disobedience by themselves, but meeting with more experienced people helped them to better structure the way protests could be organized.

As stakes get higher, civil society may be demonized by the regime. Accusation of terrorism and false evidence is a way to discredit NGOs in the eyes of the public opinion. This can be also balanced by foreign diplomacy repeatedly supporting people and people's decision and reminding that civil society is an integrating part of

a healthy society. In particular, foreign diplomacy can also help when the government takes a harsher attitude on those movements in the Georgian and Ukrainian cases worked better than elsewhere because both presidents were concerned of their image in the West that had made clear that there was a limit to antidemocratic attitudes.

Bottom forces in foreign countries may have a major role. First of all they can provide information or counter-information. Once people are more aware, public opinion might push top politicians to intervene. The louder the voice, the more the resonance the more effects it will have on international public opinion and politicians, that is a further step to the safety of protesters and civil society activists.

With the increasing importance of internet in daily life it has become all the more simple to communicate and build up international networks. As a result, independently from what was decided at political level, some NGOs entered in touch and provided for a wider vision of events. In Georgia some hardcore activists entered in touch with Otpor and then OK activists and in Ukraine the same. Technical know how on revolutions was spread also through these channels. In this respect not only the US but also the European Union allowed a high number of Georgian and Ukrainian NGOs to take part in trainings, workcamps and other grassroot initiatives that would eventually affect the mentality and attitude of youth workers and local leaders.

Foreign civil society could also have a role in domestic boosting of civil society by pressuring government through petitions, sit ins and other bottom-up initiatives like picketing of Russian embassies in several countries contemporarily.

There is a limit of what some hundred people can do out of a Russian embassy in a country, but once this happens on a regular basis in a high number of countries and is advertised, it becomes an instrument of international politics as well.

People

External actors can 'provoke collective hysteria and bring oranges filled with narcotics to keep people protesting for days with no desire to go back home' (see Yanukovich's wife's speech). This is at least one version of the authorities during the orange revolution.

More realistically, there are a number of things that can be done. One is to make people believe that they will succeed. Once a revolution has already happened in a neighbour country or at least a country with a similar past, people can see the option more real and believe they might succeed, what Bessinger sees as a modular phenomenon (2007). Once information on what has happened elsewhere permeates the country, people start thinking differently.

Like in the case of the opposition, the ultimate choice is domestic. It is up to people to choose whether to go or not down to the streets, but thanks to external influences the very alternative can be made possible. People might not be aware of this possibility, may not see it real and information coming from outside can make it into a real option.

As I said above, to find the border line between main actors is not easy, people worked very close to civil society and it is not possible to say that an initiative helped solely civil society or people, most likely it helped both. I shall re-mention here financial assistance because, once people were in the streets, they needed support.

Both protests happened in a very cold moment and people needed to stay warm. Figures on financial assistance during the protests are not available (and probably will never be) but it is sufficient to remark that feeding and keeping warm a crowd reaching 100.000 (Georgia) and one million (Ukraine) costs money. I have eyewitnessed how this money came also from domestic donations but it would be hard to believe that this was enough. For one thing, more than one informant told me that some embassies were contributing with commodities (gloves, sweaters and the 'notorious American boots') which made them sure that the money was spent for the people and, on the other hand, minimized the risk of being accused of 'financing' a revolution.

Like in the case of civil society, diplomatic pressure can help avoiding bloodsheds. Whereas it is known that most of the work has to be done at domestic level (see Sharp at theoretical level and Chivers for a factual analysis) to split forces at the Ministry of interior, awareness of being under observation gave the regime less margin of manoeuvre and eventually resulted in defection of a number of key figures that prejudged military intervention.

Further in this direction, statements can come in favour of the people to counterbalance public accusations of inciting a civil war or destabilizing the country. They could come in different forms but the message behind is 'well dear president, if such a crowd is now out in the street, there might be a reason'.

Support can come also from other bottom movements and in recent times the number of internet petitions is dramatically increased. If there may be a doubt on their influence on politicians, this at least raises awareness of people who will start dedicating more attention to the issue once they hear of it from other channels. Some may opt for an internet support of the protests, continuing the chain of petition, spreading information. New technologies have given people much more power in civil actions and the orange revolution has also been labelled an internet revolution (Kyj 2005), whereas in Georgia the use of mobile phone was equally relevant. Information is a powerful tool and people can do much for it and from it. Once the information spread, foreign supporters of protest movements arrived in Georgia and, even more, in Ukraine. Presence of foreigners, in particular Westerners, has a double advantage. On the one hand they are a sign of foreign attention for the country and the relevance of the protests but on the other Westerners enjoyed a 'guest' status in the Soviet Union and this still remains, so presence of foreigners may further keep the authorities from using the force.

Finally there is a material aspect that is financial support to the revolution, that can come from common people in the form of donations.

Conclusions

As a result of the analysis one could propose the scheme. This is not at all complete and comments are welcome but the main ways foreign actors can impact the outcome of a revolution is below. In bracket I have mentioned the countermeasure that would lead to an opposite result. This can come as a reaction to the foreign influence or can come beforehand, in which case foreign influence may counterbalance the mentioned action.

Table 3: ways to influence the output of a colour revolution

<p>ELITES</p> <p>Top-top (foreign countries, foreign political parties, foreign diplomatic representatives)</p> <p>Undermine the regime: hijack pro-governmental forces</p> <p>Spreading the idea of an alternative (Open ideological support)</p> <p>Promise advantages to some forces or threat them (Financial assistance or support economic stability)</p> <p>Pressure the regime not to use force (offer army and diplomatic support to use it)</p> <p>Pressure to hold free elections (alternative electoral monitors who endorse the elections as fair and free)</p> <p>Promise financial and material assistance (especially in countries with little raw resources)</p> <p>Bottom-top (foreign civil society, foreign common people)</p> <p>Information (counter-information)</p> <p>Know how on protest movements and revolutions (elaboration of a counter-revolutionary strategy)</p> <p>OPPOSITION</p> <p>Top-top</p> <p>Party support and cross country opposition alliances (hijack some opposition forces, public accusations to some figures)</p> <p>Financial assistance (repression of domestic forces allied with the country's opposition)</p> <p>Bottom-top</p> <p>Training for protest management (support to create specular movements to confuse people)</p> <p>Interaction NGO-politics (threats not to use civil disobedience)</p>

EXTERNAL FORCES

Top-top

Diplomatic pressures on the regime (diplomatic support) in moment of crisis, including sending a key political person for negotiations

Bottom-top

Picketing of embassies and consulates, boycott at people's level

CIVIL SOCIETY

Top-bottom

Financial assistance

Training, capacity building,

Open support for civil society (accusation of civil society)

Diplomatic pressure not to repress civil society (evidence for crashing civil society)

Bottom-bottom

Information (counter-information)

International networking of grassroots or NGO movements

Trainings

Petitions

PEOPLE

Top-bottom

Financial or material assistance during protests (financial or material assistance to repress protests, spreading of rumours on a military intervention)

Diplomatic pressures not to use forces in statements (ideological support for the use of force)

Open statement to support people's power (public condemnation of civil disobedience action)

Bottom-bottom

Participation in pro-protests actions in home countries

Internet support

Travelling to the concerned country

Information (counter-information)

Donations

A striking detail is the disbalance of top and bottom possibilities. As a general tendency the ideological dimension is stronger at bottom level. This is why government can count on lots of pro-regime diplomatic actions but cannot count on the support of bottom forces. Said more explicitly, if Russia wants to support Shevarnadze or Yanukovich it could do this from the top-level but civil society and population are almost a monopoly of the West for Russians will not bother themselves contrasting the opposition. By the same token 'civil society' movements in favour of the regime will be initiated by the government rather than being an initiative of 'real' civil society. However Russia can spread fake information (as it did during the revolutions) hoping that its population would organize itself and contrast the colour revolutions. An analysis of forces active in a colour revolution would need much more space than an academic paper but this was a first attempt to single out the main ways external actors could have a voice in a protest movement, drawn from the Georgian and Ukrainian cases, when foreign influences are much more visible than in Uzbekistan or Belarus.

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