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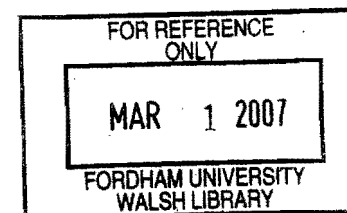
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The Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation

Youth Movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine

Olena Nikolayenko

One of the most prominent features of peaceful revolutions that have recently swept Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine was an extraordinary upsurge in youth mobilization demanding a fundamental political change.¹ For several weeks, thousands of young people mobilized by the youth movement *Pora* (It's Time!) weathered harsh winter conditions in Kiev's tent city to protest against large-scale vote fraud during Ukraine's 2004 presidential election. A year earlier, members of the youth movement *Kmara* (Enough) poured into the streets to challenge the official results of the parliamentary election in the Republic of Georgia. Both *Pora* and *Kmara* drew their inspiration from Serbia's youth movement *Otpor* (Resistance), which played a crucial role in toppling Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000. This remarkable upsurge in youth activism provides an intriguing case for the study of social movements in nondemocratic contexts. Never before had youth mobilization unfolded on such a scale in postcommunist societies. Why did the youth movements emerge in postcommunist states that fall somewhere between democracy and dictatorship? What explains cross-national similarities among them?

These two interrelated questions can be addressed in a model that incorporates the concept of political generation into political opportunity framework and diffusion theory. Political generation is defined here as "a group of individuals who have undergone the same basic historical experiences during their formative years."² Specifically, the collapse of Communism and the subsequent social transformations created the context for the formation of the post-Soviet generation. The rise of this post-Soviet generation triggered the unprecedented upsurge in youth protests. Further, shared concerns about the escalation of authoritarian practices and similarities in political opportunities provided the basis for the "attribution of similarity," which in turn led to the cross-national diffusion of protest strategies.³

A dominant concern of past social movement research has been to explain cross-national differences, whereas few studies have concentrated on movement resemblance.⁴ Motivated by an increasing cross-national flow of ideas, recent scholarship shifted the focus to the influence of original social movements on successive ones.⁵ McAdam posits that the distinction between initiator and spin-off movements provides a rationale for developing a more fine-tuned approach to the study of mass mobilization.⁶

Consistent with this view, the emergence of the initiator movement spurred by the presence of favorable political opportunities sets in motion a protest cycle and provides impetus for the rise of successive movements. In the context of postcommunist politics, the interaction between political generations and political opportunities gave rise to the initiator movement *Otpor* and set a stunning example for civic activists in other postcommunist states. Following Serbia's lead, peaceful revolutions swept through Georgia and Ukraine. The cross-national diffusion of ideas facilitated the formation of spin-off youth movements in these countries.

Though scholarship on collective action in nondemocratic contexts has grown over the past two decades, the long-prevailing dichotomous approach to the distinction between democracy and nondemocracy obscured the peculiarities of citizen mobilization in hybrid regimes.⁷ At the core of such regimes is a combination of democratic and authoritarian features.⁸ On the one hand, democratic institutions are formally present in hybrid regimes. On the other hand, powerholders manipulate and violate democratic procedures to the extent that the ruling party can not "readily be turned out of power if it is no longer preferred by a plurality of the electorate."⁹ The nature of hybrid regimes had a profound influence on the choice of protest strategies by the rebellious youth. A fierce crackdown on mass media motivated civic activists to undertake grass-roots campaigning. Moreover, technologically savvy protesters effectively used modern communication technologies to circumvent government control over the dissemination of information.

Proponents of the generational approach postulate that "the events experienced by youth during their formative years will have an enduring impact that is manifested in the political process."¹⁰ A political generation is most likely to emerge in the wake of dramatic social change, and a wave of transitions from Communism provides a valuable opportunity to explore this issue.¹¹ Political aspirations of the post-Soviet generation played a crucial role in propelling political action. Although other segments of the population became engaged in protest rallies, most observers of local politics agree that youth was the engine of peaceful revolutions.¹² The generational advantage enabled young people to initiate and organize protest activities in which older generations took part in the aftermath of fraudulent elections.

Mapping Out Cross-National Similarities

Youth movements are broadly defined here as "organized and conscious attempts on the part of young people to initiate or resist change in the social order."¹³ From Giugni's theorizing about "those aspects of movements that frequently resemble each other," five movement characteristics are singled out: timing of formation, issues, mobilizing structures, framing processes, and action repertoires.¹⁴ Identification of commonalities across youth movements can foster a more incisive discussion of movement origins.

The schedule of national elections played a vital role in determining the timing of youth mobilization. *Otpor* started as a group of a dozen university students in October 1998 but grew to 70,000 in the 2000 presidential election. Likewise, Georgia's 2003 parliamentary election, associated with the initial phase of transition from Eduard Shevardnadze's rule, motivated youth to form *Kmara* in February 2003. In Ukraine *Pora* emerged less than a year before the 2004 presidential election to prevent the installment of Leonid Kuchma's handpicked successor through flagrant electoral fraud.¹⁵ With the multiple failures of the existing regime, the youth viewed transparent elections as a viable mechanism to transfer power peacefully from the ruling elite to the opposition.

Subsequently, the overriding issue of youth movements was the demand for free and fair elections and, in particular, the recognition of electoral victories by the opposition. A lead of opposition candidates in public opinion polls suggested that change was possible, provided that citizens averted a blatant manipulation of the electoral process by the incumbent government.¹⁶ In the words of *Pora*, the mission of the youth movement was "to prove to the ruling political elite that the power it gets from people is not given forever and prove to the citizens that they have enough power in their hands in order to channel the development of their country in the direction they need."¹⁷ As a necessary condition for democratic elections, press freedom became a salient issue of youth protests. By challenging government restrictions on mass media, young people pressed for unbiased reporting and fair media policies.

Moreover, educational reform was on the minds of many youth activists. Opaque procedures for the selection of university management and the growth of corruption within the educational system have been major sources of youthful discontent.¹⁸ Yet rampant corruption and the failing standards in the educational sector were only a part of the problem in postcommunist hybrid regimes. A high degree of centralization within the educational system provided leverage for political pressures on youth activists.¹⁹

Students were the driving force behind youth mobilization. Over the past decade university enrollment increased by 71 percent in wartorn Serbia, from 91,227 in 1990–91 to 156,754 in 1999–2000. Enrollment in Ukraine's higher education institutions also rose, though at a slower pace. The share of students in Ukraine's population between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, increased from 21 to 32 percent over the last decade. Likewise, the number of students in tertiary education in Georgia increased from 135,100 in 1999 to 153,300 in 2003.²⁰ A high concentration of young people in one place provided ample opportunities to build networks of protesters.

This analysis provides partial support for the argument that schools with a history of activism are more likely to breed another generation of student activists.²¹ Universities in capital cities emerged as strong mobilizing forces due not only to their strategically important location, but also to their long-standing appreciation of academic freedom and democratic values. The University of Belgrade had a history of resistance

to Stalinist dogmatism after World War II, and its students rallied against the regime in 1968 and 1996. Similarly, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) set itself apart from other Ukrainian universities by adopting a western-style approach to higher education. The Ukraine without Kuchma movement initiated in response to the president's alleged involvement in the murder of Georgiy Gongadze, editor of the online publication *Ukrainska Pravda*, drew a number of NaUKMA students into the street and jumpstarted the publication of an independent student newspaper *Maidan-Mohylianka*. In contrast, Tbilisi State University remained a reform-averse institution in the post-Soviet period. The organization of an independent student government, for example, was met with administrative threats, ranging from harsher grading standards to expulsion from the university.²²

Against this backdrop, youth activists have employed the "injustice frame" to "negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change."²³ While exposing the unfairness of the current regime, youth defined themselves in opposition to powerholders and called for political change. The short, easy-to-remember names of the youth movements conveyed a common message: it is time to put up resistance to the authoritarian practices; there has been enough corruption and crime.

By recognizing the importance of irony in upsetting the power discrepancies in hybrid regimes, the youth movements successfully lampooned official propaganda. *Otpor*'s image of a black clenched fist illustrates how the red fist, a symbol of Bolshevik struggle against the czar, was recycled to articulate a demand for social change. Likewise, Ukrainian activists integrated the egg theme—Yanukovich's hospitalization as a result of an egg thrown at him during the election tour—into street performances and online publications to ridicule the government's baseless reports about the abortive attempt on the prime minister's life.²⁴

Transcending national boundaries, rock music, moreover, became a common symbol of resistance for postcommunist youth.²⁵ Calls for united political action were at the core of Serbia's rock tour *Vreme Je*, Georgia's Get Out to Vote concerts, and Ukraine's Patriotic Rock Tribune. In legitimizing mass mobilization, musicians linked local protests against fraudulent elections and the transnational struggle for justice. The Ukrainian hip-hop tune "Together We Are Many, We Cannot Be Defeated," for example, was in sync with the Chilean protest song "El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido." Furthermore, civic activists envisioned these large gatherings of young people as opportunities to campaign for voter participation and recruit new members.²⁶

Action repertoires—"a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice"—highlight another aspect of cross-national similarities.²⁷ Since most mass media came under heavy pressure from the

ruling elite, youth activists relied upon direct contact with people to expose the current regime and enlist support of third parties.

In all three countries, posting stickers was one of the most effective strategies to deliver the political message to a large audience. To signal the possibility of Milosevic's defeat, *Otpor* carried the slogan *Gotov Je!* (He Is Finished) on more than a million stickers weeks prior to the election. Moreover, stickers served as a mechanism to reinforce shared understandings of the political system. By designing a set of stickers based upon citizens' comments about the essence of *Kuchmizm*, *Pora* sought to link personal grievances of isolated individuals with features of the current regime.²⁸

Another effective strategy to heighten public awareness of the system's vulnerability was spray-painting political slogans. In publicizing its first message, "Resistance until Victory," *Otpor* demonstrated its strong commitment to struggle against Milosevic and stimulated public interest in the movement's ideas. Similarly, graffiti played a prominent role in *Kmara*'s information campaign for months prior to the election. By contrast, *Pora* seldom resorted to spray-painting, which may be explained by its desire to uphold an image of law-abiding citizens.

In searching for an antidote to violent protest, the youth movements used street performances as a means of reclaiming the public space and undermining the legitimacy of the current regime in a creative manner. Outrageous flaws in the country's leadership provided a fertile ground for scripts. *Otpor* condemned war crimes committed during the ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia and called for the prosecution of Milosevic. In Ukraine Yanukovich's criminal record was spotlighted in street performances. With original scripts and emblematic props, these street performances created a strong linkage mechanism between youth activists and ordinary citizens.

In sum, the youth movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine had striking similarities in timing of formation, issues, mobilizing structures, framing processes, and action repertoires. Similar worries over massive electoral fraud motivated young people to protest. Student activists used universities as mobilizing structures that provided ample opportunities for networking. By relying on direct contact with people, the youth were able to break the information blockade and reach a large audience. A wide array of protest techniques, including stickers and graffiti, street performances, and rock concerts, were employed to sustain a sense of solidarity and galvanize public support.

Theoretical Framework

Political opportunity framework, diffusion theory, and generational theory offer theoretical insights into these movements. Each of these theoretical approaches by itself produces a limited view of movement origins. A synthesis of them yields a more complete picture of youth mobilization through the integrated examination of three questions.

When did the youth movements emerge? Who was the driving force behind mass mobilization? Why are there cross-national similarities among the youth movements? The strength of political opportunity framework is its ability to explain the timing of initiator movement emergence. Nonetheless, an adequate theoretical discussion of mass mobilization must somehow identify social characteristics peculiar to movement participants. In this respect, generational theory enriches an understanding of individuals who push for change. By the same token, the integration of diffusion theory into the model not only serves to illuminate certain aspects of movement origins, but also accounts for cross-national movement resemblance.

The political opportunity framework represents a predominant perspective on the origins of social movements. The core argument of this approach is that changes in the political environment influence the chances for mass mobilization.²⁹ Although there is little consensus regarding the political features that trigger contention, Tarrow's conceptualization of political opportunity provides a fruitful starting point to assess the likelihood of protest activity from a comparative perspective.³⁰ In discussing various dimensions of a political opportunity, Tarrow singles out increasing access to participation, elite divisions, shifting alignments, influential allies, and repression. Furthermore, students of mass mobilization in nondemocratic contexts have stressed the significance of media access and press freedom in sustaining collective action.³¹ Since government restriction of mass media is common in postcommunist hybrid regimes, this element of political opportunity structure deserves special attention. Moreover, with increasing transnational linkages, the impact of international context on social movements can not be neglected.³² In light of previous research, this inquiry focuses on six dimensions of political opportunity: elite divisions, shifting alignments, influential allies, repression, media access, and international context.

Motivated by the inexorable spread of ideas, another strand of research has concentrated on the analysis of diffusion processes within and between social movements. Broadly defined, diffusion means "the flow of social practices among actors within some larger system."³³ A unifying characteristic of this approach is the assumption that social movements are not isolated actors, but transmitters and adopters of a diffusing item. Consequently, mechanisms by which ideas diffuse constitute a major area of research.³⁴ One contention is that high levels of direct interpersonal contact between adopters and transmitters increase the probability of diffusion.³⁵ Another line of inquiry focuses on nonrelational channels of diffusion and, in particular, the identification of adopters with transmitters in the absence of direct ties. Theorists operating within this tradition deem mass communication as an important device for the spread of social practices.³⁶ Given its capability to remove the barriers of time and place, cyber-diffusion has recently received much scholarly attention.³⁷ While there are differences in the theoretical emphasis of the two approaches, they can be considered complementary, since the attribution of similarity occurs in both. As McAdam and Rucht point out, "a mix of relational and nonrelational channels" tends to mediate a diffusion process.³⁸ The

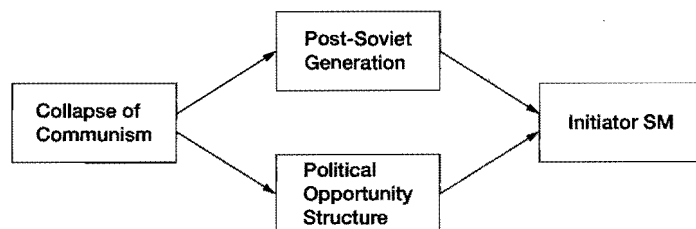
analysis of nonrelational channels, however, is particularly important in studies of cross-national diffusion, since extensive interpersonal contact between movement participants is quite rare.

A growing body of work in diffusion research is concerned with the usage of new telecommunication technologies by protesters. Rafael, for example, highlights the crucial role of the cell phone in the rapid mobilization of Filipino civilians to overthrow President Joseph Estrada in January 2001.³⁹ A recent wave of protests against authoritarian practices in postcommunist hybrid regimes provides a fertile ground for research into the impact of sweeping technological advancements on mass mobilization in non-democratic contexts. Paradoxically, an increase in the usage of new communication technologies comes hand in hand with an upsurge in old-fashioned face-to-face campaigning. Large-scale manipulation of democratic procedures by the ruling elite, an inherent characteristic of hybrid regimes, compels civil society actors to supplement a mix of new communication technologies with grass-roots activities. In the face of heavy political pressures on mass media, youth movements seek to establish direct contact with people by plastering stickers, spray-painting political slogans, and staging street performances.

In addition, the generational theory flags the importance of generational confrontation in explaining an outburst of youth activism. This approach to the study of politics emerged from the writings of Mannheim, who defined "a common location in the social and historical process" as a salient feature of the same generation.⁴⁰ A key assumption underpinning this perspective is that dramatic social changes experienced by individuals during their formative years will exert long-lasting effects on their political dispositions. As an example of drastic change, the collapse of Communism provides an excellent opportunity to explore the issue of generational replacement.⁴¹ The linkage between political generations and social movements, however, is often neglected in postcommunist studies. A recent wave of youth mobilization in postcommunist hybrid regimes opens up a fresh opportunity to analyze the salience of political generations in times of peaceful revolutions.

The proposed model ties together strands of the arguments presented in political opportunity framework, diffusion theory, and generational theory. It draws upon McAdam's distinction between initiator and spin-off movements and identifies separately factors conducive to the emergence of the initiator movement and processes leading to the rise of the successive ones.

Figure 1 indicates that the collapse of Communism triggered two sets of processes pertinent to the emergence of the initiator movement. First, the disintegration of the Communist system has altered the power balance in state-society relations by opening up access to broad-based political participation. After the abandonment of Marxist-Leninist ideology, a wide variety of political parties competed for electoral support. Moreover, in response to the formal abolition of censorship, mass media criticized inefficient public policies and corrupt governmental officials. Although the period of

Figure 1 A Model of Initiator Movement Emergence in Postcommunist Hybrid Regimes

liberalization in postcommunist hybrid regimes was short-lived and the ruling elite soon stepped up authoritarian measures to maintain its grip on power, citizens enjoyed a larger degree of political freedoms during that period than under Communist rule. The move away from Communism had long-term effects for youth mobilization in the post-Soviet era. Since the state apparatus was unable to exert absolute control over its citizens, shifts in the political environment opened up a possibility for a drastic change.

Moreover, a wide array of political, economic, and cultural transformations after the fall of Communism and dissolution of the Soviet Union formed the post-Soviet generation. Adolescence is a crucial period for the development of political dispositions.⁴² During their formative years in the 1990s, youths aged between fourteen and twenty-three witnessed at least three major social transitions: from one-party rule to a multiparty political system with an increase in access to political participation, from a planned to a market economy, and from an appendix to the Soviet Union to an independent state with a distinct national identity.⁴³ Each of these social changes left its imprint on postcommunist youth and set it apart from its parents and grandparents raised under Communist rule.

The removal of Communist ideology from its privileged position in Soviet public discourse has altered the lens through which the young generation perceives politics. By and large, postcommunist youth rejected the idea of tight social control over ordinary citizens. Empirical research demonstrates that young people, compared to the older age groups, tend to espouse a significantly higher appreciation for democratic values and principles.⁴⁴

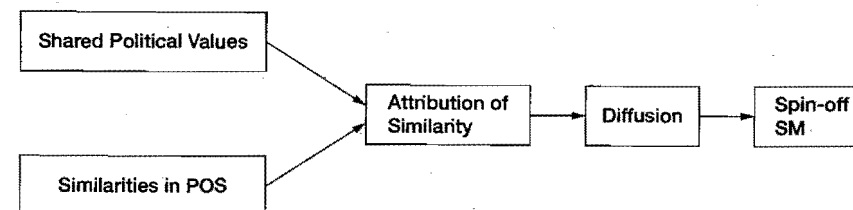
Furthermore, economic liberalization has drawn fault lines between the young and the old generations. After the collapse of social safety net, the elderly sank into acute poverty. At the same time, the growth of the private sector expanded the range of job opportunities for young, well-educated employees, making them a major beneficiary of the open economy. As a result, competing visions of economic reforms divided the

postcommunist citizenry. Survey data have shown that young people tend to express higher support for market-oriented reforms than older citizens.⁴⁵

Another cleavage between the young and old generations runs along cultural lines. Decades of Russification, an official Soviet policy aimed at imposing the domination of Russian culture throughout the multiethnic Soviet Union, left deep scars in the social fabric of former Soviet republics. Spurred by liberation from foreign oppression, the search for a national identity resurfaced with renewed force.⁴⁶ Consequently, young people became engaged in the process of reviving their national culture. In addition, postcommunist youth embraced many aspects of western youth culture. In this regard, computer games, internet surfing, and text messaging have become favorite pastimes of young people.

Nevertheless, the nature and extent of political, economic, and cultural reforms in the post-Soviet period were not uniform across the region. Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine demonstrate differences among the satellite states and the former Soviet republics. Compared to the political elite in the former Soviet republics, Marshal Tito had retained a larger degree of autonomy from the Kremlin.⁴⁷ Rather than subordinate its own interests to the demands of Soviet leaders, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia resisted a planned economy and the imposition of Russian culture. However, the ruling elite in both the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia relied upon non-democratic procedures to stay in power. Moreover, the coercive apparatus safeguarded the dominant position of a single ethnic group (Russians and Serbs, respectively) by employing an arsenal of repressive measures. Consequently, young people in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine have shared a similar experience of living through the collapse of the Communist system and the disintegration of the multiethnic states.

The interaction between political opportunities and political generations triggered the rise of the initiator movement in postcommunist hybrid regimes. Once the post-Soviet generation perceived an opportunity for political change, it revolted against the status quo. As Figure 2 shows, common characteristics of the post-Soviet generation evident in shared political values, along with similarities in political opportunities, laid

Figure 2 A Model of Spin-Off Movement Emergence

the groundwork for the attribution of similarity, which, in turn, furthered diffusion processes across social movements. Because the post-Soviet generation shared a common concern over increasing authoritarian measures by the ruling elite and perceived a similar pattern of political opportunities, youth activists succeeded in adopting social practices of the initiator movement and carrying out a wave of protests against the status quo across the national boundaries.

Emergence of Youth Movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine

Political Opportunities in Serbia Elite divisions were muted in Serbia, since Milosevic had ruled the country for more than a decade by fueling interethnic hatred and instilling a deep sense of insecurity and mistrust among the Serbian elite. Nonetheless, a newly formed coalition *Zajedno* (Together) received a majority of votes in fourteen of Serbia's nineteen biggest cities during the 1996 local election and brought thousands of citizens into the streets in response to Milosevic's attempt to deny the opposition electoral victory. Student engagement in this outbreak of mass protests—the organization of their own daily marches in Belgrade—provided Serbian youth with valuable political experience.

With widespread popular distrust for politicians, *Otpor* refrained from forming an alliance with any political party. The youth movement found allies among other civil society actors, including *Nezavisnost*, Serbia's only independent trade union federation, and G-17 Plus, a group of proreform economists. *Otpor* also tried to establish a dialogue with the police by persuading law enforcement agents that they were all victims of the political regime. Moreover, the youth movement drew support from foreign allies. The International Republican Institute (IRI), for example, funded the participation of *Otpor* activists in a training session led by a retired U.S. colonel Robert Helvey. Drawing upon Gene Sharp's ideas and his own experience in Burma, Helvey prepared young Serbs for nonviolent resistance to the existing political regime.⁴⁸

The incumbent government, in turn, has employed a variety of repressive measures, including labeling the movement participants as drug addicts and terrorists.⁴⁹ By placing the blame for the assassination of a Milosevic loyalist on *Otpor* members, the law enforcement agency orchestrated massive arrests in May 2000. Furthermore, the ruling elite sought to quell student activism by eliminating university autonomy and curtailing academic freedoms.

Likewise, most media outlets critical of the political regime were closed down or subject to recurrent harassment by the state apparatus. Political pressures on journalists have intensified during the military conflict in Kosovo. The enforcement of the "Decree on Special Measures in the Circumstances of NATO's Threats of Military Attacks against Our Country" of October 8, 1998, resulted in the closure of media outlets for "spreading fear, panic, and defeatism."⁵⁰ Notwithstanding state repressions, the radio

stations Radio B2-92 and Radio Index gave voice to the opposition. Until the University of Belgrade's administration blocked access to OpenNet, Serbia's first internet service provider and host of Radio B-92's web site, it was also a major source of independent news and a popular online forum.⁵¹

The external forces played a crucial role in undermining Milosevic's grip on power. On the one hand, a series of UN economic sanctions isolated Serbia-Montenegro internationally. As living standards deteriorated, the population grew frustrated with the ruling elite. On the other hand, the United States increased financial aid to local organizations critical of the political regime.⁵² The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) allocated more than \$25 million to the opposition in Serbia.⁵³ International support provided Serbians tremendous leverage in waging a struggle against Milosevic.

Similarities in Political Opportunities in Georgia and Ukraine Divisions within the ruling elite prior to youth mobilization were most pronounced in Georgia. The Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG), Shevardnadze's power base, fragmented in 2000–2003.⁵⁴ The defections of Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania, and Nino Burjanadze and the subsequent emergence of the National Movement and the United Democratic Party delivered a serious blow to CUG strength. Compared to Georgia, dissent within Ukraine's ruling elite was more subdued, as President Kuchma tried to dispose of challengers with legal and semilegal means.⁵⁵ Yet the appointment of Yushchenko as prime minister disturbed the status quo. The reforms in the energy sector spearheaded by Vice Prime Minister Julia Tymoshenko altered the distribution patterns of economic resources among powerful vested interests. Although Yushchenko and Tymoshenko were swiftly ousted, the political blocs they subsequently formed, Our Ukraine and the Tymoshenko bloc, sharpened divisions within the ruling elite in preparation for the 2002 parliamentary election.

The voting patterns in Georgia and Ukraine demonstrated the growing support for opposition parties. The progovernment CUG obtained 1.5 percent of the seats in *sakrebulo* (city councils) during the 2002 local election.⁵⁶ Moreover, CUG ended the election race without a single seat in Tbilisi *sakrebulo*. At the same time, the two opposition forces, the National Movement-Democratic Front and the Labor Party of Georgia, won 24 and 25 percent of seats in the city council, respectively.⁵⁷ Although the two major winners of the local election espoused different political views, the main conclusion drawn from the election results was that an antigovernmental image had a wide appeal to young people and the elderly alike.⁵⁸ Ukraine's opposition parties enjoyed a parallel success in the 2002 parliamentary elections. Yushchenko's bloc won 112 of 450 seats in parliament, and Tymoshenko's bloc secured twenty-one seats.⁵⁹ Two other political parties that articulated an anti-Kuchma platform, the Communist Party of Ukraine and Socialist Party of Ukraine, won sixty-six and twenty-four seats, respectively. In the long run, if they rallied around one candidate, the opposition parties widened the possibility of bringing down Kuchma and his entourage.

The youth movements found allies both in their home countries and abroad. The initiator movement *Otpor* shared its expertise with young people in the former Soviet republics. Moreover, foreign governments individually and through such international organizations as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Council of Europe were vocal in their criticism of massive electoral fraud, undermining the legitimacy of the alleged electoral victories.

A distinctive feature of resource mobilization by the Ukrainian youth movement, however, was its heavy reliance on domestic actors. Local businessmen became a major source of financial support for protesters by printing publications and providing communication and transportation services free of cost.⁶⁰ Five consecutive years of economic growth facilitated a visible reduction in poverty and the expansion of the enterprise sector.⁶¹ At the same time, excessive interventions by state agencies (mainly with the purpose of side payments to the bureaucracy) continued to be a major obstacle to the development of small and medium business. Frustrated with the status quo, a number of Ukrainian entrepreneurs contributed their resources to the mass mobilization against Kuchma's regime.

The powerholders tried to discredit the youth movements as organizations that disrupted public order and threatened individual security. The Georgian state-controlled media portrayed *Kmara* activists who put graffiti on the building of the ministry of interior affairs as hooligans. Ukraine's law enforcement agents undertook more radical measures. They orchestrated the arrest of several *Pora* activists after a police raid on the movement's headquarters and the alleged confiscation of 2.4 kilograms of explosives.⁶² These actions reveal remnants of Soviet mentality among politicians in postcommunist hybrid regimes. The fabrication of cases against dissidents was a common feature of the Soviet legal system, and the former Communist apparatchiks found it a convenient countermobilization technique in the post-Soviet era.

Furthermore, the Ukrainian university management played an instrumental role in hunting down youth activists. By mid October 2004 at least 350 *Pora* activists were arrested, fifteen students were expelled from the university and/or dormitory, and twenty-seven young people were physically harassed.⁶³ Educational administrators who refused to bend to political pressures were bombarded with unscheduled tax inspections and egregious harassment by local officials. Because of the increasing efforts by the university administration to stifle student activism, the ministry of education became a common site for student protests.

The media situation deteriorated in Georgia and Ukraine in the late 1990s.⁶⁴ The ruling elite mounted an assault on independent media to curtail the flow of information during the election period. Rustavi-2, Georgia's independent television station with a strong focus on investigative reporting, faced a flurry of libel suits. Some journalists were subject to physical attacks or death threats for their critical coverage of current events. In the aftermath of Kuchmagate, a political scandal that erupted after the public release of conversations allegedly taped in the presidential office, Ukraine's presidential

administration further curbed the press freedom by preparing and distributing *temnyky*, secret instructions to top managers in the media sector and editors of major television channels and newspapers on the content and style of news reporting.⁶⁵

In response to those government actions, protests demanding the protection of press freedom were held in Georgia and Ukraine. A large rally against a police raid on Rustavi-2 and a state threat to close it was held in October 2001. Signaling the vulnerability of the political regime, Shevardnadze let Rustavi-2 remain on air and dismissed his whole cabinet. Compared to Georgia, the magnitude of political pressures on Ukrainian mass media were higher. The Ukraine without Kuchma protest movement spurred by Kuchmagate failed to remove the incumbent from power.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, Channel 5, launched by Petro Poroshenko, a wealthy businessman from the Yushchenko camp, gave youth activists airtime, spreading their ideas nationwide.

In addition, the internet played a vital role in providing an alternative source of news during the orange revolution. The underdeveloped internet infrastructure crippled the efforts of Georgia's online media to reach a wide audience, while Ukraine's internet community experienced a marked growth.⁶⁷ According to Freedom House reports, 1.9 percent of Georgians in 2003 and 8 percent of Ukrainians in 2004 used the internet.⁶⁸ The volume of internet traffic soared during the election period in Ukraine. Sputnikmedia.net reported that the number of Ukraine's internet users increased by 39 percent in November 2004, compared to the previous month.⁶⁹ A number of online publications delivered in-depth news of election violations and mobilized the opposition to Kuchma's regime.

Heightened awareness of the international community about blatant vote rigging put enormous pressures on the ruling elite in Georgia and Ukraine. Massive electoral fraud during Georgia's parliamentary elections provoked open criticism of Shevardnadze's rule by the U.S. Department of State. As Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty pointed out, "that was the first time ever that the U.S. has openly accused the leadership of a former Soviet republic of rigging an election."⁷⁰ Likewise, the United States refused to accept the results of Ukraine's November elections as legitimate and cautioned President Kuchma against the use of violence to disperse the protesters.⁷¹ By the same token, the International Election Observation Mission issued a statement pinpointing the failure of state authorities to meet a considerable number of OSCE commitments and other European standards for democratic elections, immediately after the second round of Ukrainian presidential elections.⁷² Hundreds of international election observers flocked to Ukraine to monitor the rerun of the second round. Under the banner of Canada Corps alone, 463 volunteers arrived in Ukraine as election observers in December 2004. A strong presence of election-monitoring missions narrowed the choices of the incumbent government in orchestrating electoral fraud.

Diffusion Processes The role of *Otpor* in removing Milosevic from power set a stunning example for young people in postcommunist hybrid regimes. Ideas traveled across

national boundaries both through relational and nonrelational channels. Especially important diffusion processes within the youth movement were technological advances in mass communication.

Membership in the same political generation deepened the links between the initiator movement and the successive ones. Young people in their late teens and early twenties constituted a large share of civic activists.⁷³ The average age of *Otpor* members, for example, was twenty-one.⁷⁴ Movement participants shared a common experience of growing up in the postcommunist period, which significantly influenced their world-view. Similarities in political values and political opportunities provided a strong basis for the attribution of similarity among movement participants. This identification played a vital role in cementing both direct and indirect ties between youth activists. Two additional factors were conducive to the transnational diffusion of ideas. First, university education along with proficiency in English and/or Russian greatly facilitated international communication and travel. Second, moderate restrictions on the freedom of movement and the relative political openness of host countries coupled with the financial support of external actors created favorable conditions for the transnational exchange of ideas through interpersonal contact.

Moreover, engagement of nongovernmental organizations to promote democracy created a supportive environment for the cross-national diffusion of movement ideas. A number of them, including the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, Liberty Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, and Open Society-Georgia Foundation, channeled their resources toward voter education and voter participation programs in Georgia and Ukraine.⁷⁵ By taking advantage of voter mobilization among young people, civic activists indirectly benefited from election-related projects. Pro-Russia political pundits, however, exaggerated the size and the impact of western aid by advancing the so-called conspiracy theory. Proponents of this perspective asserted that mass mobilization in postcommunist states was the direct outcome of a U.S. scheme to undermine Russia's power in the region.⁷⁶ Youth activists vehemently denied these allegations. In an interview with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Otpor* leader Aleksandar Maric clearly presented this point. "If citizens in a respective country are not interested in change, in replacing the authorities in a peaceful, democratic, and lawful way, no one can 'import' revolution from abroad."⁷⁷

The attribution of similarity increased the probability of direct contact between youth activists. The Belgrade-based Center for Nonviolent Resistance staffed by former *Otpor* members emerged as a major training center for civic activists from postcommunist states.⁷⁸ Serbian youth shared its expertise with *Kmara* and *Pora* activists during their meetings before the fraudulent elections. Moving beyond a core group of activists, in-country workshops and summer camps provided training for a larger number of young people. A summer camp outside Tbilisi in spring 2003 and a formal gathering of 300 young people in the Crimea in summer 2004 were designed to build up the skills of civic activists. In addition to face-to-face contact, interpersonal ties between movement participants took the form of email correspondence.

One of the major advantages of the internet as a diffusion mechanism was its mediation of ideas both between and within youth movements. Although only a small fraction of the local population in postcommunist states was wired, young people formed the majority of regular internet users. During the initial stage of the movements' development, electronic media, which documented nonviolent resistance by *Otpor*, emerged as a rich depository of useful information. Later on, the youth movements launched their own web sites to keep protesters informed of current events and coordinate collective action. Furthermore, another web-based medium—online forums—enhanced the instantaneous exchange of information and opinions by building a transnational network of protesters. Since its inception in December 2000, *Maidan* has established itself as a major online forum for civic activists in Ukraine.⁷⁹

Moreover, the broadcasting media contributed to the diffusion of movement ideas and the mobilization of masses. Unlike state-controlled television channels, Rustavi-2 and Channel 5 provided positive coverage of youth mobilization. Furthermore, Ukrainian journalists at state-run UT-1 and progovernment Channel 1+1 refused to broadcast the censored news after the fraudulent election.⁸⁰ Finally, foreign mass media broadened the scope of the confrontation by delivering images of the peaceful revolutions worldwide.⁸¹

The distribution of Gene Sharp's 1993 book *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation* vividly illustrates how a more traditional mechanism for transnational diffusion—the written word—has contributed to the spread of protest strategies. The book's content—practical advice on how to organize nonviolent resistance to dictatorship—initially caught the interest of *Otpor* activists. Civic Initiatives, a Serbian nongovernmental organization, with the support of the Boston-based Albert Einstein Institute, printed 5,500 copies of the booklet *Od Diktature do Demokratije*.⁸² Later on, Ukrainian activists drew upon the institute's financial assistance to print 12,000 copies of the Ukrainian-language publication. In addition, it became available for free download on *Pora*'s web site. Consequently, movement participants could draw a strong link between their struggle against authoritarian rule and previous efforts peacefully to resist the dictatorship.

One of the recently popularized communication devices most extensively employed by Ukrainian activists was the cell phone. Text messaging was used for rapidly mobilizing protesters and reaching supporters in remote areas without incurring high costs. There is a number of reasons for the effective usage of communication technology. From the economic standpoint, the size of the telecommunication market has grown at an unprecedented rate in Georgia and Ukraine. Over a four-year period, the share of mobile phone users in Georgia has increased six times, from 50,000 in 1998 to 300,000 in 2002.⁸³ The rate of growth in Ukraine's telecommunication industry was also high. The number of mobile phone users jumped from 6.5 million in December 2003 to 11.67 million in November 2004 in a population of about 49 million.⁸⁴ Technologically savvy teenagers and young adults constitute the lion's share of these consumers. Consequently,

a text message can reach a large number of potential protesters. Besides, short message service is much less expensive, compared to the cost of making a telephone call. Finally, the cell phone has become an indispensable part of youth culture.

Overall, a combination of direct and indirect ties strengthened by the attribution of similarity propelled the cross-national diffusion of movement ideas.⁸⁵ In addition to interpersonal contact and written publications, young people capitalized on advances in communication technology to transmit information and exchange opinions through email correspondence, online forums, internet publications, and text messaging.

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the comparative analysis of youth movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine. First, resemblance among social movements has far-reaching implications for explanations of movement emergence. Since the original movement exerts detectable effects on the successive ones, the distinction between initiator and spin-off movements allows researchers to develop a more nuanced explanation of mass mobilization during a protest cycle. The interaction between political generations and political opportunities gave rise to the initiator movement that set in motion a protest cycle in postcommunist states. Furthermore, shared concerns about the onset of authoritarian practices and similarities in political opportunities provided the basis for diffusion processes that stimulated the emergence of spin-off movements.

Second, a combination of authoritarian and democratic features inherent in hybrid regimes conditions the choice of protest strategies. Because the ruling elite tried to constrain the openness of the political system by clamping down on mass media, youth movement participants reclaimed the public space. By distributing stickers, spray-painting political slogans, organizing rock concerts, and staging street performances, civic activists delivered their message, legitimized their action, and mobilized supporters. In addition, advancements in communication technology allowed protesters to circumvent governmental control over the transmission of information and facilitated the transfer of techniques of nonviolent resistance to dictatorship across the national boundaries. Text messaging and the internet also played a role in altering the power balance in these hybrid regimes.

Finally, generational conflict is relevant for societies that have recently undergone rapid political, economic, or cultural transformations: The wave of youth mobilization in postcommunist states demonstrates how tensions over the political future of the existing regime spill over into the street. The new generation that emerged from the debris of the Soviet Union aspires to live in a society free from the social control mechanisms employed under Communist rule.

NOTES

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Reconsidering Seniority Bias

Aging, Internal Institutions, and Union Support for Pension Reform

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Because of the dramatic aging of both populations and labor forces and the crisis of pension systems that occurs in its wake, most advanced industrialized countries face political battles over pension reform. These battles not only are fought in the electoral arena, but also are negotiated among and between the social partners and government. How does the graying of organized labor affect unions' responses to the challenge of pension reform? A common perception, rooted in rational choice assumptions, is that aging union memberships translate into increased union resistance to substantial pension reform. Institutional research offers a corrective to the thin rationalist view, highlighting how macro-level features of the political economy (for example, neocorporatist policymaking and encompassing union structures) help to define unions' interests. The account offered here emphasizes the formation and articulation of preferences at the meso-level to explain how unions' internal organization shapes both the preferences of individual union members and the expressed policy desires of union leaders.

The seniority bias thesis states that aging union memberships result in union pressure to preserve the pension policy status quo.¹ But other research suggests that aging populations do not affect welfare states uniformly. Indeed, relatively aged populations can lead to more social spending for the young when neocorporatist decision-making structures are present.² And pensioners' organizations, including pensioners' unions, are often more reform-oriented in their claims on the pension system than elderly voters are.³ These findings suggest that large numbers of pensioners in unions may, under certain circumstances, cause peak-level unions to support pension system retrenchment rather than oppose it. How pensioners are represented within unions, rather than how many pensioners belong to unions, shapes unions' positions on pension reform.

Significant pension reform consists of programmatic changes that reduce benefits and/or increase contributions for current workers in order to improve pension system solvency in both the short and medium term. Two features of internal union organization, the degree of centralization of union federations and representation of pensioners in the sectoral unions of their former employment or in their own pensioners' unions,