WHEN "IT'S TIME" TO SAY "ENOUGH!"

Youth Activism before and during the Rose and Orange Revolutions

in Georgia and Ukraine

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the emergence and development of two youth opposition campaigns, *Kmara* in Georgia and *Pora* in Ukraine, campaigns which were part of the "coloured revolutions" which took place in Eastern Europe in 2003 and 2004.

The thesis identifies, analyzes and compares the influence and the role of youth activism in post-communist countries, and attributes a new role to the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns as vanguards of oppositional protest and transmitters of public grievances in the under-researched context of semi-authoritarian regimes.

Two sets of questions are answered in this study, which relate to how and why youth opposition campaigns occurred and developed in Georgia and Ukraine. These questions are addressed through a comparative analysis of the political and social contexts in which narratives on *Kmara* and *Pora* are placed.

Based on the combination of four main approaches to the study of social movements – viz. political opportunities, resource mobilization, framing processes, and diffusion – the analysis enabled deep insight into various aspects of the emergence and development of *Kmara* and *Pora*'s campaigns and exposed commonalities and differences between them. The study confirms that the fixed and volatile features that decided on the nature of Georgian and Ukrainian regime provide a key tool for understanding the outburst of youth political activism in a hybrid form of a political system.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Stefania and Paweł.

For their love, support, and encouragement.

Acknowledgments

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ALPE	Association for Law and Public Education
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CUG	Citizen's Union of Georgia
CVU	Committee of Voters of Ukraine
EU	European Union
FNG	For a New Georgia
GYLA	Georgian Young Lawyers Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Komsomol	All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth
KPU	Communist Party of Ukraine
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSGF	Open Society Georgia Foundation
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PSC	Polling Station Commissions
PVT	Parallel vote tabulation
Rukh	Popular Movement of Ukraine (*Narodnyi Rukh Ukrainy*)
SDPU(U)	Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United)
TEC	Territorial Electoral Commissions
TSU	Tbilisi State University
U.S.	United States
UNA-UNSO	Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian Nationalistic Self Defence
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USU	Ukrainian Student Union (*Ukrainska Studentska Spilka*)

Chapter 1:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.   Research context

The unprecedented development of social movements in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s which was followed by non-violent breakthroughs and the consolidation of a functioning democratic political order appeared to be only one of many possible outcomes of the political transition in post-Soviet space (Ekiert 1991: 285). Not all post-communist countries followed the way of liberal democracy. Some were stuck halfway on the path of transition between authoritarianism and democratic consolidation; some have witnessed democratic regression rather than progress (Kuzio 2005a). Nonetheless, only a decade was needed to shake the well-embedded semi-autocratic regimes and give democracy new impetus in unexpected ways and places (McFaul 2005). Once again, the domino-effect of velvet revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) gave new impetus to the declining democracies in post-Soviet countries. Apart from being just another example in the sequence of victorious "people power", these revolutions share a certain novelty: the key role in each case was played by a well-organized youth protest movement.

In the Republic of Georgia, President Shevardnadze's declaration that he would not run for office again made the parliamentary elections an ultimate test of opposition strength before presidential elections scheduled for 2005. The rigged election and Shevardnadze's unwillingness to compromise, however, led to an earlier than expected change of president. Dissatisfied protesters led by young *Kmara* activists and unified opposition leaders seized the parliament building and forced Shevardnadze's resignation even though the presidential

elections were scheduled for 2005. During the presidential election in 2004 in Ukraine, on the other hand, the problem of incumbent selection destroyed the political calculus on which president Kuchma's political balance rested. Subsequently, after the elections were rigged in favour of the regime's appointee, Viktor Yanukovych, the well-organized opposition campaign led by young *Pora* activists rallied up to a million of Ukraine's citizens on Kiev's main square to express their discontent with ballot fraud. As a result, a few members of the Central Election Commission found enough courage to refuse to certify the final count. The Supreme Court annulled the original results and scheduled a second run-off election in which an opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, won.

The several days of mass protest in Tbilisi and Kiev that contributed to these events were indeed a unique phenomenon. Whilst many contemporary political scientists were amazed by the rapidity with which former Soviet satellites such as Poland moved from totalitarian regimes to lively democracies, some were also puzzled by the failure of former Soviet republics to effect the transition from authoritarian to democratic government. Similarly to the development of political regimes, the emergence of civil society in post-communist countries took different paths and proceeded at various speeds. In the cases of Georgia and Ukraine, a decade was not enough to activate democratic instincts and transform the momentous mass political movements of the late 1980s and early 1990s into an effective civil society. Thus, prior to the "coloured revolutions" no one would have believed that youthful enthusiasm could become an inspiration for the political radicalization and mobilization of previously disengaged post-communist societies. This thesis focuses on this undeniable power of youth activists' initiatives and treats them as an inseparable element of the recent successful breakthroughs in Georgia and Ukraine. As will later be argued, the considerable role of young *Kmara* and *Pora* activists helped to create a strong nationwide

resistance movement against electoral fraud, which became pivotal in bringing change to rigid political structures.

2.   Review of the relevant literature

The post-communist "coloured revolutions" received a great deal of attention in academic literature due to their unexpected appearance, considerable outcomes, and their spread from one country to another within a relatively short period of time.[1] The fact that they succeeded in overthrowing well-established semi-authoritarian regimes by galvanizing hitherto ineffective opposition forces supported by a mobilized public encouraged political scientists to search for common explanations for their success. What received the most coverage were "the key common ingredients" that were usually recognised as inflammatory causes necessary for post-communist breakthroughs to occur (first listed by McFaul 2005: 7, and later modified by others e.g. Beissinger 2006, D'Anieri 2006a, Bunce and Volchik 2006, Kuzio 2006, O'Beachain and Polese 2008). If taken together, these "ingredients" would include:

- a hybrid form of democracy with an unpopular incumbent;
- weakened ties between the regime and the police or military;
- a united and organized opposition with strong representation in the legislature;
- the presence of electoral fraud and enough independent media to quickly announce the falsification of voting results;
- the organization of radical youth movements using unconventional protest tactics to undermine the regime's popularity;

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[1] For the purpose of this research, "coloured revolutions" are defined as waves of mass, non-violent, anti-regime protest which emerge in response to fraudulent elections and lead to the annulment of altered voting results, thus bringing to power oppositional forces.

- massive public mobilization following the announcement of fraudulent electoral results; and

- external influence in terms of support for development of local democratic movements, diplomatic pressure, and widespread electoral monitoring.

Moreover, to explain their significant impact the above-listed factors are usually embedded in a wider context of preceding political crises that seriously undermined a regime's legitimacy and generally poor economic performance or a growing degree of inequality (and expectations) in the face of relatively good economic performance (Konieczna 2005, Marusov 2006). Altogether, these longer-term structural aspects as well as more proximate variables are distinguished as determinants of attitudes of both current elites and population, who become the key agents carrying out revolutionary messages (Wheatley 2005, Åslund and McFaul 2006).

Although scholarship remains divided over the weight of each factor listed above, most studies that have addressed the problem of revolutionary regime changes in post-communist countries in the early 2000s have denoted certain political circumstances as one of the possible explanations for the appearance of these phenomena. Bunce and Wolchik (2006: 299), for instance, highlight the specifics of the post-communist context - particularly in countries that combine illiberal leadership with hybrid political systems - as one of the crucial factors for the spread of rebellious moods across the region. Similarly, McFaul (2005) and Beissinger (2006) point to the existence of corrupt, patrimonial, semi-autocratic regimes as creating opportunities that are crucial for democratic opposition to challenge unpopular politicians. As is further explained in Chapter 3, due to their hybrid nature such regimes continue to hold regular elections and allow limited space for political competition. At the same time, they equally do not hesitate to apply anti-democratic measures, including electoral

fraud, to maintain their grip on power. By doing so, they undermine their own legitimacy and open the space for mass public mobilization whose starting-point is always a fraudulent national election (Beissinger 2006, Tudoroiu 2007).

When turning to foreign engagement in electoral processes in Georgia and Ukraine, the problem is often linked to the presence of democracy-promoting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and democracy assistance programmes sponsored by the West. They are generally considered as having an impact on struggling democracies in terms of offering long-term support of civil society (including youth activism) and electoral mechanisms (e.g. Carothers 2007). The role of the democracy-promoting community in political transformations should not be overestimated, however. In fact, before the fateful elections, there was a growing conviction that a whole generation of "democracy aid" based on the creation of nearly standard portfolios of aid projects fitted poorly to hybrid regimes (Carothers 2002, Nodia 2002). This was also upheld by eyewitnesses' assessments of the Rose and Orange Revolutions who conveniently stated that Western support played only a marginal or indirect role in those events (e.g. Mitchell 2009). Thus, what seems problematic with such accounts is that they often limit their view of foreign involvement by trying to assess its direct impact on various groups of participants of "coloured revolutions". Moreover, they rarely include other players than Western external actors in the circle of influential powers. There are, however, exceptions from this trend. Sushko (2006), for instance, highlights the role of Western actors in the context of their reaction to Georgian and Ukrainian events - such as the withdrawal of support for illiberal incumbents or the rapid condemnation of unfair elections. Wilson (2005a, 2005b), in turn, brought closer attention to the pre-electoral mission of Russian political technologists who became frequent visitors to Kiev prior to Ukraine's presidential race. One of their most visible "inspirations" for

Ukraine's authorities, he contended, was to fuel the perception of NGO activity as evidence of foreign mischief - inspiration which often becomes the core of the regime's anti-opposition propaganda.

Another set of explanations in the academic literature concerning the "coloured revolutions" phenomenon focuses on the emergence of well-organised, peaceful mass protest and the role of domestic and foreign civil society actors in this process. For example, some of the studies emphasized the limited temporal parameters of elections as an opportunity for mobilization that offered an immediate measure of the success or failure of protests (Bunce and Wolchik 2006, Beissinger 2006). Others concentrated on stolen elections creating an impetus that energised activists and general society by creating a single grievance both groups could focus on simultaneously (D'Anieri 2006a, Tucker 2006). Such circumstances, they argued, changed individual assessments of costs and benefits of participation simply because punishment for anti-corruption actions was less probable than in other situations. It therefore lowered the costs of participating in such actions and/or increased the likelihood of their ultimate success. No less important in these calculations was the reassurance coming from security forces that violence would not be exercised against the protesters (D'Anieri 2006a).

Finally, some attention has also been given to the activation of youth campaigns in support of fair elections (Kandelaki and Meladze 2007). Because these youth groups seemed to resemble one another, most scholars engaged with comparative studies in searching for common "formulae" behind their structures, tactics and overall development (e.g. Binnendijk and Marovic 2006, Nikolayenko 2009). Moreover, the impression that they spread from one country to another within a relatively short period of time has resulted in the notion of "diffusion" being applied to the emergence of *Kmara* in Georgia and *Pora* in Ukraine as campaigns modelled on the Serbian *Otpor* movement (Tarrow 2005). In particular, closer

attention was drawn to the impact of local, national and international activists' networks on spreading the idea of politically-engaged, non-violent youth pressure groups (Simecka 2009).

Interestingly, once the revolutionary euphoria evaporated and once the new leaders who were brought to power by mass civic protest made their first serious mistakes, the optimistic tone regarding the notion of so-called "coloured revolutions" and "awakened" civil society began to disappear from scholarly research. Voices such those of Demeš and Forbrig (2007) who placed the citizens at the core of electoral breakthroughs, or McFaul (2005) who went as far as to call them a "fourth wave of democracy", gave way to more critical evaluations of the events in question. What was initially portrayed as "people's power", the critics argued, proved to be little more than a limited rotation of ruling elites and an elite-manipulated demonstration, often encouraged by foreigners with their own agendas (Tudoroiu 2007, Lane 2009). Over time, the internationally-acclaimed popular upheavals often became more summarized as far weaker than the other main impetus to democratization in post-Soviet countries viz. the EU membership conditionality (Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009). Thus, although "coloured revolutions" brought with them promises of fundamental changes to take place in the countries where they occurred, even if considered as successful, according to recent, more sceptical analyses, they were followed by insignificant or no democratic progress in their wake (Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009).

3.   Rationale

As shown in the previous section, the literature on the "coloured revolutions" has been expanding dynamically over the past six years. In general, most of the previous research has examined these phenomena either more deeply within a single country (Wilson 2005a, Karumidze and Wertsch 2005) or in comparative perspectives (Demeš and Forbrig 2006) –

almost always, however, by focusing on a range of factors that determined the occurrence of the Rose or Orange Revolutions. Whilst such approaches may provide a good description of events related to the promotion of democratic change, they quite often lack an insightful analytical interpretation or give a rather simplistic view of what actually happened in Georgia and Ukraine and why it happened.

Moreover, despite their noticeable presence, much less attention has been devoted to youth participation in these developments. The existing explanations of anti-Shevardnadze and anti-Kuchma upheavals have typically treated youth campaigns as only one out of several influencing factors, and have almost never placed them in a broader theoretical framework. In fact, neither the impact of political regimes nor historical backgrounds have been systematically linked to the development of new, youth-led collective actions which emerged on the eve of the Rose and Orange Revolutions. Thus, even when referred to, *Kmara* and *Pora* have never been described and analysed in an in-depth, conceptually-embedded manner.

It is therefore the aim of this study to draw close attention to the role of youth movements in the post-communist upheavals in Georgia and Ukraine by adopting a perspective from "the bottom". The central argument is that youth groups played a much more significant role in the "coloured revolutions" than has generally been appreciated. Particularly in terms of assuming a vanguard role in mounting a mass protest, both groups skilfully translated social grievances into an active opposition against the authorities discredited by electoral fraud. Hence, instead of simply repeating the notable (but not solitary) impact of *Otpor*'s inspiration, this study examines **why** new actors with their innovative structures were needed in Georgia and Ukraine to engage citizens in defending their democratic rights - particularly since long-time established and generously-supported NGOs were already present to take this role.

Broader political and historical contexts, in which narratives on *Kmara* and *Pora* are placed here, are crucial for understanding this problem. In a region still famous for various societal and political post-Soviet weaknesses, it was mainly due to the inability of political parties to represent different segments of society and the continuous distrust of society towards civil and political institutions that shed new light on the mobilising efforts of young activists. The reason why they deserve special attention is that in the time of revolutions they helped to connect these previously separated spheres of private and political life. As is argued throughout this study, the increased political activity of youth groups compensated for the deficiencies of civil society and political parties in triggering large-scale anti-regime demonstrations. Not only did they manage to reach and mobilise ordinary people to express their dissatisfaction with the existing system, but they also served as the umbrella for people of different backgrounds and viewpoints united by the common aim of defeating a semi-authoritarian regime. Hence, the focus on *Kmara* and *Pora* adds to our understanding of the puzzling phenomenon of mass mobilisation during the Rose and Orange Revolutions.

Their success would not be possible, however, without drawing from the cultural stock of other national and foreign movements. Such linkage not only helped to pass on the flame of student activism across settings, regions and generations, but it also offered templates for organization, which after some innovations could be reapplied outside their original structural locations. It is therefore further explored in this study **how** young activists became successful by making use of experiences from past struggles and by adapting organisational models of non-violent resistance as a means of broadcasting and transforming their demands. Without these insights, analysis of *Kmara* and *Pora* would hardly reflect the motivation of young "revolutionaries" to act as a vanguard of civic protest and their conviction that a new approach towards collective action has to be adopted. Only by addressing intentionality, self-

understanding, access to resources and readiness to innovate on the part of the campaigners will it be possible to give a comprehensive answer to why and how youth campaigns emerged before "coloured revolutions" and what role they played during these events.

Although clearly interrelated, each of these issues is at the core of different explanations of the phenomenon of social movements. This is why components of four dominating concepts in this field of research are integrated in this study into one multifactor approach. Such a combination helps to explain a range of similarities and differences between motivations (why), timing (when) and means (how) behind *Kmara* and *Pora*'s development instead of focusing only on one or two aspects that affected their occurrence. Given that within a great volume of scholarship on social movements almost no attention has been paid so far to the role of youth activism in the former Soviet republics, the focus on *Kmara* and *Pora* undoubtedly enriches current debates in the field in a number of ways. It unravels how nationwide political turbulence associated with elections provided students with leverage against the hegemony of dominant political figures. It accentuates how activists perceived political opportunities in a semi-authoritarian setting and how they constructed messages to attract the broad attention of the media and the general public. It unveils how the political context affected the form and tactics of oppositional groupings and how formal and informal structures of mobilization became advantageous for collective youth action. It also describes how the campaigns were shaped by the transnational diffusion of solutions applied during previous waves of protest and how this process was determined by contextual circumstances and the involvement of other actors. As a result what emerges from these case studies is an in-depth comparison based on genuine stories and firsthand accounts of the "coloured revolutions" that are discussed in the long-term perspective of youth activism in Georgia and Ukraine.

4.   Research questions

The subsequent analysis proposes a comparison of two youth opposition campaigns, *Kmara* in Georgia and *Pora* in Ukraine, that were part of the mass protests in Eastern Europe more than a decade after 1989. It is argued hereafter that young activists from these two movements acted as self-proclaimed intermediaries between ordinary citizens, the state, and civil society. This is a novel approach towards exploring the role of youth activism in post-communist countries, which contributes to both the body of social movement research and to the understanding of civil society in former Soviet republics. In doing so, it attributes a new role to *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns as vanguards of oppositional protest and transmitters of public grievances, and it offers qualitative indicators to the under-researched nature of post-communist societies in the context of semi-authoritarian regimes.

In order to identify how and why youth opposition campaigns occurred in Georgia and Ukraine, what development patterns they followed, and why they assumed such a particular role during the Rose and Orange Revolutions, two sets of questions are answered in this study (see Figure 1). The first set of questions concerns fixed and more volatile aspects that defined the nature of the Shevardnadze and Kuchma regimes. They serve as the main pillars of contextual setting for asking the following questions in order to find out **why** *Kmara* and *Pora* emerged and **why** they assumed the role of vanguards of opposition protest and transmitters of public grievances:

- What were the political factors that contributed to the outbreak of youth collective action at that particular moment?
- Who among the youth was more likely to rebel and why?
- What key political developments facilitated/impeded the success of *Kmara* and *Pora*?
- What was the impact of the external environment?

The second group of questions relates to **how** the student protests in the two countries in question emerged and **how** they assumed the role of vanguards of oppositional protest and transmitters of public grievances:

- What were the movements' goals, organizational structures and tactical solutions and why?

- What resources were crucial for the campaigns' development and how were they obtained?

- What was the impact of external and internal support on resource mobilisation, the campaigns' tactics and organisational structures?

- What were activists' interpretations of reality and how were these translated into their action?

- What was the impact of the media?

Drawing upon these ideas, the research concentrates on the following issues that provided for the movements' success: 1) the semi-autocratic regime type, with a special focus on illegitimate presidency, dividing elites, "routine" electoral cycle and monitored election fraud; 2) the tradition of student protest, pre-existence of interest groups/grassroots organizations and occurrence of transformative events; 3) the application of a novel approach to protest campaigns, accompanied by processes of diffusion and a digital generational gap; 4) independent media, foreign assistance, and "the allure of the West". The framework for such an analysis was borrowed from the main concepts in social movement research, which in comparative perspective help to explain commonalities and expose differences between *Kmara*'s and *Pora*'s campaigns (see Chapter 2).

Figure 1: Main hypothesis and research questions

Kmara and Pora as vanguards of oppositional protest and intermediaries between ordinary citizens, the state, and civil society

WHY | HOW

Key research questions

Why did *Kmara* and *Pora* emerge?

Why did they assume the role of vanguards of oppositional protest and transmitters of public grievances?

How did *Kmara* and *Pora* emerge?

How did they assume the role of vanguards of oppositional protest and transmitters of public grievances?

Specific research questions

What political factors contributed to the outbreak of youth collective action at that particular moment?

Who among the youth was more likely to rebel and why?

What were the movements' goals, organizational structures and tactical solutions, and why?

What resources were crucial to the campaigns' development and how were they obtained?

What key political developments facilitated or impeded the success of *Kmara* and *Pora*?

What was the impact of the external environment?

What was the impact of external or internal support on resource mobilization, tactics and organizational structures?

What were the activists' interpretations of reality and how did these translate into their action?

What was the impact of the media?

Source: Author's compilation.

5. Methodological approach and methods of enquiry

The methodological challenge of the project is the use of Western social movement theories when conducting research into post-Soviet cases. The synthesis combines four main approaches to carrying out research in the field: political opportunities, resource mobilization, framing processes and diffusion; this combination enables deep insight into various aspects of

the emergence and development of social movement phenomena. Themes and selected hypotheses from these concepts proved particularly useful for designing the data collection process and organizing gathered information and are deemed to be the most suitable method for analyzing East European youth movements that lack their own research paradigms (see Figure 2). On the other hand, however, one should be aware of difficulties that may arise when applying Western explanatory models to the three countries under study. Given the complexity of influencing factors, it is expected to reveal some disparities in the application of these theories in the field.

Figure 2: Theoretical approaches and hypotheses
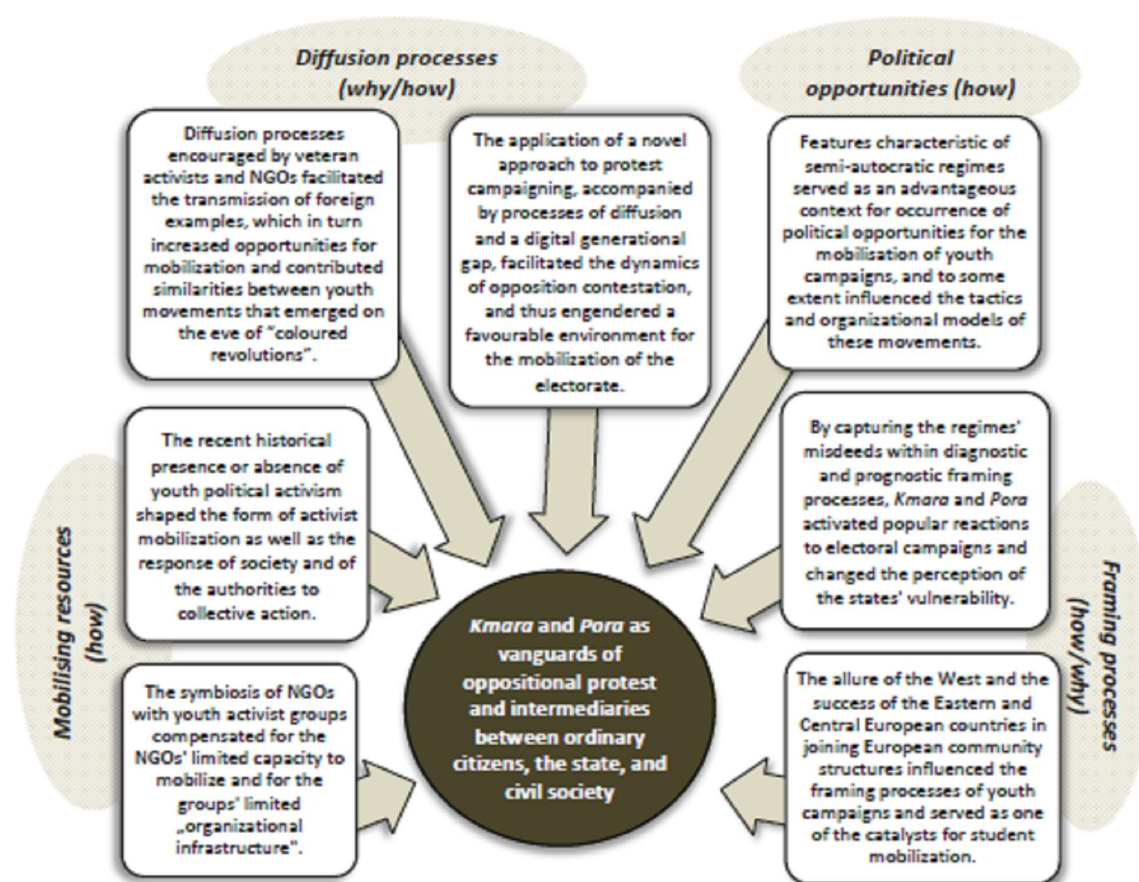
Source: Author's compilation.

The study is based on the "interpretivist" approach and will combine qualitative analysis in the form of text analysis, case studies on *Kmara* and *Pora*, and semi-structured interviews. The data presented in this thesis was acquired from both primary and secondary sources. Primary source material was collected during six months of field research in Georgia (September to November 2006) and Ukraine (May to July 2007). Throughout this time, campaign statements were obtained and about fifty face-to-face semi-structured interviews were carried out to convey ideas and perceptions of protests that flourished before and during "coloured revolutions". Other reviewed sources include key books, periodicals, newspapers and Internet news portals from which the information on political events in 2003 in Georgia and 2004 in Ukraine have been collected.[2] Although both *Kmara* and *Pora* emerged only a few months before the two revolutions, the timeframe of this study stretches back to communist rule in Georgia and Ukraine to describe pro-democracy movements from the late 1980s and early 1990s as well as the waves of protest that shook the countries throughout the decade of transition.

5.1. Comparative analysis of two case studies

In this study, the two youth campaigns are analysed in the context of the successful Georgian and Ukrainian "coloured revolutions". The starting point for selecting these cases for comparative enquiry was the awareness of similarities between the two youth movements in terms of social and political contexts as well as regarding their emergence and development (Table 1).

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[2] The following newspapers and online news services were analyzed: daily English language editions of the Georgian newspapers *Messenger* and *Georgian Times* during 2003, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty data (from 2003 to 2004), *Civil Georgia* Online Magazine (from 2000 to 2004), online publications of *Ukrainska Pravda* (Ukrainian Truth) in both English and Ukrainian versions (from 1999 to 2005), *Zerkalo Nedeli* (Mirror Weekly) and *Eurasia Daily Monitor* (from 2000 to 2005).

Table 1: Fields of similarities

Field	Dimensions	Examples
Social and political context	▪ Openness or closeness of political system ▪ The state's incapacity and/or unwillingness or propensity for repression ▪ Instable political alignments and presence of influential allies ▪ (Un)favourable international political environment	▪ Features of hybrid regime ▪ Russian immediate sphere of influence ▪ Western support
Movements' emergence and development	▪ Pre-existing networks and protest experience ▪ Movement formation and development ▪ Movement tactics ▪ Interpretative frames	▪ History of anti-regime mobilization ▪ Presence of local and Western organizations ▪ Features of post-Soviet civil society ▪ Use of media ▪ Diffusion of methods and tactics ▪ Perception of current situation ▪ Diffusion of ideas

Source: Author's compilation.

Kmara and *Pora* will be analyzed in a three-dimensional comparative perspective - that is, across movements, place, and time of their occurrence. Although the initial idea was to focus on commonalities between the two youth groups, after a deeper analysis some differences that occurred during the process of gathering the data could not be ignored, as they affected the movements' dynamics in a considerable way. Hence, the aim of this approach is to focus on broad similarities while delineating some differences between *Kmara* and *Pora* in terms of the organization, resources and tactics applied by these movements, the impact of the contextual setting in which they emerged, and the particular electoral period that stimulated the development of collective action. In consequence, the following in-depth analysis of the two case studies produced new general observations that broaden our understanding of collective action in semi-authoritarian settings and provide raw material for explanations of future similar phenomena (Hague and Harrop 2004).

Although most approaches to recent youth campaigns that emerged during the "coloured revolutions" have also included the Serbian *Otpor,* a group that served as an example for *Kmara* and *Pora*'s development, this study departs from this trend. The contrasts between this campaign and its Ukrainian and Georgian successors seem too deep, particularly in the context- and movement-related fields that lie at heart of this comparison. In terms of contextual setting, what differed between the anti-Milošević youth movement in the former Yugoslav republic and the actions of *Kmara* and *Pora* was 1) the heavy authoritarian hand of the Milošević regime; 2) the absence of external election monitors during the crucial 2000 elections; 3) international economic and political isolation; 4) and the fact that the former republic of Yugoslavia had no experience of being a Soviet republic. Among the main distinctive factors which contributed to the emergence and development of *Otpor* were:

- its long-term existence and leading position in political critique and social change in the country,

- the central role of *Otpor* in the struggle against Milošević,

- the long history of student activism in Serbia,

- the reliance on a single radio station (instead of Internet and cell phones) in spreading activists' message.

Finally, the Serbian youth movement would remain an anomaly if *Kmara* and *Pora* had not been successful. These two groups surfaced as transnational diffusion products and triggered heated discussions on the spread of "revolutionary technologies" and the prolongation of such kinds of movements in the former Soviet Union.

5.2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were particularly useful for understanding Kmara and Pora mobilization by providing greater breadth and depth of information on these short-lived and thinly-documented youth campaigns. However, the most important contribution this type of data collection method made was the acquisition of knowledge on experiences and the interpretation of reality from the perspective of movement actors or audiences. In this way it was possible to find out how they justified their actions, what their emotions and aspirations were, and how they perceived the present (Blee and Taylor 2002: 92-93). Thanks to such knowledge, it was possible to attribute subjective meaning to individual and collective decisions to form or join collective action. Given that most documentary sources are based on often limited or outdated work carried out by analysts usually involved (directly or indirectly) in the events they describe, this sort of data research offered a broader perspective of a more diverse group of the campaigns' participants and explored new themes and nuances that arose in the course of responses.[3]

The majority of these interviews were conducted with *Kmara* and *Pora* core activists: both with founders of these campaigns and with those engaged in them on a day-to-day basis.[4] They were contacted through previously established friendships with Georgian and Ukrainian students, who – if not involved directly in the movements – identified protesters who made first-hand contributions to the "coloured revolutions". In addition to the youth activists, the group of respondents was widened by interviewing individuals knowledgeable about protest

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[3] Some young interviewees expressed an interesting conviction that a proper understanding of "coloured revolutions" often derives from an outsider's view on these phenomena. As one *Pora* member explained, it was still too early to engage in academic analysis of the protest they have been participating in because "it would be like operating themselves and tear into pieces with cold blood issues which still bring too many emotions". Thus, a very subjective approach to what has happened in Ukraine throughout 2004 has been often mentioned as an obstacle to describe the events of the Orange Revolution by its direct organisers and participants.

[4] Since most of respondents spoke excellent English, the interviews were generally carried out in this language. A few interviews were carried out with help of an interpreter in Georgia, and some responses obtained in Ukrainian were later transcribed into English by an interpreter.

campaigns and revolutions in general, such as older participants of previous protest campaigns, politicians, representatives of NGOs, and political analysts. Finally, it was also to be expected that some potential respondents were simply impossible to reach. A recurring reason for their unavailability was that after the "coloured revolutions" they were chosen for government or other high office and returned to the fold.

Obviously, different respondents would exhibit different degrees of helpfulness in the conduct of research. Whilst most of the responses obtained were extremely insightful, some seemed (diligently or not) rather "reproduced" - either from other overheard replies or from the existing literature on the subject, as the explanations and ideas they conveyed clearly overlapped with scholarly approaches towards described events. The differences in qualitative fieldwork also run across countries. In Georgia, for instance, the main impression throughout the interviewing process was that all the activists had read the same book on what should be highlighted when giving answers. It therefore seemed as if they had all memorized the same major events. In Ukraine, almost every story was relatively different. One possible explanation for this could be the fact that there were several campaigns running in parallel, and that students did not limit their involvement to one particular group. The occurrence of two wings of *Pora* is yet another factor that contributed to variations in activists' stories.

5. Overview of the chapters

The dissertation is divided into seven core chapters, apart from the Introduction (Chapter 1) and Conclusions (Chapter 6), that mirror elements of the analytical approach outlined in the theoretical framework:

- Chapter 2 sets a conceptual background for the comparative analysis of the *Kmara* and *Pora* youth campaigns;

- Chapter 3 engages in the debate on the main features of hybrid regimes that fall into "grey- zones" of political systems and links them to political structures that formed under the Kuchma and Shevardnadze presidencies;

- Chapter 4 overviews the post-war history of civic protest in Georgia and Ukraine and examines the development of civil society in the two countries in the context of communist legacies and Western efforts to promote democracy in the region;

- Chapter 5 provides a detailed empirical account of the mobilisation momentum of *Kmara* and *Pora* in the period immediately before and during the "coloured revolutions".

- Chapters 6 presents a summary of findings and conclusions, which highlight the main role and features characteristic of youth opposition movements that occurred on the eve of the Rose and Orange Revolutions.

Chapter 2:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.   Introduction

Studying social movements poses quite a challenge for a contemporary researcher. Many different movements have appeared at different times, in different localities and contexts, and as many theories have emerged trying to explain their occurrences. The era of accelerating globalization provides ever more new incentives and themes for political activism that also require systematic knowledge about how activists are now creating and using global communication to solve social problems.

Although there is no integrated theory of social movements, there have been a few attempts to pinpoint and link up characteristic aspects shared by scholars from varying territorial and theoretical backgrounds (della Porta and Diani 1999: 14). In order to provide multidimensional stories of student protest campaigns in Georgia and Ukraine, the following theoretical outline will draw upon the main theories of social movements. Before doing so, however, it is important to designate what constitutes a social movement and social movement organization in general.

For Charles Tilly a social movement is a combination of:

1) sustained campaigns of claim-making; 2) an exceptional combination of claim-making performances (SM repertoire); and 3) concerted displays of supporters' 'worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment by such means as wearing colours, marching in disciplined ranks, sporting badges that advertise the cause, displaying signs or chanting slogans, and picketing public buildings (2006: 182-184).

The collective claims include "identity", "standing", and "program" claims that reinforce each other in such a way that "a distinctive identity makes it easier to claim public standing, and standing gives credence to public support for a program" (Tilly 2006: 185). Della Porta and Diani (1999: 16) would add the crucial existence of a) informal networks that are based upon shared beliefs and solidarity and b) conflictual issues around which they are mobilized. The determination to build a radically new social order (Zirakzadeh 2006: 4) and reliance on non-institutionalized forms of interaction with elites, opponents, and the state (Tarrow 1996: 874) are other important factors stressed by social movement analysts. In brief, a social movement is a series of collective challenges by social actors that build on a sense of belonging and are driven by a vision of change in existing social or/and political structures, usually directed against the authorities.

However, the social movement efforts undertaken against those who wield power often overlap with other repertoires of political phenomena such as trade-union activities or electoral campaigns (Tilly 2006). Moreover, the existence of conflict and of collective activity could feature a coalition as well. Thus, it is important to discern the features of social movements which distinguish them from other forms of collective action - such as sustainability and collective identity. For instance, coalitions do not necessarily imply the emergence of collective identities or any sort of continuity beyond the limits of the specific conflictual situation. Thus, the feeling of collective belonging and longer-lasting action makes a social movement specific in two ways: first, movement identities exceed the boundaries of any single group or organization and diminish the fear of risks and uncertainties related to collective action; second, the sustainability of challenging actions places the collective events in a wider perspective, thus preventing movements from being reduced to purely instrumental coalitions (della Porta and Diani 1999: 20).

Finally, one should distinguish between social movements and social movement organization. An organization, according to Landsberger (1969: 55-56), can be characterized by having a structure, permanence, hierarchy and bureaucracy. Therefore, whilst "movements" is a more general term for "interactive campaigns" (Tilly 2004: 48) and by definition "fluid phenomena" (della Porta and Diani 1999: 17), social movement organizations provide organizational mechanisms to mobilize their constituency in order to obtain some collective good from authorities (Kriesi 1996: 153). Social movements do not have to include formal organization but they may as well involve multiple organizations. Social movement organizations, in turn, have goals that coincide with the preferences of a social movement, but they sometimes last longer than social movement campaigns. As for variations between social movement organizations and other political organizations, most scholars have placed social movement organizations at the "margins of political systems", thus emphasizing their marginality as a factor which distinguishes them from other political phenomena (McAdam 1982, Tilly 1984, Gamson 1990). On the other hand, others, like Burstein (2002), argue that there is no major difference between social movement organizations and interest groups and define both as "interest organizations" instead. However, since this complex academic debate on the subject lies beyond the scope of this research, some simplifications will be used by the author.

First, the student movements under discussion were part of broader opposition movements in their countries. However, they are also considered as separate movements, predominantly due to the fact that they became visible before the broader campaigns against the regime swept over their countries. Hence, to escape the confusion, the term "social movement" or "opposition movement" is used when referring to wider social movement phenomena that embrace various segments of society and different political organizations.

Consequently, by "student movement" or "youth movement", the study refers to a complementary subcategory of a broader national movement.

Second, the terms "social movement", "social movement organization", and "campaign" are used interchangeably. In line with Tilly (2004: 3), a campaign is a "sustained organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities." Thus, it constitutes a major element of the social movement explanatory synthesis of social movements. Given the fact that - for the media, analysts, and the participants - the names *Kmara* and *Pora* meant movements, campaigns and organizations, their core activists, too, became both participants and members of these collective activities. Although such an overlap may become a source of analytical confusion (della Porta and Diani 1999: 16), the blurring borders between what represents a social movement and a social movement organization - when relating to a new type of short-lived and directly-oriented youth anti-regime campaigns - may as well imply the occurrence of a specific trend in the field; trend which doesn't fall into a clear-cut movement – organization dichotomy.

2.   Approaches to the study of social movements

Up until the 1960s, the dominant theories in the field - mass-society (e.g. Kornhauser 1959) and collective behaviour (Turner and Killian 1957, Smelser 1963) approaches above all - sought to explain social movements through the prism of psychological strain and social disorganization (Giugni 1998: 366). Despite differences, all these paradigms emphasized sudden increases in individual grievances created by rapid social and cultural breakdowns. Phenomena such as the rise of Nazism, the American Civil War or the movement of black Americans were considered to be the manifestation of feelings of deprivation and aggression resulting from an unexpected end to a period of well-being, or increased expectations (della

Porta and Diani 1999: 5). Accordingly, social movements were viewed as spontaneous, disorganized phenomena where emotions and irrationality played a crucial role in the emergence of collective action.

The appearance of large-scale movements in the 1960s and 1970s which were not responses to any economic crisis or normative breakdown dramatically challenged these traditional approaches. The new protest movements that emerged in the United States and Europe arose in advanced industrialized nations characterized as democratic and in civil societies with a multiplicity of voluntary associations and vital public and private spheres. The protests not only cut across class divisions but also touched upon new issues such as civil, women and gay rights, anti-nuclear, anti-armaments, peace or anti-globalization demands. By applying concrete goals, clearly-articulated general values and interests, and rational calculations and strategies, those movements contradicted the classical versions of the collective behaviour paradigm (Cohen and Arato 1992: 496). Furthermore, as Inglehart and Welzel (2005: 52, 97, 102) imply, a system of "materialist" values influenced by the hunger and insecurity resulting from World War I, the Great Depression and World War II has been replaced by "post-materialist" goals, which emphasize self-expression and quality of life. The generational replacement has been partly responsible for this cultural shift: the survival dimension was no longer the concern of younger cohorts that grew up in advanced welfare states with high levels of existential security and individual autonomy. The empirical evidence covered by data of these three decades, however, shows that younger birth cohorts are consistently more sensitive to post-materialist values than older generations even when they reach adulthood. Thus, whilst intergenerational value differences in post-industrial societies may have originated as life-cycle effects, over time they reflect a substantial cultural shift produced by socio-economic development (Inglehart and Welzel 2005: 104-105).

As a result of this shift, the social movement theory shifted as well, from the "breakdown" models to more adequate approaches such as "resource mobilization" (McCarthy and Zald 1977), "political process" (Tilly 1978, McAdam 1982, Tarrow 1983), "new social movements" (Touraine 1985, 1988; Habermas 1981), and "frame analysis" (Snow and Benford 1988) paradigms. Nevertheless, due to the distinct social and political contexts, the theoretical debate on each side of the Atlantic examined social movements at different levels of analysis (Canel 2006: 11). The proponents of new social movement paradigms in Europe emphasized the role of social norms, collective identity and structural constraints in collective action analysis (Giugni 1998: 367). On the contrary, resource mobilization and political process (or political opportunity) theories in America stressed the critical role of resources (material or non-material), formal organization and shifting institutional structures in creating opportunities for collective action (McAdam 1996: 23). The frame analysis, in turn, focused on how collective actors construct an interpretative schema that underline and sustain action and therefore it brought "culture" into the centre of discussion (Steinberg 1998: 845).

The variety of social movements and the different evolution of theoretical approaches attempting to explain them led some scholars to conclude that no single approach can explain each and every social movement. In line with McCarthy (1996), different state structures, political systems, or economic situations produce distinctive patterns of movement development depending on the cultural and institutional support for, and restrictions on, different types of mobilizing structures. Therefore, events such as the collapse of the socialist bloc and movement-initiated democratic transitions that took place beyond the context of Western democracies may require their own paradigm.[5]

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[5] For example, among extensive data collected by Inglehart among different societies, only people from Eastern ex-communist countries do not show the net shift towards self-expression values. Instead, during the period

This project, however, will use the Western explanatory models to analyze post-communist youth campaigns in non-Western and non-liberal contexts. Given the complexity of influencing factors, some difficulties and disparities in the on-the-ground application of these theories can be expected. Therefore, the following adaptation of contemporary conceptual findings to Georgian and Ukrainian student activism poses a promising methodological challenge for analyzing post-communist student movements that still lack their own theoretical clarification.

2.1. Multifactor approach

As previously mentioned, various scholars emphasize different aspects of the movements and different schemes of classification emerge. Therefore, there is no single, standard typology of social movements. Some of the analysts, however, began to point out the necessity of bridging the gap between European and American traditions and put an end to the trans-Atlantic segmentation of the field (Cohen and Arato 1992, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996, Melucci 1996, Canel 1997, della Porta and Diani 1999, Zirakzadeh 2006).

Indeed, the multifactor approach helps to establish some conceptual consensus and allows deep insight into various aspects of movements' emergence and development. According to Steinberg (1992: 551) and Canel (2006: 11), only the integration of the European concentration on ideology and consciousness with the American focus on organization and instrumentalism could provide an adequate explanation of the linkages between civil society and state, instrumental and expressive action, and politics and culture in the phenomena of social movements. Melucci (1996) and other advocates of the European

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between 1990 and 2000 they moved towards a greater emphasis on survival values as a result of dismal
economic performance and massive insecurity after political and social systems collapsed (Inglehart and Welzel
2005).

approach have also begun to discuss the importance of building on the contributions of both American and European advances. Scott (1990), for instance, supported the idea of complementary models that draw on the interplay between collective identity, ideology, organization strategy, and resource mobilization. Arato and Cohen (1992: 496-497), in turn, have distinguished common features of contemporary collective action that are most frequently emphasized in dominant paradigms. These include rationality, good organization of activists, and the context of a modern pluralist civil society (e.g. public spaces, social institutions, rights, representative political institutions, and autonomous legal systems) that determines the forms and strategies of association and that is targeted by social movements seeking to influence policy or initiate change.

On the other hand, some scholars believe that the search for a universally valid recipe for such complex phenomena as social movements must result in failure and/or "over-determination".[6] For example, Goodwin and Jasper say that:

> Some kinds of movements require political opportunities, whereas others do not; some recruit through pre-existing social networks, whereas others do not; some require powerful grievances or collective identities, whereas others do not. Parsimonious models are not very useful when they explain only a limited range of the empirical cases that they are meant to cover (1999: 52).

Paradoxically, they also suggest that one pay careful attention to 1) historical and situational contexts of the processes and events that give rise to social movements, and 2) the variety of concepts and theories that "may help us 'hit' this moving target" (Goodwin and Jasper 1999: 52). This is exactly what the advocates of the multifactor approach propose. In accordance with Huntington (1991: 36-37), it is agreed in this study that the multiplicity of plausible concepts which seek to explain an event remains a problem mainly for those who evaluate theories. Huntington says that, for those who are concerned about explaining political events,

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[6] For example, according to della Porta and Diani (1999: 3) "the concept runs the risk of becoming a 'dustbin' for any and every variable relevant to the development of social movements".

it is fairly common to cope with a long chain of causality because, "in politics, almost everything has many causes" (Huntington 1991: 37). In fact, there is a great deal of similarity between theoretical approaches to social movements and the attempts to define the waves of democratization (which often overlap with waves of social unrest). Thus, the range of variables explaining both the waves of democratic transition and the development of social movements suggest not only that no single factor can account for the development of these phenomena, but also that they result from a combination of causes, which usually differs between countries and times at which they arise (Huntington 1991: 38).

Reflecting the multiplicity of factors that have been identified as explaining social movements, McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996: 2) combine the key insights of dominant models in social movement scholarship - that is, political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes. Instead of looking for distinct explanatory theories, they show that competing paradigms are not necessarily incompatible. In doing so, they address the constraints and political opportunities that emerge at a given moment, the forms of organization (formal and informal) available to challengers, and the role played by movements in processes of interpretation, attribution and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 2). In short,

> no matter how momentous a change appears in retrospect, it only becomes an "opportunity" when defined as such by a group of actors sufficiently well-organized to act upon this shared definition of the situation (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 8).

McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald's theoretical synthesis serves as a good starting-point to understanding the distinct features of opposition youth movements that appeared in the post-Soviet republics. Thus, with some modifications, the following section will outline the main elements of the multifactor approach as proposed by these scholars. First, the emphasis on political opportunities accounts for understanding the political context of the movements'

emergence and regime vulnerability to young challengers. Next, the mobilizing resources perspective draws attention to the role of formal and informal formations and the tactical choices in movement recruitment and mobilization. And finally, the accent on how activists perceive political opportunities and on how they construct messages to recruit members and attract the media concentrates on cultural variables in the social movement analysis.

2.1.1. *Political opportunities*

The political opportunity theory derived from the work of the political process theorists (e.g. Tilly 1978, McAdam 1982, Tarrow 1983) and European scholars trained in the new social movements tradition (e.g. Kitschelt 1985, Kriesi 1995) and became a dominant paradigm among social movement analysts.

The key recognition in the political opportunity perspective is that the political environment constitutes a powerful set of constraints and opportunities affecting a movement's development (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 12). Therefore, the activists' choices about strategies and tactics can be understood by looking at the political factors that enhance or inhibit a social movement's prospects for mobilizing supporters, advancing particular claims, and employing particular political strategies and tactics (Meyer 2004: 126). In short, the proponents of this approach look at shifts in the political realm in order to explain the emergence of particular movements.

McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996) use the term "political opportunity structures" to define the factors that either encourage or discourage political actors to use their resources to form social movements. They pay closer attention to "structural" factors such as constitutional arrangements, elite factionalism or government performance that are relatively stable over time and outside the movement's control. Stable opportunity structures, therefore,

are deeply embedded in political institutions and culture and play an important role in defining movements' and the state's strategies. In comparative studies, they are used as a tool to explain differences in movement activity, a government's response to collective actions and relative success in different countries (Gamson and Meyer 1996: 278).

Nevertheless, stable features of the system of political opportunities cannot help to explain the emergence of protest. Only the volatile elements, as Gamson and Meyer (1996: 277) imply, explain the dynamic processes of mobilization (and demobilization) and the interaction between movement strategy and the opening or closing of windows of opportunity. The shifts in short-term opportunities caused by so-called "transformative events" are therefore the focal invectives that trigger social unrest (McAdam and Sewell 2001). These may include failed reform, radical erosion of a regime's authority, expectation of reform, new debate on energy sources, or crises of various sorts. Hence, broadly defined, political opportunities represent structural changes and power shifts that have an effect on social movements (Meyer 2004).

However, when setting the ground for explaining the interaction between the regime and its challengers, the emphasis on structures of political context in which movements operate seems to be particularly relevant. Among the main measures of political opportunity structures the literature highlights McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald's volume includes the following elements: 1) relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system, 2) stability or instability of political alignments; 3) presence or absence of elite allies; 4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression; 5) erosion of state's legitimacy; and 6) favourable international political environment (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, Obershall 1996, Tarow 1996, Zdravomyslova 1996). Some scholars would also add the multiplicity of independent centres of power within a regime and decisive changes in all the

items that have been mentioned above (Tilly and Tarrow 2007: 57). The basic argument here is that changes in any of these dimensions provide incentives for activists to take advantage of the new opportunities based upon their expectations for success or failure (Tarrow 1994). Consecutively, the timing of action and the form of mobilization depend on the kind of opportunity that has presented itself (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 10). Whereas the above-listed dimensions are the most common in of social movement scholarship, the growing evidence of transnational activism gave new meaning to international contexts in which movements are born. Thus, whilst the major dimensions are qualified as regime- or elite-related elements, the broader transnational context of movement activity will be discussed separately.

2.1.1.1. The regime

According to Jenkins and Klandermans (1995), opportunities are primarily structured by the organization of the state and cohesion and alignments among political elites. Hence, the state becomes a "target, sponsor, and antagonist for social movements" (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995: 3). As the organizer of the political system the regime shapes social movements' repertoires of action and the possibility that movements can occur at all (Tilly 2006: 187).

The relative openness or closure of political systems is usually studied to trace changes in political or institutional structure (i.e. legislation on public order and demonstrations, police rights, citizen rights), which grant more formal political access to challenging groups (McAdam 1996: 29). In competitive party systems, for example, movement leaders and activists often view elections and legislative work as tools for changing societies. Elections, therefore, are the key element of governing routine that expand

access to political systems (Tarrow 1994: 86). For example, McAdam's (1982) study of the African American civil rights activism contends that the movement became powerful partly because of favourable changes in policy and political environments. Kitschelt (1986), in turn, describes how the openness of the political system to new actors such as anti-nuclear activists in France, Sweden, the United States and West Germany influenced the strategies movements employed and their overall effectiveness in influencing the anti-nuclear policy in each setting.

The studies on Central and Eastern European protest movements of the late 1980s usually name Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* as directly responsible for the partial access to political participation and mass demonstrations against Soviet occupation (Beissinger 1991, Misztal and Jenkins 1995, Oberschall 1996, Zdravomyslova 1996, Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Accordingly, the "coloured revolutions" that swept over from the Balkans to Eastern Europe more than a decade later became quickly depicted as the continuation of Central and Eastern European anticommunist upheavals and Huntington's (1991) "third wave of democratization". Also labelled as "electoral revolutions," the uprisings in Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) presented attempts by opposition leaders and citizens to use elections, in combination with political protests, to defeat semi-authoritarian incumbents, and to shift their regimes in more democratic directions (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 284).

However, as Goltz (2006) interestingly observes, many Western monitors rushed to accept the first independent elections in former parts of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s as "an equivalent of the Iowa caucus or the New Hampshire primary". Can one, therefore, approach the events in post-Soviet republics as if they were any other Western democracy with at least a few decades of democratic traditions? Does the "openness" of the regime to new actors mean anything in countries where only small elite has been benefiting from a "transition to democracy" and the rest of the country does not believe in the electoral process?

As more broadly described in Chapters 3 and 4, in both countries the years of independence have given way to widespread apathy, resignation and cynicism regarding the prospects for democratic reform in countries under debate. Although Georgians and Ukrainians could formally elect their governments, the elections were marred by examples of serious electoral fraud. Moreover, clan-based political connections remained the favourite means of acquiring capital and political power - thus limiting the possibility of challengers to enter the political scene (Fairbanks 2004: 111). The courts, too, were influenced by pressure from the executive branch and the payment of bribes to judges was reportedly common.

Ironically, the electoral fraud and corruption that usually guaranteed the state officials' stay in the circles of power presented a unique opportunity for citizens to act against it. The elections encouraged the opposition to agitate radically against the political reality. The fight against corruption became the foremost slogan used by the opposition in electoral campaigns. The fact that the entire country experienced corruption served as a uniting factor against not so much the particular political personalities but the perpetual, unchangeable and unsatisfactory way in which the country was managed. Thus, it seems that the effect of electoral routine - even if mishandled - on encouraging (or discouraging) activism does not have to be limited to liberal democracies, as is usually acknowledged. As Tucker sums up,

> the most useful lessons of the wave of post-communist electoral revolutions is that – at least in part – the future of democracy tomorrow in some places may depend on continuing to hold elections today (2006: 33).

The fraudulent elections also led to the absence of the citizens' moral approval of the state's authority. Following Oberschall's arguments (1996: 94), the erosion of a regime's authority was a crucial determinant of collective action against communist and post-communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, lack of legitimacy weakens the loyalty of the social control agents. Empowered by mass demonstrations, state agents from

different institutions begin to question the executive orders of their superiors (Oberschall 1996).

The question of the loyalty of the security forces is also related to the capacity of the system to effectively handle protest, an aspect particularly relevant to "coloured revolutions". The regime's power to implement adopted policies, regardless of internal and external resistance, is an important barometer of political opportunities (Rucht 1996: 190). In other words, the extent to which the regime is able to repress or facilitate collective claims directly affects the rise of protests, the volume of participation, and movement strategies. For instance, della Porta's longitudinal examination of police responses to protests in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s in Germany and Italy provides evidence that harsh repression of protest often results in its radicalization. At the same time, tolerant and selective control over demonstrations produces a growing rejection of more violent tactics. Another important issue are police concerns regarding the loss of legitimacy and popular support. When facing poor working conditions and low wages it is even less likely that the state coercive forces will use force against challengers (della Porta 1996: 88-89). As far as levels of mobilization are concerned, the harshest styles of protest policing ought to raise the cost of collective action and diminish the disposition of actors to take part.[7] However, it should be added that many forms of repression, particularly when they are considered illegitimate, can create a sense of injustice which in fact increases the perceived risk of inaction (della Porta and Diani 1999: 211, 224.).

2.1.1.2. The elites

The instability of political alignments and the presence of influential allies are among the key signals that encourage regime challengers to exercise their power. The majority of

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[7] The creation of an unfavourable public image, disinformation, the restriction of a movement's resources and facilities, the destruction of leaders, the "de-recruitment" of activists, and the fuelling of internal conflicts are among the main repressive actions usually launched by the authorities (della Porta and Diani 1999).

social protest analysts, especially theorists of revolutions, point to the division of elites as the key precipitant of revolutionary movements. Tilly (1978) and Moore (1966), for instance, distinguish the appearance of contenders or conflicts of interest within "dominant classes" as the main precondition for revolutions. Tarrow (1994), in turn, focuses on the interplay between dividing elites and electoral instability. The changing of power relations, he argues, may induce new coalitions to seek support from outside the polity. Thus, regardless of the rationale behind their assistance, influential elite allies can become very useful as "friends in court, as guarantors against brutal repression, or as acceptable negotiators on behalf of movements". This way, even the resource-poor groups can be heard when part of the elite attempts to act as a people's tribune inside government in order to increase its own political influence (Tarrow 1994: 55, 87).

The political alignments in the Georgian and Ukrainian semi-authoritarian regime settings, however, were the outcomes of personalism, patronage and clientelism rather than of a competitive party system (see Chapter 3). Because Communist Party personnel could hardly be substituted by political counter-elites (practically absent in almost all the Soviet successor states), the Soviet *nomenklatura* remained influential political players (Fein 2005: 202). It was a world which functioned according to an elaborate, unwritten set of rules, so-called "Soviet elite culture" (O'Donnell 1994: 162-163). In the eyes of the public, both Shevardnadze and Kuchma personified this infinite presence of rule-breaking, corrupt patronage networks and indifference towards the affairs of ordinary citizens. Eventually, according to Goltz's observations, the countless protesters who poured onto the streets after rigged elections in 2003 in Georgia and 2004 in Ukraine and resulted in so-called "coloured revolutions" were not as much driven by a striving for democracy and the rule of law as they were by stagnation, lies, and fear of their continuation (Goltz 2006: xiv).

As is analysed in Chapter 3, Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's "semi-authoritarian" or "hybrid" regime style became the main factor behind the creation of political opportunities for social initiatives. Firstly, the ruling elite's cynicism, lack of legitimacy, poor performance and ubiquitous corruption created a reservoir of citizen dissatisfaction with the authorities' incapacity to meet their demands. Secondly, due to the wide gulf between the authorities and the rest of society, both presidents miscalculated not only the growing discontent within the population but also the youth movements' capacities to draw on social grievances and to mobilize mass demonstrations. Finally, the dispersion of power, political cleavages and the determination to give the impression of complying with democratic standards were among the main obstacles to the ruling elites' introduction of a full authoritarian regime. In particular, the relatively unrestricted growth of international and domestic non-governmental organizations brought about unprecedented organizational, informational and financial support for both campaigns. In consequence, the activists' expectation that elections would be mishandled and that fraud would take place, as it usually happened, were the ultimate motives that triggered *Kmara*'s and *Pora*'s emergence as well as their future actions.

To sum up, social movement analysts apply the concept of political opportunities to various empirical phenomena to serve a variety of functions. For the most part, however, this concept is used to explain the timing, form and the outcomes of social movements. The main point here is that "even the groups with mild grievances and few internal resources may appear as movements, whilst those with deep grievances and dense resources – but lacking opportunities – may not" (Tarrow 1994: 17-18). On the other hand, one should also note that the multiplicity of variables led the concept to be criticized. According to Gamson and Meyer (1996: 275), the concept becomes a "sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment". Goodwin and Jasper (1999), in turn, argue that the perspective may

be too broad to explain what conditions or circumstances produce more or less space for movement action. In this research, however, the argument upheld is that the range of variables has enlarged the explanatory capacity of the concept, which is especially useful regarding new social movement phenomena that have so far not been very extensively researched (della Porta 1006: 63). Once it is acknowledged that social movements are more than a product of opportunity, the framework of political opportunities appears to be an effective tool to assessing the rules of the game in which activists' choices are made (Gamson and Meyer 1996: 281).

2. 1. 2. *Mobilizing resources*

Clearly, the changes in the dimensions of political opportunities listed above do not cause collective action themselves. Hence, the concepts of resource mobilization theory and political process theory encouraged and directed the research towards an organizational dynamics of collective action (Oberschall 1973, McCarthy and Zald 1977, Tilly 1978, McAdam 1982). This new focus on the choices that activists make about participation or non-participation and how they affect the shape of collective action was derived from the work of economist Olson. By applying tools of analysis drawn from economic theory in sociology and political science, he postulated that "only a separate and 'selective' incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way" (Mancur 1971: 7). Therefore, only a benefit strictly reserved for group members will motivate a person to join and contribute to the group. Consequently, a characteristic and primary function of any organization "is to advance the common interests of groups and individuals" (Mancur 1971: 7).

The new turn in the evolution of social movement theories coincided with the emergence of the "conscious constituency" of the wealthy middle class that constituted professional movement organizations. The new movements of the 1960s and 1970s became interpreted as rational, purposeful and organized actions. Consequently, their leaders - as "rational actors" - replaced the crowd at the centre of social movement theory. In this new context, mobilization became perceived as "the process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participant in public life" (Tilly 1978: 69), which depends on the aggregation of material (work, money, concrete benefits, and services) and non-material (authority, moral engagement, faith, friendship) assets through which people engage in collective action (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 3). Accordingly, through adoption, adaptation, and invention (McCarty 1996) social movements try to develop a structure that corresponds to their objectives and the characteristics of the social groups they seek to mobilize (della Porta and Diani 1999: 164). However, this process is not easy since the preparatory part of the strategy requires the group to forego present satisfactions and pool resources in anticipation of uncertain future opportunities, threats and benefits. Thus, in case of high risks, preparatory mobilization requires extraordinary incentives to overcome the desire to have someone else to absorb the costs (Tilly 1978: 74).

The leaders are the central referent for the analysis of collective action. Their main role is to put together political resources (such as allies and media appeal) and political opportunities (such as a divided or united elite), and mould them into movement goals. In doing so, they design a strategy and develop tactics that will attract support from both a popular base and among politically-influential people and institutions (Rochon and Meyer 1997: 14). Their choices, however, are not made in a political vacuum, and are profoundly

influenced by the resources and constraints present within their environment (della Porta and Diani 1999: 164).

Referring to McAdam's, McCarthy's, and Zald's (1996) approach, the following subsections specifiy the ways in which the political context affects mobilization: that is, the form that a movement takes in a given country and the tactical choices made by its activists. Then, they also draw attention to informal networks and pre-existing institutional structures and their potential impact on the mobilization process. The main aim of the subsequent part is therefore twofold: 1) to account for understanding the role of the political and social contexts in conditioning the organizational forms and action repertoires adopted by the *Kmara* and *Pora* movements; and 2) to expose how these organizational and tactical choices contributed to the movements' success.

2.1.2.1. Movement formation

Social movement analysts have long been interested in the relation between opportunities and the organizational form of a social movement. In searching for factors that could affect the process of social movement formation, they draw attention to conditions external to a given movement and beyond their members' immediate influence. As Kriesi (1996: 160) points out, the institutional structures of political systems and procedures with regard to challengers provide a general setting for both the organizational development of a movement and its relations with allies, opponents, and authorities. Firstly, the change in political opportunity structures gives an incentive to social actors to select particular organizational forms. Secondly, changes in configuration of power strongly affect the level of resources available to movements and their access to decision-making processes. Taken together, the shift in political opportunity structures affects not only the timing of a

movement's emergence, as said in the previous section, but also the organizational form its members select.

The movement leaders assess the political context to identify and exploit the patterns that would work in their favour and to avoid those that could limit the expansion of their movement's potential (Rucht 1996: 189). For example, Rucht (1996) traced the impact of "context structure" on the organization of womens' and environmental movements. His case studies show that whether a movement's organization is centralized or decentralized depends on access to policy decisions, the power of authorities to implement policies, or alliance and conflict structures. In short, the form the movement acquires (e.g. interest-group, party-oriented, or grassroots models) depends largely on an adaptation to its relatively stable environment rather than on activists' deliberate choices (Rucht 1996: 202).

Kriesi (1996), in turn, analyzed how different political contexts in four European states (France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland) affected variations in the general level of mobilization as well as in the internal structuration of social movements (i.e. formalization, professionalization, and internal differentiation). Rather than foster mobilization potential, he claims, a collaborative relation with the authorities may bring conflicting results:

> On the one hand, public recognition, access to decision making procedures and public subsidies may provide crucial resources and represent important successes for social movement organisation; on the other hand, the integration into the established system of interest intermediation may impose limits on the mobilization capacity of the social movement organisation and alienate important parts of its constituency, with the consequence of weakening it in the long run (Kriesi 1996: 155-156).

In other words, acquiring powerful allies may reduce a movement's autonomy, alienate part of its supporters, and produce organizational and ideological conflicts (see also Kleidman 1993).

Given these facts, movements constantly search for innovations to balance their differing objectives and dissatisfaction with existing forms of organization (della Porta and Diani (1999: 162). To overcome these difficulties, both *Kmara* and *Pora* founders adopted a non-hierarchical, leaderless, and decentralized organizational structure. As will be explained in Chapter 5, the organizational solutions (such as division of labour, autonomy of regional units and horizontal networks) employed by campaigns were meant to diminish the possibility of their being disrupted and inhibit the authorities from either infiltrating or discrediting them. Their main intention behind introducing consensual decision-making was to reduce the risk of internal conflict and avoid "oligarchization" – so typical of the discredited governments they opposed. Finally, both *Kmara* and *Pora* claimed that they refrained from supporting specific political fractions or leaders. Whether they managed to preserve their impartiality remains controversial.

Abstaining from "dirty" politics severely limited movements' access to resources related to powerful allies. However, the absence of political allies has been replaced by "supportive organizations" (Kriesi 1996), such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their leaders. By offering finance, office space, printing facilities and information, NGOs provided the resource-poor groups with the necessary infrastructure for movement mobilization. As presented in Chapter 5, regional and local branches significantly facilitated the countrywide outreach and helped to attract new recruits. Finally, the support of respected and well-established NGO patrons elevated the movements' image in the eyes of both the local public and the international community.

2.1.2.2. Movement tactics

Political opportunities also affect the strategies and tactical repertoires of movement organizations. In line with Kitschelt (1986: 57-85), "open" political systems encourage social movements to use more institutionalized tactics. By contrast, in "closed" systems collective actors tend to employ disruptive direct-action tactics instead of conventional forms of influence. A similar reasoning applies to support from elite allies. Whereas elite patronage encourages challenging groups to engage in conventional political activities, without any links to decision-makers, they are more likely to fight their battles in the streets (see della Porta 1996).

The various ways in which state authorities respond to radical claims makes the interdependence between political setting and movement tactics conform to a different dynamic in democratic and non-democratic systems. In democratic societies, the adoption of revolutionary aims does not legitimate the state's violent repression. In contrast, authoritarian systems frequently suppress even conventional political participation (McAdam 1996: 341, 343). Whilst the most effective groups are those who pursue reform through non-institutionalized actions, the possibility of choice between fundamentalism and pragmatism is however limited by boundaries of democratic politics (Tarrow 1994).

According to Moller (1974: 153), the complete renunciation of force by subscribing to non-violence and allowing powerless members to be abused by the powerful can often morally disarm one's opponent. It is argued in Chapter 5 that in the case of *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns, the combination of radical methods and non-violent tools of action appeared to be the most fruitful in terms of getting an angry response from the government. The moral campaign of asserting imprisoned or harassed students' rights successfully aimed at eroding the legitimacy of the powerful and winning public support. Printed materials distributed

across the country and high-visibility activities - such as shows of different kinds attended by prominent personalities, debates, university round-tables - mobilized activists and engaged the public in a variety of events. Together with a graffiti campaign, these actions made the movements visible and publicized the idea of resistance. Furthermore, the choice of non-violence defied the government's argument that a protest campaign would lead to civil conflict and facilitated the neutrality of the security apparatus. The peaceful, humorous tone of both campaigns also won support from the opposition, citizens, and the international community.

Nonetheless, in the case of *Kmara* and *Pora* strategies it is difficult to assess the extent to which the semi-authoritarian regime setting impacted upon their organizational models and the tactics they used. Firstly, in countries where rules that legitimize and facilitate the ability to mobilize and to oppose a government are absent or ignored, the question of the movements' tactics remains unresolved among social movement researchers. Secondly, the label "semi-authoritarianism" implies the existence of similar factors characteristic of a certain regime type that may affect the social movements' activities in an identical way. However, although in each case the state did not respond with violence, the reasons behind this decision could differ from one state to another. A country's history, national culture, identities, social ties or economic performance also have a strong influence on the tactical choices made by social movements. Finally, although originally the non-violent tactics and decentralized structures were aimed at discouraging harsh repression, the possibility of bloodshed in Georgia and Ukraine was rather low. Therefore, as is further argued, the successful precedent of the Serbian model that appealed to the campaigns' founders could have had the strongest impact on their thinking, goals, and on the strategies they chose (see Chapter 5).

2.1.2.3. Pre-existing networks and protest experience

A well-resourced social movement infrastructure is a rare phenomenon during initial phases of mobilization. The main resources available to emerging social movements are usually limited to the active commitment and the protest experiences of its activists. Hence, the origins of the potential to mobilize are often to be found within the informal structures of everyday life. Pre-existing social networks such as family units, friendship networks, voluntary associations, study groups or work units can provide good backgrounds for socializing potential activists, movement recruitment, and communication (McCarthy 1996: 143).

At the same time, however, the idea that social roots facilitate mobilization also has noticeable shortcomings. Firstly, almost everyone is involved in some kind of social networks capable of providing the opportunities needed to involve individuals in protest. Secondly, recruitment messages attract also people who were never engaged in any form of activism. Finally, youth which is considered as a group most prone to civic action has often their social links weakened or broken due to their progression through subsequent levels of the education system (della Porta and Diani 1999: 115). Thus, as some scholars point out, differences between various types of social networks and their potential contribution can lead to explanations of various types of collective action. For example, when facing high risks, a strong subjective identification with a particular identity, reinforced by organizational or individual ties, may be the key factor in determining who will be mobilized and who will not (della Porta and Diani 1999: 115-116).

Pre-existing protest traditions as well as organizational experience are also crucial for a campaign's success. Whilst dense interpersonal networks enhance the prospects for a high level of organization and quick mobilization (Jenkins 1983), know-how from past struggles

provides critical information on how to coordinate the protest (Morris 2000). As Tilly (1978) explains, the limited but familiar structural forms and "tactical repertoires" are more frequently adopted by protest leaders simply because they reduce the mobilization and organizational cost associated with the rise of a new protest action. Similarly, whereas waves of mobilization attract people with no previous experience of collective action, those who have already participated in social movements in the past are still more likely to become active again (della Porta and Diani 1999: 89).

As is more broadly described in Chapter 4, in Georgia and Ukraine a wave of confrontational actions placing youth activists in unprecedented conflict with the authorities preceded the Rose and Orange Revolutions. For example, in 2001, young people in Georgia took to the streets to protest against corruption and the restriction of free media. In Ukraine, the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign, supported mainly by students, called for the president's resignation and undermined his legitimacy. This prior protest experience is usually described by *Kmara* and *Pora* activists as a vital foretaste of future electoral agitation. Besides, whilst youth as a whole appear to lack access to important resources, students do not (see Section 3). Both the resources afforded to students as well as the collective identity shared by the student community reduced the organizational and mobilizing costs associated with the rise of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns. Finally, as presented in Chapters 4 and 5, student activists managed to develop extensive networks of relationships with important actors (e.g. foundations and other movements). In Georgia, the Liberty Institute, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association and the Association for Law and Public Education were of key importance for the future emergence of the *Kmara* campaign, by creating civic awareness among the young and educated. In Ukraine, the Union of Ukrainian Youth, For Truth and the

Association of Law Students, together with other NGOs and think tanks, allowed their young members to perfect their techniques long before the 2004 presidential elections.

To summarize, both mobilizing structures and political opportunity models have emphasized the intentionality and rationality of protesters' choices. The emergence of non-violent youth opposition movements in post-Soviet countries reflected changes in opportunities and resources available to activists that broke the stalemate in the democratization process. Whilst the risk of harsh repression appears to have had a rather limited impact on their choice of tactics, the protest experience of *Kmara* and *Pora* leaders affected their choices more soundly. The success of activists in neighbouring countries activated a transnational and cross-movement learning process and shifted the locus of opportunity from the domestic arena to an international political context. Therefore, the rapid cross-border and cross-movement diffusion of the Serbian model appears to have been a decisive factor that shaped the organizational forms, strategies and rhetoric employed by its followers.

Yet scholars have also pointed out that chosen structures must be carefully framed as appropriate to the social change to which they will be applied (McCarthy 1996: 149). Therefore, the downplayed role between a social movement organization's ideology, moral preferences, and organizational identity became the main source of criticism of the resource mobilization approach (Klandermans and Tarrow 1988, Morris and McClurg-Mueller 1992). As Snow and Benford (1992: 147) suggest, "if movements action is inconsistent with the values it espouses or with its constituents' values, it renders its framing efforts vulnerable to dismissal". The following accent on framing processes will therefore account for meanings and ideologies that justify collective action and align members' beliefs with the tactical repertoires they use.

2.1.3. *Framing the action*

The development of resource mobilization theory has set off the careful analysis of symbolic resources, in which discourse and rituals of collective action are depicted as homologous to material assets (Steinberg 1998: 850). This reassessed importance of cultural elements found its definition in the "theory of framing" (Gamson et al 1982, Snow and Benford 1988) which derived from the theoretical work of Erving Goffman (1974). According to Goffman (1974: 10), "the definitions of a situation are built-up in accordance with principles of organization of experience". That means that events are never viewed directly but through the prism of rules ("frames") that govern the subjective meaning we assign to social events (Goffman 1974: 10). The main aim of analyzing frames is therefore to capture the process of attribution of meaning which lies behind the explosion of any conflict (della Porta and Diani 1999: 69).

The leading analysts of framing theory described frames as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings" that are "intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow and Benford 1988:198). In other words, an effective frame must 1) define the problem and its source (diagnostic framing); 2) identify an appropriate strategy (prognostic framing); and 3) call to action to redress the problem (motivational framing) (Steinberg 1998: 846). Finally, in order to make collective action possible, movement leaders must integrate their models of interpretation of reality with those of the population they want to mobilize ("frame alignment") (della Porta and Diani 1999: 74).

Drawing on the work of Snow and his colleagues, McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996: 5) further defined framing processes as shared meanings and definitions mediating between opportunity, organization, and action. Without the "shared understanding of the

world and of themselves," they argue, it is unlikely that people will mobilize even when afforded the opportunity to do so (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 5). Thus, by constructing a sense of injustice and collective identity, framing processes intend to attract new recruits, shape media coverage, win the support of bystanders, constrain opponents, and influence those who hold power (Steinberg 1998: 845).

The empirical research on framing usually concentrates on the analysis of rhetoric, symbols, scripts, declarations, or other formal ideological statements by movement actors (McAdam 1996: 341). For example, by analyzing the use of the American "rights" frame and Polish Catholic symbolism, Tarrow (1996) shows how social movement agents turn cultural symbols into frames for collective action. Oberschall's (1996) examination of the East European revolts in the 1980s in turn suggests that a combination of slogans, moral force and non-violence is a powerful tool in a formation of a new collective action and in discrediting the regime's empty rhetoric. The role of radical symbolism in constructing collective identity and collective action is also traced in Zdravomyslova's analysis of protest movements in the Soviet Union (1996).

To put it briefly, rather than passively depend on structural arrangements, unanticipated events or existing ideologies, movement actors actively engage in the production of ideas and meanings (Benford and Snow 1988). The construction of meaning, however, is not isolated from the socio-cultural contexts in which social movements are embedded. Therefore, the struggle over meaning and the creation of new frames of meaning involves other elements affecting the movements. Above all, these embrace political opportunities and media industry (Benford and Snow 2000).

2.1.3.1. Framing opportunities

The decision to act collectively depends on a complex evaluation of opportunities and obstacles. Values are articulated through specific goals and are associated with strategies of appropriate conduct (della Porta and Diani 1999: 67). It is thus necessary for activists to interpret political space in ways that emphasize opportunity rather than constraint. As Zald (1996: 286) puts it, "it is not merely a matter of seeing the glass as half-full rather than half-empty, but seeing it as half-full when it is often ninety percent empty". In that way it often happens that "unrealistic" perceptions of what is possible can actually turn the opportunity frame into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Among processes that open windows of opportunities for collective action, electoral cycles are most popular periods when activists bring issues to the public's attention (McCarthy, Smith, and Zald 1996). As some scholars imply, mass electoral politics offers a key incentive for social movements to act because they can produce the highest multiple of numbers, commitment and articulation of claims in a temporarily limited period (Tilly 1978, Cohen and Arato 1992: 502). Electoral routine is therefore frequently used by collective actors to change perceptions of and call attention to moral and political matters that had long been dormant or ambiguous (Zald 1996: 268).

Finally, the chances of success of a particular interpretative frame developed by a movement are greater when placed in alignment with the dominant master frame(s) of a given period (della Porta and Diani 1999: 80). The fact that most revolutionary movements in post-communist parts of Europe were successful implies that their activists effectively integrated the dominant frame with their mobilizing messages. In the broader terms of Huntington's wave of transitions from non-democratic to democratic regimes, the frame of "democratization" accumulated the perception of common needs, capacities, contexts, and

identities among social movement actors (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 288). In the narrower terms of Beissinger's (2006) modular electoral revolutions, interpretative framing transformed the right to fair elections into the "most important" political problem confronting the countries.[8] Thus, it is argued throughout this thesis that the prevailing common denominator among youth opposition groups was their evaluation of fair elections as the only and last chance to struggle for life in a "normal" country. Combined with radical symbolism and national themes, this evaluation won media attention and ensured ideological contact with the movement.

2.1.3.2. The role of the media

While movements sometimes win media attention, they cannot make the media publish news in the way they want it to be published. The mass media filter the process of framing because they have to respond to the demands of their owners, controllers, and information recipients (Zald 1996: 274). By shaping the way the movements are reported, the media impact upon both the strategic choices of movement actors and upon how their opponents respond to them. In order to win the attention of the media, the movement actors actively engage in the production and maintenance of new or transformed symbols, goals and tactics in order to enhance the movement's attractiveness (Benford and Snow 1988). Moreover, since public interest in stories waxes and wanes, the movements must mount "extra-institutional" action if they want to make the news. However, what is newsworthy for the media is often not acceptable within established political institutions. Therefore, as McAdam (1996: 344) concludes, in seeking both media attention and institutional influence

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[8] "Modular action," according to Tarrow, means the "capacity of a form of collective action to be utilized by a variety of social actors, against a variety of targets, either alone, or in combination with other forms" (1996: 33).

only those groups which favour reform goals but rely on non-institutionalized forms of action may successfully overcome this difficult balancing act.

Before the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the private television networks made it possible for *Kmara* to deliver its message to almost all target groups and for society to respond to popular campaign appeals (Fairbanks 2004: 119). As revealed in Chapters 5 and 6, the exaggeration of the campaign's size and round-the-clock coverage made the movement look powerful in the eyes of government and provoked the authorities to mount discrediting counteractions thus contributing to the campaign's popularity. On the other hand, with limited access to traditional sources of independent media, new communication technologies became the key tools for spreading information among Ukrainian protesters. Whilst the use of text messaging was a main tool for spreading information among a few thousand volunteers, the Internet served as an alternative public space whose character was not determined by pro-regime editorial selection. The relatively high level of Internet connectivity in Ukraine compensated for the lack of free media and was skilfully used to recruit volunteers, raise funds, organize campaigns, report breaking news, and garner the sympathy of the global community (Kyj 2006: 71). It is further argued in this study that in both cases, the campaigns' radical names, logos, and slogans attracted the young generation and caught the media's attention (see Chapter 5). Political jokes, altered electoral slogans and caricatures often referring to symbols and motives from the world of pop culture not only created a joyful feeling but also broke the deadly seriousness of everyday news and normalized the political protest (see also Misztal 1992).

In sum, the concept of framing has re-emphasized the ideological dynamics of everyday movement activities. Once formulated and successfully employed, the collective action frames become powerful mobilizing resources (Snow and Benford 2000). Also, for the

activist leaders importing the ways of framing various issues from other successful movements can turn into a decisive factor for enhancing their movement attractiveness and thus leading to its success. It should be noted, however, that in order to be effective, these leaders must deploy them in ways that are consistent with the existing mentalities and political beliefs characteristic of their prospective constituents (McCarthy, Smith, and Zald 1996).

2.2. Activism beyond borders[9]

With the development of transnational communication over the past decade, early twenty-first century social movements evidently operate more intensively in both the domestic and international arenas. Modern communication leads to an ever-faster diffusion of ideas that inspire challengers and young activists in different parts of the world to use new technologies to a greater extent than previous generations. They are therefore more likely to draw upon the latest technological innovations in order to circumvent the authorities (Kuzio 2006a: 374). The cross-border diffusion of protest models and the vigorous involvement of student activists in turning them into domestic opportunities were particularly noticeable on the eve of the Rose and Orange Revolutions. Therefore, this section pays closer attention to both the international dimension of protest emergence and the predisposition of youth to act as forerunners of political turmoil.

The development of transnational communication over the past decades has brought about a rapid diffusion of forms, tactics, and ideological themes of collective action, and has emboldened cross-national comparative studies in the social movement discipline (McAdam 1996: 34). As Muskhelishvili (2004) points out, "globalization is a context, against which the

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[9] A term borrowed from Dorothy Q. Thomas, "Holding Governments Accountable by Public Pressure," in *Ours by Right: Womens' Rights as Human Rights*, 82, 83 (Kerr, J., ed., 1993).

whole political agenda of our countries is set up, and no experience of previous democratizations is directly applicable to our examples without it" (Muskhelishvili quoted from Caucasus Journalist Forum 2005). Thus, the scholars of social movements have started to recognize the increased importance of global political and economic processes in structuring domestic possibilities for collective action (Keck and Sikkik 1998, Tarrow and della Porta 2005, Tarrow 2005).

Together with the intensified flows of trade, finance, and people across borders, new electronic technologies and broader access to them have vastly increased opportunities for international contact. Although Tarrow (2005) suggests that the Internet did not replace traditional forms of interpersonal network formation, it has certainly sped up and increased a range of intra-movement and inter-movement communications. Moreover, a dense web of information exchange aided by computer, mobile and fax communication means that governments can no longer monopolize information flows as they could a few decades ago (Keck and Sikkik 1998). As a result, a growing stream of research on social movements tries to identify and trace the processes that link the domestic to the international level of activism, and therefore to answer the question "how and why do forms of collective action that arise out of specific national configurations of conflict spread to other countries?"

First, the resources and opportunities characteristic of our era (i.e. the availability of rapid forms of personal communication, cheap international air travel, greater access to higher education, knowledge of the increasingly international language of English) are being extensively exploited by activists who are able to combine them on local, national and international levels (Tarrow 2005). The individuals who move into transnational activism (what Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkik call "activism beyond borders") have the ability to shift their activities between these levels, taking advantage of the expanded node of

opportunity a complex international society offers. It means that they use both domestic and international resources and opportunities, as they are usually better educated, better connected, speak more languages, and travel abroad more often than most of their domestic compatriots. They therefore bring with them new forms of action and new ways of framing domestic issues (Tarrow 2005: 29).

Second, the phenomenon of transnational activism is interconnected with the growing importance of non-state actors, who interact with each other, with states, and with international organizations. These interactions are structured in terms of networks, and transnational networks have become increasingly visible in international politics (Keck and Sikkik 1998: 1). At the same time, the triangular relations among states, non-state actors and international organizations challenge traditional notions of state sovereignty. Thanks to their international allies, environmental or human rights networks can pressure governments to change their domestic practices, thus undermining their absolute claim to sovereignty. Also, by publishing information which contradicts information provided by the state, such networks imply that states sometimes lie. Based on the assumption that governments are keen to preserve and promote their image, network activists exert moral leverage on certain actors, who are held up to the light of international scrutiny - a process also known as "mobilization of shame" (Keck and Sikkik 1998: 24, 37).

2.2.1. *Cross-national diffusion*

The above-mentioned migration of international pressures and conflicts into domestic politics and the triangular relationship that it creates among various actors provides a framework and a structure of opportunities for transnational activists (Tarrow 2005: 25). Defined by Tarrow as "internationalization", this trend includes the most widespread and

easily observed transnational mechanism known as "diffusion" (della Porta and Tarrow 2005: 2). The idea of diffusion can be presented as a process wherein ideas and practices spread from a core site to other sites, whether within a given state or across states (Beissinger 2002, Tarrow 2005, Tarrow and della Porta 2005). The empirical evidence shows that diffusion does not involve all movements equally, however. It is therefore also argued that diffusion is more likely to take place between movements in countries which are close geographically (often with a history of interaction), have similar social and political structures, and/or share the subjective perception of common circumstances (della Porta and Diani 1999: 247).

When applied to the cases of interest here, diffusion can refer to the electoral model of democratization as a whole, to the youth opposition campaigns it embraces, and to the non-violent repertoire of action that was applied. Given that the electoral model is easily amenable to diffusion because it consists of a compact package of tasks that have revolved around specific features (Beissinger 2006),[10] it has inspired democratic activists from the partisan political opposition and the non-governmental sector in a number of countries (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 294). In fact, the mechanism of diffusion proved to be particularly successful and popular in some post-communist countries, where the mixture of communist heritage and post-communist crisis, the opposition's eagerness to enhance their prospects for winning power, the cross-national cooperation of activists and the persuasive power of success all worked together in creating incentives for the spread of social movement phenomena. Whilst in Ukraine this diffusion was facilitated by the country's relative geographical and time-linked proximity with Georgia, the perception of common circumstances and the example of prior

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[10] These include, 1) the use of stolen elections as the occasion for massive mobilizations against pseudo-democratic regimes; 2) a united opposition established in part through foreign prodding; 3) the organization of radical youth movements using unconventional protest tactics prior to the election in order to undermine the regime's popularity; 4) the use of media (where possible) to counter the biases of the official media; 5) running campaigns that provide voters with the information and hope they need to take the election seriously and vote their consciences; and 6) massive mobilization upon the announcement of fraudulent electoral results when illiberal leaders lose, but refuse to vacate their offices (Beissinger 2006: 6).

success made the Serbian experience an attractive model for both countries in question. Finally, as Bunce and Wolchik (2006) point out, the Eastern and South European region features a number of democratic success stories in general. Therefore, the rapid transitions to democracy and capitalism coming from Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, as well as the Slovenian, Bulgarian and Romanian road to the EU, served as appealing examples in this case (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 296).

However, passively waiting for similar developments to happen in one's own country would not lead to the defeat of illiberal candidates or coalitions. Thus, not only shared perceptions of similar situations, opportunities and capacities for change explain the successful emulation of electoral revolutions between Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and even Kyrgyzstan (Tarrow 2005). Clearly, it was also the activists' conscious choice to copy what happened in another state and make international diffusion possible (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 286). Likewise, as illustrated in Chapter 5, in the case of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns the diffusion dynamics occurred through more purposive and planned actions that resulted from collaborations between local and international actors. A key factor here that promoted the diffusion of this particular organizational model and the idea of Gandhian non-violence was the existence of domestic and cross-national networks. However, as Tarrow (2005) points out, Gandhi's methods of peaceful resistance would have been exotic if transferred literally from the Indian subcontinent to the Eastern Europe. Therefore, it was the process of communication and the adaptation of an external practice to new sites and situations - so called "brokerage" - that made it possible to successfully apply this strategy in distant places such as Serbia and Georgia (Tarrow 2005: 190).

Active involvement of those activists, whose movements had already been successful, such as the Serbian campaigners who brought down Milošević's regime, played an important

role in diffusion (Beissinger 2006: 4). In the summer of 2003, these activists visited Georgia to teach methods of non-violence to a range of future *Kmara* activists (see Chapter 5). The *Pora* leaders, in turn, benefited from the experience of both the *Otpor* and K*mara* campaigns. They were first trained by *Otpor* at their Centre for Non-Violent Resistance and then by *Kmara* core activists who travelled to Ukraine to share their experiences. In consequence, acting as "brokers", NGOs and activists from initial movements played a vital role in linking previously unconnected social actors, mediating their relations, and, most importantly, in helping to modify a core idea in order to apply it outside the original structural relations (Tarrow 2005: 103). In this way, the involvement of "brokers" and the power of a positive example can to some extent compensate for structural weaknesses and allow less structurally advantaged groups to engage in successful action (Beissinger 2006: 4). It is further confirmed by this study that spin-off campaigns (such as *Kmara* and *Pora*) which develop in countries other than those of the initiator movements (such as Serbia in the case of *Otpor*) sometimes owe as much (or more) to complex diffusion processes as to expanding political opportunities.

To sum up, the faster, cheaper and more reliable information and transportation technologies had a significant impact on the rapid development of national and global patterns of communication between activists (Keck and Sikkik 1998: 9). New technologies have emboldened and sped up processes of diffusion, which gained in importance in social movement theory. By initiating actions and pressuring more powerful actors to take positions, local and international activist networks become important players in the political arena. They introduce new ideas, provide and exchange information, impose a moral leverage, lobby for policy changes, and through NGOs they provide resources for activists to publicize their issues and form new networks. Finally, it is the youth who is the first to pick up on recent global advancements. The ease with which they use modern communication technologies and

the opportunity to travel within international student exchanges makes them both strongly oriented towards Western liberal ideas (and therefore well-being) and particularly suitable for running sophisticated campaigns.

3.   Student political activism

Student movements have a long history and students have always played an important role as the agents of social change. They are often the vanguards of the political and social movements of their nations, and their actions frequently mirror the problems and moods of the entire society (Keck and Sikkik 1998: 9). The phenomenon of student political activism ranges from revolutionary movements to campus-based groups concerned about issues such as the quality of teaching. The impact of that activism varies as well: at times it triggers university reform, forces authorities to change certain policies, or even brings down governments.

Throughout the last century, there were periods of relative "silence" within the campus area and times when various attempts were made by students to influence the public affairs. However, starting from the 1960s, student activism reached a new level of intensity, and political issues have been the main stimulants for intense political activism at universities. In the West, issues such as foreign policy and civil rights and civil liberties were the main motivating forces for American student protest in the 1960s. In Europe, societal politics was also the main element during the turbulent sixties. French students reacted against the authoritarianism of the de Gaulle regime, and students in West Germany organized extra-parliamentary opposition to the coalition government of the conservative Christian Democrats and the leftist Social Democrats (Fraser 1971).

In Central and Eastern Europe, university students were among the first important groups to protest against the government. For example, in Hungary in 1956, university students initiated large-scale demonstrations against the repressive communist regime of Mátyás Rákosi and his successor, Ernő Gerő. In Poland in 1968, the closing of a play called *Dziady* triggered mass student marches and protests requesting, among other demands, respect for the civil rights guaranteed by Article 71 of the constitution. Finally, the role of students was critical in the successful upheavals against communist regimes which took place at the end of the 1980s. A desire for freedom from Soviet domination, freedom from meaningless ideology, and freedom of expression and representative government brought the first wave of student protesters into the streets. Similarly important was the role of students in Latin America in the 1960s, in China at the end of the 1980s, or more recently in the Balkans in the 1990s.

Certainly, the above-mentioned examples do not represent all the political turmoil instigated by students during the past decades. They show, however, that it is rather difficult to situate contemporary student movements within a left-right dichotomy. As Altbach rightly points out, although most of the student activist movements of the post-World War II period have been more or less on the left of the political spectrum, nationalist or religious demands and some of the anti-regime demonstrations of the late 1980s demonstrate that their ideological range is widening (Altbach 2006: 625). There is, however, something that almost all these student movements have in common: their oppositional nature. They tend to act against authorities, be it the government, university administrators, or any other established authority. In an attempt to find the reasons for this commonality, the next section will draw attention to the main determinants of student political dissatisfaction and the main characteristics of a student activist in the contemporary literary debate.

3.1. Characteristics of student activism

A student movement is a type of social movement. Its dynamics are therefore not very different from what has been so far analyzed by social movement theorists. Moreover, just as in other social movements, the most important factor that motivates young activists to engage in political protest is a key political event with a broad social impact (Lipset 1967). As Altbach points out, major student movements - at least in the industrialized nations - have arisen as responses to social or political concerns.

There are however some aspects worth underlining, such as the autonomy of institutes of higher learning, which create specific conditions for student movements to emerge. Despite the varying degree of freedom assigned to such institutions to run their own affairs without directions or influence from government, at many times universities managed to challenge state power, i.e. by providing a haven for political meetings or even to political refugees. It is therefore no coincidence that revolutionary movements in various countries have found their origins within campus' walls (Altbach 1989).

Moreover, the review of contemporary literature on youth activism brings to light the following sorts of issues that make student movements somewhat unusual:

- identifiable homogeneity within time limits, which facilitates a sense of solidarity and the creation of a specific identity;
- exposure to abstract ideological concepts that generates the tendency among students to struggle for massive social change in an effort to create a utopian society;
- privileged familial background (mainly in developing countries) and stronger political consciousness of movement participants, which makes them particularly prone to ideological orientation.[11]

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[11]The main determinants of student activism are summarized from the following sources: Altbach 1967, 1989; Lipset 1967; *Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia* (ed. Lonnie R. Sherrod, 2006).

While the above mentioned list of factors represents major commonalities distinctive of and usually facilitating student political activity, the variety of motivations behind student action, however, makes further generalization somewhat difficult. For instance, educational and campus-based issues are not always linked to demands for broad political change and student protest movements are not necessarily radical. However, in many cases, including the outburst of Georgian and Ukrainian student unrest in early 2000s, the concerns regarding university issues (such as the quality of teaching, corruption, or job and future career prospects) have led to widespread political unrest.

Hence, in the context of this research, a concise designation of what constitutes a student political movement and who qualifies as its participants seems purposeful and important. Student movements are therefore defined as associations of highly-motivated students generated by emotional (to one degree or another) feelings often associated with broader social or/and political circumstances. The emergence of such a movement is usually inspired by an event or series of events, not always political, which are often expected to have direct or indirect impact on the current or future situation of the young generation. The movement's members often share the conviction that they have a special mission to achieve objectives that the older generation failed to achieve, or to correct the imperfections of their environment. Consequently, they are strongly committed to incur significant costs and act to achieve these goals.[12]

Finally, when looking at the student movements that have appeared at various times in different parts of the world, it can be added that student activist organizations are minority phenomena, that they involve a very small number of students, and that they tend to be among the best-organized activist groups (Altbach 2006: 623). In addition, a student political

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[12] The definition partly combines the description of "a student activist" offered by Lewis Feuer in "Patterns in the History of Student Movements, "(p. 82) and "an activist" borrowed from Pamela E. Oliver and Gerald Marwell's "Mobilizing Technologies for Collective Action" (p. 252).

movement often involves an important non-student element, such as recent graduates and former student activists. As the empirical part of this study reveals, the political experience of ex-students may play an extraordinarily important role in creating and directing the new student organizations. For this reason, the characterization of student movements is broadened in order to embrace former student activists who in one way or another remain linked to the student community for longer periods of time. Thus, for the sake of clarification, the substitutive use of the term "youth movement" will refer to both students and postgraduates who actively participate in political protest.[13]

3.2.   Student activism: constraints and opportunities

Having depicted the major features of contemporary student activism, it is interesting to now reflect upon the extent to which these commonalities affect emerging student movements. The following part, therefore, will be an attempt to pinpoint the main challenges faced by student activists when starting and developing student movements. By placing them within the broader context of social movement perspectives it should be easier to further identify what is unique to youth political activism (paying special attention to student movement organizations) as compared to social movements in general.

In terms of political opportunities, young people who are eligible to vote often fail to do so, thus limiting their importance in the political sphere (Martin and Richards 2006: 593). Particularly in countries where in the past youth activism was highly ideologized and organized by the state, students tend to avoid any political engagement and their membership of civic organizations is often dramatically low. Moreover, the lack of a clear political and symbolic break with the past (as is the case in some post-Soviet countries) and the continued

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[13] This study tries to avoid the limitations of categorizing according to biological age, because it is not always relevant when comparing countries or regions, as definitions of youth may vary not only in cross-national comparisons but also within case study countries.

impunity of representatives of the old regime further contribute to the general disappointment and thus the political passivity of youth.[14]

With regard to access to financial and organizational resources, too, youth seems to be at a disadvantage. Because most students do not find full-time employment beyond minimum wage until sometime in their late twenties, they lack access to important resources that are necessary for social movement activity. Closely-related to this is the fact that, given their age, young people have not had the time to develop extensive networks of relationships with important actors (e.g. foundations, other movements) who could be potential supporters of youth activism (Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia 2006: 593).

The history of student rebellion in a particular country also has some implications for future student activism. Where the student community has few historic traditions, the role of students as an influential political force is often not taken seriously by politicians. On the other hand, governmental authorities may fear student politics and react with repression in countries, where students have already triggered a major political change in the past (Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia 2006: 593).

Finally, as in the case of other social movements, the success of a student movement depends on the publicity it receives from the mass media and key societal groups outside the university. The response to student activism in terms of media and governments has so far been mixed: sometimes it has received careful attention, at other times student politics has been dismissed or ignored. The reason for limited mass media reaction could be the difficulty of framing issues in a manner that captures the imagination and support of the broader public. Thus, at least in the West, state authorities often do not accept student protests as legitimate

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[14] *Argumenty i fakty,* 1994, No. 23, quoted in Fein 2005.

political expressions and let university authorities handle them (Martin and Richards 2006: 593).

Altogether, restricted political opportunities, lack of resources and problems with framing the issues that are the main concerns of the young generations build a myriad of obstacles for youth activism. However, young people - and particularly students - have played a significant role in contemporary political and social changes. Therefore, the question is: What are the main aspects of studentship that, despite these barriers, create opportunities for successful political action?

First, the tradition of intellectual, political, and physical freedom which students enjoy in many societies acts as a reinforcing element for student movements, permitting them to act with relative impunity (Altbach 1967: 77). The politicians' awareness that students have contributed so much in the past to revolutionary and pro-independence movements makes them both appreciate the students' political potential in the politics of the immediate present as well as aware of their value in increasing the size of demonstrations (Lipset 1967: 19).

Second, while youth as a whole seems to be especially underprivileged with regard to accessing important material resources, students do not. Students have access to an infrastructure of clubs, publishing houses, photocopying shops, informal groups, etc., etc., many of which are supported by educational institutions. This environment is critical to the formation of social movements, as it serves as a "space" or a "micro-mobilization context" (McAdam, McCarthy, Zald 1988) where resources are readily available (e.g. recruiting like-minded people, opportunities for meetings, the development of leadership skills, and networking between the supportive groups). In addition to these resources afforded to students, the collective identity of student activists also played an important role in many social movements.

Third, whilst traditional forms of interpersonal network formation continue to be the main linkages in organizing activist campaigns, there is growing evidence that young people are more likely to feel attachments to continental or global levels of networking than their elders.[15] Through resources and opportunities that are particular to our era - the availability of rapid forms of personal communication and cheap international air travel greater access to higher education and international student exchange programs, and the widespread knowledge of English - the young generation operates with equal ease on home ground and in the international arena (Tarrow 2005: 36, Tarrow and Donatella della Porta 2005: 243). As a consequence, in recent years young people have already been shown to play key roles in circulating self-consciously non-violent problem-solving tactics. By connecting to transnational players over the Internet, via letters, phone calls and face-to-face contact, today's youth is devising and communicating strategies derived from its own analyses of social problems (Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia 2006: 652).

Finally, although it is often difficult to frame problems unique to youth, there are some general beliefs in society about the entitlements which youth should be granted, such as access to quality education. When these entitlements are threatened then young people are often able to successfully frame the issue in order to garner broad public sympathy. If doing so they are able to skilfully link their particular issues to the broader appeal of youth culture, they might enjoy wider support from society (Tarrow 2005: 36). Moreover, when students are voicing an important social concern - such as civil or human rights issues - they are also likely to attract both the attention of the mass media and the support of significant segments of the population. Whilst it is difficult to predict the response of external constituencies to student

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[15] Sidney Tarrow calls them *rooted cosmopolitans,* that is "people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in regular activities that require their involvements in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts", *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29.

movements, there is no question that media attention is greater at times of social turmoil in society (Altbach 1989: 7).

As Gliński once said, the young generation and social movements share common features: spontaneity, creativity and emotionality, all prerequisites of collective action (Gliński 1998: 15). However, given the particular challenges and opportunities young people face when engaging in social movement activities, students appear to be the most advantaged subcategory of youth. It should therefore come as no surprise that, in an atmosphere of political turmoil, students regularly arise as forerunners of social unrest. Given that on the eve of a breakthrough they are frequently joined by other protesters in more or less spontaneous collective action, increasing youth radicalism in the campus often signals general problems within society which have been already mounting for extensive period of time.

4.   From theory to observation

Since education has long been associated with democratization (Lipset 1960), the rise of a new generation of students in post-Soviet states has obviously been a critical factor in the spread of "democratization by revolution" in the region. The prevailing common denominator among the youth opposition groups was their perception of fair elections as the only and last chance to struggle for life in a "normal" country. The campaigns' attractive names, logos, and slogans filled the empty space left following the disappearance of monopolistic communist ideology and effectively targeted the traditionally apolitical youth. At the same time, student and NGO networks provided a good background for socializing potential activists, for the formation of a collective identity, and for reaching a greater number of people. Finally, the authorities' attempts to expand political controls over higher education and to restrict the

independence of universities in the midst of an expansion of higher education provided the immediate impetus for the organization of radical youth movements (Beissinger 2006: 4).

The subsequent in-depth analysis of two youth opposition campaigns adds to this debate by drawing upon the major social movement perspectives that attempt to explain why, how, and who engages in collective action. Initially, drawing upon the insights of political opportunities concept, a closer look is given to the national political context and the extent to which it has shaped the movements' emergence and development. Accordingly, the political histories of Georgia and Ukraine are recounted in order to expose the limitations and opportunities that each political system posed for the mobilization of *Pora* and *Kmara*. Next, the resource mobilization perspective accounts for the movements' organizational forms, their choice of tactics, and the legacies left by previous protests in the form of experienced leaders, activist networks, and lessons about practical politics. Finally, the theoretical tradition of frame analysis provides the themes for the analysis of meanings, symbols, goals, and ideas that both campaigns used to provoke political change. In short, a multidimensional portrayal helps to reflect upon how young regime challengers become vanguards of political change that has been already taking place (Melucci 1996: 3).

Chapter 3:

SEMI-AUTHORITARIANISM IN GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

AS A CONTEXT FOR MOBILIZATION

1.   Introduction

In the second half of the 1990s it became apparent that a number of countries that arose on the ruins of the Soviet empire during the so-called "third wave" of democratization were poorly-prepared for establishing democracy. Although some undeniable positive changes have occurred regionally, unfavourable conditions such as economic collapse and poverty, rampant corruption, the clan-based nature of politics, weak institutions, the low quality (or the complete absence) of independent media and weak civil society, to name but a few, have created major obstacles to the efficient introduction of democratic measures (Ottaway 2003). In consequence, some states remain trapped between "full-fledged democracy and outright dictatorship", and have drifted for sustained periods of time in a so-called "political grey zone" (Carothers 2002: 9).

These regimes manifest themselves in a variety of forms. They mix authoritarian and democratic features in different proportions, and the literature on post-communist politics has begun to produce various labels with which to classify them. Among efforts seeking to describe their ambiguous nature in scholarly research, one can find terms such as "hybrid regimes" (Diamond 2002), "competitive authoritarian" (Levitsky and Way 2002), "electoral authoritarian" (Ottaway 2003), "soft authoritarianism" (Prizel 1997), "delegative democracies" (O'Donnell 1994), "semi-democracies" (Case 1996), "illiberal democracies" (Zakaria 1997), "virtual democracies" (Wilson 2005), "pseudo democracies" (Cosgrove

2007), "managed democracies" (Mandel 2005) or "managed pluralism" (Balzer 2003). Whilst the existence of these many adjectival variants can be partially explained by the attempts of certain scholars to precisely describe particular syndromes featuring neither democratic nor authoritarian regime types, they also create conceptual confusion (Balzer 2003). Moreover, only a few of them are justified by a comprehensive explanation of a model they actually apply to. Hence, in this study, it is proposed to define systems that developed in Georgia and Ukraine after the fall of communism as "semi-authoritarian" or "hybrid", and these two terms are used interchangeably throughout the thesis.[16] They are broad enough to encompass the above-mentioned variations without radically departing from their common key characteristics, and they do not imply direct association with democracy - which seems particularly sensible when describing countries which during a certain period did not undergo any political change towards democratic consolidation.

The focus on semi-authoritarianism as characteristic of Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's periods in power contributes greatly to the discussion on political opportunities and obstacles for political mobilization in illiberal contexts. Whilst there is a vast body of literature focusing on how democratic settings may favour or constrain activists' prospects for mobilization, relatively little is known about the political processes behind social movements in non-democracies (Almeida 2003, McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, Meyer 2002, Tarrow 1999). Moreover, even less attention in this regard has been devoted to ambiguous political systems that can neither be classified as fully democratic nor as clearly authoritarian. Hence, by providing a detailed account of the Shevardnadze and Kuchma regimes which young *Kmara* and *Pora* activists sought to change, this research extends the scope of social movement research to the semi-authoritarian landscape. Accordingly, knowledge of the

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[16] In comparison, neighbouring Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia were rated as "semi-consolidated" authoritarian regimes located one step closer to "consolidated authoritarian regime" than political hybrids (Freedom House, *Nations in Transit* 2004).

weaknesses and vulnerabilities of these two systems allows further key insights into how political pre-conditions in post-communist contexts have inspired and shaped the origins and dynamics of *Kmara* and *Pora*'s mobilization.

2. The concept of semi-authoritarian regime type

To a large extent, the success of revolutionary movements depends on the political setting in which they emerge (Goldstone 1991, Jenkins and Klandermans 1995, Skocpol 1979). As presented in Chapter 2, there are several ways in which regimes impact on pre-conditions for social protest and affect the actions of insurgents. First, they initiate events and governmental actions that give incentives for opposition campaigns to challenge the regime. Second, they have the capacity to control claim-making groups either by means of repression or legal boundaries imposed on anti-regime manifestations. Finally, by limiting their access to the political system, they encourage both excluded elites and collective actors to join forces in order to increase their chances to take part in the decision-making process. Clearly then, the study of Georgian and Ukrainian youth political activism cannot neglect the general features of the semi-authoritarian regime type in which it occurred, as these were important factors that created an advantageous context for the development of opportunities for young people's mobilization.

2.1. Defining features

The occurrence of regimes where democratic measures coexist and conflict with various authoritarian practices, thus creating neither fully-democratic nor authoritarian political hybrids, became one of the great enigmas of the post-Soviet history of a number of successor states to the USSR. This led some scholars to search for new conceptualizations of

these particular political systems, that only pretended to formally recognize the need for certain democratic values while still conforming to illiberal traits (Fairbanks 2004, Korobova 2002). In the light of this renewed debate on the typology of the ambiguous regimes that developed in the post-communist landscape, Georgia and Ukraine present distinct characteristics of "semi-authoritarian" (Ottaway 2003) or "hybrid" systems (e.g. Carothers 2002, Freedom House 2007)[17] that "fall on the blurry boundary between electoral democracy and competitive authoritarianism" (Diamond 2002: 30).[18]

There are various approaches to distinguish semi-authoritarian regimes from those fully despotic or democratic (e.g. Nodia, 2002, Ottaway 2003, Carothers 2007, Sondrol 2007).[19] In one of the most systematic analyses of political hybrids, Ottaway describes them as long-lasting systems that

> are not imperfect democracies struggling towards improvement and consolidation but regimes determined to maintain the appearance of democracy without exposing themselves to the political risks that free competition entails. They allow little real competition for power, thus reducing government accountability. However, they leave enough space for political parties and civil society to form, for an independent press to function to some extent, and for some political debate to take place (2003: 3).

The key issue here that contrasts with previous studies on former communist states is the deliberate action of semi-authoritarian governments to retain their *status quo*. Whereas the initial euphoria trumpeting the region's victory over totalitarianism prompted many scholars to imply that the ideological vacuum would be filled with democratic values, history proved otherwise. Instead, some countries managed to stop between "full-fledged democracy and

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[17] Freedom House is a United States-based non-governmental organization that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and human rights (Freedom House 2007). It has defined five regime types: consolidated democracy, semi-consolidated democracy, transitional government or hybrid regime, semi-consolidated authoritarian regime, and consolidated authoritarian regime.
[18] Diamond's typology of regimes at the end of 2001 includes: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, ambiguous regimes, competitive authoritarian, hegemonic electoral authoritarian, politically-closed authoritarian (Diamond 2002).
[19] Most of these attempts to organise knowledge on this topic derive from the growing body of research on democracy-promotion efforts of many international actors.

outright dictatorship" and turn into successful semi-authoritarian states with deliberately organized and maintained alternative systems (Ottaway 2003).

Other literature that has centred on constructing an analytical framework for hybrid regimes usually focuses on the same aspects, particular to the political arena, in order to specify whether they are closer to democracy or semi-authoritarianism and how different they are from these two systems. As far as their main contours are concerned, the following five general observations provide a concise presentation of what has so far been agreed upon regarding regimes that had begun to democratize in the 1980s and 1990s but then became suspended between democratic and authoritarian regimes:

1) the electoral transfer is constrained due to the existence of various blocking mechanisms which undermine the regime's legitimacy;

2) the line between the state and the ruling party (or ruling political forces) is blurred by the latter's regular abuse of its access to the state's main assets to use them for its own political and economic benefits;[20]

3) the power-holders continue to express their (more or less sincere) pro-democracy rhetoric, but at the same time try to avoid far-reaching political changes which would threaten their dominant position;

4) civil society and its impact are weak and citizens remain isolated from the political elite (and politics in general) as a result of various economic, social, and institutional conditions and legacies;

5) if not directly censored, the mass media are (occasionally or regularly) harassed through selective applications of economic and physical pressure.

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[20] Carother calls it "dominant-power politics", which he attributes to one of the features of political grey zones (2002: 12).

Whilst it is relatively easy to examine whether a regime features these key characteristics, one should be aware that semi-authoritarianism as a model does not represent a final, immutable form. In this sense, the regimes that fall under this category can vary significantly from one another regarding the intensity or degree with which the above-mentioned factors occur, and consequently lean closer to the democratic or authoritarian end of the spectrum (Nodia 2002, Sondrol 2007). Though the debate regarding deviations from these conceptual frames goes beyond the limits of the thesis, a brief introduction to the selected sub-categories that have been specified in order to capture the particularities of the Georgian and Ukrainian contexts appears useful to present a more detailed understanding of their defining features.

Among studies that have tried to explain the ability of political systems in Georgia and Ukraine to imitate democratic behaviour, Levitsky and Way (2002) propose the term "competitive authoritarianism" to highlight how violations of democratic criteria impede the success of regime challengers. According to their designation,

> democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority. Incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy (Levitsky and Way 2002: 52).

At the same time, however, it is further noted that the persistence of meaningful democratic institutions is what distinguishes "competitive authoritarianism" from "closed authoritarian" regimes. This means that even if competition is unfair, opposition parties continue to seriously and openly contest for power - and even occasionally win - during regularly-held elections (Levitsky and Way 2002: 54).

Another variation of semi-authoritarianism is "contested oligarchy" (Wheatley 2005), a term referring to the period of Shevardnadze's presidency which is also relevant to the system that had been forged in Ukraine under Kuchma. In this case, it is argued that "a ruling

elite (or oligarchy) that holds power does all it can to retain it, but at the same time observes some minimal democratic procedures" (Wheatley 2005: 21). A similar approach to encapsulating the political climate that developed in Georgia throughout the 1990s and in early 2002 is offered by Nodia: In his definition of a "liberal autocracy" or "liberal oligarchy", Nodia points to the conformity to certain basic norms of liberal democracy of part of a relatively small network of elites. However, their parallel endeavour to routinely manipulate formal democratic rules so as to prevent the opposition from displacing the ruling elite reveals that they merely made a pretence of acting as the guardians of a "civilized", "progressive" and "reformist" political system (Nodia 2005: 3). In consequence, feelings of uncertainty and unsteadiness, of incompleteness and instability, as well as a sense of failure, became the prevailing concerns of the societies such elites were supposedly representing (Nodia 2002: 118).

Whilst these approaches do not contradict an earlier interpretation of what constitutes a "hybrid" regime, by focusing on the actors in the political processes they clearly add some nuance. First, they emphasize that semi-authoritarian power-holders do not openly challenge the democratic model, which implies that they are however aware of the serious consequences which will ensue if they do not embrace it as a long-term goal. Second, and despite various impediments to political institutions, the competition between political elites is real, which means that hybrid regimes can change, although some extraordinary efforts would be required for this change to happen. Finally, for at least a part of society, semi-authoritarianism does not represent a state of normality, in contrast to what some scholars have been suggesting (e.g. Carothers 2002: 18). Hence, whereas citizens may acknowledge and become accustomed to various structural weaknesses of their homeland, they are generally dissatisfied with the

political life of their country and attribute most of the problems to the deleterious practices of the corrupt and elite-dominated regime.

By pointing out the main areas of uncertainty for hybrid political systems - such as the nature of the elite and the role of elections - the above-mentioned assumptions provide a direction for further discussion on the elements of this particular setting which opened a window for the change advocated by youth opposition campaigns. Instead of concentrating on durability in semi-autocratic regime type, as most scholars propose, the next sections will therefore search for factors which eventually gave rise to elements of regime-challenging activity. This will be done by answering one general and one more specific question, viz. How can changes happen if these regimes are supposedly durable?, and What are the fractures in the system that help to explain the dynamics of regime change?

2.2. Key areas of uncertainty

2.2.1. *Elites*

In undemocratic systems a struggle for power between elites is one of the main factors that ignites dissent against authorities (Tarrow 1996). In this sense, political elites become important actors who trigger changes in the political context and define the sort of political opportunities necessary for collective action to emerge (Jenkins 1995, Goodwin 1997). Hence, in order to explain the emergence and dynamics of anti-regime mobilization in Georgia and Ukraine in the context of political processes targeted by young activists, the nature of post-Soviet state officials is first discussed as one of the long-term causative factors that had considerable implications for revolutionary regime change in the two countries.

There are three main features of ruling elites that can be distinguished from the existing literature that relate to representatives of the former USSR's *nomenklatura*: 1)

corruption; 2) clientelism; and 3) patronage (Birch 1997, Darden 2001, Way 2005, Wheatley 2005). Whilst clearly interrelated, all these elements are highly relevant to what has been described as a "Soviet elite culture" (Wheatley 2005) that continued to prevail among groups that retained their power after 1991 in Georgia and Ukraine. According to Wheatley, the behavioural patterns and informal conventions distinctive to this phenomenon involved constant "rule-breaking, dissimulation, corruption, clientelism, indifference towards the affairs of ordinary citizens and an extreme degree of dependence on superiors," as well as a "proliferation of informal patronage networks" (Wheatley 2005: 24). The fact that they continued to be practised under Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's presidencies can be attributed above all to the legacies of the post-Soviet period and to the lack of preparation for the new political and economic pressures of the 1990s, which altogether impeded the building of both strong government institutions and civil society. Instead, they fostered patronage and clientelism as a dominant means of survival in the unstable, post-communist period.

One of the main inheritances from the Soviet era that outlived the break-up of the Soviet Union and continued to influence political life after 1991 was the widespread use of government connections and resources by political elites for their private benefit. Under communist rule, connections were critical to become part of or establish ties with the communist party elite, or *nomenklatura*, which in turn was a crucial step for gaining access to the state system which regulated the distribution of resources. Accordingly, the long periods of tenure of party officials encouraged the creation of party fiefdoms and dynastic clans where personal and familial ties, overlapping membership, and patron-client relationships dominated (O'Neil 1996, Vorozheikina 1994). Such behaviour was encouraged not only by Soviet bureaucratic structures (political system), but also by the inefficiencies of the state-controlled economy, which activated a second, informal market that facilitated the circumvention of

supply bottlenecks and thus ensured the survival of individuals, households, companies, and even the state itself (Portes and Borocz 1988). Hence, it was quite common at both state and individual levels to have to bribe or contact someone influential in order to skip all or part of the queue to obtain a flat or to purchase products that were in short supply (Grodeland, Koshechkina, and Miller 1998). In consequence, a political system based on more or less personalized relationships and patron-client exchange became a dominant feature across the republics of the Soviet empire, and since little legitimacy from below was required, political parties became narrow elite-driven cliques with no roots among diverse societal groups (Wheatley 2005).

The designation of the social stratification that was based on proximity to power (and resources) did not cease to exist during a major transition from one political and economic system to another, at least in the short term (Hanf and Nodia 2000: 46). In fact, the departure from communism concentrated immense resources in state hands and turned members of the *nomenklatura* into virtually uncontrolled arbiters of the distribution and use of state property (Hale 2006, Way 2005, Grodeland, Koshechkina, and Miller 1998). Hence, under the name of privatization, which in most cases proved to be essentially clientelistic, well-positioned and well-connected government figures could still channel the most valuable resources to their own clients (Dinello 2001). Accordingly, the low salaries and poor job security of those officials associated with the transition facilitated the further growth of corruption and gave them an asymmetrical level of power over subordinates and those outside the state apparatus (Van Loo 2002: 8). [21] It became clear that whilst democratic slogans replaced totalitarian ideology, little was supposed to change since 1991 in this regard: In exchange for their loyalty

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[21] In fact, bribery even seems to have been actively encouraged by state authorities. By ensuring that most or all state officials break the law, the leadership of the state could collect sufficient compromising material (*kompromat*) to guarantee the subjection and loyalty of bureaucrats (Darden 2001, Way 2005, Wheatley 2005: 104).

and political support, parties in power would still tie political, business and administrative elites to them by assuming the key functions of a patronage network (Bader 2008: 5).

Given that patronage and clientelism are most likely to prevail in "intermediate spaces" between formal centralised hierarchies on one hand and diffused or dispersed power on the other (Clapham 1982, Van Loo 2002), the semi-authoritarian setting in Georgia and Ukraine unsurprisingly served as a breeding-ground for such malfunctions of the system. According to current research, there are three key factors that contribute to the monopolization of power through a patron-client exchange:

- the patron controls valuable resources,

- the patron desires the services of a client,

- the patron has discretionary power over the distribution of public resources (Van Loo 2002: 8).

When analyzing Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's years in office, one cannot help noticing that all these conditions were in place. In both countries, the leaders and a ruling elite controlled a reasonably effective means of allocation, they were prepared to resort to patronage measures because they needed the electoral support of their clients, and, finally, due to the weak foundations of their emerging democratic institutions and civil societies, they were shielded from public scrutiny and accountability within hierarchical power structures. Altogether, this enabled clientelistic networks to step in and help to preserve the regimes' *status quo*.

2.2.2. *Elections*

The way in which power is generated is one of the most important ways in which hybrid systems vary from other regime types (Ottaway 2003: 15). In literature on the subject,

the transfer of power in a semi-authoritarian setting is usually presented as displaying a different dynamic than in a setting in which fair contestation can be taken for granted. As the main explanation for such dissonance, scholars indicate "the existence and persistence of mechanisms that effectively prevent the transfer of power through elections to a new political elite or organization, (…) despite the existence of formally democratic institutions and the degree of freedom" (Ottaway 2003: 15-16). Although these mechanisms contribute to (if not decide) the contradictory existence of meaningful democratic institutions and authoritarian practices, they are in fact encouraged by the authorities who profit handsomely from such situations. One way to understand how the functioning of limits on power transfers can benefit incumbents is to look closely at the problem of patronage and clientelism discussed above in close relation with the nature of the electoral process in the particular semi-authoritarian setting.

The ex-*nomenklatura*, which after the communist period inherited a monopolistic control over political and economic resources, proved quite successful in their attempts to transform Soviet-era structure of top-down patronage relations into a bottom-up one of electoral patronage. Such practices resulted in the development of the political mechanism defined as "electoral clientelism" (Birch 1997: 43). In general, the system is based on an exchange between two sets of actors: incumbents who have access to resources that voters desire and the ability to distribute them, and the voters willing to have their votes bought for favours or goods (e.g. jobs, contracts, permits, pensions, cash payments, and other, more basic goods) instead of having them won in fair electoral competition (which is unlikely) (Birch 1997: 43, Manzetti and Wilson 2007: 949). As for the less "cooperative" clients who may be tempted to defect to the political opposition (or who have already done so), credible threats (e.g. the use of tax authorities, compliant judiciaries, and other state agencies to "legally"

harass or persecute) can also be applied by the incumbent in order to extort their support and reduce electoral competition. However, rather than openly violate democratic rules (e.g. by cancelling or openly stealing elections or imprisoning opponents), semi-authoritarian regimes prefer to resort to more subtle forms of persecution, as they typically feel such pressure ought to at least appear to be democratic to their own societies and international community (Levitsky and Way 2002: 54, Nodia 2002).

In sum, there are three main factors used to explain the increased likehood of clientelist exchange for votes in semi-authoritarian states:

- the existence of powerful cliques who exercise a monopolistic control over political and economic resources (Manzetti and Wilson 2007);

- the successful recourse to threats and other effective means by incumbents to monitor their clients' votes at the ballot box (Medina and Stokes 2002); and

- weak government institutions incapable of providing public goods which are instead distributed by powerful groups to their political clienteles (Keefer 2005).

Given that all these factors were present in many Soviet successor states, "electoral clientelism" served as the main strategy behind the electoral successes of many ex-*nomenklatura* politicians, who relied upon extensive and well-organized clientelistic networks instead of relying upon fair electoral competition.

The clientelist and neo-patrimonial practices which surround a ballot vote, however, are not separated phenomena that are observable in hybrid regimes during electoral process. They are, in fact, closely interlinked with other elements of semi-authoritarianism that affect electoral competition in a negative way. These include, for example, establishing a "party of power" to organize support for the regime, and a pro-regime/anti-regime division between parties rather than between political programmes, where the idea behind the existence of anti-

regime parties is usually based upon the condemnation of the government's authoritarian leanings and declaring democratic convictions (Bader 2008: 4-5). If taken together, these elements shape a context in which electoral competition becomes a fiction: voters cannot transfer power to a new leadership simply because elections are not the source of the government's power. Rather, such elections serve as a ritual, incumbents holding them to "earn" the approval of the international community and to ensure their victory (Carothers 2002: 12, O'Donnell 2007: 6).

The combination of these factors also has considerable social implications. In terms of reliance on informal conventions and the exercise of power outside the realm of democratic institutions, these practices play a part in widening the divide between the political elite and citizens who are not allowed to truly challenge those in power by casting their votes for political opponents (Ottaway 2003: 16, Wheatley 2005: 24). At the same time, however, opposition parties also expose serious weaknesses regarding the representation of diverse societal interests. Partially due to their disadvantageous position, which deprives them of access to media or/and state resources, and due to their shallow political programmes - which often contain nothing more than a fierce anti-systemic rhetoric, unrealistic promises, and no actual solutions - they are not in a position to replace clientelistic networks by offering the impoverished and disillusioned communities any tangible benefits in exchange for votes (Dinello 2001). In consequence, despite their dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation, political clienteles often continue to support the barely legitimate leadership, as it is the only source of more or less credible promises to receive what are in principle public goods, whereas ordinary citizens, being aware of the powerlessness of the opposition, often choose the well-known lesser evil, fearing the instability new power arrangements could bring (Manzetti and Wilson 2007: 955).

2.3. Prospects for regime change

Semi-authoritarian regimes can last for years in forms which more or less actively exploit the afore-mentioned mechanisms. Moreover, by holding the malfunctioning mechanism of a periodic ballot vote, such regimes are quite often successful in persuading the international community that their hold on power is justified due to maintaining democratic institutions (Carothers 2007: 21). This was clearly the case in Georgia and Ukraine, where for a certain period of time the corruption and inequitable practices of the ruling elites, cloaked by a democratic veneer, have been overlooked by foreign scholars and policy-makers - most of whom expected a linear transition from communism to democracy to be followed by these new democracies. Only when the economic and political implications of their worsening situation became too serious to be ignored did the international community begin to notice the complexity of the problems these regions faced (e.g. the institutionalization of corruption, enormous losses of revenue to state budgets, delays to the development of the private sector, the monopolization of certain aspects of economic activity, and the pervasive and unjust enrichment of ex-*nomenklatura*) (Grodeland, Koshechkina, and Miller 1998). At the same time, the condemnation of such developments could not escape further reflections on the unsatisfactory role of democracy-promoting actors in preventing these failures (more on this issue in Chapter 4).

Yet, apart from a general trend towards searching for factors that were responsible for the backsliding of democratization processes in some post-Soviet states, relatively little has been said regarding the elements of semi-authoritarian settings that could bring instability and pose challenges for these well-established and supposedly durable systems. Among the main and rare references concerning this issue, shifting alliances among the ex-*nomenklatura* elite

(Levitsky and Way 2002)[22] and "a level of opposition mobilization, unity, skill, and heroism far beyond what would normally be required for victory in a democracy" (Diamond, 2002: 24) were identified as creating opportunities for change in hybrid regimes.

Interestingly, none of the recent approaches placed the discussion on regime change in the field of social movements, despite the fact that this field provides a good framework for tracing systemic fractures, which can open prospects for anti-regime undertakings. In the context of political hybrids, the elite alignments and openness or closure of a political system are particularly relevant opportunity structures, which indicate the weaknesses of the system against collective action. For instance, in his study on prospects for actions challenging authoritarian leaders, Almeida (2003: 350-353), points to the fact that if opposition parties can still secure some representation in the "grey-zone" countries, it sends a message to challenger organizations about the possibility of forming alliances and thus gaining new advantages for achieving their goals. The opposition, in turn, may view challenging groups as a vital component of their own constituency, and cooperate with them in order to increase their own electoral power. In consequence, their united strength can gain considerable weight during competitive elections by sending a strong message to the power holders that not only will more efforts be needed this time in order to win the electoral rounds, but also that a flagrant case of fraud can lead to anti-systemic protests and a consequent shake-up of the political landscape. As is maintained throughout this thesis, a similar scenario could be observed before and during the Rose and Orange Revolutions.

The subsequent case-study analysis of Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's regimes allows closer observation of the features of the semi-authoritarian regime type. Whilst both

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[22] Levitsky and Way (2002) apply Shefter's concept of "rapacious individualism" to Ukraine's elite behaviour in order to explain "the weakness of political organizations…and the fluidity of…political alignments" in the context of rampant but unstructured and unorganized corruption (Shefter 1976: 21).

presidents chose to oscillate between the democratic and authoritarian ends of the political grey-zone during their stay in office, revolutionary regime changes in Georgia and Ukraine suggest that even durable political hybrids are not impervious to change. Moreover, after having being neglected for a long time, the in-depth study of the conflictual nature of hybrid regimes in the context of contentious politics provides an excessive elaboration of the key political developments that impeded and facilitated the opening of political opportunities for the mobilization of youth campaigns.

3.   Shevardnadze's Georgia and Ukraine under Kuchma

In many ways, Shevardnadze's Georgia and Ukraine under Kuchma appear to fit the model of "semi-authoritarianism". This section therefore aims to narrow down the debate on the main aspects of the hybrid system to the Georgian and Ukrainian political experiences, particularly in the areas referred to in Chapter 2 as being central to a measure of political opportunity. Closer attention is paid to Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's style of governance, and to the erosion of their legitimacy as a consequence of illegal attempts to monopolize political control, which became a leitmotiv of future revolutionary upheavals. Also, elite behavioural patterns are discussed along with presidential practices which seek to dominate subordinates, in order to highlight how changing alignments across the political spectrum shaped opportunities for mobilization. Specifically, a direct focus on elite reshuffles complements the approach to political opportunity structure by revealing more dynamic elements of opportunities that determined political protest in the two countries. Such a detailed examination of the Georgian and Ukrainian political context refines the conceptual approach to the analysis of mechanisms that propel the continuation of semi-authoritarian systems applied in the previous sections. This adds to a holistic, exploratory perspective of

those of the regimes' weaknesses and vulnerabilities which were decisive for young members of *Kmara* and *Pora* in terms of opening-up prospects for advancing particular claims and triggering youth political activism.

3.1. Personalization of the old regime

3.1.1. *Georgia*

In 1991, the vast majority of Georgians chose a former dissident, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, as their first democratically-elected president. However, despite initial support for the new president, his autocratic tendencies, nationalistic slogans and intolerance of all political opposition saw him rapidly fall out of favour with his supporters. According to some historical accounts, the unwillingness to compromise, impatience with the slowness of progress and a disgust for political pragmatism became the main features of Georgian politics under Gamsakhurdia's presidency (Nodia 1995: 108). The consequences of such an approach to ruling the newly-independent and fragile country were quick to appear. Slogans such as "Georgia for the Georgians" deepened the fears of ethnic minorities, which eventually chose to break away from the new nation-state. Apart from the wars that broke out in South Ossetia (1991-1992) and in Abkhazia (1992-1993),[23] the political dispute between opponents and supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia was responsible for the outbreak of yet another domestic violent conflict. All this resulted in the president's ousting (January 1992) by a Military Council, which invited Eduard Amvrosiyevich Shevardnadze to return to Georgia to assume the role of Head of State.[24]

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[23] The ethno-regional tensions resulted in Georgia's unsuccessful military campaigns against the Abkhazian and Ossetian separatist movements and the displacement of more than 200,000 refugees onto Georgia's remaining territory (Nodia 1995).
[24] South Ossetia and Abkhazia are disputed regions within Georgia's international borders that declared their *de facto* independence from Georgia in 1992 and in 1994 respectively.

Following his arrival in Georgia in 1992, Shevardnadze became a leading figure on the Georgian political scene, and became perceived as a "fixed attribute of an immutable Georgian political system by both his countrymen and the international community" (Nizharadze 2005: 108). Shevardnadze was the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party from 1972 to 1985, Chairman of the Georgian Parliament and Head of State from 1992 to 1995, and President of Georgia from 1995 to 2003 (Wheatley 2005). During his years as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1985 to 1990), Shevardnadze earned the respect of the West as an architect of political and economic change who played a key role in the reunification of Germany and in the peaceful demise of the Soviet Union. At home and abroad, Shevardnadze has been praised for his good intuition about what the informal rules of the political game were, as well as for his feeling for political trends (Nizharadze 2005: 106-111). His ability to manoeuvre smoothly through a difficult political environment during all these years has earned him the Georgian sobriquet *tetri melia* - white fox.

Generally-speaking, Shevardnadze's presidency in post-communist Georgia can be divided into the following three main periods. The first period saw the successful restoration of public order after the ethnic conflicts and civil war in the early 1990s, and when the state was facing social and economic catastrophe. During the second period, the implementation of reforms and the adoption of a constitution in the mid-1990s brought about a fairly high degree of political pluralism and civic freedom to the country. Finally, during the late 1990s and until his overthrow in 2003, the main aspects attributed to Shevardnadze's rule relate mainly to stagnation and backtracking from democratic development, accompanied by corruption and cronyism deeply-rooted in governmental administration (Miller 2004, Wheatley 2005, Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006). Thus, whereas the first two periods are usually assessed as satisfactory in terms of pulling the country out of "chaos and unaccountability"

(as Shevardnadze himself put it),[25] the last one was characterized by his total failure as head of state. In consequence, his inability to improve the deficient system by making decisive changes, particularly during his second term in office, drastically reduced his popularity among both the general public and a growing political opposition.

However, when one speaks of Eduard Shevardnadze, it is essential to remember that he was a child of his time. Given his extensive political experience in the *nomenklatura* environment, it is unsurprising that Shevardnadze's method of government remained typical of a communist party boss (Wheatley 2005: 113). In order to rebuild the state, in which formal structures were either non-existent or subordinated by paramilitary or mafia groupings, he re-established old networks from the Communist Party, from the police, from the *Komsomol* (the youth wing of the Communist Party), and from the shadow economic elite (Suny 1994, Nizharadze 2005). By re-introducing old Soviet-era mechanisms of control, Shevardnadze contrived to impose his authority over various informal groupings of the Georgian political elite, which he skilfully played off against each other. Accordingly, acting as a "supreme arbiter", he balanced the opposing factions within the elite by granting each of them a share of power and thus access to lucrative state assets and to loans granted by foreign powers. Finally, in order to secure his electoral success, Shevardnadze established his official party of power - the Citizen's Union of Georgia (CUG) - which also served as an efficient vehicle for the distribution of patronage to powerful business interests (King 2001). In this way, although he failed to establish total top-down control, the President limited the possibility of an open opposition emerging that could draw on social discontent and seriously threaten his position (Wheatley 2005: 93,134).

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[25] Shevardnadze quoted in Alkhazashvili (2003).

Yet the power arrangements of Shevardnadze's design were not only unable to prevent the social and economic catastrophe that came in the late 1990s, but were also to a large extent responsible for it. Economic depression, financial destabilization and a budgetary crisis, a hastily and incorrectly carried-out privatization process, the large magnitude of the shadow economy (the result of a rapid rise in corruption and smuggling), an energy crisis, the failure of economic programs, inflexible tax policies, and an inconsistent course of economic reforms reflect only some of the major problems Georgia was facing at that time (Gachechiladze 1998). Moreover, every single election held during the Shevardnadze administration was falsified to one degree or another, thus making substantive reforms impossible, as the same people from the president's inner circle remained in charge (The *Messenger*, 10 November 2003, see also Table 2). Also, the close relationship which existed between the government and big business secured Shevardnadze's position, and the blackmailing of business and political opponents ensured their loyalty, as otherwise their properties or positions would have been threatened (Alkhazashvili 2003). Nevertheless, partially due to the reliance on such methods and partially due to the lack of a strong opposition figure, Shevardnadze was re-elected (April 2000) and stayed in power until the parliamentary elections in 2003, when he was forced to resign during the so-called Rose Revolution. Until today, Shevardnadze's failure to solve the 2003 post-electoral crisis in his own favour and to maintain himself as president until the next presidential race that was scheduled for 2005 remains a puzzle for those who praised him as a "brilliant political animal" and a "great mediator" (Baker 2005, Wheatley 2005).

3.1.2. *Ukraine*

As with Shevardnadze in Georgia, Leonid Danylovych Kuchma symbolized Ukraine's *ancien régime*. His political career in independent Ukraine began when was elected to the *Verkhovna Rada* (Ukraine's parliament) and served as prime minister between October 1992 and September 1993. As a Russian-speaking representative of the military-industrial complex and a former director of a missile factory, he presented himself as a "pragmatic and experienced technocrat possessed of the skills necessary to lead Ukraine out of the clutches of the corrupt ex-communist establishment and onto the road to economic recovery" (Birch 1995: 97). Such an image appeared to fit voters' expectations, as hyper-inflation and declining productivity made the economy the most important issue by far for most Ukrainians (Wasylyk, 1994). In 1994, Kuchma replaced Leonid Kravchuk by winning the second contest for the presidency in newly-independent Ukraine, and served two consecutive terms in office until 2004.[26]

Although Kuchma advocated economic reforms and closer economic links with Russia, his campaign promises were soon abandoned. Whilst some progress was achieved during his first term in office, such as the introduction of a national currency (1996), the development of Ukraine's first post-communist constitution (1996), the settlement of border disputes with Russia, and the securing of Western financial assistance, until 1999 there was no impulse for further economic reform. This temporarily changed when the threat of losing the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) support and the need to restructure the country's debts became instrumental in the appointment of a central banker and reformer, Viktor Yushchenko, as prime minister (van Zon 2005). Soon after his re-election (1999), however, Kuchma's reputation began to radically decline. His implication in the disappearance of an

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[26] Kravchuk's support base was mainly concentrated in western Ukraine, whilst Kuchma's backers mostly came from eastern Ukraine (Birch 2005).

opposition journalist and his decision to supply several "Kolchuga" passive radar systems to Saddam Hussein's Iraq triggered demands for his resignation four years ahead of the next elections and international support for him severely eroded (Freedom House: Country Report 2003). Disturbed by his low ratings in the domestic and international arenas, Kuchma undertook some steps to maintain his grip on power by modifying the country's constitution and electoral system. Eventually, these attempts proved unsuccessful, as he could not muster an absolute majority in parliament in order to push through the necessary changes (Christensen, Rakhimkulov, and Wise 2005: 220).

The Ukrainian political system during Leonid Kuchma's presidency combined the features of a presidential patronage system, a "bureaucratic regime", and a "blackmail state" (Darden 2001, van Zon 2005). Whereas the practice of political patronage transmitted from Soviet times was used to preserve his own personal power, the widespread use of government connections and resources by political elites led to a takeover of the state apparatus by diverse private interests (Way 2005, Wheatley 2005). Accordingly, the systematic use of blackmail became the main tool for securing compliance with the leadership's directives. As in the case of Georgia and other post-Soviet states, in Ukraine such methods were also clearly predestined by the experience of pervasive corruption. When combined with extensive surveillance and the collection of evidence of wrongdoings, known in Russian as *kompromat*, these methods served as an "essential element of the informal mechanism of presidential control" over political opponents and the oligarchic clans that owed their power to Kuchma (Darden 2001: 2-3, Wilson 2005).

Additionally, intensified state control over government jobs and various institutions (i.e. universities, prisons, hospitals) enabled Kuchma to apply the basic technique of patronage and exchange jobs, pre-election pensions, wage pay-offs or government

entitlements for votes cast for the incumbent. The routine of holding elections was therefore upheld as a strategy for maintaining legitimate power without, however, really challenging the regime's accountability. But unlike Shevardnadze in Georgia, Kuchma failed to create a viable party of power or an otherwise cohesive ruling organization, and relied instead upon loose coalitions of oligarchic parties backed by competing clans (Simecka 2009: 19).[27] Knowing that his presidential power rested upon a careful balancing of diverse political forces, Kuchma learnt to navigate between and accommodate the competing agendas of the most important regional clans (Wolczuk 1997: 169). Accordingly, by playing his allies off against each other, a non-party president remained central to all oligarchic struggles and avoided the concentration of power in any single political grouping or bloc (Way 2005: 196; Åslund 2006: 21-23). In this way, all the regional oligarchic clans owed their power to Kuchma, but none of them was powerful enough to supplant him (van Zon 2005: 4).

Until 2001, the president tried to balance reformist and nationalist forces with the interests of industrial tycoons in eastern Ukraine. As previously mentioned, under the threat of losing IMF support, he even appointed a central banker and reformer, Viktor Yushchenko, as prime minister, in order to endure the pressures from abroad (van Zon 2005). However, as a response to his gradually collapsing political career, the president's tendency toward authoritarianism began to increase. After the so called "cassette scandal" or "tapegate scandal" that aroused suspicions that Kuchma had approved the abduction of opposition investigative journalist Georgiy Gongadze, elite reshuffles shifted the balance of forces towards the oligarchs, who hailed mainly from southern and eastern Ukraine and from the city of Kiev, by giving them the upper hand (van Zon 2005). Moreover, through a selective use of

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[27] Kuchma also never managed to form a strong pro-presidential bloc in Parliament to support him. During the 2002 elections, the pro-Kuchma alliance "For a United Ukraine" received 11.98% of the vote based upon proportional representation and lagged behind Viktor Yushchenko's "Our Ukraine" (23.5%) and the Communists (20%). In the single-mandate constituencies, however, a majority could still be reached by buying-off or coercing deputies to join the President's ranks (D'Anieri 2005: 233-234).

law and administrative enforcement, Kuchma tried to guarantee that any oppositionist media outlets and deputies would be silenced or persuaded to come over to his side (D'Anieri 2005b: 233-238). If necessary, the regime also did not hesitate to resort to outright harassment of particular political opponents. In this respect, it could be said, that Shevardnadze's application of political blackmail was relatively less oppressive.

Controlling the media was in fact the major element of Kuchma's regime that differentiated it from its Georgian counterpart. Unlike in Georgia where the independent media became a major voice of criticism towards the government, all the major Ukrainian television stations, with one exception, were controlled by pro-presidential forces and groups dependent on the president and his administration (Prytula 2006). The subordination of the mass media to the regime became therefore a characteristic feature of Kuchma's era, especially during the years when the presidential administration was headed by Viktor Medvedchuk. One of the methods used throughout this time to interfere with media coverage was a supply of secret instructions - *temnyky* - to instruct journalists what news items to highlight and what to ignore when reporting during a particular week (van Zon 2005). Those who decided to rebel against the government's control over media outlets risked intimidation and violent attacks. As these crimes became more frequent and went unpunished, they attracted the attention of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which noted in its Recommendation No. 1589 (2003) that "violence continues to be a way of intimidating investigative journalists" in Ukraine.

Yet, despite these attempts to remain in power, the secretly-taped conversations from the president's office that revealed the regime's involvement in high-level corruption, the criminal harassment of opposition members, and in the alleged sale of the "Kolchuga" passive radar system to Iraq activated a course of events that marked the beginning of the end of

Kuchma's era. First, the "tapegate scandal" triggered a three month-long anti-governmental opposition campaign called "Ukraine without Kuchma," which called for the president's resignation. Second, it led to a dramatic fall in Kuchma's public approval ratings.[28] Third, Ukraine risked becoming an international pariah with a leader ostracized by most Western countries for violating the UN Security Council resolution against Iraq (Mulvey 2002). As a result, Kuchma's legitimate authority was no longer credible, and neither the growth in Ukraine's gross domestic product nor the arrival of Ukrainian troops in Iraq to join the international coalition there could rebuild his reputation among a vast part of the national and international community (BBC News, 7 August 2003, Freedom House: Country Report 2003).

3.2. Elite alignments

3.2.1. *Georgia*

In the context of the excessive use of administrative resources to accommodate the interests of a political clientele and the "informalization" of Georgian politics during the Shevardnadze era, neither the adoption of a constitution (August 1995) that set the ground for democratic institutions nor the successful organization of elections in 1995 could become efficient vehicles for bringing Georgia closer to Montesquieu's theory of the "division of powers". On the contrary, the power of informal patronage networks proved to be particularly resistant to change (Building Democracy in Georgia 2003: 10, Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006). According to some scholars, the prevalence of informal networks among the Georgian elite stemmed from the importance attached to family and kinship relations that is more deeply rooted in Georgia than in most other former Soviet republics (Gachechiladze

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[28] Over 60% of Ukrainians would vote for his impeachment in a referendum (Rakhmanin et al. 2001).

1998, Wheatley 2005). The priority given to kinship-type relationships and to helping one's own people, as Wheatley (2005: 35) argues, has led to "a fusion of work life and public life". In consequence, the reliance upon personal relationships among state officials and feelings of mutual trust not only prevented a sound constitutional approach of "checks and balances" among different state institutions, but also served as a fertile ground for corruption, the level of which had already been high since the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

The highly centralized, top-down organization of political parties further contributed to the consolidation of local patronage networks. Most of the influential parties in Georgia emerged "from above", in order to ensure political support for leaders who were already in power (Building Democracy in Georgia 2003: 10, 17, Wheatley 2005: 157). For example, the Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG) - Georgia's ruling party during the Shevardnadze era - represented the interests of those who were loyal to the President (mainly ex-*nomenklatura* members and former "red directors", as well as friends and relatives of the president and his circle). Moreover, party-formation in Georgia was rather based upon the personality of party leaders than upon political programs (programs which in fact showed little contrast between one another even before elections) (Gvritishvili 2003, Broers 2005: 336).[29] However, this is unsurprising, given that the main purpose of searching for political influence was to secure one's financial well-being. As Wheatley (2005: 158) put it, political parties in Georgia resembled narrow cliques united around one or several individuals whose main purpose in entering Parliament was private acquisition. Yet it is also fair to say that, as a side effect of such practices, the burden of the material shortages that the country was facing in the 1990s was eased thanks to informal relations with public officials. In this way, an already fragile

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[29] Interview, member of the New Rights Party of Georgia, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Georgia managed to avoid the emergence of serious social tensions when state agencies were incapable of providing citizens with adequate social services (Gachechiladze 1998).[30]

Without political agendas that would reflect cleavages within society, political parties could not build a stable constituent base and "the people followed mostly faces rather than political programs."[31] Given the state's dire economic situation, it also appeared to be easier to win the support of an inexperienced electorate by promising immediate material gains rather than gradual and somewhat abstract strategies for democratic reform. At the same time, alliances and coalitions frequently shifted, and crony networks, which were linked to the criminal underworld, became the real centres of political life, as the electorate had no influence (Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006; Building Democracy in Georgia 2003). Accordingly, an increasingly cynical Georgian public perceived that, despite all its deficiencies, the government was doing little but at least something, whereas nobody knew what to expect from the opposition.[32] In fact, similarly to the leaders and factions they fiercely criticized, the Georgian opposition's elite had no ideology whatsoever. Moreover, they continuously displayed their inability to cooperate with one another in order to achieve common goals. The leaders of the opposition and NGO groups therefore had neither a clear plan nor mutual consent about what should be done to achieve favourable political change (Stepanenko 2006: 594-595). Such divisions did nothing to attract popular support.

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[30] During her fieldwork in Georgia, the author was repeatedly told that in Tbilisi "everybody knows everybody", and that almost every family have someone from closer or distant familial circles working for the state. The interlocutors also pointed out that the capital's inhabitants maintained strong links with their relatives living in the Georgian regions. Such a dense network of relations was an important channel for obtaining various services, permissions, goods etc. otherwise not provided by the state.
[31] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[32] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

A final (but extremely interesting) fact about the Georgian elite was its positive self-identification with European culture throughout the post-Soviet period.[33] Although this cultural orientation was not automatically translated into moral or pragmatic support for democratic institutions as such, it undoubtedly helped to incline the newly-independent state towards a Western model of development (Nodia 2001). Accordingly, the elite's conviction that "being democratic meant being pro-Western" had considerable influence not only on the country's political direction, but also on the rest of the population (Nodia 1995: 107). Thus, despite shameless abuses of political power, even the opportunistic state officials did not dare abandon slogans advocating democracy and the free market, as it was the only rhetoric acceptable for the general public (Wheatley 2005). Even if disappointed with the poor outcomes of the process of democratization, the majority of Georgian voters shared the elite's conviction that "independent Georgia belongs among the ranks of civilized Western states", and therefore preferred to adapt to the "western" way of life. Such cultural identification differentiated this Caucasian republic from most of its former Soviet neighbours (Nodia 1995: 107).

3.2.2. *Ukraine*

The political system that Ukraine had developed in the 1990s had "decapitated, eviscerated and recycled most of what were once opposition parties", and most major politicians were co-opted to work within the system (Wilson 2005a: 21). Accordingly, those who remained in opposition appeared incapable of uniting to produce a single leader and to formulate a clear opposition strategy that would make them strong enough to successfully challenge Kuchma's position. Political power in Ukraine during Kuchma's presidency was

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[33] According to Gachechiladze (1998), this uncontested democratic discourse was predetermined by a particular historic vision articulated in claims that the Georgian nation belongs to the western (Judaeo-Christian) civilization (the religious majority in Georgia are nominally Orthodox Christians).

therefore dominated by regional oligarchic clans - mainly from Kiev and the Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk regions. Since each interest group established its own political party, this allowed them to make widespread use of government connections and resources in order to exercise their influence over parliament for their own benefit and to enjoy legal immunity. Moreover, the oligarchs also owned and/or controlled most of the national broadcast media and local and national newspapers, which gave them significant advantages during political campaigns. Eventually, state structures became "captured" by the influential tycoons, and it became clear that their main function was to secure economic gains and privileges for the business and political elite rather than to serve society (van Zon 2005: 16, Way 2005).

President Kuchma, however, was powerful enough to keep oligarchs under his control and balance the interests of competing clans. As explained in Section 3.1.2. his strategy to monopolize political control was based upon the use of state assets to buy off potential enemies and to establish clientelist relations. The role of the state bureaucracy was crucial to this process, because government jobs were the largest source of patronage, and because it could be used to exert pressure on economic tycoons in various ways (for example, by formulating privatization tenders in such a way that only a specific clan would win, or by creating a tax system that could be used as a political instrument) (van Zon 2005: 15, Way 2005: 198).[34] Given the number of large Soviet-era firms in Ukraine, their directors were a valuable source of support for Kuchma's regime. Through their regular contact with a sizeable proportion of the voters in their constituency, they could co-opt people either by offering them jobs or simply by allowing them to keep the one they had (Birch 1997, D'Anieri 2005). Since electoral patronage became perceived as a more economical and effective means of mobilizing support than ideological affinity or genuine interest

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[34] However, according to D'Anieri (2005: 238), state control over university places, pensions, and the quality of life for soldiers, prisoners, and hospital patients is also important.

aggregation, such patronage therefore became the main mechanism for determining both elite mobility and electoral participation in support of pro-regime political factions (Birch 1997: 41).

On the other hand, despite an array of means for enticing or coercing politicians to come over to the President's side, Kuchma could not succeed in securing support that would be strong enough to significantly increase his control over the legislature (Way 2005: 199). In fact, his fear of concentrating too much power in any single organization, reflected in his active encouragement of multiple pro-presidential parties, led to regional rivalries for state and economic resources, and thus unintentionally generated political competition (Åslund 2006: 26). Not without importance here was the line dividing oligarchic camps that cut across social, regional and economic cleavages, which are so diverse in Ukraine that it became impossible to accommodate them autocratically (Way 2005: 199). These lines were particularly visible (and intentionally overemphasized) at times of electoral competition, with the heirs to the Soviet-era Communist party being strongest in the heavily industrialized east of the country and the so-called "national democratic" parties and groups that had led the drive for Ukrainian independence having Western Ukraine as their main stronghold (Birch 1997: 44). Their stand on economic policy and foreign policy were among the main aspects that distinguished electoral blocks from each side of this division (see Chapter 5).

The party alignments, however, usually served only to mask the identity of key political players, which in general makes it problematic to classify Ukrainian parties according to the categories used in other European polities. According to Wilson (2001), the main reason for this was what he calls the "virtuality" of Ukrainian politics and thus the "virtuality" of political parties. This meant that these organizations were, in reality, "fronts for business interests or power structures whose formal name and public image say very little

about their real political priorities" (Wilson 2001, 2005b, 2005c). Hence, rather than match image to reality by delivering on their promises, these political players have mastered the art of selecting images to manipulate public opinion, political competition, and the outcomes of the electoral process more effectively. Given the lack of a political culture, the continuing weakness of civil society and the progressive strengthening of state control over the mass media, such efforts had considerable chances to succeed - and they did.

3.3. Mapping divisions in the political landscape

3.3.1. *Georgia*

After his re-election in April 2000, Shevardnadze's authority began to erode, and it became more difficult for the president to act as the main "arbitrator" on the Georgian political scene. With the growing influence of younger, reform-minded politicians within the pro-presidential Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG), the (hitherto successful) strategy of balancing the influence of various informal groupings started to fail. This so-called "reformers" wing of the CUG, which generally included either former members of the Green Party or young professionals (often with a background in law), was initially promoted by the President with the aim of fighting corruption and addressing the chronic budgetary crisis (Wheatley 2005: 117).[35] However, their attempts to trigger decisive changes in the system based on the power of informal patronage networks met with resistance from the ex-communist *nomenklatura*.[36] Facing pressure from his old colleagues, Shevardnadze decided

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[35] Although "reformers" managed to gain considerable control over legislative initiative, Shevardnadze allowed them only limited access to executive power.

[36] The initiative that sparked open confrontation between reform-minded forces and conservatives was the proposal for the re-establishment of a cabinet of ministers and the prime-ministerial position. One of the main figures from the reform team, Parliamentary Chairman Zurab Zhvania, was a leading contender for the position of prime minister, whereas conservative forces promoted their own leader, Minister of Internal Affairs Kakha Targamadze. When Saakashvili, before his resignation as Justice Minister, directly accused Targamadze of corruption, Shevardnadze sided with the conservatives, thus depriving Zhvania of his nominal support (Devdariani 2001).

to back-track, and took the side of his conservative allies (Devdariani 2001). As a result, leaders like Mikheil Saakashvili, who served as Minister of Justice between 2000 and 2001, the Speaker of Parliament Zurab Zhvania, and Vano Merabishvili, the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Economic Policy, understood that "reform of the government from within [was] impossible" and started to break away from the government in late 2001 (Devdariani 2001, *Civil Georgia*, 5 December 2001).

The ultimate resignations of Saakashvili and Zhvania were probably the most important political outcomes of the sequence of events that developed in 2001 (see also Chapter 4).[37] The focal point were the details provided by the leading, privately-owned television station Rustavi-2 regarding the financial machinations of the Ministry of State Security and of the Ministry of Internal affairs.[38] Given the fact that the support for the two ministries was traditionally the lowest among all executive agencies in Georgia, the revelations of their involvement in racketeering and in the mismanagement of state property quickly sparked popular resentment (Devdariani 2001).[39] A particular target of this wrath was the Minister of Internal Affairs, Kakha Targamadze, whose "iron hand" rule and presiding over a corrupt security establishment had bred popular frustration and discontent for months before the Rustavi-2 story. Following the reports, Targamadze publicly threatened that he would take revenge on the station, and he kept his promise. In October 2001, security forces raided the station's headquarters, claiming that they were searching for financial records in connection with charges that the station had not paid some 1 million GEL (USD 480,000) in taxes (Committee to Protect Journalists 2001). This step, however, cost him his position,

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[37] They include the murder of Georgi Sanaya, a popular, 26 year-old reporter for the Tbilisi-based independent television station Rustavi-2, who presented a nightly political talk show (more on this issue in Chapter 4).
[38] Rustavi-2 was receiving considerable Western training and financial support.
[39] An opinion survey from September 2001 showed only six percent of support for the existing regime expressed by the Georgian population (Devdariani 2001). According to polls, 74 % of respondents did not trust the Ministry of Internal Affairs (USAID, December 1998).

despite the support he enjoyed from Georgia's president. Once news of the raid spread, thousands of protesters gathered in central Tbilisi, demanding the resignation of the entire government, including the head of the state. In response to the increasing tensions, Shevardnadze dismissed his entire cabinet and remained in power, but his position was already severely weakened.

As a result of the political crisis, none of the young reformers remained in government, and the CUG parliamentary faction began to collapse (Wheatley 2005: 127). Both Saakashvili and Zhvania formed new opposition parties and became key figures among the younger generation of Georgian politicians who promoted Shevardnadze's downfall.[40] The new political spectrum was largely shaped during the local elections in 2002, which on one hand exposed the weakness of the pro-presidential party, and on the other formalized the position of new political players (Devdariani 2004, Freedom House 2003). In Tbilisi, home to a third of the republic's five million people, the two most populist parties - the Labour Party and the National Movement - each received some 25 percent of the vote, whilst the Citizens' Union of Georgia received less than 4 percent of the voices required to gain seats.[41] Soon after, speculations began over whether the "reformist team" would be able to cooperate, as both Zhvania and Saakashvili had expressed interest in becoming the next President of Georgia (Areshidze 2002). Eventually, despite their repeatedly expressed willingness to form a united front, the opposition parties campaigned separately during the run-up to the 2003 parliamentary elections (Gvritishvili 2003).

Two other political groupings that gained considerable support in the 2002 local elections were the leftist Labour Party, run somewhat autocratically by Shalva Natelashvili, and the New Rights party, established by two Georgian businessmen, Levan Gachechiladze

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[40] Saakashvili established the National Movement and Zhvania the United Democrats.
[41] Zhvania launched his own party, the United Democrats, shortly after the local polls (Freedom House 2003).

and David Gamkrelidze. The considerable support the Labour Party gained in 2002 stemmed mainly from its harsh criticism of the authorities. As maintained by its leader, "the main task of the party was to resist the system created by Shevardnadze" (EurasiaNet, 12 March 2003). Given the severe economic situation in Georgia, the radical slogans and socialist ideas advocated by the Labour Party made it particularly popular among the large population of poor Georgians and the former communist electorate (*Civil Georgia*, 20 September 2003). The New Rights party, in turn, came out first nation-wide and third in Tbilisi in the 2002 elections (*Civil Georgia*, 10 June 2002). Similarly to Saakashvili's and Zhvania's newly-established factions, the party also owed its birth to the break-up of the CUG. However, the main motivation of Gachechiladze and Gamkrelidze for establishing their own faction was their continuing disagreement with Zhvania and the wing of young reformers rather than anti-regime sentiments (Devdariani 2004: 98). Building their own political future from 2000, the New Rights party represented mainly business interests, who were once expected to provide strong financial backing for the CUG (Devdariani 2004: 98).[42]

Confronted with its growing vulnerability as a result of these defections, the government tried to rebuild its power base before the upcoming 2003 parliamentary elections. Counting on opposition disunity, Shevardnadze's loyalists formed an alliance called "For a New Georgia" by allying a number of former opposition parties and some unpopular figures whose popularity had long peaked among Georgian electorate.[43] Rather unsurprisingly, such shifts were met with derision and proved unacceptable for the general public (Gvritishvili 2003). With approval ratings falling below 10 percent, it became clear that a fair victory of

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[42] When the party positioned itself in the opposition, the businesses of their leaders began to experience some problems as punishment for their owners' ingratitude towards Shevardnadze, who considered himself partially responsible for their success. However, the president never crushed the party altogether (Alkhazashvili 2003).
[43]These included the previous oppositionist Irina Sarishvili-Chanturia and her National Democratic Party, businessman Vakhtang Rcheulishvili's Socialist Party, and the extreme religio-nationalist Guram Sharadze (Welt 2006: 8-10).

the pro-government bloc was impossible unless it relied upon the excessive use of administrative resources and upon the subordination of its political clientele.[44] Hence, as the elections approached, an increasing top-down influence on voters combined with aggressive agitation against the opposition were a clear indication that the president's camp would resort to all means available in order to obtain a majority in the new parliament.

3.3.2. *Ukraine*

The outburst of the "cassette scandal" in 2000-2001 placed Kuchma at the centre of a criminal and corrupt regime and buried his plans for a third term as president - if indeed there had ever been any such plans (Rakhmanin and Mostovaya 2001, Karatnycky 2006). At the same time, however, the protest campaign the scandal triggered did not achieve its main goal i.e. the resignation of the head of state (more on the campaign in Chapter 4). With the eruption of violence in March 2001 and the arrests of several young activists, people from Kiev were deterred from supporting the demonstrations and the "Ukraine without Kuchma" protest came to an end despite opposition claims that the clashes were a government provocation (Åslund 2006: 15). It also became evident that, at that time, neither oppositional grouping was determined enough to "push Kuchma into a corner" because each side was concerned that the other would benefit from Kuchma's departure (Rakhmanin and Mostovaya 2001, Riabchuk 2002). Hence, partially due to their inability to produce a single unquestionable leader, and partially due to their unwillingness to sacrifice personal political ambitions for a common cause, the window of opportunity that opened for anti-Kuchma forces with the "Ukraine without Kuchmma" wave of protests seemed to be a missed chance for regime change.

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[44] Opinion polls were commissioned regularly and the results publicized by the Rustavi 2 television station.

Yet the campaign and the course of events that followed brought significant reshuffles on the Ukrainian political scene. The most significant change that came after the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign was the dismissal of then-prime minister Viktor Yushchenko. As head of government, Yushchenko was often praised for introducing policies such as reductions in arbitrary administrative interference in the economy, provisions for stable payment schemes in the energy sector, cuts in inflation and barter transactions, and – most importantly for the voters - paying wages and pensions on time. Although improvements in market conditions were noticed already before Yushchenko's reforms, a 9.1 percent increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2001 (compared to 5.9 percent in 2000), the slow reversing of corruption and reductions in pension and wage arrears allowed him to establish a strong public base in a few months (Freedom House: Ukraine 2003, Byrne and Bugayova 2009). Although Yushchenko sided with Kuchma during the 2000-2001 demonstrations and remained careful not to distance himself too much from the president, his proposed reforms towards increased transparency in energy production and energy trade while abolishing barter trade threatened many oligarchs who sat in parliament. In consequence, the parliament voted no confidence in Yushchenko's government in April 2001 and the delicate balance between regional clans and the reformist and nationalist forces Kuchma tried to maintain was too difficult to keep during the second phase of his presidency.

By dismissing the popular Prime Minister, Kuchma effectively "pushed" Yushchenko into an alliance with radical oppositionists led by Yulia Tymoshenko, a controversial former vice premier in his reformist government (Simecka 2009). Tymoshenko was a former oligarch in the gas industry and a head of the once pro-presidential Fatherland Party. Like many other political leaders, she obtained resources by being co-opted into the government (Way 2005:

198).[45] However, when anti-incumbent demonstrations broke out in Kiev following the Gongadze affair, Tymoshenko, together with the leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine Oleksandr Moroz[46], supported the "Ukraine without Kuchma" movement and joined with civil society leaders to form a National Salvation Front (Kuzio 2005). The government responded quickly in order to deter the business elite from supporting the opposition forces, and she was detained on charges of corruption but released after 6 weeks when the court rejected the charges as groundless (Wilson 2005a). From that moment onwards, Tymoshenko perceived Kuchma as her arch-enemy, responsible for her imprisonment, and together with the socialists of Oleksandr Moroz (moderate opposition to Ukraine's administration) she joined the coalition with Yushchenko's emerging Our Ukraine bloc.

When the former allies of the pro-Kuchma parliamentary majority were formulating a clear opposition stance, the regime's appointment of Viktor Medvedchuk, one of the Kiev oligarchs, as head of the presidential administration reflected a shift in the balance of forces within Ukraine, with the oligarchs taking the upper hand. Medvedchuk was a leader of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) (SDPU(U)), which was in fact a forum for Kiev's pro-regime leading businessmen. It was mainly thanks to his efforts that a parliamentary majority was organised to ask for the dismissal of Yushchenko (Wilson 2001, van Zon 2005: 14). Since his rise as presidential chief of staff (May 2002), the government's control of the media was strengthened and the oligarchs consolidated their power, thus gradually limiting the opposition's administrative, organizational, financial and mass media capacities (Rakhmanin and Mostovaya 2001). Such shifts, however, did not mean that the oligarchs were united (Åslund 2006: 16). On the contrary, a power struggle ensued among

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[45] After a meeting with Kuchma, Tymoshenko agreed to leave the *Hromada* Party, led by anti-Kuchma former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko, in return for being allowed to created her own new pro-Presidential party, called Fatherland (*Batkyvshyna*) (Way 2005, Wilson 2005a).
[46] Oleksandr Moroz was one of the few who consistently opposed the government throughout the post-Soviet era. However, he has been largely marginalized and unsuccessful.

three main factions: the Donets'k group, represented by Viktor Yanukovych (Party of the Regions of Ukraine); Medvedchuk's oligarchic Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United); and the Dnipropetrovs'k group, which controlled Ukraine's Labour Party[47] (Freedom House: Ukraine 2003).

In March 2002, Yuschenko successfully led his Our Ukraine coalition into the parliamentary elections and won 24 percent of votes cast in the proportional ballot (Åslund and McFaul 2006). Accordingly, his rise as a leader shifted the locus of opposition to Kuchma from a left-wing camp dominated by the Communist Party (KPU), which together with the Socialist Party had been the main source of opposition to Kuchma from 1993, to the new right-wing opposition grouping. An important development for this change was the defection from Kuchma's camp of a range of government-business figures who joined the ex-prime minister's bloc. One of the main reasons behind their switching loyalties was that

> after over a decade of orgiastic corruption, those parts of the business elite that had already made their fortunes through corrupt privatizations and now had going concerns that would benefit from secure property rights wanted to become legitimate (Wilson 2005a: 123).

To put it differently, whilst the elites were satisfied with the existing semi-market economic regime, those who had succeeded without significant governmental support started to realize that market conditions offered greater possibilities for their business (Way 2005).[48] As a consequence of the rapacious individualism of the political elite under Kuchma's rule, the widespread practice of transferring money abroad, which allowed oligarchs to keep their funds from the reach of the government, and the protection from criminal prosecution of parliamentary immunity were the key factors that limited the possible use of blackmail by the executive (Way 2005: 198). Thus, some part of the organizational and financial resources

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[47] The most influential figure in this group was oligarch Viktor Pinchuk, Kuchma's son-in-law
[48] The most crucial difference between them and those who supported the established regime was that nearly all of them ran active businesses which would benefit from a less active state (Wilson 2005a: 61-63).

accommodated by previous allies of the pro-Kuchma parliamentary majority could now be used on opposition activity as a range of government-business figures turned into sponsors of his national-democratic opposition (Wilson 2001). The support for Yushchenko's camp also came from Ukraine's entrepreneurial middle class, which was increasingly dissatisfied with stalled reforms and the business climate that subsidized only a group of powerful leaders.

At the same time, the arrogance of Ukraine's ruling elite made it misjudge the mood among society before the 2004 presidential elections (Rakhmanin and Mostovaya 2001). The authorities repeatedly ruled out a Georgian-style revolution, claiming that Ukrainians are less hot-headed and not determined enough to challenge power openly.[49] Also, the opposition's failure to mobilize people during previous anti-Kuchma actions confirmed the ruling elite's conviction that an apathetic society had given up on the opposition's potential (Rakhmanin and Mostovaya 2001). Ironically, the main problem for the authorities appeared to be the choice of current Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych - a former Governor of Donetsk Oblast - as the official candidate in the presidential elections. By leaning too much on the Donetsk clan and its representative in Kiev, Kuchma alienated many in Kiev who thought that the increasing importance of the Donbas in Ukrainian politics would result not only in taking over much of the property in the capital, but also in one-clan rule, submission to Russia, and the continuation of the neo-Soviet style of governance (van Zon 2005: 15, Åslund 2006: 23).

4.   Conclusions

The main aim of this chapter was to provide insights into Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's regime style in the last years before the Rose and Orange revolutions, and thus to

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[49] i.e. Deputy Interior Minister Mikhail Korniyenko, quoted by Itar-Tass: "There will be no Georgian scenario in Ukraine," or Kiev police chief Oleksandr Milenin in the *Financial Times*: "There won't be any revolutions here" (Maksymiuk 2004).

describe the political context of *Kmara* and *Pora*'s development. In the first part, the analysis of the main literature on so-called "grey-zone politics" allowed one to conceptualize the semi-authoritarian regime type, which served as a framework for a detailed explanation of the systems that developed under Shevardnadze and Kuchma before the Rose and Orange revolutions. In the second part, the focus on the style of Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's leadership and on their decisions as related to the distribution of political power helped to expose how they triggered divisions and realignments between and within elites. The previous comparison exposed various similarities between the two regimes in question and allowed one to draw two main conclusions in terms of opportunities that opened for regime challengers before the 2003 and 2004 elections.

Firstly, both Shevardnadze and Kuchma were representatives of former communist *nomleklatura* who applied a Soviet-era structure of top-down patronage relations as the main way to govern their countries. In doing so, for about a decade they successfully balanced various political groupings that competed between each other for the president's backing. Yet, when confronted with the choice between a reformist political establishment and conservative old-timers, they sided with the latter and back-tracked from the promised commitments to operate political and economic reforms which brought them into power. Whilst Shevardnadze's attempts to strengthen his position met with resistance from society and from part of the elite, anti-Kuchma protests soon withered away and in fact led to increased influence of the oligarchic regime. In both cases, however, these shifts radicalised more reform-minded politicians, who first tried to reverse the trend from authoritarian into more democratic practices "from the inside", but after being marginalised decided to change into an opposition.

Paradoxically, the regime features that decided the stability and resilience of the semi-authoritarian system, such as the balanced coexistence of autocratic methods and democratic rules, eventually turned into a major source of political instability (Levitsky and Way 2002: 59). Here, the widespread corruption that allowed the executive to concentrate political power by the exercise of patronage also distributed resources to a range of future opposition leaders. This was possible mainly due to lack of organization and cohesion among political groups, and thus a high level of fragmentation of political actors. Such a situation, especially when the main source of patronage began to crumble, promoted opportunism and an uncertain attachment to any particular leader or constituency. In this way, a factor that was crucial for controlling subordinates and preserving power eventually made the government relatively vulnerable and unable to withstand crises as opportunistic allies preferred to sit on the fence or defect in times of weakness (Way 2005: 192).

Secondly, the unintentional pluralism of political systems that developed in Georgia and Ukraine throughout the 1990s prevented both presidents from establishing centralized authoritarian rule. According to Way (2005) and Wheatley (2005), the disorganization and "cacophony" of actors that entered the political scene after the fall of the Soviet Union partially explains the "pluralism by default" in both countries. Despite fluctuating levels of intentional fraud, competitive elections were still taking place and led to surprisingly powerful legislative initiative. Moreover, despite government harassment, key elements of the oligarchic system generated important sources of business autonomy, becoming potential financiers of opposition parties (Way 2005: 198). Thus, when the balance of forces changed in favour of one group, the marginalized part of subordinates and allies switched their loyalties and reinvented themselves as the main challengers of the incumbent regime. Given that corruption became the main metaphor explaining state failure in Georgia (despite being

the largest post-Soviet recipient of "democracy aid" from the United States) and unjust privatization in Ukraine (despite the highest economic growth rate in Europe in 2004), it provided a resonant campaigning platform for their oppositional groupings.

Finally, the designation of the above-mentioned areas of regime and elite weaknesses is a key element to understanding the changing of the power arrangements in the context of "coloured revolutions" and the role played by young activists in this process. As is further discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study, there were three main repercussions of the semi-authoritarianism that developed under Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's presidencies, repercussions which shaped the opportunities for opposition mobilization in both countries. Firstly, dissatisfaction with the current political situation triggered the first wave of social protest against the regime since the early 1990s. Whilst for younger cohorts the demonstrations served as a formative experience in terms of their civic engagement in anti-systemic collective action, for veteran activists it revealed what elements of organizational infrastructure should be in place in order to "provide a collective vehicle to resist unwanted changes" in the nearest future via mass sustainable contention (Almeida 2003: 352-354). Moreover, during and after the protests, both groups began to cooperate in order to fight for common goals, which gave them considerable leverage over the regimes' supporters, particularly with regard to reaching out to a broad group of the increasingly frustrated electorate (see Chapter 4). Secondly, the separation of reform-oriented groups of politicians from the pro-presidential factions meant that, for the first time in the most recent history of independent Georgia and Ukraine, both countries began to actually have a new type of "non-virtual" political opposition, which had little or no links to members of ex-*nomenklatura* circles. As is demonstrated in Chapter 5, the emergence of a relatively strong opposition that was able to attract considerable support, including from civic campaigners, was crucial to

convince disillusioned voters (and the international community) that it had sufficient experience and resources to bring about a substantial change without instigating chaos and instability. Finally, the routine of elections combined with preparations for a more rampant than usual abuse of the electoral process allowed a careful planning of anti-regime collective action and thus a direct impact on encouraging the formation of youth anti-regime campaigns and fostering links between previously unconnected political and civic actors. It also attributed more legitimacy to claims and calls for mobilization on the part of various pro-democracy oppositional groupings, especially after widespread but rapidly-exposed fraud. The only factors which remained unknown despite activists' efforts were whether and during which elections they would manage to mobilize enough support against the corrupt regimes they opposed.

Chapter 4:

YOUTH POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL

ORGANIZATIONS IN GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

1.   Introduction

In searching for factors that affected the mobilization of Georgian and Ukrainian anti-regime youth campaigns, one should draw closer attention not only to the main aspects of the regimes the young activists opposed, but also to their interplay with actors challenging the state's power. In academic debate on social movements, the focus on the relationship between the movements and the political system has often been stressed by resource mobilization theorists. As stated in Chapter 2, there are several reasons for applying this concept to the study of social movements: first, to highlight the political and social contextual role in conditioning organizational forms and action repertoires adopted by activists; second, to identify the type of resources (i.e. money, facilities, labour, legitimacy or technical expertise) available to them; and third, to explain the dynamics of mobilization in general.

However, the resource mobilization theory – as other paradigms concerning social movements – has its roots in the West. The main inspiration for its development were movements in the 1960s and 1970s which mobilized the "conscious constituency"' of the wealthy and influential middle class (Jenkins 1983). Hence, when analyzing collective action in states that were once part of the USSR, it is important to view such action within the context of the recent history and legacy of communism that still remains alive and shapes the context in the region. For example, a long absence of private business or a lack of tradition regarding charity continue to have direct impact not only on the development of social

movement organizations but also on the performance of civil society as a whole. Also, until today, the experience of "forced" volunteering in centralized social organizations during the Soviet era hampers peoples' support and participation in third sector activities.

The relationship between civil society and the recent wave of "coloured revolutions" gained considerable attention in academic and political debate.[50] In particular, the involvement of foreign organizations that deal directly with the electoral process generated a spirited discussion on the role of the West in engineering youth anti-regime protest in the post-communist region (e.g. Bunce and Wolchik 2006). The youth campaigns that spread over the region have often been compared in a search for features that travelled across borders and became decisive for young activists' success (i.e. Beissinger 2006, D'Anieri 2006, Kuzio 2006). Also, the "allure of Europe" has sometimes been depicted as one of the factors that contributed to growing impatience with the poor performance of undemocratic regimes among young Georgians and Ukrainians (Krastev 2004). Accordingly, the number of success stories in the region, sealed with EU membership, have been perceived by young people as an attractive model, of which a rapid transition, liberal democracy and material prosperity were inseparable ingredients (Quigley 2000).

Yet, what existing explanations usually omit is situating the protesting youth in a broader context of civil society. Such an approach has evident shortcomings. First, it neglects the ambiguity of the concept of civil society in post-communist regimes, a problem that has attracted little attention from contemporary social scientists. The main criticism of Western aid has been that it assumed that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) alone represent the

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[50] The discussion on the definition of "civil society" is beyond the scope of this study. In line with the current discourse on democracy, civil society is generally understood here as a public sphere of social organization located between official public and private life and a set of specific groups inhabiting this space (Bernhard 1993, Ekiert and Kubik 1997). In contrast to "political society", where people organize into political parties, the agents that constitute a civil society come together in a plethora of different autonomous associations that do not aspire to win power (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). Instead, they undertake non-state activities in pursuit of the values or objectives they have chosen, sometimes lobbying for policy reforms (Milton 2005).

whole of civil society, whilst other possible players, such as trade unions or religious movements, were usually ignored. Consequently, the inability of NGOs to represent various strata of society is rarely addressed as one of the potential factors that urged young people to "take things in their own hands". On the contrary, intensified youth activism is often treated as given or inspired mainly by student groups from abroad, without a closer look at the domestic resources for mobilization which accumulated before the "orange" or "rose" mass protests. Secondly, without looking at the recent history of civil society mobilization – against the regime in particular – it is difficult to analyse the extent to which domestic experience and innovation impacted upon the emergence, development and success of *Kmara* and *Pora.* Finally, the experience of protest in the past can also have direct implications for the main groups of actors that are linked through collective action; that is 1) those managing new campaigns (movement leaders); 2) those trying to diminish the scale of campaigns (the authorities); and 3) those who constitute the target audience of social movements (society). To put it differently, the analysis of the history of social movements in a given country can help to explain specific behaviours or/and decisions on the part of the above-mentioned agents.

It is therefore the aim of this chapter to explain the role of civil society in pre-revolutionary Georgia and Ukraine and its relation with the state, and to explain how the political opportunities identified in Chapter 3 facilitated political mobilization against the old regimes. Hence, the following sections shall touch upon formal and informal organizational resources and collective action frames that, along with political opportunities, affected the likelihood of mobilization in Georgia and Ukraine. Such an approach sets the scene for Chapter 5, where the study further concentrates on the detailed dynamics of the courses of action that resulted in what is now labelled as the "Rose" and "Orange" Revolutions. In this way, the description of crucial pre- and post-electoral events that set the context for youth

political activism serves to expose how the opposition movements gathered momentum. The turning-points that structured unexpected political opportunities (and threats) around which both campaigns developed are also identified. The overall purpose of the following overview is therefore to trace more immediate shifts in opportunities created by the state, the movement and by other actors which affected the emergence, development and outcome of collective action.

2.   Students and protest during the Soviet era

The first thought of the contemporary reader when confronted with the term "student movements" would probably be the young people's revolts that spread throughout much of the western world in the 1960s. Indeed, the American student movement of that period brought student activism to its highest level and stimulated a new debate among social movement theorists that produced a vast literature on student political engagement. However, apart from this period, the phenomenon of student activism remained a rather understudied field of social science disciplines. Whilst youth movements which later appeared in Latin America and Asia managed to gain some academic attention, student activism in post-Soviet countries continued to be largely ignored by theorists. Except for some sources relating to the communist era and to the velvet upheavals of 1989, there have only been a few attempts to gain a detailed insight into student politics in Eastern Europe and Russia (Altbach 1989, Wankel 1992, Kürti 2002, Kenney 2002).

The scarce information on social unrest in the Soviet Union reflects both the rarity of protest throughout this historical period and the meticulousness of censorship when some acts of dissent actually did take place. In a system where a heavy stress was placed on conformity, systematic political indoctrination and pervasive controls, people rarely took to the streets to

participate in collective action (Dobson 1989). All the student groups that emerged at that time had to work with or through the *Komsomol* (the All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth), an organization directly controlled by and modelled on the Communist Party's (CPSU) organizational structure (Dobson 1989). Any student political activity outside this circle was usually restricted to critical discussion and access to non-official news sources. Yet, despite a political climate in which students' views were constantly being monitored, there were sporadic episodes of spontaneous student activity that usually merged with broader nationalist protest. The most notable examples were conditioned by the relaxation of the regime during periods of liberalization: between 1956 and 1964, in connection with de-Stalinization, and following Mikhail Gorbachev's appointment as CPSU general secretary in 1985. During the late 1980s in particular student political activism reached its highest level. For example, in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, students contributed to an upsurge of ethnic protest and hundreds of thousands of citizens joined them in nationalist demonstrations (Dobson 1989: 274-275).

2.1. Georgia

The disclosure of Stalin's crimes in the "secret speech" which Khrushchev gave at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (February 1956) triggered the first significant expressions of public protest and civil disobedience in the history of Soviet Georgia (Blauvelt 2009).[51] In Stalin's homeland, the speech was perceived as an "insult" to the Georgians' national hero, and thousands of students and other citizens gathered

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[51] Stalin and Beria were both Georgians and many Georgians therefore viewed the assault on Stalin and Beria as attacks on the Georgian people (Bilinsky 1960: 3). Given that during the Stalin era Georgia and Georgians enjoyed a special status, for many Georgians (and especially for members of the elite) Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin's personality cult and the official denunciation of Stalin meant revoking Georgia's favoured place in the hierarchy of Soviet nationalities (Blauvelt 2009: 654).

in Tbilisi demanding the rehabilitation of Stalin's legacy and Khrushchev's dismissal.[52] The riots, at first passively supported by the Georgian leadership, lasted several days, and were eventually suppressed after a number of civilians and Soviet soldiers were killed in March 1956 (Medvedev 2006). Khrushchev's sensational speech also began the period of de-Stalinization across the USSR. At the universities, for instance, students started to skip lectures on Marxism-Leninism in protest against the systematic program of political indoctrination. *Komsomol* meetings and lectures also had to be suspended because students stopped attending (Pavlov 1959).

In April, 1978, the attempt to withdraw the traditional clause in the Georgian constitution affirming Georgian as the state language of the republic gave rise to another period of social unrest in the country. Several thousand students from various universities gathered in Tbilisi to protest against changing the constitutional status of the Georgian language in line with a draft of the Supreme Soviet of the republic (Karklins 1986).[53] The tensions culminated on April 1 when armoured units of the Soviet army began to encircle protesters grouped in front of Tbilisi State University. Eduard Shevardnadze, at that time First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party's Central Committee, addressed the protesters, reminding them of the tragic events of 1956, but after being shouted down by the crowd he left to intervene in Moscow (Suny 1994). Although the government eventually abandoned the unpopular move, Shevardnadze's input was hardly appreciated. The fact that Georgian remained a state language along with Russian has instead been perceived as "a victory of the

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[52] Apart from Tbilisi, similar demonstrations took place in other cities of Georgia, such as Gori, Kutaisi, and Batumi (Blauvelt 2009: 651).

[53] See also "The National Languages and the New Constitutions in the Transcaucasian Republics", *Radio Liberty Research* (RL 444/83), 12 May 1978.

Georgian people" (Nizharadze 2005).[54] Several smaller demonstrations in defence of the Georgian language followed during the early 1980s, but they dissolved peacefully. For example, in March 1981 around 1,000 students were reported to have participated in a demonstration against "intensified Russification" (Nahaylo and Peters 1981).

By the end of the 1980s, the main source of social turmoil were the separatist strivings on the part of the ethnic minorities from two autonomous regions of Georgia - Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to some scholars, the mass demonstrations of April 1989 against Abkhazia's desire to separate from Georgia constituted the "critical phase" of the evolution of the Georgian regime following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Wheatley 2005). The popular protest, which was started by students and factory workers, transformed into a broader, pro-independence movement that demanded the end of communist rule (Wheatley 2005). It came to a sudden end on April 9, when the gathering of thousands of people was brutally dispersed by Soviet troops and resulted in the deaths of several protesters – mainly women and teenage girls. This tragedy, as Suny (1994) points out, defined the political choices of the Georgian opposition and society during the first years of independence. Above all, it intensified opposition to Soviet power, which expressed itself in a shift of public opinion towards radical groupings. This increased radicalism subsequently led to a deepening of social divisions and growing fears on the part of ethnic minorities.

When one looks at the outbursts of student protest in Soviet Georgia, one observes that there was no organized cooperation between members of the student community that would unite them as an oppositional force. Young people usually took to the streets to protest in reaction to particular events which were highly unpopular in Georgian society. It will be argued in the following chapters that the lack of a tradition of student movements in Georgia

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[54] Nevertheless, the success of the manifestation coincided with the introduction of major All-Union legislation to increase the (already substantial) level of Russian language teaching in the non-Russian republics (Nahaylo and Peters 1981).

became one of the factors that made it difficult for the 2003 youth campaign to reach wider circles of the student community and to promote itself as a grass roots movement. Additionally, without know-how that could be adapted from past experiences, the movement's founders were more prone to adopt successful campaign models from elsewhere outside of Georgia.

2.2. Ukraine

In post-Stalin Ukraine, the most intense opposition came from the academic intelligentsia, whose members were concentrated mainly in the western part of the country and in the capital. After the relaxation of the nationalities policy following the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party, the protection and development of national culture started to be discussed within Ukrainian cultural circles (Nahaylo and Peters 1982). Sharp criticism was directed towards previous generation of artists for their timidity and adaptation to the despotic Stalinist regime. In opposition to their "literary parents", the new intelligentsia in the 1960s (the so–called *shestydesiatnyky,* "the generation of the 1960s") was actively calling for the revitalization of literary life in Soviet Ukraine and for an end to Russification. When, in 1965, the intellectual ferment reached its climax, the authorities launched a large wave of arrests and searches, intimidating the disconnected sections of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. The severe repression which ensued during the following years completely silenced the movement by locking up its members in prisons, labour camps or psychiatric hospitals (Nahaylo and Peters 1982). After such a clampdown on Ukrainian dissent, many representatives of the intelligentsia went underground for more than a decade and reappeared

again (with those released from detention) only in 1988-91 to provide leadership for the resurgent national movement (Kuzio and Wilson 1994).[55]

With the beginning of the Gorbachev era, various informal groups and political clubs began to re-emerge in Ukraine.[56] Most of them were concentrated in urban areas, as the cultural intelligentsia (mainly from Kiev) was always foremost in the development of unofficial organizations. In the late 1980s, the reformist writers and former political prisoners established the Popular Movement of Ukraine (*Narodnyi Rukh Ukrainy, "Rukh"*), which served as an umbrella organization for pro-democratic oppositional forces (Kuzio and Wilson 1994: 112). [57] "The confirmation of the independence of the Ukrainian state" and "the building of a national, democratic Ukrainian state" were set as priorities among *Rukh*'s main objectives.[58] In contrast to the Georgian pro-independence discourse, *Rukh* not only emphasized the multi-ethnic composition of the country, but also remained more tolerant of and eager to embrace ethnic minorities. It also called for cooperation with state institutions and governmental bodies in the process of the implementation of *perestroika* in Ukraine (Paniotto 1991).

Various youth groups also started to appear at the end of 1980s. In Lviv, two pre-war youth organizations re-launched their activity: Ukrainian scout organization, Plast, and *Prosvita* (Enlightenment) Society (Kuzio and Wilson 1994). In 1988, the unofficial student organization *Hromada* (Community) was also established at Kiev University.[59] Finally, in 1989, several students created the Ukrainian Student Union (*Ukrainska Studentska Spilka*,

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[55] Yet, despite repressions, Ukrainian nationalism remained strong in Western Ukraine. For instance, in May 1979 about 10,000 people attended the funeral of popular composer Volodymir Ivasyuk - allegedly murdered by the KGB – an event which turned into a political demonstration (Nahaylo and Peters 1982).

[56] For example, the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, the Ukrainian Association of Independent Creative Intelligentsia, and the Ukrainian Culturological Club.

[57] More than 70% of *Rukh* delegates had higher education, and only 10% were workers (Kuzio and Wilson 1994).

[58] Quotations from the *Rukh*'s leaflet, "The Popular Movement of Ukraine 'Rukh' 1994" (1994).

[59] The November 1988 demonstration in Kiev in support of the formation of a Ukrainian Popular Front and in opposition to nuclear power were mainly *Hromada*'s work (Marples 1988).

USU). The group declared itself as a "political organization, which unites the progressive student community of Ukraine on the path of democracy, which favours the growth of national self-consciousness […], and which demands the restoration of Ukrainian statehood based upon the parliamentary system of government".[60] Under the USU's "Action of student unity", several thousand students from various universities came together in 1989 to take part in strikes and pickets whose main demands were the removal of Marxist-Leninist courses from higher education, the end of the political repression of students, and the reduction of military education unto a voluntary basis (Doniy and Sinelnikov 1999).

The student protests in Ukraine reached their peak in 1990 when the Student Brotherhood union (*Studentske Bratstvo*) from the city of Lviv began to cooperate with the USU. Together, they organized a hunger strike in a tent city in front of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet in Kiev. Tent camps also appeared in other cities across Ukraine, and the whole movement was dubbed "the revolution on granite". The protest was directed against Prime Minister Vitalij Masol, whose appointment was perceived as a concession to the communist-dominated parliament. Further demands also included the nationalization of the Communist Party, second elections to the parliament in 1991, and the adoption of a resolution on military service, restricting its application to the territory of Ukraine. Although Masol was dismissed, the protesters perceived the events of the early 1990s as a historical but missed chance to push for radical reforms, particularly when compared to the "velvet revolutions" in Poland or Hungary.

However, following their initial important success, the role of student protest in Ukrainian politics began to diminish. Whereas the *devyanostnyki* (the generation of the 1990s) of the student national-democratic movement were already leaving the universities, the

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[60] Declaration of the Ukrainian Student Union, quoted in Doniy and Sinelnikov (1999).

new cohorts of young learners began to shape their lives in quite different circumstances from their predecessors. High youth unemployment, unequal life chances, and the overall disappointment with the political leadership of the newly independent state were among the key factors that caused a withdrawal of youth from political activity for almost a decade (Omelchenko and Pilkington 2006). Yet some of the activists who had taken part in the "revolution on granite" remained committed to various socio-political aspects of life in Ukraine, and continuously expressed their disappointment regarding the effectiveness of both ruling and oppositional political forces. Ten years later, some of them would become the leaders of the second mass protest movement in independent Ukraine, which opposed the regime of then president Leonid Kuchma.

3.   Transformative events and protest experience after 1991

Mass protests became one of the characteristic features of the last days of the Soviet system. The student movements that emerged on the eve of the USSR's collapse were for the most part focused on wide political and national issues, such as independence from the USSR and democratic reforms. However, with the end of the Communist Party's hegemony, vigorous initial self-organization activity began to decline. The difficult years of change that followed gradually replaced the initial pro-independence euphoria with growing apathy and cynicism among the population. Due to the absence of a well-prepared political and economic counter-elite, the old ruling circles remained in power after the Soviet regime crashed. This absence of a clear political and symbolic break with the past as well as impunity with respect to the representatives of the old regime created the impression that nothing had changed after 1991.[61] The feeling of failure to provide a strong basis for liberal democracy from below

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[61] *Argumenty i fakty,* 1994, No. 23, quoted in Fein 2005.

consolidated people's passive compliance with the imposition of "democracy" from above (Nodia 2002), and thereby encouraged the semi-authoritarian inclinations of the Shevardnadze and Kuchma regimes (as described in Chapter 3). Focused on day-to-day survival, the majority of the population could not see any possibility of themselves taking part in and bearing responsibility for civic activities that would instigate change and improve their situation, and they also simply had neither the time nor the resources to devote to common causes (Zurabishvili and Zurabishvili 2004). The bitter criticism of the ruling authorities which reproduced itself quite successfully after the collapse of the USSR seemed to be the only way they had to vent their frustration.

Also the participation of the youth in movements or organizations remained dramatically low. Partially responsible for this was the heritage of mandatory exposure to a systematic program of political indoctrination throughout all stages of the educational system, exposure which made people reluctant to participate in and distrustful of any association with independent collective action (Bunce 1999). Moreover, after the collapse of the mass youth organizations of the communist era, there was no tangible support from governmental or political elites for the formation of youth groups. On the contrary, as they were aware of the fact that broad social movements had contributed to the downfall of the communist regime, the authorities looked upon civic groupings with suspicion, and tried to limit their impact in various ways. However, new generations of students also showed little interest in organized political activism. As some studies revealed, despite the fact that they had not suffered the totalitarian lawlessness that their elders had experienced, young people felt as politically helpless as the older generation (Golovakha 2003: 211). In fact, the widespread disappointment with the results of transition and the continuous rule of former party *apparatchiks* led to a rejection of politics as "dirty" and "immoral", which became the

dominating attitude of youth from countries undergoing early transformation processes (Gliński 1998). Rampant corruption and economic instability further eroded the social authority of political leaders and reinforced a negative perception of the regime and of the whole political class. Still, some scholars imply that such a refusal to participate should not be seen merely as a withdrawal from political life. Instead, in their view, apoliticism can also be perceived as a political statement which, in a way, represents an unconventional type of commitment (Dobson 1989).

3.1. Georgia

In Georgia, the violence related to the civil war and to the desire for independence of the country's two breakaway regions, as well as the severe economic crisis that followed, created major obstacles for student activism during the first years of independence.[62] Only after a decade did the first signs of student activity reflect increasing anxiety on campus. When, in the late 1990s, the Liberty Institute – sponsored by the West - criticized the student community for its passivity towards chronic corruption, a group of students responded by asking for support in initiating changes in the higher educational system (see also Chapter 5).[63] With the help of the Liberty Institute, the "Students for Self-Government" group was established in order to organize the first ever elections to student self-government in 2001 and to target the university's internal problems (and notably corruption).[64] Although the number of participants was low, the new student body was seen as a threat by the university authorities, who decided to organize parallel elections. The alternative vote, however, transformed the

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[62] Two regions chose to break away from the newly independent Georgian republic, sparking two wars, in South Ossetia (1991-1992) and in Abkhazia (1992-1993). At the same time, the autocratic tendencies of the first post-Soviet Georgian president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, triggered a political dispute between his opponents and his supporters which led to the outbreak of violent conflict and the president's ousting (January 1992). A Military Council then assumed control, and invited Eduard Shevardnadze to return to Georgia as Head of State.
[63] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[64] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

situation, and brought more attention to the newly created student group. Thus, even if they remained a minority, the formation of such groups was an important step towards establishing the regular meetings that began to take place in the Liberty Institute's offices to discuss alternatives to the existing situation.[65]

The turning-point for student activism in Georgia came soon after, when the presenter of a popular television show, Giorgi Sanaia, was assassinated in July 2001. Sanaia, who was seen as one of the country's most prominent journalists, investigated allegations of government corruption, including high-ranking officials from the Ministries of Interior and Defence. His programme was broadcast by the Rustavi-2 television station. Established in the mid-1990s, the station became the most popular source of independent reporting in the Georgian capital and its surrounding regions and a forum for the discussion of divergent opinions. For these reasons, however, and from its very beginnings, the station also had to fight the Shevardnadze regime's efforts to close it down.[66] Thus, despite the government's efforts to present a different version, the widespread belief that Sanaia's murder was politically motivated triggered an unprecedented expression of public grief.[67] It also turned Rustavi-2 and the media in general into a focal point of resistance to the regime (Anable 2006: 9).

The reaction from the government was quick. Barely two months after the incident, the Minister of the Interior Kakha Targamadze accused the Rustavi-2 of being subversive and a "front" for foreign money, and the security police raided the television station's building, where Sanaia had worked, on the basis of alleged tax evasion (Anable 2006: 9). Since the

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[65] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

[66] For instance, the station was off the air for several months - supposedly on the grounds that the station was registered as a limited liability company without specifying that broadcasting would be one of its activities. After an eight-month battle, the Supreme Court overturned the lower courts and declared the decision of the Ministry of Post and Communications, which had revoked the station's license, to be illegal (Bokeria, Targamadze, and Ramishvili 1997, Wheatley 2005).

[67] An estimated 30,000 people joined the mourning relatives during Sanaia's funeral, which turned it into the biggest demonstration in the country's ten years of independence (Bit-Suleiman and Rennau 2001).

station was respected in Georgia as a professional source of news and investigative reporting, the raid became widely perceived as a Shevardnadze-backed assault on free media. In response, several thousand people gathered in central Tbilisi demanding the resignation of the "power ministers".[68] Among the first demonstrators were students of various Tbilisi universities, who were soon joined by other citizens, including journalists, NGO employees, and politicians. Although the Minister of Internal Affairs, Kakha Targamadze, and the Minister of Security, Vakhtang Kutateladze, had resigned, the street protests did not disband (*Civil Georgia* 2001). Discontent with corrupted law-enforcement agencies and demands for freedom of speech developed into broader requests for the government's and the president's resignation.

As discussed in Chapter 3, in an attempt to defuse the protest Shevardnadze dismissed his entire cabinet. Despite the fact that it was far from certain that the government crisis would bring substantive change, the demonstrations gave people a foretaste of successful popular action (Devdariani 2001). For students in particular, who had no recollection of participation in social unrest in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the anti-regime rallies of 2001 became a formative experience. Another group of student activists, the Student Movement for Georgia, emerged from the crisis. Together with the Students for Self-Government group, these two organizations remained in close contact under the informal patronage of more experienced activists from the Liberty Institute, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, and the Association for Legal and Public Education (See section 4.1). In early 2003, these groups merged, a merger which marked the beginning of the *Kmara* campaign (Collin 2007). For young activists, the Rustavi-2 protest made it clear that only a

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[68] The Ministry of Internal Affairs was the most powerful ministry in Georgia. Given that lack of funding for the police force from official funds, most of the money the Ministry and policemen received came from the "shadow economy" or from illegal sources. It can be said that the police force operated as a large, centralized mafia (Wheatley 2005:115).

mass demonstration exceeding the numbers of participants achieved so far could be considered a powerful force against Shevardnadze and his supporters. The president still had vast administrative resources at his disposal and the law enforcement bodies were willing to use their power to intimidate people.[69] In response to those concerns, two tasks were set up as priorities before the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2003: first, to mobilize more people to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the current regime; second, to become organizationally capable of managing a large scale demonstration if electoral results had to be defended in the streets.

3.2. Ukraine

As in many former Soviet republics, the character of relationships between society and the state in Ukraine had gone through rather insignificant changes since independence from the USSR. On one hand, public officials obtained their authority through connections with existing power centres, and on the other, the population submissively limited its own role to embittered criticism against the state's failures. The particularly low level of participation in organizations and the habit of delegating responsibility to the state for solving all urgent problems derive mainly from the Soviet era, when social organization depended heavily on the state apparatus (Fioramonti and Heinrich 2007). Moreover, given their country's history of repression and violence, the majority of Ukrainians would prefer to refrain from taking part in protest activity, even after ten years of independent statehood. According to surveys, Ukrainians would rather sacrifice their freedoms in order to preserve the fragile stability that has been attained.[70] Thus, a generational change, which would give more voice to those who

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[69] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[70] Razumkov Center, August 2002; *Zerkalo Nedeli*, October 2002.

grew up on the ruins of the Soviet system, seems to be one of the mechanisms that could limit the prejudices transmitted from the recent past.

Indeed, the vision of prolonged "Kuchmism"[71] evoked by the presidential elections in 1999 appeared as the worst case scenario for many members of the younger cohort. From the late nineties onward, organizations and groups such as the Freedom of Choice Coalition, the Maidan website (www.maidan.org.ua), *Moloda Prosvita* (Young Enlightenment), or the Student Brotherhood from Kiev reinvigorated youth activism by attracting a new generation of students who had become impatient with life under Kuchma. Thus, when in November 2000 the decapitated body of independent journalist Georgij Gongadze was found outside Kiev, it set off a spiral of events which catalysed youth into joining the anti-Kuchma forces. Gongadze was known for his sharp criticism of the Kuchma regime and for his exposés of corruption among high-ranking authorities (East European Constitutional Review 2001). Gongadze's online newspaper, *Ukrainska Pravda (*Ukrainian Truth)*,* turned into one of the country's most visited websites (particularly after his disappearance); it offered in-depth and, more importantly, uncensored coverage of political developments.[72] Contrary to the situation in Georgia, almost all major Ukrainian television stations were strictly controlled by pro-presidential forces under Kuchma (Prytula 2006). Hence, in such circumstances, few people would have believed that Gongadze's murder was not politically motivated, as he was one of the rare voices of criticism towards the government. Indeed, these suspicions were soon to be confirmed, as barely a few weeks after the incident secret recordings from president's office revealed news about Kuchma's implication in Gongadze's abduction.

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[71] A term used by activists to describe the period of Leonid Kuchma's presidency (see Chapter 5).
[72] The limitations on freedom of speech gave an impetus to the rapid development of the Internet in Ukraine. Printed online articles that provided an unofficial version of events were often shared among relatives and friends, and republished in regional publications reaching the most remote corners of Ukraine (Prytula 2006).

Gongadze's murder, followed by the frustration with the fact that Kuchma's involvement was not being investigated, were merely catalysts that turned popular discontent with Kuchma's creeping authoritarianism into a wave of mass protests (D'Anieri 2006: 11). This so-called "tapegate" scandal resulted in a political crisis, which for the first time brought together youth, civic organizations and leaders from various political parties in a united anti-government opposition.[73] Even cultural youth organizations which tended to avoid political themes in their work, such as *Moloda Prosvita,* did not remain neutral, and their members travelled to Kiev to join anti-Kuchma events.[74] The wave of demonstrations that followed under the "Ukraine without Kuchma" and "For Truth" slogans mobilized an unprecedented number of people, who, regardless on which side of the political spectrum they were, demanded the truth and the resignation of president Kuchma.[75] The fact that activists from nationalist and communist organizations (such as the Ukrainian National Assembly, Ukrainian National Self-Defence, and the Young Communist League) fought together for a common cause for the first time ever was probably the most remarkable feature of the 2000-2001 anti-Kuchma campaign.[76]

The incident also inspired the reactivation of former protesters from the early 1990s. In a letter to participants of the student hunger strike in 1991, the editor of the "Maidan" website (also launched at the time), Mykhaylo Svystovych, called for a united reaction to Kuchma's way of ruling the country.[77] This led to the emergence of a new structure, the "For Truth" (*Za Pravdu)* committee, which consisted mainly of students from western Ukraine and became a more radical wing of the "Ukraine without Kuchma" movement. Such an initiative

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[73] i.e. the Socialist Party, Yulia Tymoshenko's *Batkivshchyna* Party, the Rukh Party, and the *Sobor* Party, Young *Rukh*, the Association of Ukrainian Youth, the Ukrainian Student Union, and the youth wing of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (Diuk 2006).

[74] Interview, former *Pora* activist, 15 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

[75] For example, when in December 2000 youth from the Socialist Party pitched tents on Maidan, Kiev's main square, they were joined by other more radical groups (Diuk 2006).

[76] Interview, former *Pora* activist, 15 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

[77] Interview, former "For Truth" and Yellow *Pora* activist, 7 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

led to the unification of former and current generations under the umbrella of the opposition Committee of National Salvation, the political body that had grown out of the "Ukraine without Kuchma" protests (Kuzio 2006: 371). The "hand off the baton"' to the youth of the early 2000s was sealed by the reappearance of a tent city on Kiev's main square the same winter, a tent city which became the main symbol of the continuing tradition of youth protest in Ukraine.

At the same time, the 2000-2001 protest exposed the main obstacles to achieving a change of political system. The spontaneity of protest revealed a complete lack of preparation for its political and organizational handling. Above all, the campaign offered no answer to what would happen if Kuchma would have resigned. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the opposition also proved its inability to sacrifice personal ambitions for a common cause and to appoint a single leader (Rakhmanin and Mostovaya 2001, Riabchuk 2002). Moreover, it soon became clear that protesting youth groups turned into a titbit for political parties that wanted to use them for their own public relations interests.[78] Thus, after initial intentions for broader unity, various attempts to control and influence young activists for private benefits resulted in a declining level of trust in opposition leaders among protesting youth.

The eruption of violence in March 2001 became the main reason why the protest failed, however. Clashes with the police, injuries and fights between protesters not only discouraged the inhabitants of Kiev from joining the action, but also undermined initial public support for the entire campaign. On the other hand, and despite the fact that the actions came to a sudden end, the crisis demonstrated that Ukrainian society was more active than the regime had expected (McFaul 2007). In particular, the protest was crucial for the "politicization" of the young generation, who experienced real political struggle for the first

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[78] Interview, former Yellow *Pora* activist, 5 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

time. For instance, in the regions, some informal civic associations and organizations began to form in 2002-2003, such as *Opir Molodi* (Youth Resistance) and *Sprotyv* (Resistance), whose tasks and principles were similar to those later implemented by the *Pora* campaign. Moreover, and despite the fact that the protest's demands had not been met, the know-how from the struggle in 2001 provided critical information on how to coordinate the cross-regional cooperation of various youth groupings. Whereas the campaign also demonstrated the possibility for future united youth action to take place, new interpersonal networks established at that time enhanced the prospects for better organization and quicker mobilization in future protests. As a matter of fact, many young people who later became involved in the *Pora* youth movement acquired their first protest experience in the Committee "For Truth" and "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaigns.

Finally, the spontaneous outbursts of protest that occurred so suddenly in Ukraine and in Georgia showed that the atmosphere inside and outside universities had become radicalized. Both the assassination of Giorgi Sanaia in 2001, followed by the raid on Rustavi-2, and the disappearance of Georgij Gongadze in 2000 became turning-points in the people's quiet submission to semi-authoritarian regimes. According to scholarly research on social movements discussed in Chapter 2, such repressive events which are perceived as unjust by society can have significant transformative potential. Not only do they generate public outrage, which facilitates the mobilization of social movement, but they also undermine the fear felt by ordinary citizens when faced with arbitrary, powerful regimes (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001). In the case of Georgia and Ukraine, the above-mentioned events helped to release the people's anger, so crucial to collective action, and acted as catalysts that started open opposition to the regime. Thus, despite the poor preparation of opposition movements

and the lack of alternatives to the existing regimes, both events served as important rehearsals before the final act of the "coloured revolutions".

4.   Non-governmental organizations in the former Soviet Union

Having outlined the developments related to the phenomenon of youth activism in Georgia and Ukraine, this study will now focus on the organized entities of civil society in both countries – particularly on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international institutions. Although the NGO sector in Georgia and Ukraine was small by Western standards, it proved substantial in providing access to important resources necessary for the formation and development of youth activity. However, much of the speculation and debate on the cooperation between youth groups and NGOs that was raised by politicians, academics and the media was rarely situated in a broader socio-political context. Most commonly, NGOs were perceived as the masterminds behind youth mobilization and young civic actors as "rentier democrats" in pursuit of their pro-Western agenda (Broers 2005). Particularly after the "coloured revolutions", it has quickly been forgotten that civil society organizations coexisted with "hybrid" regimes in Georgia and Ukraine for several years without bringing about substantial social or political change. What was the actual role of NGOs in the context of civil society, including the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns? What resources turned out to be crucial for young people to form opposition campaigns? The following analysis of the factors that facilitated and affected youth campaigns in the early 2000s will address these questions in order to provide an answer to exactly *how* NGOs influenced the emergence of *Kmara* and *Pora*.

However, to be able to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of Georgian and Ukrainian civil society today is probably impossible without at least briefly mentioning a

particular legacy of the Soviet period that continued to influence post-communist societies, viz. the underdeveloped middle class. After seventy years of a communist system and a command economy, vertical cleavages were virtually non-existent in the states that emerged from the ashes of the Soviet Union, as there had been no space for the development of small- and medium-sized businesses - the traditional basis for the middle class. Whereas in Central European countries a percentage of the middle class had survived from the pre-communist period, in a number of former Soviet republics (including Georgia and Ukraine) not a trace of the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie remained (Brucan 1998). Thus, a group that is regarded as the backbone of civil society in Western societies was almost non-existent or represented a minority within the social structure of the newly-independent former Soviet societies. Accordingly, the tradition and practice of philanthropy of national business as the main socio-cultural patterns for a sustainable civil society was missing in post-Soviet countries. As a result, the civic organisations depended mainly on various forms of foreign aid and assistance in order to sustain their activity. Such a social inheritance means that "bottom-up" channels of influence remain very weak among societal structures that were substantially deformed during the communist rule of the Soviet period (Stepanenko 2006: 577).

On the other hand, in most of the former Soviet republics social groups whose members are well-educated, i.e. intelligentsia, nowadays constitute the main part of the nascent middle social stratum. This stems from the fact that the ideological and economic transformation installed by communist regimes was accompanied by a simultaneous drive to raise the educational levels of the population (Parrott 1997). Such a relatively high level of education – even if it does not correspond to Western levels - generated a socio-cultural potential uncommon for developing countries. Even though most of the intellectual elite have lost some prestige and authority after the break-up of the Soviet Union, their influence on

public opinion remained high (Gachechiladze 1998). For some of them, work for the NGO sector became an attractive alternative, particularly if they chose to remain independent from political institutions (or had little chance to join them) but at the same time tried to stay involved in public affairs (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). This group included mainly the elder generation of ex-political prisoners and student activists from the late 1980s, who continued to defy their corrupt government and undemocratic conditions. Over time, they were joined by highly-educated (also abroad) young professionals, who had become increasingly concerned about the backsliding of democratization in their country (Wheatley 2005).

4.1. Georgia

The successful mobilization of public support during the Rustavi-2 crisis led to aggressive assessments of civil society organizations by government propaganda. The Liberty Institute, one of Georgia's most vocal human rights advocacy groups created by two former Rustavi-2 journalists, Levan Ramishvili and Giga Bokeria, became the authorities' main target, as it was generally perceived as being close to the "reformers" group within the Citizens' Union of Georgia. Since the Institute received funding from USAID and Soros' Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF),[79] various initiatives were also proposed by the ministries to curtail civil society activity, initiatives which ranged from reviewing foreign funding to suspending the activity of foreign-sponsored organizations altogether (Broers 2005).[80] Moreover, when, in 2002, a group of young people raided the Liberty Institute,

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[79] USAID is the government agency which provides US economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide (http://www.usaid.gov). The OSGF was opened by a Hungarian-born businessman and philanthropist from the US, George Soros, as one of his foundations established a network of offices in particular countries and regions in order to initiate and support open society activities (http://www.soros.org/about/foundations).

[80] For example, in 2003, the Georgian Parliament enacted amendments to the Criminal Code which strengthened the libel provisions, thus extending the maximum term of imprisonment for defamation and "insult" to five years (Broers 2005). Also, in 2001, President Shevardnadze announced his intention to "promote" better funding transparency through improved state control over the NGO sector. He also accused NGOs of using foreign funding to discredit his regime through "informational war" (*Civil Georgia*, 24 September 2001).

resulting in the destruction of computers and assaults against staff members, the police showed no sign of seriously investigating this incident (Wertsch 2005:133). In fact, the attack was widely believed to have been part of a more protracted struggle between reform-minded forces and entrenched corrupt interests seeking to preserve the existing order. Parallels were also drawn between the storming of the Liberty Institute and the October 2001 attack against the Rustavi-2 independent television station, since both entities had worked to expose instances of high-level government corruption (Stier 2002).

Yet, despite growing hostility towards NGOs and free media, civic freedoms in Georgia were more or less respected and remained unchanged (Freedom House 2004). The almost unquestioned popular acceptance of democracy as the natural path for independent Georgia, briefly discussed in Chapter 3, provided enough room for manoeuvre for the international organizations and Western-oriented local NGOs to promote their liberal-democratic agenda (Broers 2005). In fact, towards the end of the 1990s, the non-governmental sector became even stronger than political parties in terms of international connections, equipment, communication capabilities and institutional strength (Berdzenishvili 2001).[81] By establishing networks with the government and with the political elite, the sector attained considerable influence over political life - particularly when compared to other countries of the Caucasus or Central Asia (Building Democracy in Georgia 2003). Moreover, the NGO community controlled significant out-of-system resources that could be (and were) used for political purposes. Regarding free media, for instance, support was provided to the influential Rustavi-2 television channel, which had direct links to "reformist" leaders within the parliament (such as Zurab Zhvania). Vis-à-vis a weak and ineffective state, and even if limited in numbers, such influential civil society actors, together with the development of free

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[81] The strengthening of civil society institutions became one of the main objectives of the foreign assistance provided by USAID, the EU, and bilateral and private donors (Building Democracy in Georgia 2003).

media, have often been considered as one of the main results of democratization in Georgia (Building Democracy in Georgia 2003, Nodia 2006).

Along with the Liberty Institute, the Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF), the Eurasia foundation and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) were among the most visible and influential actors in the sector. Whereas the first two organizations became major donors in the fields of democratization, rule of law and the struggle against corruption, the GYLA was probably the most active in promoting the adoption of legislation concerning human rights, legal reform and freedom of information. For instance, together with the Liberty Institute, the GYLA worked closely with the Parliamentary Committee for Legal Issues and Human Rights (Wheatley 2005: 147). Also, the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) and the Former Political Prisoners for Human Rights association managed to establish themselves in the NGO sector. Finally, comprehensive research in areas related to peace-building and civil society-building in Georgia and the wider Caucasus region was provided by two leading think-tanks, viz. the International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN) and the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD).[82] In 2002, these NGOs established a "watchdog" coalition under the framework of the Democracy Coalition Project, whose aim was to pressure the government into following more democratic directions.[83]

At the same time, however, only a few well-established NGOs with agendas linked to reform were clearly favoured by Western donors. Foreign assistance not only strengthened their impact on public discourse, but also turned leading civil organizations into an extremely

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[82] ICCN and CIPDD were established by two well-known Georgian scholars: George Khutsishvili and Ghia Nodia.

[83] The Democracy Coalition Project was an Open Society Institute initiative supporting civil society coalitions around the world which promote democratic reforms. The idea originated from the Community of Democracies Ministerial Meeting convened in Warsaw on 26 - 27 June 2000, finalized by the Warsaw declaration. It was signed by over 100 participating governments which committed themselves to building a "Community of Democracies as an association of democratic states dedicated to strengthening democratic values and institutions at home and abroad" (www.demcoalition.org).

politicized "vanguard" of civil society (Broers 2005, Muskhelishvili and Jorjoliani 2009). Still, despite relative institutional stability, the sector experienced problems in achieving efficiency and in winning broad public support. The narrow interpretation of civil society to NGOs engaged in a multitude of programmes advocating democracy posed a serious limitation to the development of an organized civil society sector that would respond to diverse societal needs and concerns. Being heavily dependent upon international donors, most NGOs became extremely issue-specific, and showed little or no interest in problems that did not fall within the areas delineated by their funding (Sardamov 2005, Fioramonti and Heinrich 2007). Moreover, some of the projects turned out to be meaningless, as they were designed for a broader region, such us the former Soviet Union as a whole, and copied Western experiences without reflecting local cultural contexts. A consequence of their pursuit of their own agendas was that many of the NGOs remained isolated from the public and attracted little attention from ordinary Georgians (Kandelaki 2006).

Finally, the prestige related to working for leaders in the NGO sector and the technocratic nature of the assignments also often distanced their members from ordinary citizens (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). This problem seemed to be particularly common in post-communist countries, where semi-authoritarianism coexisted with vibrant elements of a nascent civil society, represented mainly by highly-educated young professionals whose skills (such as fluency in English, computer skills, managerial and communicative skills, basic knowledge of market economics and political science) became closely linked to the values they aimed to promote. As a result, civil society became an elitist group composed mainly of an urban, well-educated and narrow stratum of the population (Wheatley 2005: 159).[84] The salary and prestige related to working for leaders in the sector, especially in an unfavourable

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[84] However, there are also some interesting opinions (though not confirmed by systematic research) that one of the main achievements of NGOs in some post-Soviet countries was the creation of a professional middle class.

atmosphere of economic recession and high (youth) unemployment, further contributed to this image. If one adds the apparent fusion of (some) civil society groups with the political opposition, such a composition of NGOs inevitably affected their credibility as a voice of the "people" and alienated important parts of their constituency (Broers 2005, Fioramonti and Heinrich 2007). Thus, without broad participation in agenda-setting, grants and assistance were often provided to areas that were without the scope of the immediate interests of society. Irrelevant projects were also proposed by local activists who sometimes cared more about sustaining their own income than the relevance of the implemented programs (Berdzenishvili 2001).

4.2. Ukraine

With the outburst of the anti-Kuchma campaign in early 2000-2001 and the beginning of anti-Shevardnadze protests in Georgia, some of the leading third sector actors in Ukraine also began to be perceived as a serious threat by the authorities. Whilst nominally proclaiming the importance of strengthening civil society in the country, various attempts were undertaken by Ukrainian officials to discredit civic organizations, with the main critique being directed against those receiving financial support from international sponsors. NGOs were often accused of providing "roofs" for the activities of foreign secret services and of representing Western interests (Freedom House 2003, *Ukrayinska Pravda*, 4 December 2003).[85] The mass protest that led to the resignation of President Shevardnadze in Georgia in November 2003 (see the following Chapter 5) raised serious concerns among Ukrainian politicians, who decided to undertake measures in order to prevent the interference of "various so-called

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[85] For example, in 2002, two consecutive heads of President Kuchma's administration, Volodymyr Lytvyn and Viktor Medvedchuk, expressed their negative view on Ukrainian NGOs as representing Western interests (Freedom House 2003).

independent non-governmental groups" into Ukraine's internal affairs.[86] Soon after, a special parliamentary committee was set up to inspect organizations funded by international donors and report on the implications of foreign financing of NGOs (Gritsenko 2003).[87] As the 2004 presidential elections were approaching, such attempts implied that the authorities tried to silence any voice of government criticism because they realized that their chances to win the elections in an honest manner were shrinking (Gritsenko 2003).

The fact that more than the majority of the NGOs were supported by international and mostly Western aid was grist to the mill for propagandist mass media attacks, encouraged by pro-Kuchma groups, against those who received Western financial help. Representatives of the ruling regime often labelled NGO leaders as *grantoedy* (grant-eaters), doubting their genuine intentions to promote greater transparency in the government and civic participation. With low participation and limited penetration into society, indicated also by various statistical information, such accusations were indeed seriously undermining their local legitimacy. According to the 2004 World Values Survey, Ukraine (alongside other former communist states) had the least participatory civil society in the world. Moreover, even ten years after independence, the protection of freedoms remained a secondary issue for most Ukrainians, who preferred to refrain from taking part in protest actions.

The state's hostility intensified and fostered cooperation between NGOs to strengthen their position against the authorities. This trend was strongly supported by foreign donors (e.g. the International Renaissance Foundation) who were offering financial incentives for

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[86] Such concerns were raised by Communist Party (KPU) leader Petro Symonenko, who described the Rose Revolution in Georgia as the US-assisted deposition of "legitimate state authorities" (Gritsenko 2003).
[87] In its first report to Parliament, the committee concluded that the major aim of Western-financed NGOs was to influence the forthcoming elections by bringing to power Viktor Yushchenko (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, May 21). In reaction to the report, Communist Party members called for closing-down or suspending the Western-funded NGOs for the duration of the elections (Kuzio 2004d).

nationwide coalitions to monitor elections (Diuk 2006).[88] The first attempt towards fostering such broad collaboration was the "Freedom of Choice Coalition" of over 250 NGOs formed in March 1999. One of the main goals of this initiative was to conduct a national campaign in order to ensure free and fair elections during the presidential voting scheduled for the same year (Declaration of the Freedom of Choice Coalition, 16 March 1999). The three major tasks set by the NGOs' leaders were the mobilization of (particularly young) citizens to participate in the electoral process, educational campaign on voters' rights, and election monitoring (Kaskiv 2000). Although the idea came too late to achieve its objectives in 1999, by the time the March 2002 parliamentary elections were held the success of a united civic front was already demonstrated in the effective monitoring of electoral campaign financing (in cooperation with Transparency International) and the running of exit polls (Diuk 2006).

Among members of the Freedom of Choice Coalition, the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU) played a key role in identifying a number of electoral falsifications and other violations in electoral procedures. Established in 1994, the CVU turned into Ukraine's largest and most successful civic group in election-oriented activities, activities which included voters' education and mobilization, assisting international observers, election monitoring, and drafting changes in the electoral legislation. From 2004, the CVU began to implement its projects under the umbrella of a newly-formed NGO coalition, "New Choice-2004", and, together with other partnership organizations, prepared to monitor the presidential elections scheduled for October 31. A foretaste of this vote came in April 2004, when cases of violence and fraud were registered by the CVU during mayoral elections in the town of Mukachevo. Although Yushchenko's candidate won the election, the authorities declared their candidate victorious. They then dispatched organized crime enforcers to intimidate and beat up officials

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[88] In Ukraine, for example, Soros' International Renaissance Foundation had contributed USD 1,600,000 to various election-related programmes since the autumn of 2003 (Kempe et al. 2005).

and destroy election documents (Kuzio 2004e). Whilst the illegally-proclaimed mayor was eventually forced to step down, for the unified NGO front the Mukachevo incident became a warning of the authorities' plans to manipulate the upcoming presidential elections.

The events related to the situation in Mukachevo were also important for Ukrainian youth groupings, who made their first public appearance under the *Pora* name in mid-April 2004 (see the following Chapter 5). The scandal surrounding the mayoral elections that had attracted the attention of Ukrainian journalists and of the international community was cleverly used by young activists to promote the emergence of the new movement. The beginning of the *Pora* campaign was the result of numerous meetings and round tables dating back to 2001, when leaders of youth organizations started to discuss the need for the creation of such an initiative. The idea of a united youth movement was strongly supported by foreign aid providers, who focused their projects on the stimulation of youth activism across the country. In the regions of Ukraine, a series of seminars for young leaders on the study of foreign experiences was sponsored by the British Westminster Foundation, the Polish Fund for European Education and the Dutch Alfred Moser Foundation for two and a half years.[89] The training of activists was also financed from small grants provided by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Freedom House, and the Canadian International Development Agency (Kaskiv, Chupryna, and Zolotariov 2007). By the autumn of 2003, an extensive network of activists from centres located in 17 provinces had already been in place, with core activist groups ready for action to create a movement.[90]

Such initiatives, however, involved only a limited number of devoted people, and, in general, participation in voluntary associations was rather low. Surveys in 2002 showed that

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[89] Interview, former Yellow *Pora* and *Znayu* activist, 18 June, Kiev, Ukraine.
[90] Interview, former Yellow *Pora* activist, 5 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

two thirds of Ukrainians had never participated in any civic activities.[91] Although the number of NGOs in Ukraine reached about 35,000 in 2003, only a limited group of about 4,000 functioned on a steady basis (van Zon 2005). Moreover, even those that remained relatively active did not engage their beneficiaries at a grass roots level in planning the future stages of their projects.[92] Similarly to the situation in Georgia, NGOs thus acted as an instrument for the promotion of civil society and the development of democracy, rather than its essence (Muskhelishvili and Jorjoliani 2009). It partially stemmed from the fact that like in Georgia most of them were created in response to specific requirements or projects, instead of having grown out of citizen mobilization (Fioramonti and Heinrich 2007). In consequence, the majority of citizens, including the authorities and mass media, did not understand the role NGOs played in social and democratic development, and often mistakenly criticized their engagement (including in the electoral process) (Palyvoda 2000). The fact that only a few NGOs remained open to financial scrutiny further impeded public confidence in the authenticity of their pro-democratic declarations.

5.   Conclusions

When looking at the development of civil society in Georgia and Ukraine, it appears as generally weak prior to the "coloured revolutions", which contrasts with some enthusiastic opinions about the "resurrection" of civil society in non-democratic regimes that began after the "rose" and "orange" upheavals. The historical account of civic initiatives during the Soviet era shows that outbursts of social unrest emerged either as a sporadic and usually unorganized response to a particular issue, and subsided once the issue was solved, or as a

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[91] Data from a nationwide survey evaluating public opinion which was conducted in 1999 by the Innovation and Development Centre (Sydorenko 2000).
[92] According to a survey conducted by the Counterpart Creative Centre in Kiev, 54% of NGOs plan their programmes to meet the needs of their clients, but only 2% involve them at the project design stage (Palyvoda 2000).

form of dissent among intellectual circles that lasted only as long as the authorities allowed it to. Given that until the 1980s almost all independent social activities were forbidden by the state and were often the victims of repression if they appeared, the general public was wary of openly supporting or engaging in any form of independent collective action. Accordingly, instead of participating in a public life where social organization was a highly ideologized and state-organized phenomenon, people withdrew into their own everyday "private islands", where only close friendship and family networks could be trusted (Omelchenko and Pilkington 2006). The widespread state surveillance and a shortage economy were additional factors that further contributed to the attribution of high importance to private circles as the only spheres where one could not only express oneself openly, but also where one could acquire goods that were difficult to obtain (Howard 2002). As a result, as this and other studies on post-communist societies reveal, some cultural aspects inherited from the Soviet past (e.g. low participation and institutional trust, persistence of informal networks and dependency on the state apparatus for solving all urgent problems) continue to this day to constitute the main impediments to the development of civil society in former Soviet bloc countries (Smolar 1996).

Certainly, the contemporary nature of post-Soviet societies is not shaped solely by the inheritance from the communist past. Among other factors that have substantial influence on public inclinations towards the development of the values and traditions of "civicness", the overall performance of non-governmental organizations is of no less importance (Stepanenko 2006: 577). Since the end of the USSR, NGOs have been often considered as a critical component of a thriving civil society, at least with regard to democratization (Howard 2002). Hence, they became the only relatively strong segment of the third sector that began to appear shortly after national independence had been proclaimed in both Georgia and Ukraine.

Remarkably, their rapid development was permitted in both countries, as part of the Shevardnadze and Kuchma regimes' attempts to maintain an appearance of genuine democracy. Particularly in Georgia, the almost unquestioned acceptance of a pro-Western direction as the natural path for the newly-independent state opened-up the space for foreign donors with pro-democracy agendas. Besides, NGOs were not the only beneficiaries of generous Western aid providers;[93] the lion's share of international aid was received by public institutions (Building Democracy in Georgia 2003). In this manner, NGOs' activities were tolerated throughout the 1990s and until the outbreaks of the first serious anti-regime protests that shook both countries in 2000 and 2001. Suddenly, once their position became uncertain, political leaders began to accuse local third sector actors for their dependence on foreign financing as an encroachment on national sovereignty. Yet, although various attempts were made to control and restrict NGOs, they came too late, as NGOs had already consolidated their positions in the civil society promotion arena.

It soon appeared that the main problem with maintaining the *status quo* of the semi-authoritarian regimes was not only their tolerance of "reformist" politicians (as described in Chapter 3). By allowing an unrestricted increase in the number of formal non-governmental organizational structures, Shevardnadze and Kuchma opened the space for their own future challengers to emerge. Already during the first signs of public disapproval with their governance, it was mainly the NGOs' organizational resources that provided the necessary (and much-needed) "organizational infrastructure" for emerging anti-regime social groups, especially among youth. They created a particular environment which mixed young student activists with their older predecessors, the latter bearing the philosophy and know-how from

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[93] In most former Soviet republics, foreign funding accounted for up to 100 % of NGOs' overall budgets, with urban NGOs receiving the lion's share (Fioramonti and Heinrich 2007).

student pro-independence movements of the previous decade.[94] The role played by veterans of student activism – many of whom became the new NGO leaders – was especially important in terms of encouraging new cohorts of students to take an active stance against the situation in universities and in the country as a whole. Accordingly, during the political turmoil of 2000 and 2001, both old and new activist groups had time to crystallize their ideas, train, and to learn from their own mistakes. As a result, under NGO auspices, targeting corruption, the focus on voter rights and a carefully steered action to gain media coverage became central to youth organizations, and replaced the reactive spontaneous action which took place during the Rustavi-2 and "Ukraine without Kuchma" crises (Cohen and Arato 1992: 506). As will be further explored in Chapter 5, this so-called "professionalization" of youth organizations was further strengthened by cooperation with foreign organizations, whose "brokerage" made it possible for youth groups to transmit and adapt external practices (e.g. from Serbia) to their local sites and situations (Tarrow 2005). Within the frameworks of various programmes, NGOs facilitated networking between activists across countries and supported their training. Eventually, the local and international webs of personal connections, as well as existing and newly-established organizational structures, served as the basis for what later became *Kmara* and *Pora*.

On the other hand, it should be mentioned that although NGOs played a role in building democracy in post-communist Georgia and Ukraine, their underdevelopment in the region still remains visible after several years after their independence when compared with other European countries. Among the weaknesses which hinder NGOs contribution to the development of democratic governance are the extremely low levels of citizen participation and the elite character of NGOs membership, the lack of interest in meeting societal needs

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[94]The reappearance of a tent city on Kiev's main square at times of major political crises can serve as the best example, which symbolizes the continuing tradition of youth protest in Ukraine.

and addressing people's concerns, the importance of personal links to key political actors, and the lack of financial resources - to name a few (Fioramonti and Heinrich 2007). Whilst most of these deficiencies originated during the Soviet period, some of them, at least partially, also reflect the mistakes and failures made more or less intentionally by NGO representatives. For instance, some "opportunistic" NGOs had no mission other than obtaining lucrative donor or government contracts. Clearly, such an approach raises doubts about their input to the process of democratization, as they usually alienated society from broad participation in agenda-setting, often directing donors' support to the areas that were out of the scope of the immediate interests of society. Thus, they often shaped the nascent civil society in ways that were desirable for external actors rather than for endogenous forms of social organization. This, in turn, led to a backlash of semi-authoritarianism against "foreign interference", as the NGOs' reliance of foreign funding was used as a pretext for pro-regime political groupings to launch aggressive propaganda attacks against them once political tensions increased (Bebbington and Thiele 1993: 57).

Despite the accusations of public officials with regard to the above-mentioned issues, it remains rather clear that the NGOs' impact was rather narrow, particularly in terms of public mobilization. Whilst many NGOs have developed the "art" of obtaining grants, most of them have never developed the necessary skills in public communication (Heap 2000). Hence, it can be said that the cooperation with active youth groupings that flourished after the political crises of 2000 and 2001 constituted the crucial linkage between NGOs and wider societal circles, which partly compensated for their limited mobilization capacity. During the months preceding the 2003 parliamentary elections in Georgia and the 2004 presidential vote in Ukraine, youth activists' networks not only managed to reach the most remote regions with their activities, but also attracted the attention of voters through solid informational

campaigns and happenings. Particularly striking in this respect was the young activists' awareness of both the deficiencies of contemporary civil society in their home countries and the necessity of a new approach to target them through civic campaigning, which is further revealed in the following chapter. Thus, even if access to media was at times restricted, youth campaigns managed to gain considerable attention by pursuing their innovative (at least in Georgia and Ukraine) activities more effectively than the political opposition. As is argued in subsequent chapters, such increased political activity among youth groups can at least partially explain the puzzling phenomenon of mass mobilization during the Rose and Orange Revolutions as an effect and response to their anti-regime campaigns.

Chapter 5:

THE DYNAMICS OF *KMARA* AND *PORA* CAMPAIGNS

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE "COLOURED REVOLUTIONS"

1.   Introduction

On 22 November 2003 in Georgia and exactly a year later in Ukraine, massive protests broke out, resulting in a political stalemate, which eventually led to the rather unexpected twilight of the Shevardnadze and Kuchma eras. Tens of thousands of people decided to demonstrate against the corrupt regimes, whose security forces did not prevent the crowds from gathering. The international community sided with the protesters, and the countries' semi-authoritarian leaders and their supporters remained alienated and were forced to resign after a decade of unbroken rule, thus bringing the opposition to power. Commentators in both domestic and international media coverage of these events labelled them "coloured revolutions", reflecting the symbolic meaning of the two anti-regime mass protest rallies that lasted several days. Interestingly, the possibility of such mass scale protest activity was usually omitted in studies of semi-authoritarianism in Georgia and Ukraine until they actually occurred.

This chapter aims to examine the emergence of the two protest waves that resulted in the Rose and Orange Revolutions, and will primarily focus on the pathways to *Kmara* and *Pora*'s emergence and development, as well as on the unfolding of protest events in a semi-authoritarian setting that triggered their mobilization. It will be argued that the described youth initiatives and events that took place before and during the "coloured revolutions" in Georgia and Ukraine were generated by shifts in political opportunities and the mobilization

of resources which increased during the Shevardnadze and Kuchma regimes and which determined the demands of young regime challengers. Moreover, by linking them to the political and social developments discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, it will also be maintained that the demonstrations which followed the raid on Rustavi-2 in Georgia and the Gongadze scandal in Ukraine turned into transformative events which triggered a gradual politicization of the young generation and served as a litmus test for the regime's responses to civic activity. Finally, given the fact that some important incentives which influenced the form, repertoire and claims of youth groups came from abroad, special attention will be paid to the role of external actors and of the diffusion processes which spread across the region on the eve of the assessed events. The detailed empirical evidence provided in this chapter constitutes an introductory step towards the more conceptual account of the *Kmara* and *Pora* youth movements in Chapter 6.

With this end in mind, this part of the study is divided into two major sections which set the contextual background for the final in-depth analysis of *Kmara* and *Pora*. The first part presents – in chronological order – the key developments related to the electoral processes in Georgia in 2003 and in Ukraine in 2004, in order to provide an overview of the "coloured revolutions". Whilst emphasizing these elements of the political game that determined the emergence and form of the two youth campaigns in question, the characteristics of the main contenders who took part in the electoral race are also presented. As will later be explained, elite realignments triggered by the elections were among the major factors, which shaped the calculations of youth activists regarding their chances of successfully mobilizing and exerting political pressure. Consonant with this reasoning, foreign influence is also briefly discussed because its presence had a considerable impact in terms of highlighting the importance of

conducting competitive and fair elections and of preventing the semi-authoritarian leaders from using violent measures to dissolve the youth activist groupings and disperse the protests.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to the description of the *Kmara* and *Pora* case studies in order to depict the origins, development, goals, organization, and main activities of both youth movements. The main intention behind this approach is threefold: first, to expose the youth movements' role as vanguards of social protest in Georgia and Ukraine; second, to highlight the complexity, uniqueness, and intensity of these phenomena which emerged after a decade of youth political apathy (excepting the two waves of protest described in Chapter 4); and third, to expose how the dynamic, non-violent youth campaigns contributed to the revolutionary atmosphere in Georgia and Ukraine, and thus helped to mobilize voters and to legitimate the position of more moderate political players (detailed explanation in Chapter 6). Additionally, when discussing the two campaigns, a cross-national, cross-movement comparison allows one to identify noticeable similarities between *Kmara* and *Pora*, mainly because they belonged to the same wave of anti-regime protest that developed in certain post-Soviet countries. Such a detailed account, however, also reveals some differences between the Georgian and Ukrainian groupings. It will therefore be argued in Chapter 6 that such disparities stemmed mainly from both the campaigns' embeddedness in particular political configurations and from the history of student protest in a given country.

Finally, recognition of the importance of these factors reflects a major theme of the theoretical background to this study. In line with recent trends in conceptualizing the social movements discussed in Chapter 2, collective action is presented here in a multidimensional perspective resulting from the combination of various factors traditionally explained by separate applications of various concepts. By linking the analysis to the political and social

developments that were scrutinized in Chapters 3 and 4, this research shows that inseparable elements of semi-authoritarianism in the post-Soviet context, such as

- the maintenance of competitive but usually unfair elections,

- the vibrant but largely "virtual" activity of a range of political actors,

- the development of a relatively strong but elite-driven civil society, or

- the political impotence of aggrieved but generally passive citizenry,

served as an advantageous context for the formation of Georgian and Ukrainian youth campaigns. Thus, by tracing the key themes of the theoretical framework on social movements applied in this research, the subsequent empirical research confirms that also in a non-Western and non-democratic context they constitute the building blocks of a comprehensive explanation of *Kmara* and *Pora's* emergence and development.

2.   Chronology of the Rose and Orange Revolutions

The 2003 parliamentary elections in Georgia and the 2004 presidential vote in Ukraine were broadly perceived as the events that would define the political landscape in the post-Shevardnadze and post-Kuchma eras. These presumptions stemmed from several key developments, described in Chapters 3 and 4, that not only implied that these electoral contests might well proceed differently from the previous regime-steered political competitions, but might also lead to increasing radicalization and tensions between pro- and anti-regime political and civic forces. These novel, nationally-generated conditions were a visible reflection of the shifts in political opportunities which appeared after a period of efforts towards democratization, period which witnessed several relatively competitive elections, the formation of rather weak but active oppositional groupings, and the

establishment of various organizations protecting democratic freedoms outside the realm of political and economic life.

Firstly, the separation of more reform-oriented politicians from the pro-presidential camp gave rise to a vigorous, Western-oriented opposition. After this split, the pro-Shevardnadze and pro-Kuchma factions could no longer present themselves as having some kind of reformist wing, and both governments' performance in terms of democratic reform deteriorated significantly. Instead of the once-promised prosperity, rapprochement with the European Union and a fight against corruption, Georgia's poverty rate increased, Ukraine's relative economic development benefited only those who were close to the political leadership, and there was no decline in corruption. This in turn led to a growing alienation from the Western community, which began more critically to assess the perceived retreat from democracy of Georgia and Ukraine. Yet, as this chapter will present, the opinion of the international community made little impression on the Ukrainian and Georgian authorities. On the contrary, as the evidence shows, both the Shevardnadze and Kuchma regimes shifted towards more authoritarian practices (see Chapter 3). However, by making this move, they not only seriously misjudged the political situation before the upcoming elections, but they also destroyed the political balance on which their power had rested during the last decade.

Secondly, the regimes' efforts towards limiting previously-acquired democratic rights (e.g. by violating media freedom), particularly coming after a period of relatively-unrestricted development of civil society, sent a strong message to non-governmental organizations that the state would no longer devote time to implementing reformist measures or addressing demands for such reform (Almeida 2003: 352). Instead, with the electoral process becoming increasingly manipulated and NGOs being vigorously attacked by the authorities for their activities and links with Western donors, it was rather clear that the state began to restrict the

development of a pluralist democracy and to withdraw from a pro-reform agenda (see Chapter 4). At the same time, this shift towards the closing-down of institutional access met with the resistance from the two sets of actors who had already established their position in the semi-authoritarian context. These were the opposition parties who had managed to secure some representation in a democratizing polity, and the civic organizations, who thanks to the support of national and international actors (e.g. donors, international organizations) had strengthened their position and remained relatively immune from state pressure. As was previously explained in Chapter 3, the opposition parties and NGOs were to some extent permitted to function in hybrid systems because their presence was necessary for the regime to maintain the image of a functioning democracy. Over time, however, and despite visible weaknesses identified elsewhere in this study (Chapters 3 and 4), their activity could not be curtailed by state-generated efforts. Instead, as will further be discussed in this chapter, the undemocratic measures against oppositionist groupings became a major incentive for the regimes' political and civic opponents to form alliances and to use their existing organizational infrastructure in a radicalized conflict with the authorities.

2.1. Georgia

2.1.1. *Key developments before the elections*

The political climate in Georgia became increasingly tense in the run-up to the 2003 parliamentary elections. As discussed in Chapter 3, despite extremely low approval ratings the pro-government bloc began to implement various strategies that were highly unpopular among the population and some politicians. First, Shevardnadze's loyalists assembled in an alliance called "For a New Georgia" (FNG), an alliance which included some political figures whose potential future careers in governing structures were unacceptable to a majority of

Georgians.[95] Second, throughout the months preceding the vote, a series of meetings in the provinces were initiated by the FNG to re-establish party branches and thus to strengthen top-down pressure on voters; this was the FNG's main strategy for the 2003 elections. Thirdly, debates on the composition of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) ended with a deal giving the government a working majority and a more or less free hand in the Commission's activity (Mitchell 2009: 48). Moreover, additional support seemed to have been secured by the choice of the head of the CEC: from the three names submitted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Shevardnadze chose Nana Devdariani, the ombudsperson and a former leader of the Socialist Party. Due to her former association with part of the pro-presidential alliance, Devdariani's appointment met with reservations from some opposition leaders. Their concerns were soon to be confirmed as the pro-government CEC majority was deciding every case in favour of the state administration (Mitchell 2009: 57).[96]

The issues relating to improving the effectiveness of the electoral commission also raised the concerns of Georgia's main foreign ally. In July 2003, U.S. president George W. Bush sent former U.S. Secretary of State (and long-time friend of Shevardnadze) James Baker as his personal envoy to Tbilisi, in order to re-start electoral reform. During his visit, Baker proposed urgent amendments (also known as "the Baker Plan") to the Electoral Code, which called for electoral commissions at all levels to be composed of five members of the pro-governmental forces and nine representatives of the opposition parties. Moreover, in line with the proposal, the Chairperson of the Central Electoral Committee was to be proposed by the

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[95] According to Nino Burjanadze, at that time Speaker of Parliament, the newly-enrolled FNG members "were people who were corrupt, people who had no authority among Georgians, people who were hated by Georgians" (Burjanadze, quoted from Karumidze and Wertsch 2005: 44).
[96] For instance, at the end of October the CEC's resolution cancelled computerized voter lists that had been prepared since December 2002 with support from the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This led to suspicions that additional lists might be introduced instead to facilitate electoral fraud (the *Messenger*, 3 November 2003).

OSCE subject to Shevardnadze's approval. Whilst both the government and the opposition accepted Baker's proposals, soon after he left it became clear that what had initially looked like a successful compromise simply failed to materialize (Hancilova 2003).

Support for assuring free and fair voting came from other members of the international community and from NGOs, who pressured the President to adopt viable electoral legislation and to improve the quality of the elections. Moreover, the plan to deploy an unprecedented number of international election observers by the OSCE led to the belief that no election held in post-Soviet countries had elicited more international interest as those in 2003 in Georgia (Gvritishvili 2003). Interestingly, whilst all the elections held in Georgia over the past five years had been strongly criticized by international experts (see Table 2), once they had passed Western powers kept turning a blind eye to the blatant lack of progress in democratic development of all three South Caucasus countries (Devdariani 2003). During the 2003 parliamentary vote, however, this pattern seemed to be changing. In their statements regarding the conduct of the upcoming parliamentary vote, both American and European policymakers consistently emphasized that the 2 November parliamentary vote represented a "critical test for the country's democratization" (*Civil Georgia*, 8 October 2003).

One way of ensuring free voting and a fair count was to field thousands of domestic monitors and to conduct a parallel vote tabulation (Fairbanks 2004: 114). Whereas the OSCE was preparing an international long-term and short-term observer mission, the national leading non-partisan groups, e.g. the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), also began to develop their monitoring efforts. With the support of foreign financial assistance, the ISFED and the GYLA fielded some 2,800 observers across the country. Moreover, for the first time in Georgia, the ISFED sought to carry out a parallel vote tabulation (PVT) and exit poll. Other monitors from

Western (e.g. the National Democratic Institute [NDI] from the U.S.) and non-Western (observers from the CIS) countries were also given free access to monitor the 2003 parliamentary elections in Georgia.

Table 2: Major shortcomings identified during the 1999, 2000, and 2003 elections in Georgia

Year	Elections	Major shortcomings
1999	parliamentary	- intimidation and violence during the pre-election period and on election days - privileged access to state media for the authorities and the head of state - some Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) unaware of the counting procedures - instances of ballot stuffing - intimidation of local electoral commissions' members - presence of unauthorized persons during voting and counting procedures - lack of essential information for a transparent completion of the election process in the protocol - poor handling of electoral complaints by the Central Electoral Commission (CEC)
2000	presidential	- interference of state authorities in the election process - deficiencies in the electoral legislation - electoral administration not fully representative - unreliable voter registers - dominant position of the parliamentary majority in the electoral administration - selective application of legal provisions by the CEC - questionable accuracy and transparency of voter lists - ambiguous, vague and sometimes contradictory procedural provisions of the electoral legislation - lack of clear dividing line between affairs of state and the incumbent's electoral campaign - failure of state media to provide balanced reporting on candidates, incumbent given a clear advantage - series of identical signatures on the voter lists, group voting and the presence of unauthorized persons - deterioration of the electoral process after the close of polls - lack of uniformity and transparency during counting procedures - ballot box stuffing - lack of transparency and instances of protocol tampering during tabulation procedures

Year	Elections	Major shortcomings
2003	**parliamentary**	▪ lack of political will on the part of the authorities to conduct a genuine democratic process ▪ two acts of serious violence and intimidation of voters ▪ dissuasion of political parties from campaigning in Adjara ▪ state media failed to provide politically-balanced reporting of candidates ▪ biased coverage of TV Adjara ▪ widespread and systematic electoral fraud during and after election day ▪ lack of genuine efforts to compile accurate and reliable voter lists ▪ deficient voter registration (and thus disenfranchisement of a potentially significant number of voters and double registration) ▪ lack of fair campaign conditions for all contestants ▪ abuse of administrative resources to the benefit of the pro-Presidential bloc ▪ CEC members placing narrow party interests above legal obligations ▪ tolerance of serious violations and accepting implausible election results without question ▪ polling disorganized and slow, and marred by serious irregularities ▪ ballot stuffing, multiple voting and destruction of ballot boxes ▪ obstruction and intimidation of election observers ▪ correct counting procedures ignored

Source: Excerpts from OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Reports, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (7 February 2000, 9 June 2000, 28 January 2004)

2.1.2. *Main contenders*

According to election observers' reports, political competition was generally free and the participation of a wide variety of parties provided voters with a genuine choice (OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report 2004, Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2003). Apart from the pro-Shevardnadze "For a New Georgia" (FNG) alliance, five other political parties were able to cross the 7% threshold and win parliamentary seats. These included:

- the Union for Democratic Revival (Georgian: *Aghordzineba,* hereby "Revival"), which could be called the second "ruling party" of Georgia under Shevardnadze, created and backed by the authoritarian leader of the Adjaran Republic, Aslan Abashidze (Wheatley 2005); [97]

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[97] Adjara is the only region whose autonomy dates back to Soviet times that has not seceded from Georgia. However, the republic remained outside Tbilisi's control and its state structures served mainly as a source of revenue for the family of its leader, Aslan Abashidze (Wheatley 2005: 115-116).

- the National Movement, led by former Justice Minister Mikhail Saakashvili, which opted for revolutionary changes in government along with a crackdown on corruption (Devdariani 2004: 106-107);

- the Burjanadze-Democrats, established by two parliamentary speakers under Shevardnadze, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze, and joined by some of the most visible young reformers of the Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG) and by yet another former parliamentary speaker, Akaki Asatiani, along with his Traditionalists party (Mitchell 2009: 52);

- the New Rights party, whose members had split from the CUG in 2000 and included many of the country's most successful businessmen; and

- the Labour Party, centred around its charismatic leader Shalva Natelashvili, who began to lose popular support after a number of broadly-disliked former Communist Party leaders joined the ranks of his formation (Mitchell 2009: 49).

Remarkably, the main line that defined differences between Georgian parties did not follow ideology or political and economic programmes. Instead, it was the personality of the leaders, their position with regard to Shevardnadze, and – most importantly – their vision of Georgia's future that separated young, Western-educated modernizers from the former Communist Party *apparatchiks* and the Soviet-era industrial elite (Mitchell 2009: 48). Another distinguishing feature was the way in which the opposition's campaign was run, especially when compared to previous electoral battles. The most charismatic and visible candidate was without doubt Mikheil Saakashvili. His talent for leadership and oratory was very appealing, particularly to the young Georgian electorate. Together with other National Movement leaders, Saakashvili travelled across the country and gave fierce speeches to virtually every voter group (Mitchell 2009: 50-51). The main support for reformers, however,

came from members of the electorate with similar backgrounds, who believed that the only rational way for Georgia's development would be its rapid transformation into a European-style democracy.

Such a division of parties, so different from Western democratic patterns, can be attributed to two major factors that have already been briefly discussed in the previous chapters, viz. firstly, the short history of democratic pluralism in Georgia meant that political parties did not have enough time to mature and take roots among or attract various groups of society (see Chapter 3). Rather, they were built somewhat artificially with almost nothing but outside help provided by various democracy-promoting actors (Nodia 2002: 18). Secondly, the country's totalitarian past substantially deformed societal structures, leaving little space for any signs of differentiation (see Chapter 4). In consequence, as one activists summed up, "unlike in normal democracies where people's political preferences fall between the left or right wings of the political spectrum, in Georgia the choice is either forwards or backwards".[98]

2.1.3. *Election results and their implications*

That the elections were to be rigged as usual was no longer a prediction but fact when on 2 November 2003, 60.06 percent of Georgians went to the polls and experienced numerous local difficulties.[99] Major violations reported by observers included: ballot stuffing, bussing of voters from one polling station to another, the use of pre-marked ballots, and the destruction of ballot boxes (see Table 2). Moreover, as a result of poor voter registration procedures and of numerous and serious inaccuracies on the voter lists, large numbers of voters were reported by the observers as having been turned away from the polling stations without being allowed

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[98] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[99] It is worth noticing, however, that fabricating protocols could vastly inflate the turnout figures (OSCE Final Report 2004).

to cast their ballot. Examples of serious electoral fraud were particularly evident in the regions of Adjara and Kvemo Kartli, where the lowest degree of confidence in the voting process was conveyed by the monitors (OSCE/ODIHR 2004). In the OSCE's Final Report on its Election Observation Mission in Georgia (2004), the responsibility for such widespread, systematic electoral fraud was attributed above all to the lack of political will demonstrated by the government authorities (see also Table 2). In particular, the members of the electoral commission were held accountable for producing "strikingly implausible" and dishonest election results. Similar observations of various shortcomings and irregularities were reported by the International Observation Mission and other national and international monitors.

Shortly after the polls were closed, the first results were released. According to a parallel vote tabulation carried out by the ISFED (in collaboration with the National Democratic Institute), the National Movement (26.6%) had a clear lead of 8% over the pro-Shevardnadze "For a New Georgia" (see Figure 3). The other parties that crossed the 7% threshold were the Labour Party (17%), the Burjanadze-Democrats (10%), and Abashidze's pro-Shevardnadze Revival Party (8%).

The CEC's announcement, however, reported a quite different set of results. According to them, Saakashvili's National Movement finished second with 22.6%, whilst "For a New Georgia" had accumulated the largest number of votes (26%) at that point in the vote count. Additionally, the president assessed the elections as "the freest and fairest elections ever" in Georgia, and a leader of the government bloc, Vazha Lortkipanidze, shared his opinion.

Figure 3: PVT results
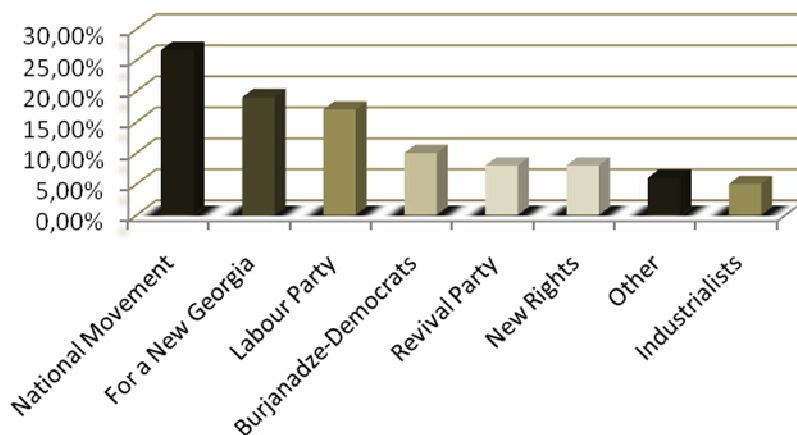
Source: Fair Elections PVT, The *Messenger,* No. 211 (0487), 6 November 2003.

At the same time, the results of the parallel vote tabulation (PVT) fortified the opposition's claim to victory. After declaring that the government had lost by a landslide, the leaders of three opposition blocs - Mikhail Saakashvili (from the National Movement), Nino Burjanadze (from the Burjanadze-Democrats) and Jumber Patiashvili (from the Unity party, Georgian: *Ertoba*) - issued an ultimatum to the authorities, calling on them to present fair and accurate voting results. The joint post-election position of two competing opposition parties, the National Movement and the Burjanadze-Democrats, was a particularly important development during this turbulent period, as it gave their popular leaders considerable leverage against the pro-regime alliance. Whilst such efforts had repeatedly failed before the elections, the "triumvirate" of Burjanadze, Zhvania and Saakashvili obtained significant popular support by accommodating both moderate and ultra-radical views of Georgian society.[100] Eventually, since their demands were not met, the opposition began calling for mass popular mobilization to contest the results in the streets (Wheatley 2005). Other

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[100] It is worth noticing that despite his appealing rhetorical skills, Saakashvili's metaphorical "all or nothing" approach towards Shevardnadze's resignation was received with reservations by less radical voters.

opposition parties (the New Rights Party, the Labour Party, and the Revival Party) declared they had no intention of taking part in street actions and condemned the "revolutionary attitude" of the National Movement and of the Burjanadze-Democrats.

The official election results that arrived from the Autonomous Republic of Adjara were the main event that inclined the general public towards supporting the opposition's call for mass popular mobilization. Not only did the Revival Party push the National Movement into third place in the latter results, but the voter turnout in the regions was also unfeasibly high (97%) with almost everyone in the republic (96.7%) voting for Abashidze's party (OSCE/ODIHR 2004). Although the Revival Party presented itself as an opponent to the Shevardnadze regime, the Adjarian leadership had in fact never failed to find some compromise with the central government. Thus, having almost no support in Tbilisi, Shevardnadze decided to ally with Aslan Abashidze, who brought several thousands of people and special forces from Adjara to march against the protesting opposition groupings. This was a risky move for Shevardnadze, as Abashidze was generally disliked by the vast majority of Georgians for his "one-man rule" system of governance, which was based on intolerance of internal opposition, lack of transparency, and subservience to Russia. Moreover, the arrival of Abashidze supporters was the most dangerous moment of the post-electoral crisis, as a serious confrontation could have occurred. Perceived as an attempt by the authorities to instigate a confrontation between the centre and the regions, it was met with a strongly negative reaction, including by law enforcement services. As a result, many Georgians, including those still uncertain of Shevardnadze's real intentions, understood that the president would not hesitate to resort to authoritarian measures to preserve the status quo even at the cost of a violent clash.

The political crisis entered its critical phase when the head of the CEC revealed the official results. According to the announcement, the pro-Shevardnadze "For a New Georgia" Party had received the highest support (21.32%), followed by the Revival Party (18.84%), the National Movement (18.08%), the Labour Party (12.04%), the Burjanadze-Democrats (8.79%), and the New Rights Party (7.35%). As presented in Table 3, the official figures differed significantly from the parallel vote tabulation (PVT) organized by the ISFED: they placed the Revival Party in second place, and declared that the pro-Shevardnadze "For a New Georgia" Party had won the vote.

Table 3: Comparison of official and PVT results

Party/Bloc	Official Results (%)	Place	PVT (%)	Place
For a New Georgia	21.32	1	18.92	2
Union of Democratic Revival	18.84	2	8.13	5
National Movement	18.08	3	26.60	1
Labour	12.04	4	17.36	3
Burjanadze-Democrats	8.79	5	10.15	4
New Rights	7.35	6	7.99	6
7% Threshold				

Source: OSCE/ODIHR 2004.

For the National Movement and its leader this moment turned into a "historical opportunity to remove Shevardnadze" (Saakashvili quoted in Chikhadze and Chikhadze 2005). In fact, the president's ousting became Saakashvili's main demand, which turned out to be even more important than the parliamentary elections itself (Richard Miles quoted in Karumidze and Wertsch 2005: 70). To find more support for his radical stance, Saakashvili left Tbilisi and spent a week touring the regions. The now-famous image of people arriving from the provinces and rural regions of Georgia belongs to Levan Ramishvili, one of the

founders of the Liberty Institute, who learnt it from the Yugoslavian opposition. On the evening of 21 November, a long convoy comprising hundreds of cars, buses and minibuses full of flag-waving opposition supporters advanced on Tbilisi, with Mikheil Saakashvili at the front. The next day, an estimated 50,000 to 150,000 people protested against the old regime, following the announcements and the moving footage of this event broadcast on Rustavi-2 and pro-opposition radio stations (Nodia 2005).

The protesters gathered in front of the State Chancellery, where Shevardnadze was to convene the newly elected Parliament. Shortly after the president began his opening speech, Saakashvili together with other members of the opposition led their supporters into the chamber, facing no challenge from the Parliament guards. Without managing to finish his opening speech, Shevardnadze was ushered out by his bodyguards and returned to his residence where he declared a state of emergency (Wheatley 2005). By that time, however, a number of government officials had abandoned their posts, leaving the President's position considerably weakened. These included the chair of the state broadcasting company, the minister for culture, the first deputy prosecutor general, the head of state television and the aide to president Shevardnadze for international law issues, all of whom had resigned to protest the government's handling of the crisis. Three members of the Anti-Corruption Council also submitted a letter of resignation, objecting the current leadership, as well as the Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia Tedo Japaridze, who in a public statement expressed his frustration with the president's response to electoral fraud. Additionally, various army and police units began to declare their allegiance to the new acting head of state Nino Burjanadze, who proclaimed herself as interim president. Ultimately, the political gridlock was resolved with Shevardnadze's resignation announced on 23 November. Although it came as a surprise, at the same time, it was unlikely that anyone would follow his

orders had he decided differently. Following the President's declaration, the Georgian Supreme Court annulled the November elections, and, having been reinstated, the old Parliament unanimously approved the proposal to hold presidential elections on 4 January 2005 (Wheatley 2005).

2.2.   Ukraine

2.2.1. *Key developments before the elections*

Similar to the situation in Georgia prior to the 2003 parliamentary elections, in Ukraine the ruling elite also began to prepare for the use of "administrative resources" to secure the victory of its presidential candidate, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych. While such efforts had already been made during previous electoral campaigns (see Table 4), this time, the regime's increased "activity" in terms of manipulating the electoral process was additionally triggered by the results of the opinion polls carried out in the months preceding the 2004 presidential ballot vote. As several Ukrainian surveys indicated, the anticipated presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko, leader of the opposition Our Ukraine parliamentary bloc and former Prime Minister, had more favourable ratings than his expected rival representing the pro-Kuchma camp (OSCE/ODIHR, 28 June 2004). Although the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) registered twenty-two candidates to participate in the electoral race, from the outset, it appeared that only Yushchenko and Yanukovych had real chances to win.[101]

There were several ways in which the authorities tried to enhance the chances for its own candidate to come first in the electoral race. According to the concerns raised by both opposition politicians and representatives of the civil society, the biased media coverage, the

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[101] Other candidates that also enjoyed some stable but limited levels of support were the Communist Party leader Petro Symonenko, and the Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz.

interference of the executive branch, the abuse of the role of the police, and the exploitation of inaccurate voter lists for partisan purposes were considerably affecting the parity of conditions for the candidates during the campaign in support of the Prime Minister (see Table 4). Moreover, as briefly discussed in Chapter 4, the criminal developments surrounding the Mukachevo mayoral elections, which took place in April 2004, further substantiated such concerns (see also Section 3.1.1 of this chapter). In addition, the high number of candidates, most of whom were not particularly popular, affected the proper functioning of the electoral commissions to a large extent. These so-called "technical candidates" were put forward indirectly by the authorities, as each one was able to nominate the electoral commissioners. This way, they could effectively form a "majority bloc" with Yanukovych's representative within the commissions, thus securing the support for Kuchma's candidate when counting and recording the votes (OSCE/ODIHR, 11 May 2005). These and other practices clearly illustrate that the attempts to influence the election result had already corrupted the electoral process in the early stages (Wilson 2005a: 108).

Nevertheless, the opposition and representatives of the civil society were not the only ones who remained preoccupied with the regime-instigated pre-electoral developments in Ukraine. The West also expressed its concerns about whether the elections were carried out according to international democratic standards and declared the 2004 elections as a test for the country's democracy, on which their mutual relations with Ukraine rested. In 2004, several famous political and social figures (e.g. Madeleine Albright, Zbigniew Brzezinski, George H.W. Bush, Richard Holbrooke, George Soros and Richard Armitage) visited Ukraine, aiming to prevent President Kuchma and his associates from adopting authoritarian measures during the impending political crisis (Sushko and Prystayko 2006: 133-135).

Table 4: Major shortcomings identified during the 1998, 1999, 2002, and 2004 elections in Ukraine

Year	Elections	Major shortcomings
1998	parliamentary	- incidents of violence, arrests and actions against candidates - abuse of public office that raises questions about the neutrality of the state apparatus in the elections - clear promotion of particular parties by state and private media - pressure from state authorities on newspapers and TV stations - confusing and unclear election appeal procedures
1999	presidential	- failure to meet a significant number of the OSCE election-related commitments - selective interpretation and enforcement of legal provisions - unequal competition between candidates in the pre-election period - campaign for the incumbent President and against his challengers by the state administration and public officials - lack of balanced media coverage of the campaign and equal treatment of all candidates - students and hospital staff voting under the supervision of their superiors - multiple voting and proxy voting - bussing around state officials so as to vote more than once - chaotic aggregation of the votes, and instances of interference by state officials
2002	parliamentary	- failure to guarantee a level playing field - highly biased media, with access to electronic media restricted by local authorities for opposition parties, blocs and candidates - disproportionate coverage of the pro-presidential candidates by the state-funded national television channel - illegal interference by public authorities, and abuse of administrative resources, including allegations of pressure on public officials to vote for certain candidates - failure by some political forces to distinguish between State and party activities - abuse of power to gain undue campaign advantage - unfair distribution of leadership positions in district and lower electoral commissions - the murder of a prominent candidate on the eve of the elections - isolated violent incidents and allegations of intimidation and harassment against opposition candidates, activists and voters - failure to enforce effectively legal provisions on campaign violations - inaccurate voter lists, including deceased people and non-residents found on the lists, whilst omitting entitled citizens - failure to publish all polling station results aggregated by district in a timely manner
2004	presidential	- abuse of state resources and huge bias in favour of Mr. Yanukovych in the media - coercion and intimidation of state officials and students to support the candidacy of Mr Yanukovych - the CEC's reluctance to grant legal redress against improper administrative decisions and violations of the electoral law - the CEC's failure to make available a transparent and detailed tabulation of election results - registration of a large number of candidates who were not particularly popular (so-called "technical candidates"), affecting the functioning of the Territorial Electoral Commissions (TECs) and the Polling Station Commissions (PSC) - TECs lacking independence from local government structures - dismissal of hundreds of PSC members appointed by the opposition on the eve of the first and second election rounds - voter lists compiled by local government authorities contained numerous errors and omissions - failure to ensure the secrecy of the vote - instances of voters being "bussed" from polling station to polling station - ballot box stuffing and a variety of serious irregularities in the use of Absentee Voter Certificates.

Source: Excerpts from OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Reports Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (29 March 1998, 7 March 2000, 27 May 2002, and 11 May 2005)

To facilitate the conduct of free and fair presidential elections, both the EU and the USA launched various projects and provided grants to assist the administration and monitoring of the election process. For instance, special election-oriented donor programmes were offered by the International Renaissance Foundation (known as the Soros Foundation in Ukraine), the National Endowment for Democracy (a USA donor organization), and the National Democratic Institute, which provided substantial technical and financial assistance to the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, the European Commission also implemented some election-related projects, which sought to promote free and fair elections by:

- monitoring the election coverage by the media,

- mobilizing and educating youth groups to prepare them for their first voting experience,

- carrying out the "Each Vote Matters" mobilization campaign in four eastern and north-eastern oblasts, targeting young people and journalists, and

- contracting the services of the Bureau for Institutional Reform and Democracy to assist the work of the Ukrainian CEC (Gatev 2008: 20-21).

The involvement of the EU, which was complemented by national assistance programmes which were financed and managed by the Member States,[102] was among the main factors that distinguished the Ukrainian electoral developments from the foreign assistance received before the Georgian 2003 elections. The direct beneficiaries of foreign assistance were mainly NGOs working on pro-democracy issues, such as election-monitoring projects dedicated to exposing fraud.

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[102] Particularly by the four Visegrad states, the Baltic states, and the United Kingdom.

Russia's active expression of its concerns over the events in Ukraine was also what distinguished the Orange Revolution from the process that had taken place in Georgia a year earlier. Russia did not hide its preferences behind diplomatic statements and began a massive intervention in support of Kuchma's candidate Viktor Yanukovych, whose presidency the Kremlin perceived as the best option for its interests in Ukraine (Gromadzki, Sushko, Wolczuk and Wolczuk 2004). Warned by the state of affairs in Georgia, which had begun to fall into the Western orbit, the Russian elite perceived this election as its private battle to regain hegemony in its sphere of influence. Thus, the official Russo-Ukrainian relations between the two countries intensified before the elections, and several meetings took place between Russian and Ukrainian high-level dignitaries, aiming to promote neighbourly friendship and to support the incumbent Prime Minister. Due to the economic, social and political interdependence between the two countries, the Kremlin had been able to use its access to influence Ukraine's domestic agenda, for instance, by promising various forms of substantial economic support if its preferred candidate won the presidency. The media, in turn, served as the main tool for conveying anti-Yushchenko propaganda to the voters. The electoral race was portrayed as a confrontation between eastern Ukraine, drawn towards its friendship with Russia, and the nationalistic western part of Ukraine, with its pro-Western leanings. Such strategy served to narrow Yushchenko's potential social basis of support by associating him with "Ukrainian nationalism" and "extremism" and thus proposing Yanukovych as a remedy to "revolutionary" personalities, including Yulia Tymoshenko (see also Chapter 3), from the opposition camp (Petrov and Ryabov 2006, Wilson 2005a).

It is difficult to assess, however, whether the Russian aggressive pro-Yanukovych campaigning and anti-Yushchenko propaganda proved an efficient strategy in terms of increasing the electoral power of the former. Whilst it may have reached the most

conservative part of the electorate, according to popular opinion, it irritated many undecided voters who felt offended by Russia's direct interference into Ukraine's affairs (Petrov and Ryabov 2006, Wilson 2005a). On the other hand, it appeared that the Western approach, based on providing substantial technical and financial assistance to election monitoring programmes and organizations such as the CVU, indirectly contributed to key elements of Viktor Yushchenko's strategy: it not only exposed the predicted falsifications but also confirmed that a fair ballot meant his success. As presented later in this chapter, the immediate publication of exit poll results helped the opposition to draw thousands of supporters to the streets to celebrate the victory, making it difficult for the Ukrainian authorities to confront demonstrators with force and put their own future and reputation at risk.

2.2.2. *Main contenders*

Of all the candidates who contested the election, only two of them, Viktor Yushchenko, representing the policies of a clearly defined political opposition, and Viktor Yanukovych, the incumbent Prime Minister, enjoyed extensive popular support (OSCE 2005). The main candidate backed by the ruling camp was Viktor Yanukovych, who was nominated by the Party of the Regions. Moreover, the seal of approval for his candidacy came from the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. During his campaign, Yanukovych chose to promote paternalistic slogans regarding social care and public subsidies for crisis-affected companies to ensure employment. He also called for dual citizenship and special rights for the Russian language in Ukraine, given that his base of support came mainly from eastern and southern Ukraine, which were predominantly Russian speaking. In terms of foreign policy,

the incumbent Prime Minister advocated closer relations with Russia and vaguely defined the "advancement of Ukraine's euro-integration" (Olszański 2005).

Whilst representing the interests of the political machine of the outgoing president, the incumbent prime minister, also former governor of Donetsk Oblast, maintained links with oligarchs from the Donbas region. His relationship with business tycoons from eastern Ukraine, however, raised concerns among the business elite outside the pro-regime circle. As discussed in Chapter 3, many entrepreneurs, who had begun to profit from a more transparent business environment that had been developed under Yushchenko's cabinet between 1999 and 2001, perceived Yanukovych's presidency as a regression from the progress that had already been achieved (Åslund 2006: 23; van Zon 2005: 15). Additionally, the fact that in his youth Viktor Yanukovych had served two prison terms for theft and assault alienated parts of the elite and the electorate. The appointment of someone with a criminal past as Kuchma's heir revealed not only the arrogance of Ukraine's ruling elite but also their over-confidence in being able to "sell" anybody with the help of "administrative resources", if deemed necessary (Wilson 2005a: 84-85).

Yanukovych's main opponent was the leader of Our Ukraine bloc Viktor Yushchenko. As a former head of the National Bank of Ukraine and a former Prime Minister under the Kuchma administration, Yushchenko was praised for introducing the national currency, successful reforms in the banking system and hampering the wave of hyperinflation in the late nineties. This won him considerable support from small- and middle-sized entrepreneurs, mainly from Kiev, who hoped for a stable environment to do business under his presidency (Copsey 2005). Unlike Yanukovych, Yushchenko was also perceived as a politician who enjoyed western support. Although he did not oppose co-operation with Russia, the opposition leader saw Ukraine's future outside the framework of the Single Economic Space,

and his 2004 campaign was generally regarded as favouring a more pro-Western direction for Ukraine's foreign relations. According to the salient provisions of Yushchenko's electoral agenda, his goals for presidency included creating new jobs, giving priority to funding social programmes, battling corruption, and improving the state of the military. In general, none of these issues that were touched upon referred to more divisive matters, such as the language issue.

Whilst there were no significant discrepancies between the two main opponents' electoral agendas, under the increasing political tension, the discourse on potential alliances and the vision of Ukraine's future began to diverge. Yushchenko spoke of the need to integrate with European institutions, whereas Yanukovych opted for integration within the framework of the Common Economic Space (Centre for Eastern Studies 2005). As highlighted in his electoral leaflet, the prime minister was against revolutionary changes and favoured a gradual process of development, which targeted mainly the older generation that wanted to avoid the repetition of the turmoil in the early 1990s. Moreover, his agenda did not reveal any intentions to fight corruption. The leading theme of Yushchenko's campaign, on the other hand, was to bring radical change in almost all aspects of life in Ukraine, with the overthrowing of the "criminal rule" of President Kuchma to begin with. In July 2004, Yushchenko's Our Ukraine bloc allied with Yulia Tymoshenko's supporters, forming a "People's Power" coalition to support his candidature during the October elections. For a while, Tymoshenko considered standing for president herself, but later agreed to back Yushchenko when he promised to her the premiership together with positions to representatives of her faction. This move ideally completed Yushchenko's image of a moderate politician, who was rather unconvinced about his own chances to reach the president's office. In this regard, Tymoshenko's inflammatory rhetoric and stinging attacks on

the oligarchs and Kuchma's chosen successor not only made up for Yushchenko's calmness but also skilfully tapped on the enthusiasm of ordinary citizens (Maksymiuk 2004).

2.2.3. *Election results and their implications*

The first round of the presidential elections in Ukraine took place on 31 October 2004. The voter turnout was very high and reached 74.5% (Committee of Voters of Ukraine 2004). After the closing of the polls, the joint mission of the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and NATO issued a statement based on reports by election observers. It concluded that the elections "did not meet a considerable number of European standards for democratic elections" (see Table 4). Similar observations came from some 10,000 domestic observers from the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), which conducted a parallel vote tabulation. According to CVU results, Yushchenko and Yanukovych had received the largest and equal number of votes (39.6%), whilst none of the remaining candidates had obtained more than 5.6% of voters' support.[103] These results did not differ significantly from the official statement issued by the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), which stated that Viktor Yushchenko, the leader of Our Ukraine, had won the election by the thinnest of margins (0.55%).[104] It therefore became clear to the authorities that Yushchenko had real chances of winning. That is why a much wider range of falsification technologies was applied during the runoff to avoid such a scenario (see Table 4).

As planned by Kuchma and his close allies, after the second round the CEC declared that Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych had won over the opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko (see Table 5). Independent exit polls, on the other hand, showed quite different numbers, indicating that Yushchenko was the winner (see Table 5).

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[103] See the Committee of Voters of Ukraine at
http://www.cvu.org.ua/elections.php?lang=ukr&mid=pres&eid=82&lim _ beg=0
[104] See the Central Electoral Commission at http://www.cvk.gov.ua

Table 5: Comparison of official and PVT results during the runoff

Company name	V. Yushchenko	V. Yanukovych
CVU	51.9	44.4
KIIS and CNR	53.0	44.0
Official results	46.6	49.5

Source: Paniotto, V. (2004), WAPOR Newsletter, Fourth Quarter 2004, CVU

Following the announcement of contradictory results, Yushchenko declared himself president and, together with his staff, delivered a vote of no confidence in the CEC. He also appealed to the people to protest against such blatant electoral fraud. Yushchenko's claims regarding large-scale falsifications were further confirmed by reports issued by the OSCE and other foreign observers, which stated that major shortcomings were evident throughout the electoral process (see Table 4). Accordingly, the growing number of demonstrators who responded to Yushchenko's call exceeded the expectations of all sides engaged in the emerging crisis. The rally, which took place in the main square in Kiev, the Maidan, drew approximately 200,000 to 500,000 people, many of whom protested day and night while living in tents that had been set up on the nearby boulevard. Protests also spread to other cities of Ukraine, bringing the Orange Revolution to its peak (Diuk 2006: 81). Under such heavy and increasing pressure, the Supreme Court banned the publication of the final election results. In addition, Ukraine's Parliament passed a resolution stating that the November runoff was marred by irregularities and proclaimed the second round of the presidential elections invalid.[105]

Support for Yushchenko's claims also came from the only pro-opposition television station Channel 5, owned by multimillionaire and Our Ukraine supporter Petro Poroshenko.[106]

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[105] The vote was nonbinding and 307 out of 450 deputies vote in favour of the resolution.
[106] Apart from Channel 5, pro-Yushchenko only media channels were the Internet, a few newspapers, and the TV and radio company *Era*.

Although it had limited coverage, Channel 5 appeared to add salt to the government's wound, especially when the ratings showed that its viewer numbers had significantly increased before and during the Orange Revolution. In an attempt to reduce its impact, the authorities pulled the plug on Channel 5 before the elections in the country's densely populated Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk regions, as well as in several other towns across Ukraine, for supposedly "technical reasons". Moreover, using an alleged defamation lawsuit as pretext, Channel 5's bank accounts were frozen several days before the first round of the elections. Quite unexpectedly, this incident was met with response from more than 100 journalists representing several TV channels, including some pro-government stations, who rallied in support of Channel 5's ongoing struggle with Kuchma's regime. After such encouragement, Channel 5 staff began a hunger strike until the Kiev Court of Appeals annulled the original verdict on freezing the channel's bank accounts (Varfolomeyev 2004).

The lack of agreement on how to resolve the crisis prolonged the political impasse. In order to find a solution that would be acceptable to all sides involved in the dispute, a team of European diplomats came to Ukraine[107] to facilitate the "round table" negotiations with Kuchma, Yushchenko, Yanukovych, and the Speaker of Ukraine's Parliament Volodymyr Lytvyn (Sushko and Prystayko 2006: 132, 139). Apart from bringing the conflicted parties together to solve the election crisis, the main result of the mediators' visit was twofold: first, they encouraged the declaration of the non use of force that was adopted by both opposing sides; and second, they facilitated the transfer of the decision-making process to the Ukrainian Supreme Court, which was to make a decision on whether to repeat the runoff (Centre for Eastern Studies 2005, Salnykova 2004). After two weeks of popular protest, the Supreme Court upheld the opposition's standpoint by annulling the disputed CEC results of the runoff

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[107] The group included European Union High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Polish president Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Lithuanian president Adamkus, OSCE secretary general Jan Kubis and and Speaker of the Russia State Duma Boris Gryzlov.

election. Its decision to repeat the runoff in December was accompanied by constitutional reform, which prompted both sides to agree to rerun the second round of elections.[108]

By that time, however, many officials had abandoned Yanukovych's and Kuchma's side and had more or less willingly shifted their loyalties to the opposition leader. The most important events, in terms of signalling the opportunity for mass protest, were the rejection of the official results by the Kiev City Council and the neutrality (or even pro-opposition leanings) of the security apparatus and the state institutions. This meant that there were no obstacles for the anti-fraud protest that was held in the capital and that no attempts would be made to disperse the demonstrators. Such attitude greatly contrasted with the efforts that had been taken before the elections and during the "Ukraine Without Kuchma" protest campaign in 2002, when state authorities used several means to suppress the anti-Kuchma rallies (e.g. by blocking access to the centre of the city) (D'Anieri 2005b: 245). The repeated leaks of important confidential information to Yushchenko's team, which were instrumental in revealing the massive electoral fraud, and the resignation of the head of the Yanukovych campaign Serhiy Tyhypko, after he admitted that large-scale manipulations had taken place, further confirmed that the authorities could no longer count on the loyalty of their previous allies (van Zon 2005: 16, D'Anieri 2005b: 245).

Interestingly, despite the ambiguous voting results, the Russian President Vladimir Putin had recognised Viktor Yanukovych as the "convincing" winner after the second round of the presidential elections. He also voiced allegations that the West had manipulated the elections in Ukraine and rejected the view of most international monitors that the Ukrainian elections were falsified. Both the State Duma and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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[108] According to the new legislation, the amendments to the constitution were to limit presidential powers in favour of the prime minister, thus transforming Ukraine into parliamentary-presidential republic. The electoral regulations were also amended in order to restrict the possibility of fixing the repeated vote. The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc was the only faction against reducing the powers of the president.

blamed the European Union, the European Parliament, and the OSCE for fomenting unrest that could lead to "massive disorder, chaos, and a split of the country" and for using election monitoring as a political tool (*RFE/RL*, 28 November 2004). Accordingly, the only monitoring results recognised by the Kremlin where those provided by observers from the Commonwealth of Independent States (including Russian representatives), who declared the runoff election as "legitimate and of a nature that reflected democratic standards" (*Ukrainska Pravda*, 22 November 2004).

Western countries, on the other hand, issued statements criticizing Russia and did not recognise the official results. Such response, however, was not simultaneous. The hesitation of some European leaders to condemn immediately and radically the way in which the elections were held could be explained by the EU's reluctance to promise Ukraine future integration with European institutions. Considering that the 2004 elections were often portrayed as the country's choice between a pro-European and pro-Russian orientation, statements coming from Brussels were carefully formulated so as not to go beyond the usual comments on the conduct of free and fair elections. A contrary stance was taken by the new Member States from Central Europe (though not only by these countries), which identified themselves more easily with Ukrainians, given their history of civic movements in the 1980s. Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, who came to Kiev to negotiate the contours of a democratic solution among the differing interests, played a key role. Polish ruling elites were particularly sympathetic to the Orange Revolution because they saw echoes of their own communist-era opposition movement, Solidarity. Its original leader and former President Lech Wałęsa was one of the first foreign dignitaries to visit Ukraine and to meet Yushchenko in the outbreak of mass demonstrations (Kuzio 2004b).

Other politicians and former dissidents, such as Vaclav Havel, also voiced their support for the protesters in Kiev.

Ultimately, as ordered by the Supreme Court, the second runoff election was repeated on 26 December 2004. This time, almost 80 percent (77%) of the voters went to the polls, which were monitored by approximately 12,000 observers sent by governments and social organizations. According to the Central Electoral Commission announcement, Viktor Yushchenko received 51.99 percent of the votes, winning the race for the president's office. Quite notably, Viktor Yanukovych also managed to gain support from 44.19 percent of the voters, despite the bad publicity following the fraudulent runoff (Copsey 2005: 105). Observer teams, who condemned the previous election rounds for not complying with European standards for democratic elections, agreed that there were no grounds for challenging these results.[109] Three weeks later on 23 January, Viktor Yushchenko was inaugurated as the third President of Ukraine.

2.3.   Concluding remarks: the demise of Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's regime

In the light of the aforementioned events, the key features of the Georgian and Ukrainian political landscapes under Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's regimes, respectively, appear as the main factor that gave rise to the political opportunity for endogenous social initiatives. First, the ruling elites' cynicism, the lack of legitimacy, the lack of trust in state institutions, the social injustice, the poor performance of the governments and the ubiquitous corruption created a pool of citizen dissatisfaction due to the authorities' failure to meet their demands. Second, due to the wide gulf between the authorities and the rest of society, both

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[109] Yanukovych refused to recognise the results because of mass violations of voters' rights. His team submitted numerous complaints about the course of the election, which delayed Yushchenko's inauguration as the Supreme Court was obliged to consider them with due respect. The complaints were finally rejected during the night of 19–20 January (Centre for Eastern Studies 2005: 121).

presidents miscalculated not only the growing discontent among the population but also the youth movements' ability to draw on social grievances and to mobilize mass demonstrations. Finally, the dispersion of power, the political cleavages, and the determination to give an impression of democracy were the main obstacles for the ruling elites to introduce full authoritarian regimes. This "pluralism by default", as discussed in Chapter 3, prevented both leaders from banning political parties, suspending elections and limiting NGO activity. Ultimately, the activists' expectation that elections would be competitive but also mishandled were the ultimate motives that triggered the creation of the *Kmara* and *Pora* movements.

It is further explored in the next sections that the instability of political alignments granted youth activists with yet another opportunity that turned out to be critical for the successful outcome – the neutrality of the security *apparat*. As the case study analysis further reveals, the vast number of demonstrators and the growing chances of the opposition parties to win persuaded some representatives of the security forces to abandon the incumbent authorities, which in turn eliminated the possibility of violent repression. In the Georgian case, however, the memories of civil wars and the 1989 rally (see Chapter 4), as well as the low morale among security forces that had not been paid for a long time, were of equal importance in terms of factors that are crucial for the prevention of violence. Moreover, despite the limited repression that was carried out against youth activists, *Kmara* and *Pora*'s non-violent, and often humorous, actions facilitated a restrained response from the police forces. Similar to the wave of rallies that took place in Central Europe in the late 1980s, "the scenario of protest became surreastically [*sic*] reverted; police were simply uncomfortable arresting demonstrators who were giving them flowers and declaring friendship with the police forces" (Misztal 1992: 63).

3.   Case study of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns

The outline of the Rose and Orange Revolutions highlighted the general factors that led to mass protest and to the end of the regimes that had developed under Shevardnadze and Kuchma, respectively. In short, these events included above all: the frantic preparation of state authorities to falsify the elections, the emergence of a new political elite, unpopular pro-regime party or presidential candidates, and the presence of national and local non-governmental organizations, which helped to expose and publicise the falsification of voting results. Similarly, other scholars have also acknowledged these elements to be among the general factors that usually lead to the so-called "coloured revolutions" (see "Review of the relevant literature" in Chapter 1).

Nonetheless, it is argued in this study that such an account of the dramatic events that took place in 2003 in Georgia and in 2004 in Ukraine offers only a partial depiction of what actually happened during the election-related political crisis and leaves certain questions unanswered. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, neither the existence of a "new" political opposition without the Soviet past nor the presence of organizational vehicles, such as NGOs, were able to guarantee the mass mobilization against the electoral fraud that took place in Georgia and Ukraine. Given their inability to represent different segments of the society and the general distrust of the citizens towards civic and political institutions, the following case studies shed a new light on the role of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigners in this process, and depict them as the vanguard of the social turmoil surrounding the manipulation of voting procedures.

The detailed circumstances surrounding the creation of the *Kmara* and *Pora* movements are less known than the general narratives on the "coloured revolutions". Thus, by consulting the *Kmara* and *Pora* leaders themselves, this study proposes a different approach

to the analysis of these issues and sheds light on important factors that may have been overlooked by other sources, such as the motivations behind and the causes of the students' anti-regime movement. Moreover, based on the activists' stories, it is later argued in Chapter 6 that the competitive elections in 2003 in Georgia and in 2004 in Ukraine signified the beginning of opportunities for the dissatisfied youth. By voting for the strengthened and radicalized alliances of reformist parties, they had for the first time a genuine chance to push their countries in a western direction. The elections also created a space where the younger generation could bring certain issues to public attention and crystallized the youth's opinion on political matters. Accordingly, through their active participation in political protests, the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns became the main vehicle for the articulation of grievances and the coordination of protest activities, which compensated for the deficiencies of the civil society and the political parties before and during the Rose and Orange Revolutions, respectively.

3.1. Origins and development

3.1.1. *Kmara*

Although it was arguably predictable that the regime would resort to vote-rigging (see Table 2), a response of public outrage was far from being guaranteed – even less so in the form of organized and sustained protests. Due to declining standards and fairness of the ballot casting, many Georgians had simply lost faith in the electoral process. The prevailing opinion was that whether they voted or not, nothing was going to change (Katz 2006: 127). Paradoxically, the tolerance for a certain amount of fraud and corruption became a kind of a "defence against uncertainty" and chaos, which dominated many spheres of life in post-Soviet Georgia (Nizharadze 2005: 111, see also Chapter 3). Therefore, the main challenge for the

opposition and youth activist initiatives prior to the elections was not only to confront the regime's efforts to falsify the vote but also to make people believe that a radical but peaceful change of the regime was possible.

Yet, after a decade of antagonism towards popular mobilization – with a few exceptions – young activists were convinced that a different strategy was needed in order to motivate people to defend the right to free and fair elections. As agreed on by several NGO leaders, the core of the new approach was to create a student campaign modelled on the Serbian activist group *Otpor*. The idea was discussed and developed during an international conference on civil society, which was organized by NDI who had invited several activists from Serbia (Simecka 2009: 16). Already in early 2003, a few young Georgian activists joined a group of older colleagues and politicians who travelled to Serbia and Slovakia to learn from the anti- Milošević and anti-Mečiar oppositionists.[110] They returned from Belgrade with video clips, films, and detailed textbooks, "most of which was translated and put into a handbook, to be of use for the Georgian youth".[111] Young visitors also brought back something else from their trip to the Balkans: the knowledge that a simple copy-paste method would not be an option given the different national contexts. Whilst in Serbia universities became the main pillar of support for radical opposition, in Georgia, where institutions of higher education were among the most corrupt in the country, it was far more difficult to win the support of the student community.[112] It soon appeared that such concerns were not unfounded, and the new group faced strong criticism not just from the government but also from their peers.

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[110] In Serbia they met with representatives of *Otpor* and the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID); in Slovakia with OK'98 campaigners.
[111] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 19 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[112] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

The visit was financed by the Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF). It included also a stop in Bratislava, where the Georgian group met with Slovakian activists. However, most of them remained rather sceptical about the applicability of the Slovakian experience to the Georgian reality. They perceived the Slovakian "OK '98" campaign as more NGO-oriented and as embracing mainly intellectual circles. Moreover, an analogous "Democracy Coalition" project had been already established in Georgia in order to support democracy in a similar way, but it ceased to exist due to the lack of consensus among its NGO participants.[113] There were a few people, however, who saw the meeting as a chance to gain different perspectives on similar events. According to the head of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association at that time, the Slovakian case seemed to be more "civilized and democratic" than the strategy that was put forward in Serbia because "there was no room for confrontation and fist-fights in the streets, which always have negative consequences."[114] Still, after studying the aspects of peaceful resistance, the young Georgians preferred to refer to the non-violent activities of the Serbian volunteer network. In summer 2003, they invited *Otpor* activists to share information on protest tactics with the newly established *Kmara* (Georgian: "Enough"), a movement that had begun to go through a similar course of events.

The main outcome of the training was an increased awareness among young people of the vulnerability of the Georgian regime. Shevardnadze's decline during his second and last term in the office offered a prime opportunity for the formation of a new campaign. In this context, the 2003 parliamentary elections were an ideal moment for protest in which the emerging youth movement could gain its first experience before its large-scale activity planned for the 2005 elections. The final decision to start a new movement was made in the spring of 2003 by a few close friends from two student groups, which had formed in the late

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[113] Interview, former GYLA member and *Kmara* activist, 25 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[114] Interview, former GYLA member and *Kmara* activist, 25 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

1990s and early 2000s – the "Students for Self-Government" and the "Student Movement for Georgia" (see Chapter 4, Section 3.1). Assisted by older, more experienced colleagues from the Liberty Institute, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA), and the Association for Law and Public Education (ALPE), they formed the nucleus of a new campaign designed to "initiate mass civil disobedience", to "weaken the regime", and to "assist the democratic opposition in replacing the existing government" (see Figure 4).[115]

Figure 4: Youth organizations and supporting NGOs in Georgia before the Rose Revolution
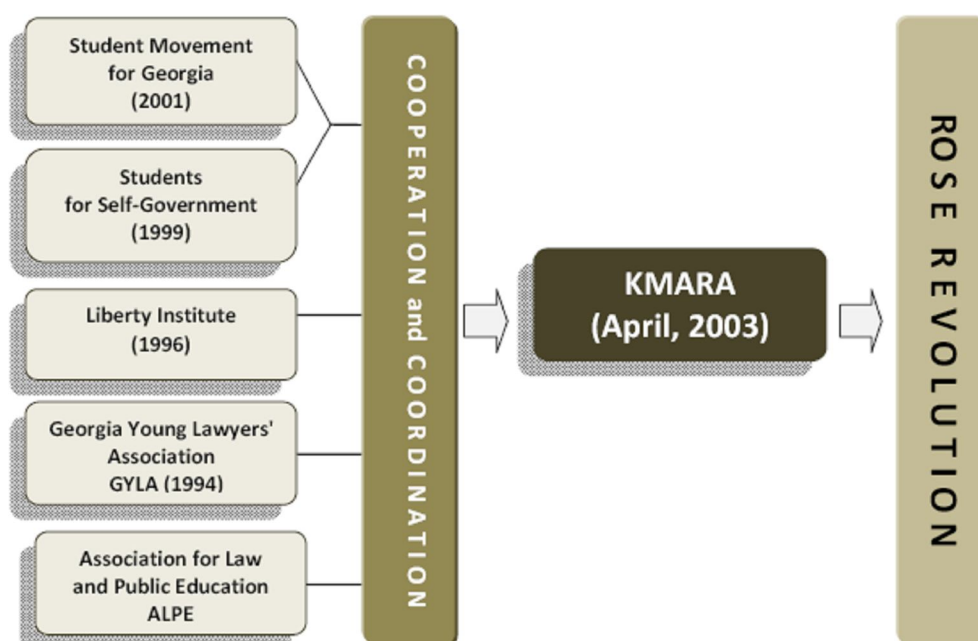
Source: Author's compilation

The effects of previous student organization should also be taken into account. Before the 2003 parliamentary elections, two autonomous student groups formed at Tbilisi State University – the "Students for Self-Government" and the "Student Movement for Georgia" – in response to the rampant corruption within the Georgian education system and the 2001

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[115]*Kmara* documents provided courtesy of the Liberty Institute.

political crisis (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1). These groups provided a base for the subsequent formation of *Kmara's* campaign in terms of establishing an activist network and gaining valuable experience on how to organize, run the office, recruit members, and send a consistent and enticing message to the media.[116] Their most active students later became the core members of *Kmara* movement.

3.1.2. *Pora*

The 2004 youth campaigns in Ukraine emerged mainly as a response to the restricted media freedom and to the regime's preparations to falsify the vote (see Chapter 3 and Table 4). Yet, the idea to create a movement that would be an effective antidote to the regime's manipulations and capable of attracting widespread attention had been in the works for several months. Enriched by the experience of the "Ukraine Without Kuchma" and "For Truth" initiatives, groups of Ukrainian activists from central and western Ukraine began to discuss the creation of a new campaign in the context of the presidential elections. Contacts were also made with representatives of movements in other countries that had formed in similar settings. Already in 1999, civic leaders from Kiev forged links with representatives of the Slovakian "OK '98", a campaign that helped to overturn the authoritarian rule of Vladimir Mečiar. Following a workshop in Bratislava, members of "OK '98" helped Ukrainian activists create "Freedom of Choice" (*Svoboda Vybora*), a coalition of NGOs, which would monitor the 2002 parliamentary elections.[117] The initiative was later renamed the "Wave of Freedom" (*Hvylia Svobody*) campaign, which was to perform similar tasks during the 2004 presidential elections. Designed as an information and education campaign to promote free and fair

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[116] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 18 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[117] By early 2004, the "Freedom of Choice" coalition, later changed into the "Wave of Freedom" campaign, united nearly 300 NGOs, including youth organizations such as the Christian-Democratic Youth, the Organization of Young Lawyers, the Youth Enlightenment (*Moloda Prosvita*), and the Coalition of Democratic Youth.

elections, the concept won the support of international financial donors who supplied the necessary funds.[118]

In western Ukraine, another group of youth activists from Lviv also sought international assistance for forming the anti-Kuchma campaign. From 2001, they began to cooperate with members of the Serbian *Otpor* and the Belarusian *Zubr* movements who delivered their knowledge to their Ukrainian peers during a series of seminars and workshops. After the Rose Revolution in 2003, the representatives of the Georgian youth movement, *Kmara*, joined this team of informal advisors. Altogether, about twenty meetings took place in each regional centre in Ukraine, with financial backing provided by Dutch, British and Polish foundations.[119] The main goal of the seminars was to transfer expertise on non-violent resistance to the youth activist leaders and to create a network of connections between various civic groups across Ukraine. More specifically, in the words of one of the participants, the issues covered by the training included specific information on:

- establishing an organization,

- making ones' voice heard,

- fundraising and PR,

- carrying out demonstrations, and, more generally,

- improving the overall situation of democracy in Ukraine.[120]

As a result of these meetings, a widespread network of activists had been developed before the 2004 presidential elections, and spread across the country. Most of the key figures who oversaw this initiative belonged to the activist circles that used the activist website

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[118] For instance, the Westminster Foundation (United Kingdom), the Renaissance Foundation (USA), and the Canadian Agency for Regional Development.

[119] The Alfred Moser Fund (Netherlands), the Westminster Foundation (United Kingdom), and the European Foundation for Education (Poland).

[120] Interview, former Black *Pora* activist, 24 October 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

Maidan (e.g. editor of *www.maidan.org.ua*, Mykhailo Svystovych), Lviv's "Youth Resistance" (*Opir Molodi*) and the Student Brotherhood (*Studentskie Bratstvo*) organizations (see Figure 5). Some of them also had experience as part of the "Ukraine without Kuchma" and "For Truth" movements, and thus lent the emerging campaign a sense of the radical element of the 2001 protests (Wilson 2005a: 74).

The concrete debate over setting up a new youth protest movement took place in late 2003 when brainstorming sessions organised by "Maidan" and "Youth Resistance" took place to decide on the movement's logo, aims, strategy, and principles. From the more than twenty variants discussed, the name *Pora* ("It's high time") was eventually chosen, signifying that the time had come for the Kuchma regime to leave Ukrainian politics. Subsequently, the picture of the rising sun in a triangle was accepted as a campaign logo, which symbolized the arrival of new hope for changing the system, labelled by *Pora* with the catchy term "Kuchmism" *(*Diuk 2006: 77-78).[121] The immediate goal agreed on by the campaign founders was to "promote citizens' participation in the 2004 elections and ensure their transparent, fair, and timely organization" (see Appendix). Accordingly, this was to be realized through the mass activation of the youth prior to the 2004 elections, which would be based on the civil disobedience campaign model that had been successful in Serbia.

Pora's official campaigning began in March 2004, when mysterious stickers asking "What is Kuchmism?" materialized overnight throughout Ukraine. Afterwards, Pora carried out various activities to direct society's attention to the authoritarian features of the incumbent regime. The subsequent components of the "What is Kuchmism?" initiative, such as the "I am Kuchmism" protest, focused on constructing a negative image of the regime's candidate, Viktor Yanukovych, by associating him with the most unpopular attributes of Kuchma's

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[121] The logotype resembled the emblem of the *Vybiray!* (Choose!) campaign conducted in Belarus before the 2001 presidential elections.

rule.[122] In doing so, *Pora* focused mainly on street activities, which were carried out on the local and regional levels and relied on the extensive activists' network built up over the previous years. Moreover, the amorphous structure and invisible leadership (also for security reasons) created an atmosphere of mystery around the *Pora* members and contributed to its increasing popularity among the youth.

To *Pora's* surprise, soon after its debut on the Ukrainian political scene, a second group with the same name gave rise to public confusion during the mayoral elections in Mukachevo (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.). While various accounts of this coincidence appeared, the most probable version of events asserts that the information about the new *Pora* group reached the coordinator of the Freedom of Choice Coalition of NGOs, Vladislav Kaskiv, who found it attractive enough to change the initial concept of the "Wave of Freedom" campaign (see Figure 5). Instead, he decided to form a second, so-called "yellow" *Pora* (hereafter Yellow *Pora*) campaign, in contrast to the "black" adjective added to name of the first *Pora*, which would combat Kuchma's system of strict control over information. It would also "mobilize society for the protection of their democratic rights and freedoms in the event of the falsification of the election results or of other illegitimate actions of authorities" (see Appendix).[123] As announced on *Pora's* website, this was to be accomplished by providing "alternative mechanisms for delivering objective information […] directly to citizens in all regions of Ukraine" in the form of a nationwide information and education campaign.[124] Inspired by the Serbian *Otpor's* "*Gotov je!*" (He's finished!) logotype, the symbol of the second *Pora* campaign showed the inscription "PORA!" with a black clock on it, which indicated that the Kuchma regime's days were numbered.

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[122] Interview, former Black *Pora* activist, 29 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[123] The adjectives "black" and "yellow" added to both *Poras* derived from the colour of the campaigns' stickers: the first sticker of Black *Pora* was in black, and the first was in yellow for Yellow *Pora*.
[124] A quotation from *Pora's* website: www.pora.org.ua (accessed November 2005).

Figure 5: Youth organizations and campaigns in Ukraine before Orange Revolution
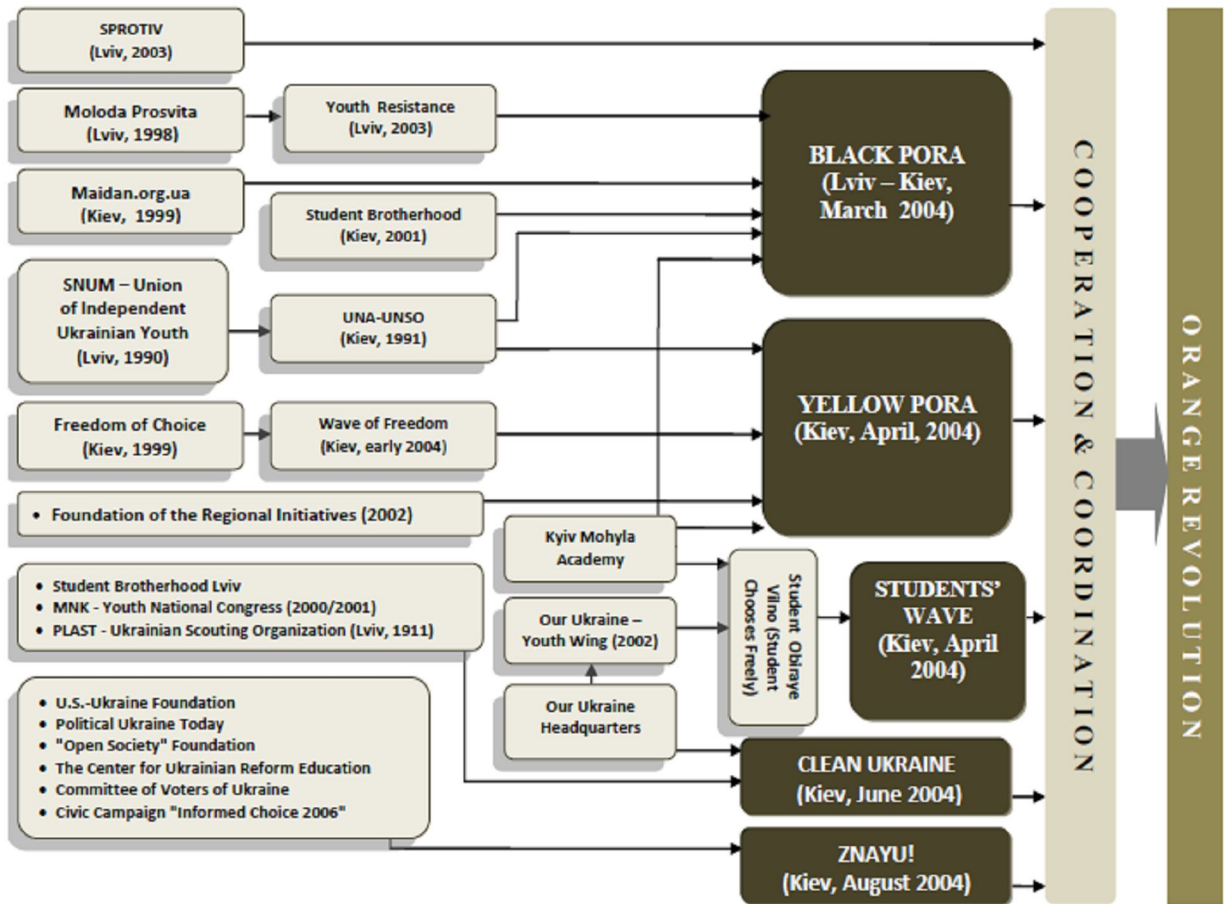
Source: Author's own compilation, inspired by interview with Oleksandr Solontay, former Yellow *Pora* and *Znayu* activist, 18 June, Kiev, Ukraine.

3.2. Goals and organization

3.2.1. *Kmara*

In principle, *Kmara* was designed as a civic movement, organized as an open, non-partisan initiative of activists to ensure free and fair parliamentary elections in Georgia (see *Kmara's* mission statement in Appendix). In the longer term, the group aimed to mobilize a large political movement to prevent Shevardnadze from staying in power, in the event that he decided to do so, after his second term in office. In this context, *Kmara* openly voiced its dissatisfaction with the incumbent government, and did not hesitate to sympathize with the opposition, despite its statutory non-partisanship. Moreover, its vision of radical action against the authorities facilitated links with other political actors who shared this idea (e.g. the Liberty Institute and Saakashvili's National Movement) and intensified their cooperation. At the same time, however, this radical approach prevented more moderate opposition supporters from joining the group. It therefore remained unclear whether the strategy to create a strong nationwide resistance to Shevardnadze's regime could have ever become a viable option.

The promotion of *Kmara's* campaign was divided into three main phases. First, the "Street Activities Project" included the printing and distribution of the posters, stickers, T-shirts, and leaflets with one single slogan: "It's enough", which was meant to convey the idea that youth had had enough of electoral fraud (see *Kmara's* mission statement in Appendix). The main purpose of this stage was to make the *Kmara* name visible and known to the population. Second, the "Mobilization Phase" envisaged television and radio ads inviting the population to join the different events organized by the new movement (e.g. public debates, rock concerts, meetings). The final stage, approximately one month prior to the election, the *Get Out the Vote* campaign was to be launched. The aim of this part of the project was to make sure that each potential voter that was reached by *Kmara's* message would come to cast

their vote and would not allow the "others" to decide on the future of the country (see also Appendix: Campaign For Free and Fair Elections "Kmara", 2003).

Kmara never built the broad and sophisticated organizational structure that it initially planned. Still, within a short period of time, it managed to establish small independent branches capable of carrying out local activities without daily supervision from the leadership. The headquarters, based in the capital, coordinated the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the national campaign, with regional units supporting its actions in nine other regions. Major decisions were taken by the National Council, made up of representatives from each Kmara branch. Everyone had a role to play: some people were assigned to contact the media, some to prepare actions, others to communicate with activists, to prepare posters, and so on.[125] With relatively developed mobile phone networks in Georgia, it was easy for the activists to communicate through these channels. The information first went to the ten coordinators of the regional networks, who then passed it along to their subdivisions. The aim was to disseminate the information within half an hour to organize simultaneous actions and make a greater impact.[126] The outcomes of this practice were not only pragmatic but also very effective. Even if little more than a dozen people demonstrated in one place, once a similar kind of action took place in other places, it created the perception that it had a much more popular following in the beginning than it had in reality.[127] In this way, Kmara not only managed to attract new groups of supporters, who at least partially substituted for the lack of involvement of Tbilisi's students (see Section 3.3.1), but it also confused political leaders and security forces who did not know how to respond to the newly formed youth anti-systemic grouping.

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[125] Interview, former Kmara activist, 19 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[126] Interview, former Kmara activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[127] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

For rather inexperienced youth, such organization was quite impressive. In addition to the commitment of its activists which clearly increased Kmara's effectiveness, the financial aid offered mainly by Soros' Open Society Georgian Foundation (OSGF) was also a valuable resource that helped with the organization. In total, approximately 200,000 to 350,000 USD was spent to support the campaign through television ads, flyers, transportation from the regions, printing t-shirts, flags, etc.[128] The bulk of the financial support (e.g. from the OSGF, the National Democratic Institute, the British Council, and USAID) came in the later stages of *Kmara's* activity, however. Initially, the group had to rely on individual donations and its own efforts when planning and staging various protests. As one activist recalled, at this stage, *Kmara*

> […] had no money – only brave hearts, good humour and friendship. And they were doing it all by themselves from February till the end of May 2003. Someone offered materials, someone did some fundraising among friends or colleagues, and it was enough to print posters and leaflets, to buy sticks for flags, and to buy a paint. All those small things were done with their own hands and on their own initiative.[129]

In terms of other non-financial support available for a nascent *Kmara*, the main NGOs involved in establishing the movement (see Figure 4) also provided various types of assistance. For instance, the Liberty Institute and ALPE dealt with routine matters by mentoring young activists and granting them access to communications equipment and venues for training. The GYLA members, on the other hand, offered legal support, particularly at times when the *Kmara* activists were arrested. Finally, it should be stressed here that such an efficient and unified team of NGOs deserves some recognition, particularly in the context of the previous attempts which failed to unite the main actors in the sector. Together with the youth's enthusiastic engagement, this cooperation was crucial for making *Kmara* an effective movement.

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[128] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[129] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 and 23 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

3.2.2. *Pora*

Despite the different genesis of the two campaigns, the members of both *Poras* shared a similar pro-Western and anti-Kuchma approach. The activists agreed that the image of unanimity among the youth was crucial for the success of the movement and that the tactics of both campaigns were in fact complementary of one another. Although they had similar aims, they pursued different organizational and ideological solutions (see Table 6). Yellow *Pora* usually referred to the philosophy and traditions of the Central European student national-democratic movements of the late 1980s and early 1990s. This partially stemmed from the fact that among its founders was a certain group of over-thirty activists who were veterans of Ukraine's protest movements dating back to the "revolution on granite". Moreover, by taking into account Ukraine's geo-political, demographical, cultural, and regional particularities, the group leaders believed that the experiences of *Otpor* (and *Kmara*) were less applicable to their country and thus a more unique approach was required (Kaskiv, Chupryna and Zolotariov 2007: 141-142). Finally, unlike the horizontal and leaderless structure developed by the "black" wing of the campaign (hereafter Black *Pora*), the Yellow *Pora* at times resembled a well-managed project, designed to promote free elections as well as its core leadership and their political future.

Table 6: The main differences between Black and Yellow *Pora*

Black *Pora*	Yellow *Pora*
▪ Civic campaign (anti-Kuchma oriented)	▪ Education-information campaign (pro-Yushchenko oriented)
▪ Ideology in brief: no Kuchma = no problems	▪ Ideology in brief: revolution and after
▪ Strong in western and central regions	▪ Strong in central and south-eastern regions
▪ Non-leadership principle	▪ One leader
▪ Based on friendly internal relations	▪ Professionalized approach to internal relations
▪ Similar age group	▪ Leaders from slightly older generation
▪ Non-regular pocket money	▪ Regularly paid managing staff
▪ Based on Serbian model (see Chapter 6)	▪ Based on coalition of NGOs
▪ Independence from political parties	▪ Connections to political parties
▪ Idealistic, national patriotic orientation	▪ Well-managed, promotional project
▪ Against future political activity	▪ Future as political party
▪ Strong regional network	▪ Resources concentrated in Kiev
▪ More street actions but weak PR	▪ Fewer street actions but better PR

Source: Interviews with *Kmara* and *Pora* activists.

The organizational form and tactics applied by Yellow *Pora* brought tangible effects in terms of the number of supporters and the functioning of the activists' network. At the peak of the protest campaign, the Yellow *Pora* representatives claimed to have more than 9,000 volunteers (registered members of mobile groups) in seventy-eight regional units (*kushches*). The regional groups were managed by district leaders (*kushchoviy*), each managing a group of ten to fifteen volunteers (Kaskiv, Chupryna and Zolotariov 2007: 89). Although impressive and well presented by *Pora* leaders, one should be aware that the organizational structure did not function as smoothly as planned.[130] Furthermore, the high figure of the number of *Pora* volunteers was merely a rough estimation, because no list of members was ever completed. Moreover, although the two *Pora* branches independently led a number of actions, making a distinction between "black" and "yellow" *Pora* participants is arguably impossible. The reason for this is that most of the activists joined each of the protest events, usually without even knowing about the existence of the "black" and "yellow" coordinating centres, particularly if the actions took place in the regions.

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[130] For instance, there were only a few or no *Pora* units in some cities in eastern Ukraine.

With limited access to the traditional sources of independent media, the new communication technologies became an important source of unbiased information and a tool for coordinating the Ukrainian activists. While the use of text messaging was a main tool for spreading information amongst thousands of volunteers, the Internet served as an alternative public space whose character was not determined by a pro-regime editorial selection. The website *maidan.org.ua*, for example, offered practical advice on issues such as how to create mobile election observer groups, and how to react when stopped by a police officer.[131] The Black *Pora* campaign's website, *kuchmizm.info*, described all the negative aspects of President Kuchma's decade-long rule (1994-2005) and contained downloadable print-ready stickers and literature. Reports from activists, photo gallery, and information in the English language were also available on *Poras'* sites, which reached out to global communities, including a large number of Ukrainians living abroad.[132]

The realization of *Pora's* goals and activities (see Appendix)*,* however, would not be possible without considerable financial backing. Although Yellow *Pora* founders preferred to claim otherwise, the campaign benefited from various international donors' funds (e.g. American Renaissance Foundation, Freedom House, and the Canadian Agency for Regional Development) which allowed the "Wave of Freedom" and the "Freedom of Choice Coalition" to secure legitimate 2004 presidential elections. The Black *Pora* branch also received some financial assistance from foreign donors (e.g. from Soros' Renaissance Foundation). Nonetheless, as the activist explained, the funding was never granted for functioning of *Pora per se*, because the external supporters abstained from supporting a strictly political agenda.[133] Hence, the money involved in both movements came from parallel grant projects aimed at monitoring, countering violations, anti-corruption and general civic activity. In summer 2004,

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[131] The *Maidan.org.ua* editor, Mykhailo Svistovych, who later became one of the Black *Pora* founders.
[132] The Yellow *Pora* front page offered capsule summaries in thirteen European languages.
[133] Interview, former Yellow *Pora* activist, 23 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

for instance, international funding helped to finance the training camps for activists in the Crimea and in Carpathian Mountains where about 350 young people (with *Pora* members among them) were instructed on election monitoring, various techniques of non-violent civic protest, and the skills to be deployed in the event of voter fraud.[134]

Finally, it should be noted that apart from *Pora*, the information campaigns based on direct communication with the voters were also carried out by other youth-led initiatives that emerged before the 2004 presidential elections (see Figure 5). Actions such as *Chysta Ukraina* (Clean Ukraine), *Znayu*! (I know), and *Studentska Khyvilya* (Students' Wave), where students were the backbone of the group's activity, aimed to point out corruption (*Chysta Ukraina*), support election monitoring (*Znayu*!), or call for supporting Yushchenko (*Studentska Khyvilya*). The dissemination of leaflets, stickers, posters, and other printed materials served as channels through which to spread the youth's campaign message, and complemented the organization of rallies. These groups often cooperated with *Pora*, particularly during the final "watchdog" stage, where a parallel vote tabulation was carried out, in order to provide a quick tally of the actual vote and report on any electoral fraud.

3.3. Main activities

3.3.1. *Kmara*

Kmara's first appearance in April 2003 was carefully planned. It was accompanied by "Enough" signs in handwritten Georgian, which were painted overnight on Tbilisi's streets. At that time, no one knew what *Kmara* actually was. While to some foreign observers it may not seem like radical action, it was perceived in the Georgian capital as provocative, intriguing, and unprecedented activity. No less provocative was *Kmara's* first demonstration,

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[134] Other examples include printing and distributing twelve thousand copies of Gene Sharp's compendium of non-violent tactics, "From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation", by Sharp's Albert Einstein Institute from the United States.

organized on the anniversary of the 1978 student demonstrations, which was the largest student gathering since the 2001 political crisis (see Chapter 4). This initiative was triggered by the meeting of a new pro-Shevardnadze alliance, whom the youth movement viewed as representative of the corrupt ex-*nomenklatura*. On that day, about 200 students marched from Tbilisi State University to the State Chancellery, carrying flags of the old Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic with faces of the current government officials on them. The main aim of this action was to emphasize the connection between the leaders of Shevardnadze's newly formed bloc and the country's Soviet past, as well as to condemn its intention to rig the approaching parliamentary vote. A few flags were burned outside the Chancellery building, which met with a quick but expected reaction from the government. In front of the television cameras, the Interior Minister ordered the arrest of some of the activists, an act which guaranteed the free publicity that *Kmara* desired.[135]

Kmara's activities, which were meant to gain nationwide coverage, were carried out over the seven months leading up to the 2 November election. In general, the main plan of action can be divided into three temporal stages:

- the pre-election and organizational phase, which included establishment of organizational branches, and discussions with the opposition parties to determine positions and stances;

- public outreach and voter mobilization, which involved summer training programmes for activists; and

- a long-term "watchdog" mechanism and citizen empowerment, which meant undertaking efforts to ensure enduring accountability, transparency, and good governance.[136]

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[135] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[136] *Kmara* documents provided courtesy of the Liberty Institute.

As a part of its mobilization programme, *Kmara* launched the *Get Out the Vote* (GOTV) campaign inspired by the Serbian Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID). The main lesson learnt from the Serbian experience was that several complementary components of the campaign had to be carried out simultaneously, to target a wide group of people, including at once those with more radical and those with more moderate political views.[137] In contrast to *Otpor's* radicalism, CeSID representatives drew attention to the neutral and "positive" part of pre-election campaign, which was aimed at enhancing citizens' awareness of the importance of free and fair elections.[138] The Georgian experience with the *Get Out the Vote* project reflected the Serbian approach presented during the meeting in Belgrade.

Another issue that the *Kmara* campaign focused on was the reform of a corrupt education system**.** To address this issue, as one *Kmara* member revealed, was a difficult task which required "lots of personal trust". Students did not want to discuss paying bribes at the universities, and *Kmara* wanted to break this silence.[139] When in late April 2003 the Rector of the Tbilisi State University (TSU), Roin Metreveli, was re-elected for a third term, *Kmara* claimed that the election had been illegal and appealed to the district court of Tbilisi. Metreveli, a former Communist Party activist, was Rector for eleven years, and the re-election would give him another six years as the head of the major Georgian university. According to the student protesters, this was possible only after his unilateral amendment to the University Charter, which was made with the president's permission in 2001. The lawsuit submitted by the students also enumerated the facts of the corruption and of the financial mismanagement at TSU which were discovered by the Chamber of Control of Georgia (*Civil Georgia*, 23, 24 April 2003). With *Kmara's* assistance, the television show "60 Minutes" aired a special

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[137] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 and 23 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[138] See CeSID's website, URL: http://www.cesid.org/eng/onama/index.jsp (last accessed on 8 January 2008).
[139] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 6 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia

programme of an investigative report on the rampant bribery at TSU (*Georgian Times*, 26 November 2003).

Nonetheless, the institutionalized culture of corruption meant that few students were willing to join the protest. While some were simply apathetic, others were ashamed and afraid because they had been accepted at the university through dishonest dealings. According to one *Kmara* activist, the main problem with recruiting students in Tbilisi was that many of them were simply not interested in anything: "They were not studying; they did not go to the classes. They just wanted to hang around all the day." Moreover, many of them were comfortable with paying bribes in order to secure their successful education.[140] The main resistance to major changes, however, came from the Student Union, a formal organization that resembled the *Komsomol* structures. "Although they did not care much about the existence of *Kmara*," one activist said, "they were very well used by the university administration who fulfilled the orders of the government."[141] The main task of the Union was to neutralize the emerging youth movement by showing that not everyone in the student community supports this kind of initiative. When expressing their distrust of *Kmara*, the young supporters of the Rector argued that "some opposition groups and pro-government parties use students for their own purposes" and provoke confrontation amongst the student community (*Civil Georgia*, 23 April 2003). For the rest of the students, *Kmara* often appeared as too pro-American and biased towards the opposition. Georgian university students who were abroad, for example, chastised the members of *Kmara* for associating themselves with the opposition and for inciting radical confrontations. Instead, they suggested that the movement be patient and wait until the scheduled presidential election and Shevardnadze's retirement from political life (Katz 2006: 148).

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[140] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 24 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[141] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 19 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

As *Kmara's* founders predicted, mobilizing the student community proved a difficult task. Despite flyers and meetings to advertise the goals of the newly formed movement, only a small number of students expressed interest in participating in *Kmara's* activities. Moreover, the movement never managed to stage a mass demonstration in front of the university. As the summer approached, *Kmara* aimed to widen its network beyond the academic community. Within a framework of the pre-electoral agenda funded by the OSGF, *Kmara* set up a camp in a mountain village to "encourage citizen activity" among its youthful participants.[142] In reality, however, hundreds of potential activists were instructed to commit acts of civil disobedience. The instructions were divided into three-day courses based on *Otpor's* materials and other relevant sources (e.g. Sharp's book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*). Meetings with dissidents from the Soviet era and with Serbian veterans who arrived in Georgia to talk about their own experience were important elements of the training.[143] According to the leaders, 95 percent of those who participated in the summer camp later became *Kmara* activists.

The Rustavi-2 television channel greatly helped *Kmara* to communicate its message to a broader audience. Unlike in Serbia and Ukraine, where the major television channels were controlled by people loyal to the respective governments, the Georgian opposition and *Kmara* had substantial access to the mass media. Rustavi-2 announced when and where opposition demonstrations would take place, showed a series of controversial anti-government advertisements prepared by *Kmara*, and broadcast an American film about Milošević's downfall just before the voting was to take place.[144] All demonstrators knew how to react because "[they] knew the tactics of the revolution in Belgrade by heart", a National

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[142] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 19 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

[143] Levan Berdzenishvili, former political prisoner, and Slobodan Djinovic, leader of *Otpor*, were among the key figures that led the courses.

[144] Directed by Steve York, an award-winning film "Bringing Down a Dictator" was brought to Georgia by *Otpor's* activists.

Movement member said after elections (World Press Review, 7 December 2003). Various tricks were used to create an impression on the television of an active student movement. The images showed groups of young people within the protestors' ranks, holding banners with the names of different universities. However, a closer look revealed the same faces appearing repeatedly, with the only real change being the name on the banner.[145]

During the following months, the movements became a regular occurrence on the Georgian political landscape, with a major group of supporters coming from the regions. Actions were staged almost daily to gain the attention of the media and to sustain the motivation among young *Kmara* recruits. Drawing from the Serbian experience, each activity had to be different from the next. Theatrical elements were also important to make the events interesting for the viewers and to contrast with the rallies of political parties.[146] Thus, *Kmara* organized concerts, cleaned rubbish from the streets, collected books for school libraries, rallied against police violence, and ran television ads condemning the incompetent government. "Enough of corruption", "Enough of bad-quality education", "Enough of violence", "Enough of criminals with uniforms", "Enough of torture", and "Enough of vote-rigging" were the main slogans linked to specific actions that sought to bring down Georgia's ruling government. Although *Kmara* tried to balance between positive and negative images, neither approach made a significant difference. The first reactions towards the group were in fact very negative. "If someone did not like *Kmara*," one activist said, "we could not make him or her like us from these actions, and we do not remember anyone joining us because of more positive actions."[147] Even inside *Kmara's* ranks, the opinions on the nature of the tactics to be undertaken were divided. As one campaign founder revealed, "[I] was ashamed of what *Kmara* was doing because it was extremely non-intellectual." At the same time, however, she

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[145] Interview, former GYLA member and *Kmara* activist, 25 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[146] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 19 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[147] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 19 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

admitted that only in this way could they convince people to express their anger at the current situation.[148] As a result, this shared conviction that something controversial had to be done to attract or even "shake" a disengaged society bounded *Kmara* members together, and helped them to put aside their individual preferences.

3.3.2. *Pora*

For the first time, both *Poras* could test their election-monitoring techniques during the elections in Mukachevo, where the authorities used different types of provocation to reverse the final result (see Chapter 4, Section 3.1.1.). As one *Pora* member summed up, the "Mukachevo campaign was the Orange Revolution in microcosm", which meant that almost all the actions that took place in April 2004 (e.g. election monitoring by *Pora* members and rigging the votes by the authorities) were repeated on a larger scale during the October elections.[149] By entering the local election campaign with the goal of mobilizing the voters and preventing electoral fraud, *Pora* took a firm position towards its main political contenders in the 2004 presidential election. While the group's activity coincided with the objectives of one side of the competing parties – the Our Ukraine bloc, which tried to reveal the true result of the vote – it also clearly disturbed the plans of the second main competitor, the United Social Democrats, who wanted to falsify the vote. Yet, although in Mukachevo the interests of both *Pora* and Our Ukraine overlapped for the first time, the group did not support the opposition directly but rather shared the same views on the final election result. "Yellow" *Pora*, in particular, was at that time focused more on promoting itself, as the scandal around the elections was an ideal moment to attract wide media attention to the newly formed civic movements. In front of Ukrainian and international television cameras, it made the news

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[148] Interview, former GYLA member and *Kmara* activist, 25 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[149] Interview, former Yellow *Pora* activist, 5 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

quickly and successfully and thereby demonstrated that the youth was able to carry out an organized protest to defend free and fair elections (Solontay 2005).

Starting from the summer of 2004, *Pora* began in earnest to counterbalance Yanukovych's near-monopoly of large billboard advertisements and the negative information about Yushchenko on the main television channels. Through the activist network, election campaign literature was disseminated: election-related newspapers and special expanded editions of independent opposition papers, some of which printed millions of copies.[150] The presence at tens of thousands of polling stations of young campaigners – who had been trained to act as election observers – was crucial for monitoring the legality of the voting procedure, informing the public about their observations, and disseminating the parallel voting results. Since the link between NGOs and society was rather weak, as described in Chapter 4, only through the activists' penetration of the community at grassroots level could the information reach a greater number of Ukrainian voters.[151] In addition, the presence of the many young election observers undermined to the regime's allegations that the position of the international monitors and their organizations was biased (meaning pro-Yushchenko).

Similar to the strategy applied by *Kmara*, *Pora's* actions were twofold: the first type of action can be characterized as having negative tone, the second as having a positive tone. As described in Section 3.1.2, through actions such as "Kuchmism is…", "The faces of Kuchmism", or "Ten years of Kuchmism",, youth activists from Black *Pora* singled out the Kuchma regime by exposing its most negative aspects. For example, the "Kuchmism is…" initiative took place in twenty regional centres and was a second explanatory step to the "What is Kuchmism" action, which detailed the key aspects of Kuchmism (e.g. "Kuchmism is despair", "Kuchmism is corruption", etc.). According to the activists' message, the decoding

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[150] Interview, former Yellow *Pora* activist, 22 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[151] Nevertheless, the visibility and effectiveness of youth activism in the eastern regions of Ukraine was considerably weaker than in other parts of the country.

explanations of the "Kuchmism concept" were corruption, crime, despair, unemployment, and poverty (Marusov 2006: 60). The apogee of this action took place during a weeklong event, "10 years of Kuchmism", which was carried out throughout the country in June 2004, and included a ceremonial presentation in which the activists presented a copy of the Ukrainian constitution to government officials in order to remind them of their duty to the nation (Diuk 2006: 78). Thus, it could be said that by focusing on the deficiencies of current system and the intense anti-Kuchma campaigning Black *Pora* chose to convey a negative message to the Ukrainian public.

At the same time, within the framework of six information series of the campaign ("Time to stand up", "Time to think", "Time to vote", "Time to win", "Time to understand – they lie", and "Vote or you'll lose"), Yellow *Pora* applied "positive" protest strategies. In doing so, the group published and distributed around 40 million copies of different types of print media (newspapers, stickers, leaflets, brochures, posters, etc.) on a national level, and other media specific for the regional-local levels were also prepared. In addition, the monitoring of voter lists carried out by activists across Ukraine and on the basis of a unified methodology became an important instrument of the campaign (Kaskiv, Chupryna and Zolotariov 2007). Some slogans and tactics applied by the movement drew from the "OK '98" in Slovakia. These included the "I vote therefore I am" motto, which became one of the main messages of the mobilization phase in Ukraine, as well as the involvement of various celebrities, an approach that proved successful in Slovakia. Apart from *Pora*, the *Znayu* initiative also carried out some activities that were analogous to the "OK '98" campaign (Marusov 2006: 52).

The focus on PR elements in Yellow *Pora's* campaign and the abundant repertoire of the direct actions staged daily by Black *Pora* appeared to be a perfect combination for the

youth activists to rouse their peers from political apathy and to encourage them to resist unwanted policies, including those on the local level. The escalation of the events of the student protest in Sumy is a good case in point. It began as a small-scale protest by students, their parents, and the faculty against Kuchma's order to amalgamate the three local universities, and against the appointment of the President's nominee as the university principal. The peaceful protest followed this decision, which was widely understood as a step towards greater control over the student vote in the hotly contested region. After the picket, a group of students began a long-term action, having set up a tent camp in a park in Sumy city, but local police swarmed the tents, and several students were detained. The protest reached its peak as around 50 students began to march towards Kiev in protest of the police action against the demonstrators in the camp. The students were arrested for "the violation of public safety" together with a journalist and a member of parliamentary opposition who were also present during the incident (Korrespondent.net, 6 August 2004). To support the detained students, both a committee of mothers and a civic committee to support students and lecturers were organized, both of whom picketed the regional state administration office (Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group 2004).

The Sumy incident marked the beginning of the systematic violation of students' political rights aimed at limiting their political involvement (Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group 2004). However, unlike in Georgia, where the majority of students refrained from supporting *Kmara*-led actions against university problems, in Ukraine state interference in campus-related issues had a widespread impact and met with a firm response from the student community. For example, the Sumy developments caused a series of student strikes entitled "Student Solidarity", which were organized to support the student protests (Diuk 2006: 78). A similar action took place in Poltava, where together with other youth campaigns,

Pora took part in student rallies against the pressure exerted by the university administration upon students for their political activity. Student movements also occurred in other cities (e.g. Odessa, Kiev, Chernihiv, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Luhansk) following the university authorities' statements forbidding students to take part in opposition actions, on threat of expulsion (Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group 2004). The fact that Kuchma eventually repealed his decision to integrate the Sumy universities was seen as a significant victory not only for the students but also for the opposition, because the highly corrupt and vertical power structure had been successfully challenged.

Not surprisingly, given the context of these events, the dissatisfaction with the discredited regime who meddled in campus life translated into firm opposition towards Kuchma's appointee, Viktor Yanukovych. His ties to the President and corrupt oligarchs from the Donetsk clan proved to be unacceptable for the majority of the student community. The younger generation perceived Yanukovych not only as incompetent, uneducated, and as having poor manners, but also as a former criminal whose victory would lead to the consolidation of an oligarchic autocracy.[152] At the same time, "it was a big plus for [*Pora*]", one activist said, "that Mr. Yanukovych was such an 'outstanding' candidate", because his biography appeared to be very inspiring.[153] Revelations about the conviction and imprisonment of Yanukovych in his youth as well as the mistakes he made during the presidential campaign provoked an avalanche of jokes and harsh comments publicized by the students on the Internet. For instance, the video of his dramatic fall after being hit by an egg became legendary and inspired the interactive game "The Boorish Egg", in which players fought for democracy by launching virtual eggs against Yanukovych's henchman (Kyj 2006: 76). The "Travelling Egg" performance was also staged near the Council of Ministers

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[152] Apparently, a CV submitted by Yanukovych to the CEC had grammatical and spelling mistakes, and during the campaign, he called his opponents *kozly* (bastards).
[153] Interview, former Black *Pora* activist, 29 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

building, where Yanukovych had his offices, and aimed at revealing the techniques of manipulation used by the Prime Minster during the "egg attack".

This kind of hard-line anti-Yanukovych campaign engendered a "bad" Kuchma's elect versus "good" opposition leader portrayal of competing political forces. Initially, however, it was the negative image attributed to the ruling elite representatives that mobilized young people rather than genuine support for Yushchenko, even though he was often perceived as the representative of the intelligentsia.[154] Nevertheless, Yushchenko's poisoning before the elections fostered the radicalization of public opinion and somewhat romanticized the image of Our Ukraine's leader among young demonstrators. From being perceived as an indecisive and technocratic leader with little belief in his own chances to win (Olszański 2005), he turned into a hero of the Orange Revolution and became the unquestionable choice in the eyes of the youth. Yushchenko's electoral slogans, which promised to "overthrow the criminal regime", and, as such, the revolutionary changes that would took place after his election gained a new meaning in a radicalised context and were easily "inhaled" by the disgruntled youth. The support for his candidature was evident during a student gathering in Kiev where tens of thousands of students from across Ukraine came to demonstrate their preferences during a pro-Yushchenko rally in October 2004. They met with Our Ukraine representatives (including Yushchenko) and cast a mock "no-confidence vote" in Yanukovych's cabinet (*RFE/RL*, 20 October 2004). According to the participants, it was the largest meeting of students in Ukraine's recent history, and the columns of students that arrived from four sides of the city were meant to symbolize national support for the opposition flowing from all parts of the country.[155]

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[154] Interview, former Black *Pora* activist, 29 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[155] Interview, former Students' Wave activist, 18 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

3.4. The regimes' response

3.4.1. *Kmara*

The regime did not take *Kmara's* actions seriously in the beginning. Over time, however, the movement's bold methods, in terms of the size of its campaign and Rustavi-2's around-the-clock coverage of its disruptive tactics, made the group appear powerful in the eyes of government. This in turn provoked the authorities' counteractions, usually in the form of anti-*Kmara* propaganda and limited repression. For example, at one press conference prior to elections, a spokeswoman for the pro-Shevardnadze bloc, "For New Georgia", Irina Sarishvili-Chanturia declared that the "Russian special services were planning a large-scale, tried and tested operation under the name *Kmara*" (*Eurasianet*, 10 June 2003). In another case, during the Fourth Congress of the youth branch of the Socialist (pro-government) Party, *Kmara* was accused of being governed by leaders of the National Movement and United Democrats. Then once again, in summer 2003, Vice-Speaker of Parliament and leader of the pro-government alliance Vakhtang Rcheulishvili claimed that "it was not a secret that [*Kmara*] was financed by foreign grants and that the opposition parties use them to destabilize the situation in the country" (*Civil Georgia*, 18 June 2003). Some other negative statements about *Kmara* played on traditional Georgian conservatism, saying the students popularized "homosexuality" and together with the opposition they wanted to destroy the Eastern Orthodox foundation of the Georgian state (Katz 2006).

The government also pursued a strategy of low-level repression and provocation. The Interior Minister, Koba Narchemashvili, ordered a few *Kmara* members to be detained on charges of "hooliganism", "demoralization of the police", and "discrediting the government". Furthermore, during a protest in the town of Sagarejo, police officers sprayed activists with the same paint that the youths had used on the local police station's walls (*Civil Georgia,* 18

June 2003). On another occasion, an agent provocateur acting as a *Kmara* member tried to harm the group's reputation by planting a gun in its office.[156] Beatings by the police were also common, though they more often occurred in the regions, as in Tbilisi the police seemed to be more aware that the government was not playing fair.[157] In general, however, apart from one or two other serious situations, there were no casualties during those confrontations. All charges were eventually dropped, or small fines were imposed, and the young detainees were released shortly after being arrested.

Yet, had the authorities not responded to youth actions in a repressive way, the campaign could have been denied the broad media coverage and attention from the general public. To the activists' advantage, even the government's relatively mild anti-movement measures were sufficient to contribute to the *Kmara* campaigners' popularity. Thanks to the favourable coverage provided by Rustavi-2, almost all of the regime's anti-movement efforts were emphasized and publicized as oppressive acts which took place against young and generally harmless people. Even the government finally understood that by confronting *Kmara* members they were simply adding to the movement's image as regime-fighting heroes, and over time fewer activists were arrested.[158]

3.4.2. *Pora*

Whilst the civic protests that led to the Rose Revolution caught the Georgian regime by surprise, the Ukrainian elections provoked the incumbent regime to take a series of preventative action against activists. The long list of repressions effected by the authorities against *Pora's* campaign included beatings and the fabrication of criminal cases, as well as provoking violent counterattacks, creating an unfavourable public image in the state-controlled media, searching activists' apartments, denying the right to assemble from the

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[156] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 23 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[157] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 18 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[158] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 18 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

municipal authorities, restricting the movement's facilities, and interrogations of activists. Altogether, *Pora* (both the "Black" and "Yellow" branches) recorded more than 350 arrests of its activists (from April 2004 to October 2004), 15 students expelled from the universities, and about 30 cases of physical violence against its members (Pora 2005: 15). The overall aim of this persecution was to intimidate the most aware and active part of the electorate and to stop the development of student opposition movements before the 2004 presidential elections.[159]

Unlike in Georgia, where the *Kmara* movement was unable to find support in academia, in Ukraine the student community became the main part of society that joined the ranks of the oppositional groupings, and thus a favourite target for the authorities on national, regional, and local levels. Accordingly, a significant amount of pressure was also put on the universities' administrations to reprimand and repress those students who were actively involved in election-related campaigns, particularly in *Pora* and other civic organizations, such as the Student Wave and Student Brotherhood in Lviv. Whereas various forms of coercion were used on students, including threats of expulsion from the university, not all deans and rectors wished to interfere with their students' political activity. Strike committees were allowed in some universities, and some institutes of higher education plotted mass student protests in the event of electoral fraud. The leading example was the elite Kyiv Mohyla Academy, which was considered to be a hotbed of activists, and was where Yushchenko's press centre was located.[160] Alarmed that many of the Academy's students comprised *Pora*'s avant-garde, the security service personnel tried to inspect the university buildings under a dubious pretext: that illegal works were supposedly being carried out on the

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[159]Interview, former Black *Pora* activist, 26 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[160] The Kyiv Mohyla Academy was considered the only university in Kiev where the academy authorities did not repress students for their political views (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, 17 October 2005).

campus.[161] In response to this incident, the vice-Rector issued a strong statement describing the unwarranted search as an evident "political provocation against the university". He also said that the Kyiv Mohyla Academy would not persecute its own students (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, 17 October 2005).

The most severe wave of repressive measures used against *Pora* activists began in the weeks preceding the first round of elections, including the accusations of terrorism that were made against several members of the group. This followed a series of investigations of *Pora* for the alleged possession of explosive materials. For example, special police in riot gear, the *Berkut*, raided the Yellow *Pora* office in Kiev, claiming that they had received information about a bomb hidden in the office (Pora 2005: 15). Interestingly, no explosive device was found during the initial examination, but a grenade, electric detonators, and other homemade explosives were discovered in the basement of the premises after a second search. Although five *Pora* activists were arrested on the grounds of "supporting terrorism" and "anti-state activities", the operation was so obviously a provocation and incompetent that the security service officers backed off immediately after the incident, and informed NGO leaders that the executive office had ordered the operation to be carried out (Kuzio 2006b: 57). Moreover, the consequences of these provocations actually turned out to have the opposite effect on the regime, contrary to what it expected. After the Mukachevo elections and the poisoning of Viktor Yushchenko, the wave of repression against the young activists gave additional impetus towards anti-regime mobilization.[162] As a *Pora* member explained,

> Right after this [the planting of the bomb], the *Pora's* membership doubled. And we [*Pora*] played to this; we created the atmosphere of mystery, secrecy. It did not mean a restricted access to join [*Pora*] or something – it was just the aura. Young people liked it. […] They wanted to become a part of some

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[161] Once informed that parliamentarians from the Our Ukraine party were on their way, the police left the building immediately.
[162] Interview, former Black *Pora* activist, 26 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine

mysterious secret movement, which fought with the regime. For them, it was a kind of heroic and romantic act![163]

As a result, instead of radicalizing *Pora* and provoking a violent response from them – which was the regime's intention – the regime's counteractions contributed to its strength and growing popularity, particularly among young people.

3.5.   The post-election crisis

3.5.1. *Kmara*

The post-election survey measuring voters' trust showed that almost no one in Georgia believed that the election process and results were fair.[164] Yet, despite a general agreement that electoral fraud had been committed, different views on the current situation developed among the Georgian electorate, which can be divided into four major views, which were also reflected in the Georgian press. One group concerned those people who feared that the government would resort to violence and that hostility would erupt as it did in 1989 or the early 1990s. The second group, many of whom were younger Georgians, viewed Saakashvili as a mythical hero who would rescue Georgia from all the misery it experienced. The third perspective was that the protests were prepared very carefully in order to realize someone's ambitions for power. Finally, the last group's opinion was to wait until Shevardnadze's term in office expired (which would have been the following year, 2004), and then to replace him with someone better. Interestingly, the majority of the discussions did not touch upon an alternative solution for dealing with the fraudulent elections (Katz 2006: 152). The only non-

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[163] Interview, former Yellow and Black *Pora* activist, 31 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[164] The project, supported by the Open Society Georgia Foundation, polled 3,000 respondents between 9 and 11 November 2003. According to the poll results, 84% of the respondents from three of Georgia's largest cities – Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Rustavi – agreed that the results of the elections were either partially or completely faked. Another 11.5% believed they were just slightly falsified, and only 4% thought the elections were fair (the *Messenger*, 18 November 2003).

political group that openly expressed the idea of what the next step should be following the fraudulent election was *Kmara*.

Immediately after the elections, *Kmara* called for the annulment of the results. After several days of protest, however, the group altered its main demand, and its goal was no longer to voice opposition to a fraudulent vote. The modified theme of protest was now the immediate resignation of the Georgian president. Whereas the demand for new elections seemed logical to many people, the ousting of Shevardnadze was a riskier request and was viewed with scepticism by much of the population (Khutsishvili in *Georgian Times*, 13 November 2003). *Kmara's* attempts to mobilize people did not translate into increased support from the youth either. Due to its distance from the election-related turmoil, the student community at Tbilisi State University was termed a "sleeping lion", and the only official youth statement came from Georgian students studying abroad.[165] In an open letter to CEC Chairwoman Nana Devdariani they called for the annulment of the election results in the regions where support for one political party reached 90%. The students who signed the petition, however, preferred to stay impartial, and distanced themselves from *Kmara*'s extreme position. Claiming neutrality, unlike the *Kmara* participants, they expressed a belief that "the November 2nd elections could and still can make a noticeable contribution in bringing the Georgian political reality to the demands of the time" (The *Messenger*, 7 November 2003).

Indeed, not many students were seen among protest crowds, particularly during the first days of the demonstrations. Their absence did not go unnoticed, and some people perceived it as a factor which discouraged those still unconvinced from taking to the streets. Unlike in the late 1980s, when students led the national mass movement, in the 2003 events

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[165] TSU's Dean of the European Languages and Literature department, Temur Kobakhidze, used the phrase "sleeping lion" when addressing the issue of the TSU students' involvement in the November 2003 events (the *Messenger*, 7 November 2003).

pensioners were on the front lines of the demonstrations.[166] Knowing their low popularity within the university circles, *Kmara* decided to use some tricks in order to show that the young people would unite with the other demonstrators. They took shifts, standing in front of Parliament so that the presence of the *Kmara* youth would be continuously reported by the media. They organized marches with different universities' names written on banners (not under the *Kmara* name) and walked down from the campus to join the opposition protests and make it livelier. In reality, the same group of people entered the demonstration each time, but under a different institutional name, although this could hardly be detected from the television footage. Indeed, the intended perception of student support would not have been achieved were it not for help from the media. The television station Rustavi-2 was particularly helpful in this regard, broadcasting most of the group's actions during the protests.[167]

One of the most important lessons *Kmara* learnt from the Serbian experience was the need to undermine the regime's main "pillars of support" – the police, the army, or general prosecutors – in order to win the battle with the system. One way *Kmara* did this was by addressing the army and the police as a force separate from Shevardnadze's circles. Thus, during long hours of protest when facing the police cordons, young activists drew a clear division regarding who was the main target of their actions by repeating that they opposed only Shevardnadze and his closest allies. *Kmara* appealed to the law enforcement forces, calling them inseparable parts of society who shared the same problems and "miserable life" as other ordinary Georgians. The only solution to this situation, as *Kmara* continued its convincing efforts, was to change the regime, which eventually would have led to a better

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[166] Interview, former GYLA member and *Kmara* activist, 25 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[167] Rustavi 2 also showed *Kmara's* post-electoral advert which vilified members of the Central Electoral Commission for falsifying the parliamentary elections. However, the ad was dropped after the channel was fined (Broers 2005: 341).

quality of life for everyone.[168] To symbolize *Kmara's* peaceful intentions, food and flowers were given to police officers who stood for long hours in front of the government buildings to protect them from the gathering crowd.

Eventually, due to Shevardnadze's reluctance to approve the process of holding new elections, a growing number of people started to sympathize with *Kmara's* radical stance. Moreover, the non-violent rigour exerted by the group's members definitely helped to create a more favourable image of the campaign. By refraining from violence, *Kmara* not only defeated the government's argument that it tried to incite a civil conflict but also gained further sympathy when its defenceless activists were detained or beaten up by the police. For instance, by forming human "buffer zones" of activists, the group separated the anti-Shevardnadze protesters from Abashidze's supporters who were bussed to Tbilisi to support the cornered president.[169] It is important to stress, however, that as decisive as the activists' discipline was the fact that the police was paid poorly and irregularly for many years before the November event, which probably decreased their loyalty towards Shevardnadze among the law enforcement agents. Finally, the general reluctance or unwillingness of the security forces to use force against their compatriots should also be taken into consideration as an important factor of the non-violent settlement of the conflict.[170] However, that the protesting crowd remained peaceful and no casualties were reported (except for a few pro-government deputies who were beaten) was indeed miraculous, and can be partially attributed to *Kmara's* principles. Hence, despite controversy regarding some of *Kmara's* provocative tactics, by late November 2003 the group became the main societal force promoting change in the Georgian

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[168] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[169] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 28 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[170] Interview, member of the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN), 26 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

political sphere, and the necessity for such change was understood by the majority of the population.

However, *Kmara's* only demand was that Shevardnadze should be removed from power, and once Shevardnadze resigned, the issue of "cleaning" the corruption from the education system was again raised by the activists. Three days after Saakashvili's supporters broke into Parliament, *Kmara*, together with other students, staged a protest at Tbilisi State University (TSU), demanding the Rector's resignation. The group expressed its concerns that a corrupt administration would continue to bring up new generations of corrupted young people, and requested that anyone on the university's academic staff who was involved in bribery should be exposed, regardless of their position. Some other demands were also presented, including the need for sweeping reforms and changes to the obsolete curriculum. According to *Kmara*, the low employment rate of TSU graduates was partially a consequence of the unqualified or unprepared university staff, which was said to be dominated by "people who have been preaching Communism for years" and who then switched to teaching about democracy after the break-up of the USSR, as one protester complained (*Georgian Times*, 12 December 2003). Most of the lecturers, however, disagreed with the ideas put forward by the group, even though it was generally known that TSU lagged behind other institutes due to its lower standards and non-transparent policies.

In addition, the students remained divided over the tactics and the solution proposed by *Kmara*. Whereas some non-*Kmara* students agreed that corruption was widespread and needed to be tackled, in their opinion the methods employed by *Kmara* were unacceptable and despotic.[171] Instead, they advocated more "civil ways" of solving the problems within the education system. The protest gained momentum when, under increasing pressure, the Rector

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[171] For example, *Kmara* members once entered the Rector's office, threatening to nail his office door shut if he refused to quit.

decided to leave, and a group of non-*Kmara* students decided to call for his return. Accordingly, the "Committee for Saving the University" created by TSU students addressed the de facto government, demanding that the Rector be allowed to return and that the talks with opposition leaders should begin. After the intervention of interim president Burjanadze and National Movement leader, Saakashvili, during which both politicians stressed the TSU's autonomy regarding resignations, the University Scientific Council rejected the Rector's resignation. Taking it as a failure, the group of student activists belonging to the *Kmara* campaign decided to stop their activity until the presidential elections scheduled for 2004 (*Georgian Times*, 28 November 2003).

3.5.2. *Pora*

Given the unsatisfactory conduct of the previous elections (see Table 4), as well as the regime's intense efforts to rig the vote (see Chapter 3), the belief that the 2004 elections could not be democratic was widespread among the youth group's participants. This overlapped with the prevailing views shared by Ukrainians, as only 12 percent of the population surveyed said that no fraud would take place during the vote.[172] Accordingly, 19 percent of the people were confident that everything would be falsified, and 24 percent agreed that there would be major irregularities that would alter the results. The Committee of Voters (CVU) distributed monthly reports on the election-monitoring process which regularly confirmed these concerns. Thus, although Yushchenko was allowed to win on October 31, the minimal difference between the two main contenders in the final results was understood by *Pora* members to be a warning that more serious violations would take place during the second round in order to grant Yanukovych a certain victory.

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[172] This survey was carried out by the Democratic Initiatives and SOCIS Centre between 19 and 26 August 2004, and included 2,000 respondents representing all regions of Ukraine. The standard error did not exceed 2.2% (Democratic Initiatives Foundation, http://dif.org.ua/ua/archive).

In contrast to Yushchenko and his Our Ukraine bloc, which showed a rather subdued reaction to the results of the vote, *Pora* issued a statement condemning the falsification and staged a rally in central Kiev, marking the beginning of a non-violent student resistance movement against electoral manipulations. Another event called the "Great laundry", which took place in front of the CEC, was a performance during which activists were casting ballots into a washing machine symbolizing a ballot box in which the people's real choice was "laundered" (Pora 2005: 23). Several other street protests and university strikes followed, including a rally against the stolen elections and a picket against the persecution by the militia, which was staged in front of the local militia headquarters.

Yushchenko and his staff, on the other hand, seemed to have low expectations regarding the people's response to their call for protest. Whilst on one hand they expressed a conviction that the victory of the opposition leader would be guaranteed had the vote been fair, at the same time, they dismissed such a scenario by maintaining that the elections would undoubtedly be falsified (Olszański 2005). Such an approach met with strong criticism from many youth activists, who perceived it as too passive and conciliatory vis-à-vis the determination of the regime to win the presidential bid. Yet, despite the different views on how to deal with the fraud, *Pora* representatives and officials from Yushchenko's headquarters decided to coordinate their activities and to work together towards the mobilization of disgruntled voters. According to the action plan agreed on before the second round of the elections, *Pora's* main tasks were to set up and manage the tent camp in Kiev's central square, the Maidan, which would serve as the information centre for the opposition's parallel vote tabulation (Diuk 2006: 80). By that time, the first tents had already been pitched near the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, and similar tent camps appeared in a few other cities where

they served as centres of protest and for the recruitment of new activists (Kaskiv, Chupryna and Bezverkha 2005: 9).[173]

The second round of elections began as Black *Pora* made the news when trying to block the buses filled with workers from Western Ukraine, who were forced to vote for Viktor Yanukovych.[174] They were supposed to be taken to another province, where their vote would be controlled by their supervisors and filmed on camera in order to ensure their obedience. They were also threatened that they would lose their jobs if they voted for Yushchenko. Due to the media presence, however, the police that came to intervene withdrew immediately, without attempting to stop the protest. After the incident, the footage showing the *Pora* activists lying down under the bus-wheels with the slogan "The bus is not an administrative resource" made the headlines around the world as proof that the electoral process was being manipulated.[175]

Pora was also the first to enter the streets and shout mobilizing slogans after the second round of elections. Thousands of Yushchenko supporters responded to their call and filled up the central square to protest against electoral violations. Despite the authorities' hopes that low temperatures and sleet would stop the demonstrators, the tent camp in the Maidan quickly grew to more than 2,000 tents with over 7,000 inhabitants, thus becoming the symbol of Ukraine's Orange Revolution (Pora 2005: 30). Although not all of the demonstrators were *Pora* affiliates, young *Pora* activists, who were ready to stay out regardless of the inclement weather, constituted the nucleus of the protest movement. The activists' role included passing out leaflets and supplying protesters with orange ribbons and flags – the official colour of Yushchenko's campaign.

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[173] Interestingly, the tents that were pitched in Donetsk by seven *Pora* activists lasted for about twenty minutes. Before the activists were arrested by the police, a group of thugs tore the tents and *Pora* flags apart.
[174] Most of them worked for a state oil and gas company, Naftogas Ukraina.
[175] Interview, former Black and Yellow *Pora* activist, 24 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

What was particularly striking about the 2004 mobilization was the high level of organization and self-discipline among the demonstrators outside and within the tent camp. A campaign coordination centre was established to watch over the thousands of people living in the tent camp whose time had to be somehow organised.[176] The centre's work, and that of many other *Pora* activists, included maintaining order and safety, directing the blockades of administrative buildings, and running a media hub for direct contact with the press. This clearly implies that the protest organisers drew serious conclusions from the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign, when the provocations and lack of preparation became the major factors which contributed to the failure of the movement in 2000-2001. Thus, whilst "Ukraine without Kuchma" came as a total surprise, "because it just happened and nothing could be done", the Orange Revolution was thoroughly prepared and well coordinated. The general view shared by the activist leaders throughout 2004 was that "there is no such thing as improvisation during the revolution", especially when it is known when it is going to happen.[177]

From the activists' perspective, the whole process was greatly facilitated by good communication and trust among the people, which was crucial for successful teamwork. Goodwill and support also came from other spheres of society, contradicting the pre-revolution surveys showing how passive Ukrainians are (van Zon 2005: 12). Whilst small and medium-sized businesses – the core group of Yushchenko's support base (see Chapter 3) – supplied tents, mattresses, warm clothing, transport, and bio-toilets, Kiev residents provided free accommodation and food. Thousands of similar acts of individual kindness helped to maintain the protest and kept the protesters going (Wilson 2005a: 126). Signs of moral support for the protesters also came from the various artistic and academic circles. For

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[176] Interview, UNA-UNSO activist, 14 June, 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[177] Interview, former Yellow *Pora* activist, 12 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

example, support came from the veterans of the 1960s dissident movement, the Association of Ukrainian Writers, and from popular Ukrainian singers.[178] In neighbouring countries, too, students held demonstrations in a gesture of solidarity with their Ukrainian peers.[179]

With hundreds of thousands of people standing up in protest against the fraudulent elections, real political change seemed to be closer than ever. Encouraged by the massive amount of support, *Pora* expressed its dissatisfaction with the prolonged negotiations between Viktor Yushchenko and the government's team. When Yushchenko talked of compromise, legal decisions and voting procedures, *Pora* activists began to talk of a more radical game (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, 3 December 2004). The most extreme activists' voices called for "clearing Kiev from the Kuchmism people" and a total "renewal of the elite".[180] Yet, the opinion within the group was not unanimous, and the older campaigners expressed more sympathy for the voters in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine and their support for Viktor Yanukovich. Amidst discussion on diverse concepts of how to solve the political crisis, the decision of the Supreme Court invalidating the second round and ordering a third one eased tensions among *Pora* members.

According to various reports, at the peak of the protest the opposition campaign led by *Pora* activists accumulated up to a million people in Kiev's main square to express their discontent with the electoral fraud. Faced with such numbers, few members of the Central Election Commission were able to summon enough courage to certify the final count. The Supreme Court annulled the original results and scheduled a second run-off election in which the opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, won. His victory marked the end of the civic campaign that was officially announced during a united congress held by Black and Yellow

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[178] Including the winner of the Eurovision Song Contest, Ruslana, and the popular rock group, Okean Elzy.
[179] For instance, in the centre of Minsk, the opposition youth organization *Zubr* held a rally in support of Viktor Yushchenko.
[180] Interview, former Yellow and Black *Pora* activist, 23 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

Pora on 28-29 January. The ceremony was attended by some high-profile guests, including Secretary of State, Oleksandr Zinchenko, who read Yushchenko's letter expressing his gratitude and congratulatory remarks for *Pora's* overall efforts. A congratulatory speech was also delivered by the Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine Andrew Robinson, the President of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, Viacheslav Briukhovetsky, and the Deputy of Verkhovna Rada (a faction of Socialist Party of Ukraine), Yuriy Lutsenko (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, 31 January 2005).

After the success of the Orange Revolution, *Pora's* split into two branches continued. Yellow *Pora* leader Vladislav Kaskiv's stated intention of transforming *Pora* into a political party led to further division. Despite a reluctance of both the Yellow and Black *Pora* members, *Pora* was registered as a party; however, only a few genuine activists remained within its political ranks.[181] Those who did not agree with transforming *Pora* into a political faction decided to continue their efforts in "de-Kuchmization" (that is, the lustration policies intended to erase the legacy of the former President Leonid Kuchma) as a pro-democracy watchdog, the All-Ukrainian Civic Organization *Pora*. The new NGO attracted mainly Black *Pora* members who claimed that they did not want to renounce the campaign's founding ideals for political benefits. Later, the group was renamed *Opora* (Foundation), a civic network that currently aims to support civic activity at a grassroots level.

4.   Conclusions

When looking at the aftermath of the events that took place in Georgia in 2003 and in Ukraine in 2004, it seems that the scenario which unfolded was predictable. The regime's legitimacy was drastically declining, the opposition was becoming stronger, the public's dissatisfaction with the authorities was increasing, and the attitude of the West towards

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[181] In the 2006 parliamentary elections, *Pora*, in an alliance with the Party Reform and Order, received 1.47 % of the vote.

supposedly the "pro-democratic" Georgian and Ukrainian leadership was beginning to be met with growing scepticism. However, a deeper look at the political context of the events during those two years in each country reveals that the outburst of the so-called Rose and Orange Revolutions was not necessarily a foregone conclusion. Whereas until the final days of the political crisis neither side could be sure of the way in which the crisis would develop, what appeared to be the most uncertain issue throughout the electoral process was the general public's support for more dynamic forms of civic protest during a predictable case of electoral fraud. Although the drama of crisis developed sometimes in random directions, it is generally acknowledged that were it not for the people's support it would not have been possible to face the regime and prevent the continuation of its undemocratic structures.

Three main actors had the ability to foster people's opinion and mobilize citizens against the regime's attempts to falsify inconvenient voting results. However, none of them seemed to be sufficient to sustain a wave of protest for several days. Firstly, through a deepening engagement in criminal practice the state authorities themselves risked triggering mass resistance to their undemocratic governance. Yet, as presented in Chapter 4, such situations had already taken place, and the semi-authoritarian leadership appeared to be more or less unaffected by the spontaneous outbursts of public pressure. Whilst some political figures were sometimes sacrificed to satisfy the protestors' demands at such times, the leaders themselves quickly recovered from their political skirmish and continued their rule without major changes. Secondly, the political opposition had for the first time in a decade a real chance to win considerable support, particularly of the younger generation, and to be victorious in an electoral bid. Two of the main reasons for this shift were the pro-EU, reform-oriented approach and the different set of values espoused by the opposition, which strongly contrasted with the corrupt and clan-based system of policy-making. However, the style of

campaigning practiced by some opposition leaders as well as their demands were often perceived as too radical (as in the case of Saakashvilli) or at times too passive (as in the case of Yushchenko) for the electorate. Moreover, it was simply impossible for the opposition to deliver their message to the general public because of the state-imposed media blockage, and as such, to face their main contenders within a fair competition (as in Ukraine's case). Finally, it also appeared unlikely that NGOs could play a direct role in mobilizing the masses for their cause. In most of the cases, they were simply too distanced from the grassroots community to make a successful call for civic mobilization. Moreover, the NGOs, by dint of their links to political circles and Western financial donors, were unable to portray an image of themselves as trustworthy third-sector actors. Instead, they were often perceived as too close to one side in the conflict, and thus not able to take an objective stance in the midst of the pre-electoral propaganda.

Given the above-mentioned limitations, most Georgians and Ukrainians did not feel that they could have a decisive impact on the fate of their own country prior to the elections. However, as it is argued in this study, due to activity of *Kmara* and *Pora* and campaign tactics that they applied, people in Georgia and Ukraine began to change their assessment of the opportunities for a successful protest, which opened up with the electoral process. Here both of the youth campaigns' influence was significant in several ways. The foremost outcome of both groups' activity was that the regime's image of omnipotence was fundamentally shaken. Through the regular exposure and mockery of the regime's deficiencies, *Kmara* and *Pora* activists constantly drew people's attention to the negative aspects of the governments. In this way, not only did they help to radicalize moods among large parts of society, but they also made it easier for opposition parties to concentrate on campaigning and communicating their own messages to voters (Mitchell 2009: 54). Accordingly, through regional activist networks,

they were able to reach even the most remote areas in the country, publicizing issues that concerned everyone and uniting people under a common cause. Acting as an alternative channel of communication with voters, *Pora's* activity was particularly important for spreading information other than that provided by the State or private pro-Kuchma sources. Therefore, notwithstanding the numbers of activists that have been claimed, both groups were unique because they emerged as a visible and boisterous element of the opposition's campaign, which in a way spurred people to take a firm position in the ensuing election.

At the same time, the radical *Pora* and *Kmara* stance limited space for unsatisfactory compromise with the regime and contributed to irritating the regime, irritation which later transformed into panic on the part of the regime. Whilst the methods applied by *Kmara* may seem rather soft to a Western observer, local bystanders and the movement's participants usually described them as quite radical, and certainly as something innovative on Georgia's landscape of civil protest. In Ukraine, on the other hand, the presence of non-violent student activism was not perceived as so surprising and extreme as it was in Georgia. In addition, since the "Ukraine without Kuchma" and "For Truth" campaigns did not achieve their goals and were dispersed by the state control agents, almost no one really believed that youth would be able to organise itself into a viable oppositional force. Yet, the "radical" number of dissatisfied young people empowered by an example of a "revolutionary" regime change in neighbouring Georgia and beforehand in Serbia has worked in favour of *Pora's* rebellious image. Eventually, by staging numerous anti-regime actions both groups not only shaped the State's response, which contributed to their own popularity, but also created an image of a much stronger support mechanism for the opposition than it actually was. This convinced the incumbents that they needed to resort to fraud in order to win, and provoked their ostentatious manipulations on a large scale, which was simply unacceptable, even for those who did not

support the opposition leaders. Had the authorities not resorted to such embarrassing tactics, there is reason to believe that they would have had a good chance to win or at least to stay in power for another few years.

The experiences of Kmara and Pora also highlight the particular challenges that youth face during any process of organization. Because of a lack of resources, the organizers were especially dependant upon aid from NGOs to organize and then sustain a viable system for the social movements (Simecka 2009). According to Nadia Diuk from the National Endowment for Democracy, it remains questionable whether the political campaigning would have brought about the Orange Revolution without the years of international support for Ukraine's nascent civil society (2006: 82). It is worth mentioning, however, that this influence was possible only when transmitted through the younger generation, which had not been in a position of authority during or – in most cases – after the Soviet era. The key element to this mutual empowerment was undoubtedly the young people's willingness to leave behind the archaic Soviet past and to become part of the modern Western world. Moreover, the accession to the EU of eight former members of the eastern bloc was a clear example of how such a transformation can lead to a positive outcome. Thus, if in the early 2000s Georgia and Ukraine went through revolutions, to paraphrase Cheterian (2007), "Westernization" would be the best description of their driving ideology.

Chapter 6:

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS: THE *KMARA* AND *PORA*

CAMPAIGNS AS AN OPPOSITIONAL AVANT-GARDE

1.   Introduction

The phenomenon of growing political activism before and during the "coloured revolutions" gave new impetus to academic discourse on civil society and political systems in the former Soviet republics. However, most of the previous research in these fields failed to attribute enough importance to the role of the youth campaigns. Recent analyses of the "coloured revolutions" have typically treated youth mobilization as secondary, focusing instead on other issues such as the interplay amongst the political elite, fraudulent elections, the role of NGOs, or international intervention. By engaging in the current debate on the dynamics of social movements in hybrid regimes, this research sheds new light on the role of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns during the Rose and Orange Revolutions, respectively, as the vanguards of civic protest and the intermediaries between the citizens, the state, and the civil society. It shows that neither the "the civil society argument", which placed considerable emphasis on the role of NGOs during the "coloured revolutions", nor the "personal charisma" argument, which linked the personality of opposition leaders to the waves of protest, offer satisfactory explanations for the mass mobilizations during the Rose and Orange Revolutions. Rather, it confirms that in societies where the link between elites (both political and non-political) and citizens is weak, youth activist groups can act as unique intermediaries for the separated segments of society.

The youth campaigns in Georgia and Ukraine also provide strong support for the application of a multifactor approach in the study of social movements, which combines four major concepts in the field of social movements in non-Western states: (1) political opportunities, (2) resource mobilization, (3) framing processes, and (4) diffusion. Above all, an analysis of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns demonstrates its usefulness for explaining the collective action, in terms of providing a broad framework for the comprehensive analysis of new movements that lack deeper systematic investigation. Thus, by emphasising different aspects which explain the emergence, development, and activities of social movements, a multifactor approach is an effective tool for tracing the stories of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns. Accordingly, it allows to identify the key features common to youth movements and the contexts in which they developed, in terms of opportunities for the activists, mobilization, the resources needed for action, and the way in which activists frame the current state of affairs. If applied separately, none of the above-mentioned theoretical approaches would provide such a "full" or "complete" account of the youth campaigns in the context of Georgian and Ukrainian politics (Zirakzadeh 2006). This research, therefore, makes two major contributions to the literature on social movements and democratization: it applies a novel concept of using a multifactor approach in the study of social movements, and it extends this model to the under-researched phenomenon of post-communist societies in semi-authoritarian political settings.

Drawing on these ideas, this study examined the major stages of the civil society's activity in communist and post-communist Georgia and Ukraine and linked them to the peculiarities of the post-1991 political system that developed in these two countries. In line with these themes and the selected hypotheses from the main theoretical approaches, such a design helped to explain the reasons, dynamics, and outcomes of the outbreak of the political

engagement of the youth in Georgia and Ukraine. In this context, this study included: 1) the political opportunities for mobilization, which emerged in the semi-autocratic regime type; 2) the tradition of student-popular protest, which contributed to the expertise of the new collective action and determined the responses it received from the society and the State; 3) the independent media and Western foreign assistance, which partially balanced the unequal division of resources between the movements and the authorities; and 4) the unrestricted growth of international and domestic NGOs, which facilitated the diffusion of protest models and brought about unprecedented organizational, informational, and financial support for both campaigns. Finally, this research also confirmed the advantageous position of the student community in terms of opportunities for social movement activities, not only as a subcategory of youth but also as a part of the population in general. Through the access to an infrastructure of publishing houses, informal groups, the Internet, or NGO apprenticeships, they gained considerable advantages against the state authorities, especially compared with other strata of the society.

The significance of this cross-movement, cross-national comparison lies in the similarities between the campaigns' emergence, development, and strategies, whilst embedded within a particular semi-authoritarian regime setting. Moreover, the comparative study made it possible to make the two following assumptions: first, that noticeable similarities between organizational forms, tactics, and frames applied by young activists result from diffusion processes facilitated by activist networks (see Figure 6); and second, that the dissimilarities between the campaigns stem from the important nuances in the social and political context in which activists operate, which often goes unnoticed in broader comparative works (Landman 2003: 5). It has therefore been demonstrated that even in a similar contextual setting, local unrest is a product of various problems, and is not always

universal among the youth of post-communist, modernizing societies. Finally, the comparison further showed that in the era of intensified globalization, the international dimension of movements' origins and expansion becomes an inseparable aspect from concepts addressing collective action.

The following parts of this chapter provide a concise analysis of the findings of the joint development of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns. They are categorized under six headings, loosely corresponding to the theoretical framework and research questions posed at the beginning of this study:

- the political context highlights the opportunities and disadvantages for the development of youth activism under the semi-autocratic regime type;

- the network of personal connections, protest experience, and organizational infrastructure offer a closer look at the existing resources that were mobilized for the development of youth campaigns;

- the concept of the diffusion of the protest model explains cross-boundary similarities between the protest movements and points out the main elements that make the model attractive for activists in a certain socio-political setting; and

- the interpretative frames deployed by young people to challenge the regime reveal how the elections were perceived through the lens of the activist, and how this point of view was used to motivate and legitimize action directed against the discredited regimes.

However, whilst focusing on such a diverse range of variables offers a complex perspective of the Rose and Orange Revolutions from "the bottom", this research did not intend to minimize other reasons why these two events happened. Instead, it provided an in-depth approach to the assessment of the internal and external preconditions with which the

Georgian and Ukrainian youth mobilized and shaped their collective action against the regime. In other words, the main questions that this research tried to answer refer to how and why the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns appeared on the eve of the "coloured revolutions", and what their role was in contributing to breakthroughs in Georgia's and Ukraine's elections.

2.   Why youth?

In the context of the weaknesses of the post–Soviet political and social structures, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the youth's emergence as the vanguard of the anti-regime protests does not seem accidental. Due to the absence of a well-prepared political and economic counter-elite, the old ruling circles continued to hold power after the fall of the Soviet regime. The growing impression that the new system just quickly replaced the old one has only increased the passiveness of the citizens (Howard 2002: 163). Hence, instead of public activism, the already well-established informal networks of family, kin, and friends provided a strategy for survival where administrative and judicial structures were weak. The reliance on powerful connections not only facilitated the corruption and growth of powerful unaccountable private interests but also widened the gap between state and society (Jones 2000: 44). This again led to the low levels of trust in tainted political and civic institutions and prevented people from participating in the public activities necessary to consolidate a democratic system (Howard 2002: 158). The main paradox stemming from this situation was that despite a high level of dissatisfaction with the situation, the gap between ordinary citizens and civic and political leaders made it impossible for representatives of governmental or non-governmental institutions to translate effectively public grievances into mobilization potential.

Still, being less inclined to a corrupt mentality and less dependent on the State than other social groups, autonomous individuals with few personal responsibilities and no

political attachments, such as students, were more prone to incite the protest. Accordingly, those who decided to lead the rebellion against the regime usually belonged to a talented group of students, some of whom had had a chance to study in a Western country. Since a good knowledge of English and the experience of education abroad usually set a solid basis for a successful future in Eastern Europe (Krastev 2009), these students could remain relatively optimistic about their career with or without the help of bribery. At the same time, they became the main group that felt the need to modernize their country. As Lipset pointed out, "[an] awareness or the concern with the inferior position of the nation is most acute among those who have received or are receiving the university education, since the culture which that conveys is so obviously part of a universal culture and the university community has such close ties with the international community of scholars and universities" (Lipset 1967: 16). Thus, although there was no need to go abroad to see the rampant corruption, those who travelled abroad could more easily realize the gravity of the situation compared with Western communities.[182]

In Georgia, however, students had something more to lose due to their adaptation to and engagement in corrupt forms of social survival. *Kmara's* problems with engaging the Georgian student community in anti-regime activity serve as a good example. Here, the immediate benefits of the corrupt education system, such as easily securing a diploma through bribery and a lack of serious competition, meant that some young people may have balked at supporting radical change. How deep the roots of corruption went in daily life is well illustrated by one *Kmara* activist:

> The fact that students did not raise their voices in protest was because every student entering university had first to realize that despite his or her knowledge he or she would not get there without making some corrupt deals. Therefore, students were involved in dirty deals from the beginning. This would become

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[182] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 18 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

a habit and a specific psychology would form, which meant that students had to be nice to the professor and to give gifts [financial ones]. In this way, the feeling of protest they might have had inside them was hidden somewhere – somewhere deep – and it was hard to wake them up and show them that the relationship they had with the professor, with the chief of police, etc., was not a proper relationship. It was hard to wake them up, because they were brought up differently from the beginning.[183]

As a result, most Georgian students did not expect anything from the university, apart from a diploma, that would allow them to become a part of the ruling elite.[184] This is why the student community as a whole was not in a position to act as an anti-systemic force in Georgia, which constitutes a major difference from the Ukrainian case. Nevertheless, the country's small size, the sympathetic media coverage, and the uniqueness of *Kmara* in the context of a long-term absence of any radical civic engagement were all key factors that allowed a small group of radical activists to initiate much more dramatic changes than one might have expected.[185]

The situation in Ukraine was quite the opposite. The country managed to retain rather a high level of quality education and substantially modernized, de-ideologized, and diversified the curricula. Furthermore, private schools and international fellowships had enhanced competition, improved the quality of education, and limited corruption (Riabchuk 2007: 55). As a result, after thirteen years of social transformation in Ukraine, the expansion of student activity beyond Kiev and western Ukraine became one of the most important changes to occur in this sphere, and thus an important development for *Pora's* activity in terms of the possible mobilization in the regions. For the 2004 youth campaigns, higher education institutions provided a valuable site for recruitment. Particularly in the regional centres, the universities and informal student groups found a receptive audience for the movement's message. The explosion of various youth groupings, particularly during Kuchma's second term in office, is best illustrated by Figure 5 (Chapter 5), which presents the landscape of the main youth

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[183] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 24 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[184] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[185] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

organizations and campaigns in Ukraine before the Orange Revolution. Compared with Georgia (Figure 4, Chapter 5), the Ukrainian youth political activism appeared to be much more vigorous throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. As further explained in Sections 4 and 5, the pluralism of and within the youth groups – some of whom lasted for several years and even decades – had a significant impact on the creation of the *Pora* campaign, and the movement's ability to mobilize people. This continuity of student activism, even if at times limited, helped to create a linkage between past and present student protests, which served as an reinforcing element for youth mobilization in 2004 and defied the regime's argument that *Pora's* emergence was rooted solely in the West.

One of the key features that undoubtedly contributed to elevating students to the role of the vanguard of civil society was the "middle class" situation, which differed in the Georgian and Ukrainian civil societies from their western counterparts. Although in both countries the middle class emerged as a new social group following independence, in general, this sector was pushed back from any political engagement due to specific Soviet and post-Soviet developments. Whereas in Georgia, the "middle classes" were practically unidentifiable, in Ukraine the "new middle class" had to struggle for economic survival, coping with the hardships of day-to-day life. Moreover, the situation of the working class was far from consolidated: neither Georgia nor Ukraine had experience with formal trade union activities or professional associations, which shaped the Western concept of the civil society (Stepanenko 2006). In consequence, as discussed in Chapter 4, the groups that are generally regarded as the backbone of civil society in Western societies were almost non-existent or represented a minority within the social structure of the emerging Georgian and Ukrainian societies.[186]

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[186] However, representatives of the private sector became the main sponsors of *Pora's* activity (Riabchuk 2008: 55).

The only group with a tradition of revolutionary activity and a sense of community were students, who before and after 1991 stood at the forefront of their own societies, encouraging the removal of the successive regimes. Given their role as one of the leading societal forces during various historical events (see Chapter 4), students also enjoyed relative political autonomy in Georgia and Ukraine, which allowed them to act with relative impunity (if compared with independent journalists, for example). Therefore, in the twilight of the Kuchma and Shevardnadze regimes, it seemed quite natural that the students emerged as a societal force which decided to speak on behalf of the wider public. Students, pupils, and the youth also enjoyed yet another important advantage, which gave them adequate powers to represent their community's interests: their central location in relation to other social and age cohorts. In this way, not only did they represent future bankers, miners, engineers, or factory workers, but they were also connected – through familial ties – with the older generations, who felt wronged when their children were assaulted or when their future was stolen from them by fraudulent elections (Stepanenko 2006).

Finally, as discussed in Chapter 2, young people are more open to new ideas, and they tend to be the driving force of reforms which are sometimes unwelcome by the authorities. In particular, educated young urbanites are likely to support pro-democratic changes because they are more prone to benefit from them in the future (Wallace 2003: 17). This rationale behind the young people's political choice is also based on their strong conviction that in the modern world there is no real alternative to a market economy and to an open society (Golovakha 2003: 205). Thus, despite the numerous negative effects of market reforms that they had experienced over the last decades, most of the Ukrainian and Georgian youth still voted for such reforms, expecting more future benefits than losses (Golovakha 2003: 205-06).

Since they had grown up in non-communist, unsettled political systems, the fear of change had lost its influence on some of them and could no longer be considered a decisive factor in preventing the development of protests (Golovakha 2003: 211, Pokalchuk 2004).

3. Semi-authoritarian context

The study of *Kmara* and *Pora* confirms that, similar to the empirical evidence regarding social movements in the West, in a semi-authoritarian context the key dimensions of political opportunities (such as access to an institutionalized political system, the instability of political alignments, the availability of influential allies, or the way in which authorities respond to the protest) also signal the beginning of the prospects for mobilization. However, the importance of particular factors differs across political systems. As discussed in the Theory Chapter, in competitive party systems, elections are "the key element of governing routine that expands access to political system as it may induce new coalitions to seek support from outside the polity opening space for relation with a social movement" (Tarrow 1994: 86). In authoritarian states, on the other hand, institutional access becomes rather meaningless, and the change in regime is often brought about by divisions within political elites (Kitschelt 1995). When looking at the hybrid regimes that developed in Georgia and Ukraine throughout the 1990s, the different indications that were perceived as opportunities by anti-regime activist forces before the "coloured revolutions" incorporate the elements that are characteristic for both democratic and authoritarian political settings.

In terms of political context, the opportunities that were particularly relevant in the emergence of the *Pora* and *Kmara* campaigns included the shifts in openness and closure of the political system, and the change in elite alignments, which indicated the system's weaknesses against collective action. Despite their initial attempts to appear as pro-

democratic reformers, over time both Shevardnadze and Kuchma began to show their intentions to undertake illegitimate actions in order to retain the regimes' *status quo*. Having the state's economic and administrative resources at their disposal, they did not hesitate to use them to intimidate the opposition. The rampant corruption served as their main tool to maintain patronage and clientelism in order to keep control over the state institutions and to limit the opposition's activity. At the same time, however, both regimes implemented some reformist measures, mainly due to heavy international and domestic pressure. Their liberalizing efforts could be clearly observed in the relatively democratic transfers of power, the fragmented yet active opposition parties, the independent media (to a lesser extent in Ukraine), and the surprisingly powerful legislature. Hence, neither Shevardnadze nor Kuchma were at the top of monolithic power, and they both continued to meet serious political competition throughout the post-Soviet era (Way 2005: 192).

In addition, a number of visible and influential NGOs were established without major disturbances from the state. Although the pro-regime oligarchic forces mainly held all the power, some part of this influence remained in the hands of civil society.[187] This in turn allowed the third-sector entities to become a cradle for an emergent anti-regime elite. Therefore, in the early 2000s, when Shevardnadze and Kuchma tried to impede the continuation of these arduously achieved democratic changes, they triggered the first wave of protest against their authoritarian leanings. Although both leaders managed to keep their position, the 2000-01 demonstrations clearly exposed their inability to control the array of actors who began to challenge the regimes that had emerged during the post-Soviet era. By the time of the 2003 parliamentary elections in Georgia and the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections, this policy of restraints and concessions towards a supposedly pro-democratic

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[187] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 6 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

development path for the political systems created circumstances that turned into "structural advantages" for the thriving anti–regime collective action (Beissinger 2007).

Clearly, such shifts alone were not enough to be perceived as immediate opportunities for mobilization. Instead, they functioned as a tug-of-war between the authorities, the opposition, and society, in order to see the extent to which each side could advance or defend its established position. Among the main elements of this political game, the most advantageous for the development of the protest movement was the instability of the political alignments, which was reflected by the separation of a new generation of pro-reform politicians from the old regime. Only after Saakashvili and Yushchenko had left the pro-presidential camp and had formed their own opposition parties (see Chapter 3) were the prospects for replacing the ruling authorities perceived as feasible by the elites, the youth activists and the general public. The importance of this factor confirms the argument developed by D'Anieri (2006: 14), who maintains that Yushchenko's unwillingness to join other opposition forces undermined the opposition efforts during the 2001 protest. A similar situation took place in Georgia, where Saakashvili refrained from supporting the 2001 demonstrations until the last days of the protest.[188] The main outcome of their decisions at that particular time, as agreed on by all *Kmara* and *Pora* leading activists, was a lack of political alternatives to the unpopular leaders, which eventually hampered the radical change during the Rustavi 2 and "Ukraine without Kuchma" crises.

As this study revealed, the success of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns relied on the proper recognition of the three main developments, which characterized the semi-authoritarian regimes in Georgia and Ukraine in the late 1990s; that is, the party system's

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[188] According to some derisive comments popular amongst Georgians, Saakashvili acted in this way because – not being old enough to run for presidency – he could have not replaced Shevardnadze if the mounting requests for the President's resignation had materialized (Interview, former GYLA member and *Kmara* activist, 25 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia).

weakness (see Chapter 3), the potential of new opposition leaders to challenge the ruling elite, and the regime's tendency to manipulate the elections (see Tables 2 and 4). As one of the founders of *Kmara* confirmed, "a realistic understanding that political parties were not capable of undertaking the mission of bringing significant changes" and "the expectation that electoral fraud will take place" were among the key reasons for initiating the *Kmara* campaign (Minashvili 2004).

Concerning party politics, youth activists perceived the weak link between the political factions and society as the main gap, which needed to be addressed by a new type of campaign, directed towards the active mobilization of voters. Thus, through various actions drawing attention to the electoral race (see Appendix), the activists managed to persuade the electorate to express and actively defend their own electoral choices. This task was particularly challenging given the recurring trend in both countries, which manifested itself in the people's intention to vote for the lowly esteemed but already familiar political forces in order "not to make things worse".[189] Here, the fears of violence and the escalation of conflicts were to some extent diminished by the non-violent principles, an attractive and humorous repertoire of contention, and a strict organization of *Kmara* and *Pora*.

Moreover, the pro- and anti-regime, or the backward and forward division of the political spectrum functioned as a facilitating factor for youth groups, who tried to distance themselves from any party allegiance. In a non-ideological context, it was simply easier to claim neutrality from "dirty politics", and thus to attract people from different backgrounds and with diverse political viewpoints. At the same time, however, due to the polarization of political groupings, any anti-regime campaigning was automatically interpreted as pro-opposition. Activists, therefore, created the impression that the opposition's strength was

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[189] This phenomenon, as depicted in Chapter 4, was related to the notion that a change in regime was a source of deteriorating situation and chaos, which was deeply rooted in the pre- and post-*perestroika* period (Golovakha 2003: 213).

growing, which convinced, first, the freshly mobilized recruits of the real opportunity for successful protest, and second, the general public of a viable chance for substantial yet peaceful change.

The convergence of the political interests of the youth and the opposition, or rather, the common vision of their homeland's future, was crucial to achieve such developments. Although no political party claimed to officially represent the generation of disappointed youths, economic pressure and a growing desire for modernity gave rise to a new cohort that developed in parallel to the opposition's response to the socio-political situation they faced. Young Georgians and Ukrainians were increasingly frustrated by the State's poor performance, which contrasted sharply with the fast-paced development of the Baltic states and the Central European countries. Whilst dreaming about a better life in a developed country, what they saw under Shevardnadze and Kuchma was corrupt and backward regimes unable to deliver the kind of modernization they wanted.[190] Having been exposed to democratic practices around the world, some of the students who had a chance to work or study abroad emerged as the core pressure group that organized the youth protests and represented the youth's interests politically.

Programmes or "ideology" were not the only key sources of attractiveness, however. Whilst leading oppositionists called for changes that merged with the youth's expectations (e.g. intensified relations with the West, political pluralism, radical reforms, and curbing corruption), what was even more important for the youth activists was the fact that unlike their opponents, neither the National Movement nor the Our Ukraine leaders enriched themselves through corruption (Wilson 2005a: 17). Although initially linked to the unpopular incumbents, Saakashvili and Yushchenko were perceived as the only politicians with a

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[190] Interview, member of the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN), 26 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

background that was different from that of their "political fathers" and of the other people they opposed. Both men also belonged to a new, younger generation of politicians who had already proved their professional skills. The combination of these factors gave them additional points in the eyes of the younger electorate and led to an unwritten, newborn alliance, which emerged between these two reformist forces.

The declining quality of the electoral process, however, became the main obstacle for the two oppositional forces (that is, those led by Saakashvili and Yushchenko) to turn their postulations and demands into reality. Accordingly, as discussed in Chapter 3, power remained in the hands of a small circle of political and economic elites, allowing the opposition to win no more than a few local elections. However, the growing strength of the opposition forces on the eve of the "coloured revolutions" roused the pro-regime camp to prepare to "improve" its own results in the elections. By implementing a number of electoral manipulations, the state initiated the gradual closure of the political system at national level by impeding the fair competitiveness of the elections. The occurrence of such tendencies marked a shift towards the consolidation of the incumbent regimes, and implied that for those who cared about confronting the regime, the cost of not acting this time would be higher. In Zhvania's words, "[the opposition] either had to defend their right to confront the government themselves or they would be deprived of this right for a very long time" (Zhvania quoted in Karumidze and Wertsch 2005: 36). For the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns, the anticipated manipulations became one of the main issues central to their mobilization. Since the elections and attempts to rig them occurred at regular predictable intervals, this gave the youth activists the opportunity to prepare their response in the form of organized mass protests.

Finally, the opportunities for the development of anti-regime protests were increased by the relatively mild response of the state authorities. Whilst the government sporadically

attempted to impede the continuance of *Kmara* and *Pora* protests, such efforts appeared counter-productive for the regime, as they boosted the groups' visibility in the media, publicized the idea of resistance, and attracted new recruits. The choice of non-violence not only defied the governments' arguments that a campaign would lead to civil conflict but also facilitated the neutrality of the security *apparat* (McFaul 2005). Yet, the dynamics of the youth campaigns' interaction with the state was also shaped by the parallel processes of the erosion of the regimes' authority, the growing influence of the opposition movements, and the divisions among the regime's coercive forces, all of which marked the security services' decreasing loyalty to the state. Thus, following on D'Anieri's (2006: 5) argument, this study confirms that the decrease in legitimacy of the state leadership played a powerful role in determining the spread of protests by signalling that violence would not be used to repress the demonstrators (D'Anieri 2006: 2).

4. The impact of protest experience and pre-existing networks

Confirming the hypothesis linked to resource mobilization theory on the development of social movements, the origins of the mobilizing potential in Georgia and Ukraine can be traced to the pre-existing activist networks that were formed during the previous anti–regime collective activities and transformative events. As the evidence shows, the 2003 and 2004 demonstrations were largely staffed by former activists and students, who had participated in earlier pro-democratic or anti-regime protests in the early 1990s.[191] Already experienced in challenging state actions, they brought with them important knowledge, that is, expertise from

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[191] For example, Vladislav Kaskiv participated in the 1990 student hunger strike and in the "For Truth" campaign; Andriy Gusak and Evgen Zolotaryov were activists in the "For Truth" campaign; Mykhailo Svystovych was one of the leaders of the "Revolution on Granite" campaign and the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign; and Andriy Yusov was one of the leaders of the "For Truth" campaign in Odessa.

past struggles, that reduced the organizational costs of mobilization during the Rose and Orange Revolutions.

However, they had to wait for a decade before popular contention occurred in response to the regimes' unpopular moves. Despite different accounts of these transformative events (that is, the Rustavi-2 crisis in Georgia, and the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign in Ukraine), there is common agreement among activists that these events were a necessary step for the Rose and Orange Revolutions to take place.[192] One of the most important lessons learned from these two waves of protest was the increased awareness among activists that a long-term strategy was needed to sustain the protest activity and to engage a large number of citizens that could turn them into a powerful force against Shevardnadze or Kuchma.[193] As stated by almost all of the interviewed activists, the non-orderly character of spontaneous mobilization and a lack of vision among demonstrators were the main weaknesses of the Rustavi-2 crisis and the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign (in addition to above-mentioned lack of political alternatives) . "That's why we stopped demonstrations: because we didn't know what to do. The President said he is not leaving and that's it. So another lesson was: we have to have a plan", one protest participant stated.[194]

At the same time, these two transformative events provided a good training ground for all future *Kmara* and *Pora* members, who experienced various practices associated with protest activity. They learned how to cooperate with the opposition, how to keep a distance from political figures, and how to communicate with the police and government institutions. They also learned the methods the security forces had used to try to disperse protests and how

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[192] In Georgia, the initial goal of the protest was to prevent the closure of the Rustavi-2 TV station and to demand the resignations of the Minister for Interior, the Minister for State Security, and the Prosecutor General, not the resignation of Shevardnadze. Since this demand was realized, the overall outcome of the crisis has been generally interpreted as a success. In Ukraine, the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign was perceived as a failure because Kuchma did not resign.
[193] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 6 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[194] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

to confront them.[195] Interestingly, both in Georgia and in Ukraine, the activists specifically highlighted the importance of balanced cooperation with politicians because they felt that the opposition wanted to greatly influence the protests – a factor considered detrimental to an effective youth collective action. In Ukraine, for instance, representatives of the opposition were blamed for exaggerating the radical atmosphere and for using the situation for their benefit rather than trying to find a solution to the societal problem.[196] Similarly, in Georgia, the fact that political parties tried to use the protesters' claims for their own political aims did not go without notice. Consequently, those who founded the youth anti-regime groups decided to act as "civil initiatives without any flags". This meant that one of the rules of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns was their independence from any political faction and the emphasis placed on the activists' unity despite their often-overlapping organizational affiliations.

Although Shevardnadze's and Kuchma's power remained unchanged following these waves of protest, the most active wing of the student community profited from its networking with NGOs and former activists, which intensified after these events. The organizational infrastructure, established around this time in the form of new student groups and NGO coalitions, helped to keep relations ongoing regardless of fewer incentives to engage in orderly protests until the disputed elections (see Figures 4 and 5). Eventually, these activist groups and networks provided the building blocks for more radical and revolutionary organizational structures, which emerged on the eve of the "coloured revolutions". Whereas the electoral mobilization also attracted people with no previous experience in collective action, reliance on specific groups, which were already organized before, during, and after the

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[195] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 24 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[196] Interview, former Black *Pora* activist, 15 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

2000-2001 waves of protest, helped to cut organizing costs substantially during the *Kmara* and *Pora* mobilization processes.

Finally, a major benefit from the widening (and then narrowing) political opportunity created by the Rustavi-2 and "Ukraine without Kuchma" crises was the awakening of a sense of civic activism among formerly active campaigners. This was noticeable mainly in Ukraine, where many activists who had participated in social movements that had taken place in the late 1980s felt "betrayed" and "abandoned" following the "unfinished revolutions".[197] Here, the political crisis in the aftermath of the Gongadze case became an incentive that roused them from their extended withdrawal from political engagement. In Georgia, on the other hand, it appeared that a weaker tradition of student political protest and a lack of interest among the students in such activities made it more difficult to link the new groupings that emerged in the late 1990s and the early 2000s to earlier outbursts of student movement. As one activist declared, although "*Kmara* encouraged students to participate in contentious processes and to act as a leading force", as it happened in 1976 when students tried to defend the Georgian language, "the students were just not interested."[198] The weaker tradition of student activism, as well as the education system's institutionalized corruption, were the main obstacles that prevented the Georgian student community from widely participating in *Kmara's* activity.

5.   Non-governmental organizations as resource centres for mobilization

The phenomenon of youth activist networks across post-communist countries discussed in this study is clearly interconnected to a growing number of important non-

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[197] Interview, former "For Truth" and Yellow *Pora* activist, 7 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[198] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 24 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

governmental organizations in the region. Although the third sector in Georgia and Ukraine is small by Western standards, its presence ensured the existence of communications networks and resources already partially mobilized, which proved significant in providing access to important resources that were necessary for youth political activity (Oberschall 1973: 125). As illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5, this was clearly the case for the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns, where the emergence and development of protest movement relied on both material (e.g. office equipment, printing facilities, office space) and non-material support (e.g. inter-organizational activist relationships) provided by NGOs. Such resources constituted human and organizational infrastructure necessary for the success of the flourishing youth activism in Georgia and Ukraine. At the same time, as Chapter 4 further revealed, civil society represented by NGOs was unable to organize mass campaigns because they lacked popular support. Cooperation with youth activist groups compensated for their limited mobilization capacity and linked them to the wider public.

The nucleus of both campaigns was already formed in the early 2000s as a response to the states' coercive behaviour. It motivated the youth activists to form "a collective vehicle to resist unwanted changes via popular contention" and to press for the renewal of democratic commitments promised in the previous decade (Almeida 2003: 352-54). Starting from the Rustavi-2 and "Ukraine without Kuchma" crises, these nascent organizations learned how to develop a reciprocal network of relationships, how to ensure efficient communication, how to engage in the political process, and how to advocate fundamental changes without becoming embroiled in partisan politics. Their tasks and principles were therefore similar to those later implemented by the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns. That is why they could unite their efforts to secure an organizational infrastructure that kept the campaigns going for several months before the elections. The engagement of veteran activists from several NGOs was also of

paramount importance in this respect. They participated in the creation of *Kmara* and *Pora*, they were responsible for the coordination of activities with political forces, they carried out trainings for youth activist recruits, and they used their connections to facilitate regional outreach. Moreover, on many occasions young activists were saved from punishment and imprisonment due to their involvement with these organizations. Taken together, such active engagement enabled the public campaign to contribute to the events surrounding the elections.

Alongside local organizations and their staff, other important third-sector actors included Western foundations and institutes engaged in the long-term promotion of democratic values and in the direct support of increased youth civic activity. Yet, whilst some of their programmes and policies were indeed useful, their long-term impact should not be overestimated, as they played a supporting rather than a leading role in shaping the political transitions (Carothers 2007: 22). As explained in Chapter 4, a portion of the Western funding for "democratic values" projects was wasted because the educative role of these projects was inadequately designed, unsuitably located, or poorly managed. On the other hand, in terms of direct support for youth activists, the tangible benefits of foreign help were easier to define. First, international and locally committed organizations helped *Kmara* and *Pora* to emphasize the issue of voter rights and to attract the global community's attention through the mass media. The explicit role of Western NGOs in maintaining and enforcing democratic standards transformed the local elections in Georgia and Ukraine into events with international implications. The "whole world is watching" factor not only rendered the direct repression of youth activists more difficult, it also hindered the Georgian and Ukrainian authorities from openly opposing the ballot vote, which in the public's view was understood as a basic tenet of democracy (Bunce and Wolchik 2007). Accordingly, Western NGOs that organized a parallel count of the vote created an independent basis for the evaluation of the performance of semi-

authoritarian systems, which put targeted states on the defensive (Lehoucq 2003: 247). In this way, they contributed to the exposure of manipulations in hotly contested elections and undermined the regimes' legitimacy, thus attesting the main themes of the youth protest campaigns.

The second area where international actors made a visible difference was the financial and organizational assistance provided for the training and networking of youth would-be revolutionaries. Thus, acting as "brokers", non-state actors facilitated the process of communication and adaptation of an external practice to new sites and situations (Tarrow 2005: 190). Interestingly, there was a strong belief among activists and local and international organizations that they had a responsibility to share their insight concerning effective strategies for political change through elections (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 299). As a result, in both Georgia and Ukraine, several NGOs and foreign donors funded and coordinated the meetings with activists from the *Otpor* and "OK '98" campaigns. It should be noted that whilst almost all external assistance for the Georgian activists came from George Soros' Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF), *Pora's* list of international financial donors and supporters was much longer. Hence, it was partially due to this diversification of foreign financial backing (stemming from proximity to the EU) that *Pora's* two branches developed independently, as each group preferred to manage the already secured finances on its own.

At the same time, however, foreign funding weakened the legitimacy of NGOs in the eyes of politicians and made them less accountable to their grassroots constituencies. It was therefore vital to present the struggle as an internal event in order to repel the accusations of "dancing to the tune of a foreign piper with no legitimate right of entry into domestic policy debates" (Bratton 1990: 114). Such opinions were commonly raised by analysts, journalists, and politicians from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), who warned about the

Western attempts to "manufacture democracy" in the former Soviet space (Herd 2005: 3). Particularly sharp was the Kremlin's reaction concerning the "coloured revolutions". The Kremlin considered the Rose and Orange Revolutions in the context of the post-cold war geopolitical struggle for dominance, and thus portrayed the democracy-building programmes as imported, unnatural "implants" that were supposedly linked to Western intelligence agencies. The role of the foreign "brokers" had to be carefully balanced: when advocating democracy through various cross-national projects, they also offered a great deal of autonomy for the youth activists. In this way, they encouraged the creative modifications of the campaign model, which would correspond to the national contexts. The necessity of such an approach is consistent with activist reports. As one *Otpor* member summed up, "it's one thing to be supported, and another to be orchestrated. When people get orders from abroad, it usually doesn't work" (The *Independent*, 7 August 2005).

The development of protest movements is expected to be shaped by the unique political and cultural context in which such movements are embedded. On the other hand, it is quite likely that the initial impetus or inspiration for these movements may be imported from elsewhere (McAdam and Rucht 1993: 67). This was the case of the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns, where a vast part of the ideas, tactics, and organizational structures applied by these two groups cannot be explained by solely domestic factors. In fact, their collective action structures were first experimented in Serbia and Slovakia, where their effectiveness had already been confirmed in a similar structural setting. As described in Chapter 2, the process in which social-movement actors draw influence and information from other movements is described by sociologists of collective action as diffusion. When applied in the context of the Ukrainian and Georgian protest movements, this concept helps to explain the cross-national

similarities between the *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigns and to distinguish the mechanisms that contributed to the diffusion of a certain campaign model in the region.

For the first time, the opportunity to model the political discourse and to mimic action repertoires arose during the Slovakian elections in the late 1990s. Due to the dubious democratic credentials of then Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar, the 1998 parliamentary elections were perceived to be decisive for Slovakia's political future, given the threat of the country's exclusion from EU integration. In contrast to Mečiar's popularity among the more disciplined older electorate, the poorly organized and unappealing pro-Western opposition led by Mikulas Dzurinda did not appear as a formidable anti-Mečiar force (Hale 2006, Tucker 2006, D'Anieri 2006a). The main idea of how to strengthen the position of Dzurinda's camp was drawn from the "NDI handbook brochures about a get-out-the-vote campaign in the Philippines", which had been presented to interested parties during a meeting organized by US donors in Vienna (Simencka 2009). A framework for this campaign envisaged the launch of the NGOs' campaign to increase voter turnout by implementing voter mobilization projects and election monitoring. Although the cooperation of Slovakian NGOs was the first of its kind in post-communist Europe, its results exceeded all expectations. Whilst parliamentary elections were not falsified in this case, the NGOs' campaign helped deliver an unprecedented 84 percent voter turnout, paving the way for pro-democracy forces to form a coalition without any violence (Simencka 2009).

More than the Slovakian example, however, it was the success of the Serbian *Otpor* movement, which inclined the Georgian and Ukrainian campaigners to adopt similar organizational strategies, tactics, and ideas from an array of options. As the "revolution's ideological and organizational backbone" (Mowat 2005), *Otpor* applied an unconventional approach to civil disobedience that broke the fear and apathy of the Serbian public and

discredited the authoritarian regime of President Slobodan Milošević before the 2000 presidential elections. The impetus came in the spring of 1999 when *Otpor* leaders arrived in Budapest to attend a seminar on non-violent resistance, organized by the International Republican Institute. During the seminar, Serbian students received training in various tactics directed at breaking people's habits of subservience to authority and to subvert the regime's "pillars of support", including the army, the police, and other government branches (Cohen 2000; Mowat 2005).

In the months prior to the elections, *Otpor* became the driving force in Milošević's ousting in Serbia, an event that set a precedent for non-violent popular revolution in a post-communist country. The secret of its success lay in the contentious repertoires, which simply made anti-Milošević resistance look "cool". From the very onset of their struggle against the dictator, *Otpor* leaders adopted a principle of non-violence, which proved very effective in the face of growing repression against the movement. In numerous street performances, *Otpor* activists consistently poked fun at the regime (Tucker 2006, Kuzio 2006c). By implementing a double approach to collective action, *Otpor* forged a wide range of actions that accommodated both radical and moderate activists by means of two parallel projects: a negative campaign under the slogan "Gotov je!" ("He's finished!''), which was based on an aggressive and relentless anti-Milošević propaganda; and a positive campaign in the form of a broad alliance of 150 civil society organizations called *Izlaz2000*, which aimed to increase voter turnout. *Izlaz2000's* core message was "Vremje Je!" ("It is time!"), and it was clearly inspired by Slovakia's "OK '98" campaign. The group also developed a diffused organizational structure that allowed the movement to sustain a pervasive presence and withstand the regime's attempts to subvert it (Simecka 2009).

The evidence of *Otpor's* contribution to the nationwide campaign that brought down Milošević's authoritarian rule was evident in the form of the mass protests by Serbians who chose not to remain indifferent to the electoral fraud. According to the results announced by the Yugoslav Election Commission, the leader of the united opposition, Vojislav Kostunica, enjoyed the highest level of support among the voters, but not high enough to be declared a winner after the first round. However, the numbers established on the basis of the election observers showed that Kostunica had won 55% of the vote, followed by Milošević (35%). As a consequence, Kostunica refused to participate in the runoff, the Yugoslav Constitutional Court annulled the election results, and over half a million people marched on Belgrade to seize control of the main government institutions. Within a day, Milošević declared his resignation, and by the Court's decision Kostunica became the winner of the election (Tucker 2006: 4).

The above-mentioned cases speak of the usefulness of the organizational models in understanding the form of youth collective action during the "coloured revolutions". In studying the prospects of peaceful resistance, *Kmara* and *Pora* expressly referred to the above-mentioned themes of campaigning and to the activities of the volunteer networks from Slovakia and Serbia. Whilst the sources of these two youth groups may have been indigenous, the direct support provided by the *Otpor* and "OK '98" veterans encouraged a more general receptivity to the main elements of the protest model from Serbia and Slovakia. According to activist Aleksandr Marić, *Otpor* provided training on

> how to set up an organization, how to open local chapters, how to create a "brand", and how to create a logo, symbols, and key messages. [*Otpor*] trained them on how to identify the key weaknesses in society and what people's most pressing problems were – what may be a motivating factor for people and, above all, young people to go to the ballot box and in this way shape their own destiny (Marić cited in Bransten 2004).

Interestingly, both the *Kmara* and *Pora* activists used the words "to brand the movement" when they referred to the brainstorming sessions convened to invent the name and logo for the campaigns. According to a *Kmara* member, the main idea behind the branding was to attract public attention and to make the public buy the product.[199] Indeed, together with *Otpor*, both groups resembled well-managed projects rather than the spontaneous youth movements from the past.[200] The main elements that were involved in creating such an image included specific names, logos, slogans, organizational forms, and even the particular timeframe in which these movements evolved. First, a catchy, single-word name and a good logo had to convey all the ideas for which the group had been created. Second, a non-hierarchical and leaderless organizational structure based on the division of labour, the autonomy of the regional units, and the horizontal networks secured the sustainability of the campaigns' actions (e.g. by diminishing the possibility of the campaigns' disruption and inhibiting the authorities from infiltrating the movements).[201] Finally, various street protests and events, often coloured in a humorous tone, were good techniques used to attract and recruit people who perceived them as mysterious and fun. Divided into positive and negative activities, they kept the activists busy and sustained their commitment through the cycles of protest.[202] In sum, the logic of *Kmara* and *Pora's* approach was to produce the maximum amount of disruption through non-violent methods with minimal resources. As a *Kmara* founder further explained,

> Like David and Goliath, the Soviets in Afghanistan, or the U.S. in Vietnam, a small well-organized group can achieve success. Hence, we were trying to wear out the ruling regime, to make them nervous, and in that atmosphere we were expecting them to make more mistakes and finally to lose.[203]

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[199] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[200] Interview, member of the International Republican Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[201] Although in neither case could such a non-hierarchical and leaderless structure in the purest sense was be achieved.
[202] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[203] Interview, member of the Liberty Institute, 20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

The mechanisms that allowed for these elements to be transferred shed light on the role of former activists and Western assistance, who – acting as "brokers" – facilitated the identification of the similarities between the previously unconnected social actors. Not only did they influence the definition of the main problems that the embryonic *Kmara* and *Pora* groups were about to face, but they also offered a solution in the form of a certain political campaign model and made it adaptable to previously unrelated settings. In Georgia, this influence was first imposed on the group of visitors who travelled from Tbilisi to Belgrade and Bratislava to meet former *Otpor* and "OK '98" activists. In Ukraine, participants from these two groups met with young leaders during regional seminars, where they shared the experiences of their successful movements. Analogies were constructed and spread during the summer camps that took place in both countries before the crucial elections. Such meetings served to stimulate the growth of the student activist groups in three ways. First, they brought them closer together within the framework of the collective mission. Second, they served as training sessions for those who took part in these projects. Finally, when they returned to their hometowns and universities, the volunteers brought with them the ideological and tactical lessons of the summer camps and began to influence others.

Western funding and assistance was critical for this process. It facilitated direct and indirect communication between activists and provided training on how to include the idea of non-violence in a template for winning stolen elections. Whilst various government and non-governmental institutions provided financial backing within the frameworks of so-called pro-democracy projects, the experts on non-violent resistance methods offered their know-how in the form of lectures or printed compendiums of non-violent tactics.[204] For instance, the methods used in the Georgian and Ukrainian revolutionary sequences were first taught to

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[204] For example, the Soros Foundation, Freedom House or the National Endowment for Democracy, Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative, the National Democratic Institute, etc.

Otpor by former US Army officer, Col. Robert Helvey .[205] Additionally, the core *Otpor*, *Kmara*, and *Pora* activists were all familiar with Helvey's colleague, Dr Gene Sharp and his book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*. With funding from Sharp's Albert Einstein Institute in the United States, twelve thousand copies of his book were printed, which were then distributed in Ukraine via a website.[206]

The final factor that helped to cement the identification of the Georgian and Ukrainian youth with their Serbian counterparts was the phenomenon of "institutional equivalence" (Strang and Meyer 1993). Whilst Strang and Meyer used the concept to highlight the tendency of organizationally embedded policymakers to identify with their counterparts in other countries, as regards *Kmara* and *Pora*, other forms of institutional equivalence – such as the student community – served as salient reference groups that facilitated cross-national diffusion (Strang and Meyer 1993, McAdam and Rucht 1993). McAdam and Rucht proposed a similar mechanism in their study on the American and German "New Left". As the authors concluded, for students in one country to identify with their counterparts in another,

> a nontrivial process of social construction must take place in which adopters fashion an account of themselves as sufficiently similar to that of the transmitters to justify using them as a model for their own actions. Direct relational ties – even if minimal in number – between adopters and transmitters increase dramatically the chances of this protest talking place (McAdam and Rucht 1993: 73).

In Georgia and Ukraine, such direct ties with *Otpor* and "OK '98" were indeed established. Once they were in place, the forms, rhetoric, and tactics of the youth protest movements spread swiftly across social locations in the region, represented mainly by students and activists, with a number of English and Russian speakers among them. Thus, after a degree of identification had been established, the diffusion process was then more

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[205] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 1 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[206] For instance, by free adaptation of Sharp's main three-volume work, "The Politics of Nonviolent Action"; *Otpor* also created its own "*Otpor* User Manual" (Mowat 2005).

easily embraced by wider circles of potential activists through various indirect channels such as television, seminars, the Internet, and leaflets, without direct contact with the Serbian or Slovakian "initiator" movements.

It should be noted, however, that the transmission of experiences took slightly different routes in Georgia and Ukraine (see Figure 6). The Georgian youth were more receptive to influences from abroad, owing to the long absence of student activism in the country. According to *Kmara* activists, the power of the Serbian example was simply impossible to resist, which is best illustrated by the *Kmara* discussions on logo design:

> For several months [*Kmara*] didn't have a logo, and there was much debate: we want to have this, or we want to have that. But the activists started to draw *Otpor's* fist on their T-shirts. It was clear that this was what they wanted, because it meant "Serbs", who did what we wanted to do, who were cool, and everything they did was cool. So, we wanted to have a fist as well.[207]

Apart from their appealing success story, the joint idea to establish connections with Serbian activists had also been dictated by temporal and situational proximity (unlike Gandhi's civil disobedience methods, for example).[208] Finally, and more speculatively, a geographical remoteness from Central European influence, a sparser network of NGOs, and the lack of electoral fraud in the case of the anti-Mečiar campaign made the import of the Serbian model a more attractive solution among Georgians.

According to *Pora* activists, on the other hand, the experiences of *Otpor* and *Kmara* were less applicable to Ukraine. Their country's size and population, and its cultural and regional particularities, including Russia's interference, were the main features enumerated by the Ukrainian civic leaders for which a unique approach was required (Kaskiv, Iryna Chupryna and Yevhen Zolotariov 2007: 141-142). Furthermore, if placed in comparative perspective with Georgia, the limited access to unbiased media constituted a major difference.

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[207] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 1 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[208] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

In fact, the veterans of political activism in Ukraine prefer to link *Pora* with their own anti-regime movements or the Central European uprising during the late 1980s (see Figure 6). Not only was a stronger tradition of Ukrainian student protests perceived as a more relevant background for designing a model for *Pora's* campaign, but also, for some participants of the 1990s liberation movement, the 2004 mobilization offered another chance to achieve the goals for which they had fought thirteen years ago.[209] In addition, this inclination to seek more than one source of inspiration stemmed from a more vibrant youth civic sector, if compared with Georgia, which maintained relations with representatives of various domestic and foreign institutions (see Figure 5). As such, *Pora's* Black branch used most of the organizational, tactical, and visual solutions of its Serbian predecessor, while the Yellow branch established closer links with the Slovakian "OK '98", still drawing some slogans and ideas from *Otpor's* more positive protest repertoire.[210]

This is not to say that *Kmara* and *Pora* made their strategic and tactical choices in a political vacuum, or that they did not use innovation to develop campaigns which would more closely correspond to their own contexts and characteristics of the social groups they sought to mobilize. There is, however, indisputable evidence that a major source of inspiration and moral support behind each case came in the form of their recent predecessors, who demonstrated that change is possible in a similar political setting. Thus, while both groups were clearly influenced by opportunities, resources, and constraints present within the domestic environment, the *Otpor* and "OK '98" examples were crucial for determining the political circumstances that would open the way for collective action against the current arrangements of power. Such patterns were particularly important for the non-politicized

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[209] Interview, former "For Truth" and Yellow *Pora* activist, 7 June 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[210] Despite the initial plan to build a campaign which would resemble the Slovakian "OK '98", the "Wave of Freedom" NGO coalition leader, Vladislav Kaskiv, partially abandoned this idea and incorporated elements of the approach that worked in Serbia (see Chapter 5, Section 3.1.2). The success of *Kmara*, modelled solely on *Otpor*, probably had an impact on this decision.

younger generation, which did not participate in the social and political turmoil that followed the Soviet Union's collapse. It demonstrated that they could "break the mode of powerlessness" (Nodia 2005) and alter the vicious circle of the electoral self-reproduction of the unpopular regime. Since this was achieved by applying similar ideological, organizational, and tactical solutions, the youth campaigns of the 2000s marked the occurrence of a new phenomenon in the post-Soviet space.

Figure 6: Cross-national and cross-movement diffusion
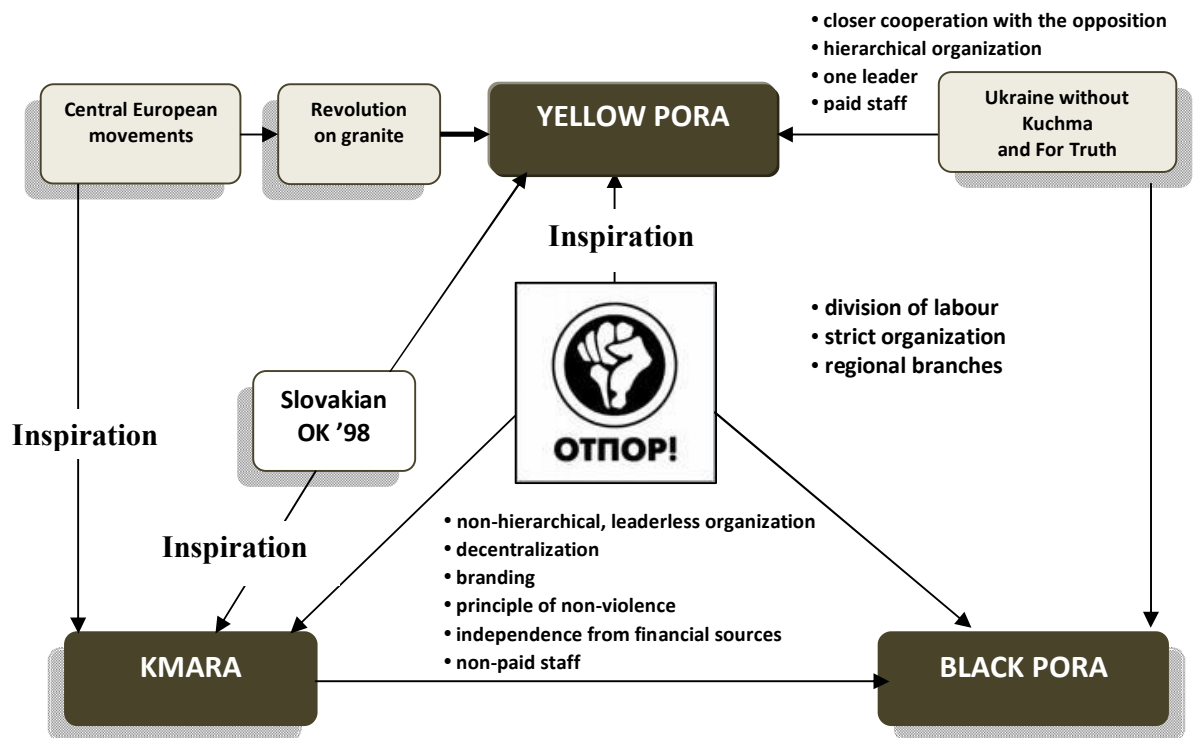
Source: Author's compilation

6. Attribution of meaning to anti-regime collective action

The phenomenon of the "coloured revolutions" refreshed the debate about the "resurrection" of civil society in non-democratic regimes and led to comparisons between the post-Soviet regimes of today and those of 1989 Central Europe. Despite a number of differences between these two waves of protest, it is fair to say that both phenomena have been affected by the same sources of meanings or frames, which were attributed to a given political situation. Such interpretative sources – described as master frames in the literature on social movements (see Chapter 1) – provide a basis for constructing ideas through which social actors legitimate action, assign blame, and formulate alternatives and changes (Snow and Benford 1992: 139). In the context of anti-communist and post-communist revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, above all, democracy and injustice served as the dominant master frames justifying and dignifying collective action around contentious social and political issues (Olesen 2005, Tarrow 1993).

Thus research confirms that the theory of framing provides a useful tool for a better understanding of *Pora's* and *Kmara's* motivation behind their campaigns in terms of explaining how the young activists developed a shared perception of a particular problem, and how they mobilised behind certain goals and ideas to solve it. When looking at their mission statements (see Appendix), the array of issues they were criticizing ranged from the problems of authoritarianism (e.g. political criminal behaviour, political violence, violations of rights, election fraud, oppression by the authorities, impunity of the authorities, and lack of reforms) to societal ills, such as a general apathy and distrust among citizens. Accordingly, the governments and systems of the early 1990s, when Shevardnadze and Kuchma came to power, were identified as the main source of these problems.

The essential remedy for such a complex crisis, according to *Kmara* and *Pora* campaigners, was strictly political (motivational framing, see Chapter 2). Nothing would change without changing the government itself, as these youth activists believed, and only a fair electoral process could reshape the continuously "undermined and suspended democratic development of society" (see Appendix). The main role of *Kmara* and *Pora* in this respect was to transform the perception of the stated problems from indestructible barriers that triggered "public nihilism with regard to various political processes" into mobilizing themes that would set off active civic protest (Campaign For Free and Fair Elections "*Kmara*", 2003). Through various actions and demonstrations they relentlessly brought them to the public's attention, thus increasing the political tension to the point, where people began to believe that "if the situation continues like this, it will take the country, the citizens, and their children to the point of no return – where improving something will be impossible" (frame alignment, see Chapter 2).[211]

Eventually, the constant focus on the non-democratic practices of the "bandit" or "criminal" state slowly radicalized the situation by linking people's grievances to the electoral manipulations that were anticipated. As *Pora's* statement reads:

> If every citizen of Ukraine is well informed, knows his rights and realises his own role in society, he will not accept any limitations on these rights. He will actively protect them and fight for his private interests and, as a result, for the interests of the whole state. Such a citizen will not elect a statesman who would not guard [the citizen's] rights and interests of the country, and in case of election fraud will defend his right to the free expression of [his] will (See Appendix, Civic campaign "ПОРА!" Mission Statement, 2004).

In this way, an injustice frame was developed to shift any responsibility for excising problems from society to non-democratic rulers, and to mobilize the electorate against the "culprits" (diagnostic framing, see Chapter 2). It also made people more vigilant and sensitive

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[211] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 24 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

to the otherwise rather abstract claims that warned of electoral fraud. Thus, while those who were not allowed to vote (e.g. because of intentional administrative shortcomings) were affected and offended directly, the injustice frame helped to spread the sense that individual rights were being violated to a broader circle of voters once the news of mass electoral fraud was announced. In this atmosphere of mass discontent, the initial demands of the youth activists could be easily radicalized and shifted from calls for fair elections to calls for Shevardnadze's resignation, and for Yushchenko to become president.

International and locally committed organizations were also helpful in voicing the issue of voter rights and attracting global attention through the mass media. Accordingly, the explicit role of the international community in maintaining and enforcing democratic standards transformed the local elections in Georgia and Ukraine into events with international implications. First, the idea that the "whole world is watching" made the direct repression of the youth protesters more difficult, as it would put future contacts with the West into serious question. Second, the governments refrained from openly opposing a ballot vote, because in the public's mindset it was understood to be a basic tenet of democracy (Bunce and Wolchik 2006). Thus, under the umbrella of international scrutiny, the electoral fraud turned into something more than a simple violation of electoral law. As a part of the discourse of the international and domestic pro-democratic forces, the accusation of fraud acquired a broad meaning, one which includes the violation of civil liberties and the aggravation of the political climate by restricting liberal democratic principles in Georgia and Ukraine (Lehoucq 2003: 246).

Another factor that contributed to this sense of injustice was the number of success stories in the region, which had led to EU membership for several neighbouring countries. It provided an attractive model of rapid transition, which associated liberal democracy with

material prosperity (Quigley 2000: 196). In its campaign statement, *Pora* synthesized this perception of the "fundamental challenge of making decisive choice on its social and geo-political priorities" that Ukraine faced (Concept of National Informational, Educational and Mobilization Campaign "Pora", 2004). The solution to this challenge, as stated in the pamphlet, could have been obtained only through free and transparent elections, because they opened up "a unique opportunity to mobilize common capacities for the final victory of democratic ideals, the speeding-up of Euro-Atlantic integration, and the realization of qualitative reforms" (prognostic framing, see Chapter 2). According to Krastev (2004), the reference to the European Union as "aspiration not return, model not protection, future not past" was the main component of the "coloured revolutions" that set them apart from the 1989 protests, when the main thrust of the people's demands was the "return" to their rightful place in Europe as in the pre-communist past.

The campaigns' framing processes were primarily aimed at the younger generation as a group. The tendency to appoint young people as agents for change stemmed from three basic facts: first, it was dictated by the national protest traditions or an attempt to refer to them; second, of all the groups within society, the lives of the younger age cohort would be the most affected by these "critical elections", for many years to come; and third, given the weaknesses of political parties and NGOs, the youth were in a position to introduce the campaign to various circles of Ukrainian society. In addition, by targeting students, activists from both campaigns incorporated campus issues (e.g. the elimination of bribery at the university level, or the independence of the universities from government control) into their agenda and then linked them with larger problems, such as corruption in the government or the violation of freedom and human rights in the country. As such, they illustrated how

serious the problem was, how it concerned both the student and general community directly, and who was to be held responsible for creating these problems.

The wider target group of youth campaigns included all those citizens who believed that "they deserve a better life, who could no longer stand the lies and impunity of the authorities that care exclusively for their private interests, totally neglecting the interests of the people and the State" (see Appendix, Civic campaign "ПОРА!" Mission Statement, 2004). Civil society, too, was addressed as being "in the position of a general without an army", because it lacked popular support (Campaign For Free and Fair Elections "*Kmara*", 2003). A need for a new campaign was therefore defined in order to lead mass protest movements for the elimination of various regime-related ills. By undermining the regime's credibility, winning the support of the law enforcement agencies, and overcoming apathy and fear among the people, such a campaign was actively engaged in the conscious creation of "a sense of moral superiority" over the autocratic regime (Kandelaki 2004: 4). Due to the state-sanctioned (though low-level) brutality against the non-violent, disciplined youth social actors, the new approach fortified this appealing image. It also helped to anchor the groups' framing strategy by presenting evidence that the increasing political threats should be attributed to the state, not to "terrorists" (*terroristy*), "troublemakers" (*avanturisty)* or "losers" (*neudachniki*), as the young campaigners were often called in the regime's propaganda. As a consequence, in the months leading up to the revolution, a large portion of the population not only began to point to the authorities as the cause of disorder in the country but also started to believe that they had the right to confront the injustices (Fournier 2007: 113; Kandelaki 2004: 4).

While "biting the system" could serve as a concise version of their leading strategy, neither group formulated a clearly conceptualized campaign ideology.[212] They shared some liberal ideas about what should be done in the country, in legal, political, or economic terms, but this kind of agenda was considered as party business, not theirs.[213] However, despite the non-political and non-partisanship campaign rules of *Kmara* and *Pora* since their inception, nearly everyone understood that demanding fair elections was equal to agitation against the current regime. It also reflected the specifics of party politics in the post-Soviet republics discussed in the preceding chapters. Here, the political spectrum was not split between left- and right-wing parliamentary factions; rather, the choices it offered were simply labelled as "forward" or "backward" political programmes, with "forward" standing for "pro-democratic", according to popularly accepted logic, especially for the youth. Given the lack of ideological underpinning and clearly defined party programmes, a carefully constructed image and personal charisma had a major impact on the electoral choices of Ukrainian and Georgian voters. Hence, by successfully linking Yanukovych to the criminal regime camp and by depriving Shevardnadze of his reformist aura, *Pora* and *Kmara*, respectively, managed to circumvent the principle of non-partisanship and to mobilize those who were sceptical towards Yushchenko's and Saakashvili's leadership to vote against pro-Kuchma and pro-Shevardnadze camps. The following metaphor quoted by one *Pora* member serves as a vivid illustration of how limited the range of options presented to activists and voters before casting their ballots was:

> According to experts on the treatment of alcoholism, unless a person gets to the "bottom", he or she will never give up drinking. The Orange Revolution came up in the moment of that social "bottom": either a gangster will rule the country – someone who was in jail twice – or we should change in some way.[214]

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[212] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 28 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[213] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[214] Interview, former *Pora* activist 23 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

The elections were therefore a peak political event, which polarized the situation, making it the perfect moment for this kind of radical discourse. By using various symbols (often from the world of popular culture), wordplay, amusing videos, and political humour as tools of group affiliation, the activists convinced citizens to take sides, while at the same time implying a desirable direction (e.g. through exaggerated "us" and "them", "black" and "white", and "good" and "evil" dichotomies).

For activists keen on transmitting their frames to a target group, the media were an important means of diffusion, especially given the heightened attention on the part of citizens during elections. The extensive use of modern communication technologies and television in delivering their message to a wider audience was a unique attribute of *Pora's* and *Kmara's* activity, all the more so when compared with previous campaigns. While *Otpor* relied mainly on one radio station, the Internet and mobile phones were important instruments of the activist's toolbox in Georgia and Ukraine. The attractiveness of this method of communication and spreading information among young people was not accidental. As Kyj's (2006) study reveals, the core group of Internet-users in Ukraine before 2004 comprised youth and people with a higher education, mainly in large cities, which clearly corresponds to the profile of the majority of *Pora's* participants. Similar social demographics also defined *Kmara's* founding members and its situation. Moreover, in the former Soviet republics, where access to modern technologies has not been as readily available for as long as in the West, the gap between the generations became particularly wide in terms of familiarity with technological innovations. As in this case the youth were generally more open to new technology, the information age helped them to shift the advantage from semi-authoritarian leaders to youth protest groups (Laura Rosen in *Salon*, 3 February 2001, quoted in Bandera 2006).

Kmara in particular enjoyed close contact with the media. In its booklet, the clearly defined goal of the group's media campaign was "to give a response to the general scepticism and the frustration of the public with politics and to motivate disillusioned, hesitant, undecided, and even angry voters to participate in the elections" (see Appendix, Campaign For Free and Fair Elections "*Kmara*", 2003). The implementation of this goal was divided into three stages: 1) the branding of *Kmara's* movement; 2) the mobilization phase; and 3) the *Get Out the Vote* component (see Chapter 5). Despite its small size, the group had a special media unit to ensure that all of its events were fully covered by the majority of the broadcasting companies. In this way, it was guaranteed that the headline news of the day was usually about a disruption caused by *Kmara's* activists and the subsequent response from the State to the youth group. Accordingly, the main success of the small group was that it made substantial "noise" in the media, to which no one could remain indifferent.

The "branding" process, however, did not proceed exactly as planned.[215] Having little or no experience in delivering the image the movement wanted to achieve, most of *Kmara's* actions were perceived as too aggressive in Georgia, even by its own participants. Setting a precedent in the history of youth rebellion in post-Soviet Georgia, *Kmara* broke many cultural taboos, which was difficult for some segments of Georgian society to accept. It was interpreted as controversial mainly because *Kmara's* activities went against the tradition of respect for one's authorities and elders, something which was generally expected of young people and was rooted in the Soviet system as well as in the national culture. The appearance of *Kmara* also marked the first radical and open attempt to oppose Shevardnadze. His age and status in the international political arena were also important factors which made it more difficult for the young people to attract the older citizens to their cause. The idea of civil

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[215] The branding was meant to make the movement popular by advertising its new name to the society (Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 and 23 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.)

disobedience inevitably violated these principles of the social code, which valued order more than personal rights and freedoms.[216] Later attempts to counterbalance the negative attitudes with more positive actions have not been successful, and *Kmara's* image as aggressive and unpredictable "kids" remained unchanged in the eyes of some people. The efforts of the state television channels, which portrayed *Kmara* members as crazy young people, hooligans, or simply kids who dared to raise their voice, instead of devoting themselves to studying, also had a major impact.[217] As a consequence, *Kmara* failed to present itself as a group of educated, "cool", and properly mannered young intellectuals, and was thus unable to win the support of Tbilisi's elites, who in general did not favour antagonistic and reactionary movements.[218]

According to the *Guardian*, the post-communist youth protest campaigns were "a sophisticated and brilliantly conceived exercise in Western branding and mass marketing" (Traynor 2004). The case of *Pora* provides a particularly good example in this respect, mainly due to its in widespread and efficient information campaign while lacking access to the media. *Pora* itself considered its main success to be a good public relations campaign (for the Yellow branch) and a number of direct actions (the Black branch), during which neither its people nor its reputation were sacrificed.[219] Accordingly, by using new communication technologies, such as mobile phones, e-mail, and websites, to inform people about its activity, to recruit members, to call for action, and to gather financial support, *Pora* defeated Kuchma in the information campaign.[220]

Given the history of student activism in Ukraine, the group was not perceived as so radical, even though the pro-Kuchma media referred to *Pora* as "nationalists" and "terrorists"

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[216] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 28 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[217] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 and 23 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[218] Interview, former *Kmara* activist, 10 and 23 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.
[219] Interview, former *Pora* activist 30 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.
[220] Interview, former *Pora* activist 30 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

who wanted to "destroy the country" and "lead to civil war" (Fournier 2007: 105). This was accompanied by other propagandistic materials released by the authorities, which focused on preventing a return to chaos and violence, allegedly triggered by *Pora* activity, and which were meant to spread fear among society. Such messages aimed to create the impression that pre-emptive action was necessary – and was even the responsibility of the state – in order to stop *Pora* from potential violent acts (Frohardt and Temin 2003: 6). The fact that the broad student movements contributed to the breakdown of the communist regime further increased the regime's suspicions that a similar scenario would be repeated in 2004.

For *Pora*, however, "negative" public relations actually worked in a positive way, and the activists did not miss the opportunity to highlight their connections to other revolutionary movements. According to its founding concept, the idea behind the implementation of *Pora's* campaign was adopted from the philosophy of the late 1980s to early 1990s student national-democratic movement, as well as from the All-Ukrainian public resistance committee "For Truth". The group also referred to "the activities of colleagues from [the former] Yugoslavia, Croatia, Slovakia, Georgia, and other countries of the region that successfully realized their potential in recent critical elections" as positive examples for the Ukrainian youth (Concept of National Informational, Educational and Mobilization Campaign "Pora", 2004). In this way they created a myth around themselves as "youngsters who knew how to subvert a dictator", and both the domestic and international media began to pay more attention to *Pora's* methods of promoting democratic ideals.[221] Consequently, the peaceful, humorous tone of the campaign not only won support from the opposition, the general public, and the international community, but it also skilfully exposed the real nature of Kuchma's regime – i.e. not as a guarantor of the maintenance of order, but as a guarantor of its own interests. The practice of

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[221] Keto Kobiashvili, *Kmara* activist, quoted in Fournier 2007.

broadcasting demonstrations live (and access to international reporting on satellite television) further helped to diffuse the activists' frames during the critical days, and the Ukrainian events in Kiev between 2003 and 2004 acquired an international character.

7.   Conclusions

In the twenty-first century, state and non-state actors involved in world politics have to skilfully operate at once on the national and global levels in order to become influential. At the same time, young people are among the first in society to respond to global threats and opportunities by using a range of tools offered by modern communication. The cross-national dimension in the experiences of *Kmara* and *Pora* reflects these new trends in political activism. The knowledge of foreign languages, access to new media technologies, and links to the national and international NGO sector were the main features that differentiated young core activists from the rest of the student population, making them important political players. Moreover, domestic and international organizations provided key resources for the activists to publicize their issues and to form networks with the participants of victorious movements. This led to an effective symbiosis of NGOs with youth activist groups: NGOs benefited from greater youth's mobilization capacity while the young activist relied on NGOs' "organizational infrastructure" in conveying their message. As a result, radical youth groups became an inseparable feature of the recent revolutionary regime changes in the former Soviet republics and triggered the heated discussion on the further spread of "revolutionary technologies" in the region.

The prevailing common denominator between *Kmara* and *Pora* was their belief that non-violent action was the best method to use in the struggle to attain a "normal" life in their country. Therefore, *Otpor's* attractive campaign model became the standard for the student

protests in Georgia and Ukraine. Whilst the protest techniques may not have been radically different from those used by Gandhi or Martin Luther King, the Internet, mobile phones, and text messaging offered the present-day activists new possibilities. The youth groups' frequent references to modern marketing terminology created the impression that they were managing a business project rather than a protest campaign. Blended with humorous stunts, the marketing-oriented approach made protest "cooler" for the younger generation and helped to break the pattern of political apathy. Hence, by updating old methods with a modern branding, the young participants of the "coloured revolutions" developed new versions of opposition movement to match the socio-political contexts of their life in a "global village". At the same time, the student and NGO networks provided a context in which potential activists could socialize, form a collective identity, and reach a greater number of people.

Alongside a rapid diffusion of forms, tactics, and thematic frames of collective action, traditional political opportunities also played a significant role in shaping *Kmara's* and *Pora's* development , thus highlighting the enduring significance of Tarrow's work (1994) and other social-movement theorists (e.g. McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Meyer 2004). Although in countries with hybrid political systems the phenomenon of any movement's emergence still poses some questions for social-movement researchers, the concept of "semi-authoritarianism" exposed the existence of similar factors characteristic of this regime type which affected the movements' activities in a specific way. In Georgia and Ukraine, the fixed and volatile features that decided on the nature of Shevardnadze and Kuchma's regime provided a key tool for understanding the outburst of youth political activism in a hybrid form of a political system:

- the "routine" of competitive but fraudulent electoral process gave the main incentive for forming youth campaigns;

- the elite realignments resulted in emergence of new opposition leaders that were an attractive political option for parts of the younger population, which signalled the right moment to advance youth activists' anti-regime claims;

- the blatant election fraud, which indicated limiting access to the political system, undermined the legitimacy of the authorities and justified the youth's radicalisation in the eyes of fellow citizens;

- the state's incapability and unwillingness to break up the peaceful protests encouraged the youth groups to engage in disruptive direct action tactics.

Accordingly, instead of dismantling their organizational structures, the governments' half-hearted efforts to discredit *Kmara* and *Pora* led not only to their increased ability to mobilize the public but also to a kind of "mythization" of their collective activity among the youth.[222]

It is worth mentioning, however, that hybrid regimes often mix authoritarian and democratic features in a variety of ways, and different factors were more powerful than others regarding their impact on the activists' organizational and tactical choices. Thus, despite important cross-national commonalities, the authoritarian tendencies of particular leaders have also defined what was unique about *Kmara* and *Pora*. These include:

- Shevardnadze's less repressive "liberal autocracy" (Nodia 2005: 101), than Kuchma's regime, where *Pora* was more susceptible to the state's coercive behaviour;

- *Kmara*'s access to independent news sources in Georgia, which allowed its activists to built the image of a much broader student movement than it was in reality;

- stricter control of the media in Ukraine than was the case in Georgia, which made the Internet the main tool to transmit activists' message to potential recruits and to a broader public.

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[222] Interview, former *Pora* activist, 31 May 2007, Kiev, Ukraine.

In addition, due to particularities stemming from both historical and social contexts, *Kmara* failed to arise as a broad student anti-regime movement, whilst the Ukrainian youth protests against the conduct and results of the elections transformed into a broad civic movement in opposition to the system of power.

In both cases, however, *Kmara* and *Pora* were an important and integral part of broader opposition movements which were triggered by the electoral fraud that happened in 2003 in Georgia and a year later in Ukraine. Such development of a radical youth wing within a broader political movement is an important feature of the social-movement dynamic. Defined in the literature as a "radical flank effect", it occurs when the existence of extremist groups helps to legitimate the position of the moderate civic or political forces with the similar yet more acceptable claims. The main problem with this concept, however, is that it presumes that violent resistance is inseparable from the strategies pursued by radicals. As the *Kmara* and *Pora* experiences proved, having "radical" goals does not automatically mean implementing violent action, especially when non-violent tactics have the potential to be as disruptive as violence (Schock 2005: 49). Such a situation, viz. when non-violent protagonists armed only with "radical" goals can produce fundamental change in the political structure, seems especially relevant in explaining revolutionary regime changes during the "coloured" revolutions" and future research on the increased use of repertoires that do not resort to violence by youth campaigns could possibly contribute to explain further this phenomenon.

Appendix: *Kmara* and *Pora* mission statements

	Campaign For Free and Fair Elections **Kmara** (Enough)	Civic campaign **"Pora!"** (It's high time)*	National mobilization and informational campaign **"Pora"** (It's high time)**
Status	*Kmara* is a **civic movement**, organized as an open, **nonpartisan** initiative of activists of various age groups and regions, students, non-governmental organizations, religious groups, and other private citizens, that is designed to ensure free and fair parliamentary elections in Georgia. It campaigns for human rights and use creative nonviolent advocacy to force the solutions which are essential to a free and prosperous future.	**Civic campaign** *"Pora!"* is based on **non-violent** approach to resistance and aims at increasing the level of civic activity in Ukrainian society. Campaign *"Pora!"* will cover the whole territory of Ukraine and will consist of numerous actions and activities. Our friends and/or spiritual partners are Serbian *Otpor* (www.*Otpor*.com), Georgian *Kmara* (www.*Kmara*.ge), Albanian *Mjaft* (www.mjaft.org) and Belarusian *Zubr* (www.zubr-belarus.com).	The *Pora* Campaign is **independent from any political structure**, commercial or governmental organizations. It is a **self-governing nation-wide** action, registered in the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. Organizational and legal bases for the Campaign's realization are provided by the Coordination Centre of the Campaign that is a main structural department of the Campaign.
Goals	▪ to activate and mobilize as many people as possible from all over the country in order to avoid frauds in upcoming elections and to enable people to make fully perceived vote; ▪ to involve people in policy making and to make public opinion as a leading principle for governmental officials of any level; ▪ to help changing the regime through civil disobedience campaign and assisting democratic opposition to replace the existed government.	▪ to promote citizens' participation in elections 2004 and ensure their transparent, fair and timely organization.	▪ to provide conditions for definitive affirmation of democratic priorities in the development of Ukrainian society, realization of complex reforms, formation of transparent power structures in Ukraine, as well as realization of its Euro-Atlantic choice during the Presidential elections of Ukraine in 2004.
Strategy	▪ First stage covers the period until parliamentary elections: 1) establishment of basic organizational structures (creating groups in regions and departments of universities); 2) pursuing strategic political position (nonviolent resistance regime in collaboration with oppositional parties). ▪ Second stage includes election campaign and day of election itself. *Kmara* at this stage carries out wide scale mobilization campaign for get-out-to-vote (GOTV). ▪ In third stage, after defeating existing regime and attainment desired reforms in country, *Kmara* will keep working on active citizenship issues either to	▪ to prove to the ruling political elite in Ukraine that the power it gets from people is not given forever; if the job is done in an unsatisfactory manner every government official – from clerk to president – risks to lose it; ▪ to 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; ▪ as a result – to strengthen civil society and democracy in Ukraine, to bring Ukraine politically and economically closer to the European standards as well as to guarantee equal opportunities to all Ukrainian citizens.	▪ to come up with alternative mechanisms for delivering objective information and candidates' positions directly to citizens in all regions of Ukraine over the course of the electoral Campaign; ▪ to stir up participation of electoral groups supporting Euro-Atlantic integration ideas, national priorities, and democratic development (youth, intellectuals, etc.) during elections; ▪ to provide organizational conditions for active participation of those sympathetic to a European vector of development for Ukraine in informational and educational components of the electoral Campaign;

	mobilize observers for elections in any level or enabling people to lobby any kind of policy issues. *Kmara* will work with upcoming generations to develop civil society and active citizenship mentality as well as political culture a guarantee of transparency, accountability towards people and good governance within any further government as far as coming of certain government does not necessarily means setting up values pursued by *Kmara*. Only social activism and attempt is a tool of rooting up of desired values.		- to form a developed and powerful network of volunteers for effective promotion of national-democratic ideals during the electoral Campaign; - to carry out broad and well-grounded promotion of European and national-democratic ideas (slogans) to attract a substantial part of neutral or poorly-informed citizens towards progressive forces in society; - to create a mechanism for efficient preparation of informational and educational materials pertaining to the socio-cultural and political specifics of the regions, and for their efficient distribution using the network formed in all regions of Ukraine; - to mobilize society for the protection of their democratic rights and freedoms in case of falsification of election results or of other illegitimate actions of authorities.
Problem statement	Previous experience of parliamentary and presidential elections clearly demonstrates that **large magnitude of election fraud**, as well as political tension, has to be expected in upcoming parliamentary elections in November 2003. Lack of consensus around electoral legislation exacerbates political situation. **Repudiation of applying current legislation** in regards with Central Election Commission (establishing professional election supervisory body) and inclusion of party representatives within above-mentioned supervisory body generates mistrust in election administration from both population and politicians. According to recent development, **political criminal behavior** (wrongdoing) reached immense scales. Number of political parties control criminal groups, **who illegally intervene within political process**. Their intervention takes form of violent rampages at polling stations, voter terror etc. In spite of the above-mentioned violations, law enforcement agencies have not prosecuted a single person. As a	Ukrainian society after turbulent changes in the end of 80s – beginning of 90s year after year has been increasingly resembling a swamp without any sign of life. Even if from time to time there was some disturbance – it left very small if any marks, because the surface very quickly covers with the slime of **apathy and distrust**. Such society humbly accepts any **rights violations**, any **oppression by the authorities**, thus giving a green light to them for even more impertinent steps, impunity and **transition to dictatorship**. In the same time the **impunity of authorities** is only another side of **civic passivity**. Therefore in order to change the situation both citizens and civic institutions should become more active to make people realise they have an opportunity to influence situation in the country. The best timing for this is pre-elections period, because this is when majority of population keeps asking themselves – what's next? **Elections is the moment of direct application of people's power**. It is time when each and every citizen should evaluate efficiency of activities of elected officials, who were	Present-day socio-political development in Ukraine, despite some economic achievements, is characterized by **authoritarianism** and **systematic oppression of basic rights and freedoms**. After a decade of post-totalitarian transformation the Ukrainian society is **losing trust** in the former-communist nomenclature that still retains power in the country, but is **unable to ensure** its consolidation and to carry out conceptual **reforms**. Today Ukraine faces the **fundamental challenge** of making decisive choice on its social and geo-political priorities. The solution to this challenge can be obtained only through free and transparent elections. Taking into account the unique internal political circumstances and important geopolitical processes on the European continent, the future Presidential **elections** of Ukraine will symbolically **complete the post-Soviet stage of social transformation,** and their results get crucial significance both for strategic prospects of Ukraine and for the system of European safety.

	result, **political violence** became widely exercised antidemocratic practice.	hired by the voters 4 or more years ago and during this time the people in timely manner were paying their high salaries and ensured good conditions of life.	

Source: Mission statements of the Campaign For Free and Fair Elections "Kmara" (2003), Civic campaign "Pora!" (2004), and National mobilization and informational campaign "Pora" (2004).

* Black *Pora*

**Yellow *Pora*

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