

How Ukrainians View Their Orange Revolution: Public Opinion and the National Peculiarities of Citizenry Political Activities

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Abstract: This article focuses on the analysis of public opinions of the Ukrainian people on the nature, character, and characteristics of the citizens' political activism during the Orange Revolution. The author analyzes data from the annual nationwide representative survey, conducted by the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in February–March 2005. The time lag allows for the consideration of the public's attitudes and assessments of political activity in Ukraine during the “post-Orange” period, and for comparison of the experts' analysis of the Orange Revolution. The peculiarities of the public's political participation and citizens' political engagement in Ukraine are distinguished and examined.

Key words: citizens' engagement, democratization, Orange Revolution, political protest, public political activity, Ukraine

The period from the end of 2004 through the beginning of 2005 was marked by the enchanting events of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. The carnival-like Orange Revolution that broke out at the end of November 2004 in Kyiv, as well as in other western and central Ukrainian cities, had transformed Ukraine

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from a “grey-zone” (T. Carothers’s term) and marginal territory of the world’s political stage into one of the most intriguing countries in the world. The alternative “blue” (the color of the opposite political camp) meetings and manifestations over eastern parts of Ukraine, predominantly in the Donbas region, gave additional political traits to these sociopolitical events. Experts and researchers are now actively analyzing the phenomenon of the historic sociocultural changes in the country,¹ which had often been considered as a dependent geopolitical territory in the shade of neighboring Russia, while its population had been regarded as politically inert and passive. History will undoubtedly highlight key points of the Orange Revolution, its lessons, and its results. However, even now, it is obvious that these events demonstrate deep sociopolitical and cultural changes in the huge post-Soviet Eurasian continent. The profound internal transformation of Ukrainian society prepared cultural and social ground for the Orange Revolution.² The various aspects in the transformation of the hybrid semiauthoritarian political regime under the rule of L. Kuchma are comprehensively analyzed in the works of Taras Kuzio,³ Paul D’Anieri,⁴ Lucan A. Way,⁵ and other experts. Thus, Ukrainian political events at the end of 2004 sum up a period of complicated and multidimensional Ukrainian transformation,⁶ and the revolution itself was marked by numerous dimensions and tasks. In my opinion, the characteristic of the Orange Revolution and Yushchenko’s victory stated by Taras Kuzio—that it was an event that “brought together three revolutions in one: national, democratic, and anti-corruption”⁷—makes sense.

This article is an attempt to look at the Orange Revolution not only from the experts’ point of view, but also from public opinion, examining the nature and reasons for the orange political action. I also examine some peculiarities of the political activity of the citizens during that period. The spectrum of public opinion about the estimations and comprehension of the Orange Revolution, analyzed in the article, is chronologically traced to the post-Orange period of February–March 2005, when the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, conducted its nationwide representative survey.* The statistical data designate yet complicate an ambiguous democratic consolidation process in Ukrainian society at its new postrevolution stage of development. It is obvious that the public opinion on the orange events will change along with the process of further sociopolitical development in the country. At the time of writing this article (April–May 2005), there were comments about the end of the revolution’s “honeymoon period” and even about it as “treason.”⁸ But even judging from the short historical distance, public opinion was marked by diverse sociopolitical meanings and contexts. The orange project of social changes is still developing; its results and consequences are open and vague. It is still a question whether the political gap between the orange project and the postcommunist past is radical or revolutionary enough. In other words, as Paul D’Anieri rightly indicates, “the story of democratization in Ukraine is, at best, at a midpoint.”⁹ But, the Orange Revolution at least determined a new way of public political activity, formed new social experience, and integrated itself as a successful political mobilization of wide sections of the population in a post-Soviet country.

Postmodern Coup d'état or National-Democratic Revolution?

Participants and sympathizers of the political events at the end of 2004 (more than 20 percent of our poll respondents, who were in some way engaged in these events) regard them as the Orange Revolution. Others see these events as a *putsch*, *coup d'état*, *orange sabbath*, or a *conspiracy* that was planned and financed from abroad. Polarized views about the Orange Revolution are quite natural. Analysts and historians still disagree about the characteristics and determinations of the recent wave of sociopolitical changes in postcommunist Europe at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, which they may call revolutions, reolutions (reforms from above through the corrective pressure from below), the “exchange of the systems,” the change of a political regime through the exhaustion of recourses and collapse of the command-administrative system, and so on. It turns out that the sociopolitical events at the end of 2004 in Ukraine are even more complicated and contradictory.

The “aggregated” public opinion on the nature of the Orange Revolution from the above-mentioned survey conducted in February–March 2005 is represented in table 1.

From the methodological point of view, respondents' views about the nature and reasons for the orange events do not share a common truth (and the criteria for the truth, especially a sociopolitical one, are not always connected with the statistical majority). But at least three factors seem to be symptomatic. First, most respondents regard the Orange Revolution as a conscious and organized action. This includes various dimensions of citizens' engagement—“conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights” or coup d'état, either organized with Western support or carefully planned by the Ukrainian political opposition. This thesis is confirmed by statistic data, shown in table 2. It demonstrates that respondents are more likely to regard the Orange Revolution as an organized rather than spontaneous action, no matter what the nature and ways of such action. Second, although the conspiracy theory and theory about foreign direction of orange political actions are quite popular in mass public opinion

**TABLE 1. General Opinion Regarding the Orange Revolution:
“What was the Orange Revolution, in your opinion?”**

Response	%
Conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights	33.3
Coup d'état, organized with Western support	23.9
Coup d'état, prepared by political opposition	12.4
Spontaneous people's protest	11.8
It is difficult to answer	18.3
No response	0.3

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. $N = 1,800$.

(table 1), most respondents believe in internal reasons as driving forces of the revolution. Third, symptomatically, a great part of the respondents (18.3 percent) are not sure about the nature of the Orange Revolution (table 1). We can assume that these people are likely to support a “combined” version of partly internal factors, partly external factors, and partly spontaneous, yet, at the same, time partly organized action. As Ukrainian oppositionists state, the scale of protest actions exceeded even the bravest expectations.¹⁰ Yet, authorities had also made mistakes by expecting an easily controlled fifty to one hundred thousand activists.¹¹ More than a half-million manifestations by activists, which took place in the capital, was a surprise not only for politicians, but also for many specialists who studied the issues of protest potential in Ukrainian society. It means that the respondents’ realistic position concerning the combined spontaneous and organized character of the revolution is close to the experts’ evaluation of Ukrainian political events at the end of 2004. It also reflects the public opinion, formed by the informational situation of partial truths about the Orange Revolution.

The views about the nature of revolutionary events, their spontaneous or planned character, and their internal or foreign origin, including the possibility for the import of the revolution from abroad (table 1), do not change considerably based on the respondents’ gender, age, and education. This attitude is also not influenced by the respondent’s membership in certain public organizations, unions, or movements. But, the opinions concerning the nature of the Orange Revolution differ considerably, depending on the respondents’ participation in these events as well as their regional and ethnic identity.

Citizens’ participation in the Orange Revolution determines their dominant notions about it as “a conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their rights.” Thus, it is natural to assume that most activists had been participating in protest actions consciously and voluntarily. That is, they found argumentation for this position or saw it as a way to rationalize their own motives for public activ-

**TABLE 2. Organizational Nature of the Orange Revolution:
“Was the Orange Revolution a spontaneous or an organized action?”**

Response	%
An absolutely organized action	33.5
A partly spontaneous, partly organized action	25.2
A more organized than spontaneous action	23.9
A more spontaneous than organized action	8.7
An absolutely spontaneous action	8.1
No response	0.6

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. *N* = 1,800.

ity. A personal position of keeping a distance or not taking part in the orange actions (not in its possible political “blue” counteraction) in most cases is connected with uncertain, critical, or negative attitudes to these events. Such attitudes are mostly associated with the perception of the revolution as an internal or external political conspiracy against the government (table 3). On the contrary, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (92 percent), who support the view of the “imported” origin of the Orange Revolution, did not participate in it.

Representatives from the western and central parts of Ukraine—the regions of the most steadfast electorate of oppositional forces during the 2004 presidential elections and of the most active supporters of political opposition during the Orange Revolution—are also likely to evaluate these events as the “conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights.” However, the respondents from the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine are more likely to regard the orange political activity as a conspiracy, organized by internal or external forces (table 4).

“A personal position of keeping a distance or not taking part in the orange actions in most cases is connected with uncertain, critical, or negative attitudes to these events.”

Political positioning of the main candidates during the 2004 presidential election between the main Ukrainian ethnocultural and geopolitical poles—mostly Ukrainian-speaking, nationally oriented communities from the west and some central regions and mostly Russian-speaking and pro-Russian-oriented communities

TABLE 3. Attitude toward and Participation in Orange Revolution

Attitude toward the Orange Revolution	Personal Participation (%)		Total %
	Participated in a certain way	Didn't participate	
Conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights	64.3	25.3	33.3
Coup d'état, organized with Western support	8.0	28.2	23.9
Coup d'état, prepared by political opposition	7.7	13.7	12.4
Spontaneous people's protest	15.5	10.9	11.8
It is difficult to answer	4.5	21.9	18.3
No response	—	—	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. $N = 1,800$.

TABLE 4. Regional Distribution Attitudes Regarding the Orange Revolution

Attitude toward the Orange Revolution	Regions† (%)				Total %
	West	Center	South	East	
Conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights	58.2	41.9	23.0	17.3	33.3
Coup d'état, organized with Western support	5.8	12.0	34.2	39.1	23.9
Coup d'état, prepared by political opposition	8.4	12.2	12.3	15.0	12.4
Spontaneous people's protest	17.4	15.7	6.7	7.9	11.8
It is difficult to answer	10.2	18.2	23.8	20.7	18.3
No response	—	—	—	—	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. $N = 1,800$.

†In the survey, Ukraine was represented through four geographical regions as follows: West refers to the eight oblasts of Ukraine (L'viv, Ternopil', Ivano-Frankivs'k, Rivne, Volyn', Chernivtsi, Zakarpat'ye-Transcarpathia, and Khmel'nyts'kyi), Center refers to the city of Kyiv and seven oblasts (Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Kyiv, Cherkasy, Kirovograd, Chernigiv, and Poltava), South refers to three oblasts (Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson) and Crimea. East refers to Donbas, including Donets'k and Lugans'k and four other oblasts (Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs'k, Zaporizhzhia, and Sumy).

from the east and south regions (except for the Kherson region, which was politically divided into two parts), where ethnic Russians are predominantly concentrated in Ukraine (especially in Crimea)—had caused not only typical regional, but also ethnocultural distribution in the respondents' attitude toward the Orange Revolution. The proportional part of ethnic Russians who believe that it was a “coup d'état, organized with Western support” is two times greater than the amount of their like-minded ethnic Ukrainians (45.8 percent of Russians and 18.6 percent of Ukrainians support this position). On the contrary, this ethnocultural proportion is almost an inverse of the view of the revolution as “the conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights” (38.4 percent of all Ukrainian respondents and only 13.5 percent of Russian respondents support this idea; see table 5).

The factor of ethnopolitical mobilization of Ukraine's two major ethnic groups—Ukrainians (77.8 percent of the overall population in the 2001 census) and Russians (17.3 percent)—had certainly played an important role in preelection campaigning of the main candidates,¹² as well as in forming a special national-cultural meaning of the Orange Revolution. In this sense, the events at the end of 2004 were not only a civil rebellion, but also a national-democratic and anticorruption revolution (Kuzio 2005, Stepanenko 2005). The ideas of democratic renewal for the society and the political regime, as well as the agenda of the national interests policy, had been effectively combined in the mobilization slogans of the revolution. In the

TABLE 5. Attitude toward the Orange Revolution and Ethnocultural Self-identity of the Respondents

Attitude toward the Orange Revolution	Ethnocultural self-identification (%)		Total %
	Ukrainians	Russians	
Conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights	38.4	13.5	33.3
Coup d'état, organized with Western support	18.6	45.8	23.9
Coup d'état, prepared by political opposition	11.4	17.6	12.4
Spontaneous people's protest	13.7	4.2	11.8
It is difficult to answer	17.9	18.9	18.3
No response	—	—	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. $N = 1,800$.

next part of this article, I will examine the national factors of the Orange Revolution by discussing the particularities of national civil engagement. Now it is important to discuss some peculiarities of Ukraine's social-political transformation.

The national-democratic revolutions of Eastern Europe took place in nation-states that have historically determined their political independence (Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, although the latter with further peaceful separation into two nation-states) or were politically renewed after a comparatively short historic period (the Baltic countries). In Ukraine—with its unfinished project of nation and state formation and ongoing processes of national, language, religious, geopolitical, and cultural identification—any kind of important political events, and elections in particular, inevitably reopen the special national-cultural alternatives. The political struggle at the end of 2004 and the Orange Revolution intensified not only the still unsettled issues of ethnocultural and civic identity of a considerable part of Ukraine's population, but also actualized the open civilization-choice for the country. In this sense Kuzio, paraphrasing Huntington, rightly remarks that the 2004 election in Ukraine was 'a clash of civilizations' between two political cultures: Eurasian and European."¹³

Summing up the views of Ukrainians about the nature of the Orange Revolution, one should verify a certain realism of mass public opinion, convinced in its internal reasons. People believe that the Orange Revolution mostly included organized actions that were thoroughly prepared by political opposition with the help of a democratic foreign coalition and civil society. (The engagement of foreign political actors and mediators in the Ukrainian events at the end of 2004 was especially important on the stage of political bridging between conflicting sides.)

Undoubtedly, Ukrainian political opposition has successfully used the international experience of political struggle against authoritarian regimes. Functional analogies and technological-organizational algorithms of Ukrainian Pora, Serbian Otpor, and Georgian Kmara look like they were literally copied from Gene Sharp's book (well known to democracy managers) *From Dictatorship to Democracy*.¹⁴ Although Pora activists had training in the tactics and strategies of nonviolent resistance under the direction of experienced foreign experts, the contribution of domestic and international NGOs in the preparation and organization of protest actions was equally important. The new post-modern technologies and communication-informational tools of mobilization had also been effectively used in the Orange Revolution. The technical organization of a large tent city (a kind of Ukrainian know-how), informational-technological supply of the revolutionary actions, the standing national scene-tribune, the nonstop music show of popular singers that supported a festive atmosphere in the city, orange fashion, and informational commentaries and television broadcast of orange action and political developments in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities in real time all created a sense of direct participation for millions of Ukrainian citizens who were not directly standing on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square in Kyiv).

However, the Orange Revolution cannot be characterized purely as a political-technological postmodern coup d'état.¹⁵ As most respondents note, the motivational explosive fervor was based on the idea of the conscious struggle of the people, united to protect their own rights. The realistic wisdom of this position is that any revolutionary technology of mobilization, as well as external technical, organizational, or financial support, is senseless and inefficient without the internal potential of the society and a favorable sociopolitical background. In such conditions, the mass wish for changes achieves a critical level and is supported with sufficient civil representation.

Such estimation of public opinion coincides with most experts' views about Ukrainian political events at the end of 2004. In particular, one should agree with Gene Sharp, previously mentioned as an authoritative theorist of nonviolent resistance to authoritarian regimes. He criticizes the theory of conspiracy regarding the Orange Revolution and notes that the success of any revolution depends not on money, but on the change of the people's awareness and their strong belief in the ability to achieve social changes.¹⁶ In addition to this significant conclusion, one should add that mass aspiration for sociopolitical changes could be effectively supported by international civil society. This is one of the main reasons for the success of the revolution. Another important factor of its success is a drift of a considerable part of the influential elite from the bankrupt power to the political opposition.¹⁷ Thus, the Orange Revolution is the natural result of two interconnected tendencies in the recent development of Ukrainian society—the accumulation of a critical mass of social pathologies combined with the society's protest potential and its maturity for resistance. Let us analyze the main reasons for revolution and the respondents' views about this in greater detail.

Social Reasons and Factors of the Orange Revolution

To a certain extent, the Orange Revolution was the second historical stage in the wave of Eastern European transformation (since the beginning of the 1990s). In the Ukrainian case, there are still a number of unfulfilled tasks, such as forming a civil and transparent market economy, democratizing the political process, and establishing the rule of law. At the same time, the political events in Ukraine were not only a more-than ten-year-old Eastern European *déjà-vu*. The Orange Revolution had its particularities and its own idiom, not only the unfinished nation-state-building quality. In comparison with the tasks of the Eastern European revolutions of the 1990s, Ukrainian society has accumulated new system deformations of social development during the period of postcommunist transformation. Its main features are a corrupted, opaque economy; the “accrete” of government, politics, and more or less successful business under the “roof of the authorities”; as well as an almost total absence of the rule of law. Ukraine had been slowly, but inevitably, moving to a formally democratic state, but it essentially moved to an authoritarian regime¹⁸ and to social order, which was characterized with the total control by the authorities and widespread corruption. This brought a seemingly hopeless attitude about changes in the controlled sociopolitical life as well as the mass spread of corruption, even at the level of everyday life.

The convincing victory of Viktor Yushchenko’s *Nasha Ukrayina* (Our Ukraine) bloc over the traditional post-Soviet favorites of the previous elections—the Communist Party in the 2002 parliamentary elections—indicated a new stage of Ukrainian sociopolitical development. It mainly lies in the change of the main sociopolitical emphasis from decommunization (the slogan of Eastern European revolutions at the end of the 1980s) to the demafiazation of society. It was not only a question of clannish-subordinated state machinery, which functioned under the principle of strict hierarchic dependence and personal loyalty to the heads of the powerful clans, but also the question of forming a postcommunist Ukraine gang-clientele social order. And this is not a publicistic overestimation. According to the previous survey by the Institute of Sociology, most respondents (40.2 percent) answering the question about social groups that play the main role in Ukrainian society in the revolutionary year of 2004 (as well as in previous years, starting in 1994) had ranked “mafia and criminal world” in first place (table 6).

Judging by the change in public opinion, the mafia-corrupted social system of “machine politics” (the term of Paul D’Anieri) experienced its first crash at the end of 2004. In the postrevolutionary survey at the beginning of 2005, “mafia and criminal world” had lost its top rank and fallen to second place, after entrepreneurs and businessmen. It is important to note that, according to some experts’ opinions,¹⁹ participation in the Orange Revolution by the emerging middle class and businessmen, as well as their financial and organizational support, provided for its success and effective organization. (The businessmen suffered the most from the mafia-corrupted social relations and from the power abuse of officials.)

So, what do respondents consider to be the main reasons for the political activity of citizens during the Orange Revolution? As one can see from the survey results (table 7), the political activity during the Orange Revolution has a wide

**TABLE 6. Social Group Participation in Ukrainian Society:
“Which social groups, in your opinion, play an important role in the life of
Ukrainian society?”**

Response	1994 (%)	1997 (%)	1999 (%)	2002 (%)	2004† (%)	2005 (%)
Laborers	23.4	19.1	19.7	27.2	22.4	25.4
Peasants	20.9	15.9	15.4	22.4	17.8	19.3
Intelligentsia	16.3	9.9	11.3	17.3	13.2	18.1
Entrepreneurs, businessmen	24.2	25.2	30.7	28.0	27.0	31.9
Heads of state enterprises	16.2	10.1	14.7	13.9	13.8	15.4
State officials	29.1	25.1	33.3	23.9	23.6	25.7
Pensioners	1.9	1.7	2.7	6.8	3.1	6.8
Heads of state farms	10.7	5.5	8.1	8.6	5.8	7.5
Political party leaders	—	—	—	24.5	25.9	28.3
Military	6.6	5.5	5.3	8.1	4.8	7.5
Policemen, security service workers	7.9	8.9	9.9	14.5	12.6	12.8
Judges and the Office of Public Prosecutor workers	—	—	—	11.3	9.8	10.7
Mafia, criminal world	33.9	42.0	43.9	38.3	40.2	30.7
Others	0.7	0.5	1.3	1.1	0.8	1.6
No one	4.2	4.6	3.6	2.3	2.8	2.3
It is difficult to answer	17.4	18.3	13.1	13.1	12.6	14.2
No answer	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.2

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. $N = 1,800$.

†The survey was conducted in February–March 2004 and 2005.

spectrum of reasons (thus, many motives for public activity during that period), from protest against power and emotional-psychological factors to rational reasons, connected with the people's expectations for the improvement of their socioeconomic positions.

The hierarchy, shown in table 7, is relative, because public opinion is formed under the complicated interaction of numerous factors and motivations (ideologically, such as political viewpoints or values; emotionally, such as psychological traits; rationally, such as economical considerations, and so on). Moreover, the postrevolutionary period had brought about a certain mass reevaluation and ratio-

TABLE 7. Main Reasons for Public Activity in the Orange Revolution: “What were, in your opinion, the main reasons for public activity during the Orange Revolution?”

Response	%
Protest against the authorities	41.9
Hope to improve own social-economic position	30.4
Nonacceptance of one of the candidates at the presidential elections	24.7
Concern about the future of their children	21.7
Emotional protest against injustice	20.1
An awakening of Ukrainian national self-consciousness	18.8
A choice between good and evil	13.2
A wish to take part in the enchanting performance	9.9
A choice of geopolitical orientations between the West and Russia	5.2
Other	2.1
Difficult to answer	15.7
No answer	0.1

Note. The survey was completed in 2005. Respondents were asked to indicate no more than three positions. $N = 1,800$.

nalization of these events, initially caused by possible cooling of psychoemotional reasons and increasing socioeconomic pragmatics.

But, it looks like the government and authorities were an embodiment of all the system’s sins and shortcomings. According to our own research and that of other experts, authorities and state institutions (which are quite often unpopular in many countries) seriously lacked public trust and were not supported in Ukraine. The “tape scandal” of 2001, a further political crisis, which was connected with the tragic death of Georgiy Gongadze and the accusation that the nation’s highest ranking officials were connected to it, seemed to undermine the rest of the presidential power’s legitimacy. According to the survey in 2005, almost 40 percent of the respondents evaluated Leonid Kuchma’s work as president of Ukraine with the lowest possible mark.

It is also obvious that the “hand-rule” personalized government, based not on the rule of law but on *poniattia* (an informal, unregulated way of government), was inefficient and did not satisfy the majority of Ukrainians. According to our survey data in 2002–2004, almost half of the respondents were unsatisfied with the work of local administrations (theoretically the closest to people), and more than 40 percent of the respondents at that time believed that their deputy-representative in the parliament did not represent their interests. This problem has been actualized by the effective mobilization slogan of Yushchenko’s campaign and the Orange Revolution, “to live by the laws and not according to *poniattia*.”

The critical mass of accumulated protest potential in society had been traditionally directed against authorities and automatically transferred to the governmental

candidate. This was one of the main reasons for the Orange Revolution and is the opinion of more than 40 percent of the respondents asked in the 2005 survey. It is also important to note this peculiarity of Ukrainian public opinion as a personified attitude toward power. The personification of power is, to a certain extent, the opposite side of its demonization or, on the contrary, its idealization. Almost a quarter of the respondents noted that they disapprove of one of the candidates as a potential president. Although the political neologism dekuhmanization (unlike the more appropriate, in my opinion, demafiazation) simplifies the problem of strained social relations and reduces it to the question of overcoming the heritage of a government under Kuchma, in the public opinion, the change of power had become the key factor for sociopolitical changes.

“The Orange Revolution was not the revolution of ‘the hungry people.’”

The bellicose sociopolitical protest against power and possibility to improve it was connected with the constructive hopes for improvement of one’s socioeconomic position (30.4 percent of the answers) and with hopes for a better future for their children (21.7 percent of the answers; see table 7).

The logic of the presidential campaign anticipated the possibility to change presidential power in the country. It was possible to realize this in a convenient, peaceful way, which was acceptable to most people, including the Ukrainian political elite. The efforts of authorities to hand down the power, like an inheritance or capital (just like credits, shares, factories, or sanatoriums), to “their own” people—in the usual way the regime used to do, with a brutal abuse of legislative law—intensified the problem of choice for many citizens. The most active of them supported and participated in the Orange Revolution. For the electorate of the Donbas region, Yanukovich was a “countryman” and “a good manager, who understands people’s needs.” With his help, people from Donbas hoped to obtain economic and social preferences for the region. This, in a way, also proved the deformation of social relations in Ukraine.

It is important to comment on the economic explanations for the Orange Revolution, namely, people’s hope to improve their own socioeconomic position through political changes (table 7). The respondents regarded this as quite important. In any country, the economic element of the political programs of the candidates and parties is an essential component of their proposed contract with society. Political logic of the electorate connects this prospect with the change of the government. In the 2004 elections in Ukraine, the formula “the change of power = the improvement of people’s welfare standards” had its specificity, because the first element of the equation had been particularly emphasized. The point is that the Orange Revolution was not the revolution of “the hungry people.” Unlike the mass social motivations in overthrowing the political regime of Milošević in Ser-

bia and the demission of Shevardnadze's government during the Rose Revolution in Georgia at the beginning of 2004 (some observers classify these events as the model for the Orange Revolution), Ukrainian events of 2004 lacked the mass despair factor that was so typical in a Serbia destroyed by war and an economically collapsed Georgia. On the contrary, according to statistics, the Ukrainian economy since 2000 had the highest rate of economic growth in Europe (and among the highest in the world) and favorable macroeconomic indexes. It is quite another matter that, according to the most accurate economic "valet" indicator, most citizens felt the gap between pink official macroeconomic reports and their own economic well-being. "Where did the lion's share of financial incomes and returns from favorable economic growth disappear?" That was the question referring to the system of political and socioeconomic relations established in the country. So, interpreting the respondent's views, one should conclude that the Orange Revolution had also been caused by social and economic factors, particularly by the unfair socioeconomic distribution of common wealth. And that was reinforced by the existing social and power-clannish relations in the country. Mass hopes for the best, connected with the possibility to change the political regime, are also associated with such weight by respondents for their reason of public activity as "concern about the future of their own children."

My own observations and the results of my colleagues' express polls held at the "tent city" during the protest events proved the special role of emotional mass protests against injustice. These observations are also confirmed by the results of the survey, which shows that more than 20 percent of the respondents state that mass emotional protest was one of the important reasons of the revolution. As surveys show, mainly owing to aggressive political technologies and intensive political rhetoric, the 2004 election campaign acquired the meaning of the fundamental moral choice between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and justice and injustice.

The main reasons for the Orange Revolution, including "protest against the authorities," "hope to improve one's own socioeconomic position," "concern about the future of their own children," and especially "an awakening of Ukrainian national self-consciousness" are more often mentioned by the respondents in the west and center of the country. These are the regions that formed the electoral basis for the oppositional candidate and, afterward, the body of the active Orange Revolution participants. Protest activity in the west and center of the country was almost three times more intensive than it was in the south and east. For the representative sample of western and central regions, the factor of "awakening of Ukrainian national self-consciousness" was three times more important compared with the respondents from the east and south (table 8).

Symptomatically, for the respondents from the east and south of the country—the regions that became the electoral basis for the governmental candidate—it was much more difficult to identify their positions about the reasons for the orange actions, compared to much more active participation in these events by Ukrainians from the western and central regions of the country. In particular, the percentage of the respondents from the east who are not sure about the reasons

TABLE 8. Regional Distribution Attitudes Regarding the Orange Revolution

Reasons for the Orange Revolution	Region (%)				Total (%)
	West	Center	South	East	
Protest against the authorities	53.7	47.5	37.8	32.8	41.9
Hope to improve own social-economic position	37.4	36.6	23.7	24.8	30.4
Nonacceptance of one of the candidates at the presidential elections	23.9	23.5	22.2	27.0	24.7
Concern about the future of their children	31.1	29.0	14.4	13.9	21.7
Emotional protest against injustice	26.6	22.8	16.7	15.7	20.1
An awakening of Ukrainian national self-consciousness	33.2	24.7	11.9	9.1	18.8
A choice between good and evil	24.7	13.2	7.4	8.9	13.2
A wish to take part in the enchanting performance	2.4	4.9	13.7	16.3	9.9
A choice of geopolitical orientations between the West and Russia	2.9	1.6	7.4	8.3	5.2
Other	0.5	1.2	1.9	3.6	2.1
Difficult to answer	4.7	12.1	23.7	21.3	15.7

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. The respondents were asked to indicate no more than three positions. $N = 1,800$.

for the revolution is four times greater than the similar group of the respondents from the west. Such regional characteristics in general confirm a regional political geography of the country, with politically active citizens in the west and center and a more politically inert population in the east and south. I now examine in greater detail these and some other peculiarities of public activity during the Orange Revolution.

The Peculiarities of National Public Activity

The question of national peculiarities of political activity, traditions, and citizens' political culture in different sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts is extremely relevant and fruitful for further fundamental investigation,²⁰ especially in the post-communist states. Modern political processes in these countries, including the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, stimulated researchers to revise many conventional models and approaches. Scientists are now reconsidering a widespread extrapolation of methodological approaches to Western societies with stable democracies on the countries in transition, including the postcommunist societies. However, my task here is more unpretentious—to identify some features of sociopolitical activity dur-

ing the period of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. The orange events had become a type of prism through which a researcher could analyze the tendencies of public activity development and mass forms of protest by the end of 2004 in Ukraine. Such an approach to the moving forces and trends of social activity development and people's participation (not only willingness to participate) in social protests might provide additional evidence about the internal reasons of this revolution.

What were the peculiarities of public activity during the Orange Revolution? First of all, it is significant that the orange protest was the mass action. More than 20 percent of the respondents (one-fifth of the country's adult population) participated in these events in some way (table 9). If one takes into account the high level of citizens' political participation in eastern and southern Ukraine (no matter on what political motivations it was), as well as the active voter turnover during three tours of the elections, one can argue that the majority of the adult population of the country was involved in active political processes at the end of 2004 in Ukraine.

The explosion of citizen-based political activities in the period of the Orange Revolution resembled a popping cork effect, which gained its energy from the pressures of socioeconomic protests that had been accumulating during the last decade in Ukraine. Sociological monitoring surveys, held from 1999 to 2004, as well as numerous expert appraisals,²¹ confirm a considerable growth of society's protest potential, formed by people's dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic and political situation in the country. In answering the question of our survey, "What, in your opinion, is better—to suffer privations, but to keep order and peace in the country or to protest on the streets in case of worsening living conditions?" the share of the respondents who chose to protest had almost doubled over the decade since 1994; in revolutionary 2004, it reached 42.1 percent. The growing dynamic of mass protest feelings has been especially significant since the end of the 1990s. As Ukrainian experts Holovakha and Panina pointed out, during that period, "the

**TABLE 9. Participation in the Orange Revolution:
"Did you participate in the Orange Revolution actions?"†**

Response	%
Participated in Kyiv's actions	4.8
Participated in actions in other city (village)	12.8
Helped the participants of the political mass-meetings (providing provisions, food, money, etc.)	5.2
Did not participate	79.0
No answer	0.3

Note. Survey conducted in 2005. $N = 1,800$.

†Because some respondents found multiple responses relevant and selected more than one, the total percentage of the responses to the questions about one's participation or lack of participation in the Orange Revolution exceeds 100 percent.

peaceable potential in Ukraine is decreasing.”²² Political crisis at the beginning of 2000, caused by the “tape scandal,” and the widespread protest actions of that period not only seriously undermined the government’s (starting with the president’s) legitimacy, but also became the important sociopsychological precedent of the widespread protest actions as a legitimate way to demonstrate social dissatisfaction with the authorities.

However, the widespread actions against the authorities at the beginning of 2000 (including the all-national political movements “Rise up, Ukraine!” and “Ukraine without Kuchma”) were estimated by citizens as inefficient, and their actual influences on the authorities were viewed as “practically zero.”²³ As noted

“. . . respondents more often preferred the traditionally conventional ways of public political activity to radical methods.”

in the research on public political activity of that period conducted by the Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies named after Oleksandr Razumkov, “evident neglect of people’s lawful demands by governmental institutions” was the main reason for inefficiency that “hindered citizens’ public activity.”²⁴ One can

assume that the government’s indifference to the critical public opinion, the lack of social dialogue, and the disregard of public opinion in decisionmaking caused a powerful countereffect. Thus, the “insensitive” authorities were one of the main factors of increasing social instability and discontent that also intensified public political activity.

For political opposition in 2004, the problem of the inefficiency of public activity also coincided with the predominant citizens’ orientation (even during the period of political crisis at the beginning of 2000) to the peaceful and nonaggressive ways of protecting one’s own rights. Even in the stormy year of 2004, the respondents more often preferred the traditionally conventional ways of public political activity (such as a collection of signatures under collective petition, lawful meetings, and demonstrations) to radical methods (such as threats through strikes, boycotts, unsanctioned meetings, hunger strikes, seizures of buildings, or road blockades). Moreover, the statistical majority, consisting of more than one-third of the respondents in this survey, believes that none of these methods (peaceful or radical) was efficient enough for them to participate in.

During the last decade, the Ukrainian political situation was marked by the growth of the society’s protest potential that, however, had not achieved the level of mass willingness and practical ability for people to protect their own rights and to press on the authorities by all lawful means. The persistent posttotalitarian syndrome of the impossibility to protect one’s own rights before the state and the lack of efficient pressure on the government were still typical for Ukraine. Studies and polls taken at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000 found a considerable gap between the mass widespread dissatisfaction with the government and a

comparatively low percentage of the people willing to participate directly in meetings, demonstrations, and protest actions. In the 2004 survey by the Institute of Sociology, only a little more than 6 percent of the respondents believed in their ability to resist the possible government's decisions that could oppress their lawful rights and interests. Before the 2004 elections, such a psychological syndrome of despondency appeared in a widespread phenomenon of public belief that the oppositional candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, would really win, but the governmental candidate, Viktor Yanukovich, would become president anyway. The logic of social disability stated: "They would not give up the power" (or, as the governmental candidates noted, "you would not extrude us out from the power"). The logic of belief disclaimed this, stating, "I believe. I know. We can!"—a bright slogan from Yushchenko's campaign that concentrated the essence of the situation.

Of course, the factors of society's protest potential are not isolated from one another, but are interconnected in a complicated manner. But, which factor of this potential is significant enough that it can detonate in a critical situation? This is a difficult question, and that is why it is not easy to predict an answer through rational and mathematic calculation. It is simply too complicated (or even impossible) to take into account numerous factors, including causal as well as subjective ones. In particular, the relative duration and stability of the existing power system in Ukraine under the pressure of growing social dissatisfaction could be explained with reasons such as the routinization of a clientelist social system through spreading the everyday corruption and the people's adaptation to this system. It was, in its own way, the rational life strategy for survival for many individuals. This factor had been supporting and reproducing the system. The personal dependence of many people on corrupted governmental institutions had become a convenient and, to some extent, an efficient way of governmental control over the society.

The Orange Revolution has actualized one of the issues of modern social theory, which is being elaborated and researched in modern theories of collective social action (Hardin, Olson, Ostrom, Axelrod, and other researchers). The main point of this approach is in the interrelation between individual, sometimes pragmatically egoistic, interests and the public good. Freedom, democracy, and people's rights are no longer abstract categories in the current Ukrainian context. As sociological surveys proved, they had acquired a significant meaning for many Ukrainians by the beginning of the 2000s. These ideals are a kind of public good that cannot belong to any separate individual. At the same time, the achievement of this good takes many individual efforts and participation in collective actions for many potential free-riders, who would rely on the efforts of others. Awareness of this is possible in a situation of the highest sociopolitical tensions, of which the 2004 elections in Ukraine were an example. The larceny of personal choice (and the lie connected with this) was a much more serious issue than the larceny of public (that is, in postcommunist traditions no one's) property, such as a factory. This intrusion on the sacral Ukrainian world of privacy encouraged a lot of citizens to become consistent orange protesters and revolutionists. Overcoming the fear, apathy, and cynicism was a personal choice and risk in the

Orange Revolution. Its synergy was based not only on the thousands of such individual deeds, but also on the emerged mutual trust and solidarity among protesters with the sentiment “I hope that you will come to Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) with me and we will support each other.”

The sociodemographic analysis of the participants in the Orange Revolution showed that by the absolute as well as proportional indexes, men were more active during these actions. Twice as many men than women participated in Kyiv’s actions. But women’s contribution correlates with “men’s job” in the revolution. The survey confirmed that the youth and the middle-aged people were the most active age groups of the orange protest. The number of young people under age thirty exceeds the number of elderly people (older than fifty-five) by three times in Kyiv, and was twice as large in other cities (table 10).

The data on the social status of orange protesters showed that social groups, such as students, employers, small-scale businessmen, and self-employed workers, were more active than others. This conclusion coincides with the hypothesis that the new generation, formed during the years of Ukrainian independence, is more oriented than older generations to democratic values, and it also reveals some new social qualities (such as relying on oneself). Thus, one can affirm that the democratic potential in Ukraine is closely connected with forming new democratic values and entering new generations into the sociopolitical arena.

One of the explanations for the success of the Orange Revolution lies in the unique and favorable combination or constellation (using Max Weber’s term) of numerous preconditions (starting with the possibility for the peaceful, acceptable-

TABLE 10. Participation of Different Age Groups in the Protest Actions of the Orange Revolution†

Participation/nonparticipation in protest actions	Age (%)			Total (%)
	< 30 years old (%)	30–55 years (%)	> 55 years (%)	
Took part in the actions in Kyiv	8.3	4.9	2.3	4.8
Took part in the actions at another city (village)	17.9	13.3	8.5	12.8
Helped the participants of the political mass-meetings (providing provisions, food, money, etc.)	5.4	5.6	4.5	5.2
Did not participate	71.5	79.0	85.3	79.0
No response	—	—	—	0.3

Note. Survey conducted in 2005.

†Because some respondents found multiple responses relevant and selected more than one, the total percentage of the responses to the questions about one’s participation or lack of participation in the Orange Revolution exceeds 100 percent.

for-most-citizens change of the political regime), factors (including social, psychological, and ideological), and determination and will of the participants. As the experts argue, in a comparatively stable but friable balance between the existing protest potential of society and the strength of the governmental machine (like it was in the prerevolutionary situation in Ukraine), “the key role in stimulating the protest activity can be played by regional and *ideological* peculiarities rather than by welfare standards changes” (emphasis added).²⁵

The ideas of Ukrainian national renaissance and of the policy of national interests had become the important ideological meanings, which, to a certain extent, legitimized the revolutionary protest actions. Historically, the Ukrainian national idea was more efficacious and articulate in the western and central regions of the country, where people have clear notions about their national identity. In the Orange Revolution, the west played the role of traditional ideological locomotive, and the Ukrainian central regions, especially the capital, Kyiv, were turned into the main national arena for the orange citizens’ activity. These ideological regional peculiarities of civil activity during the period of the Orange Revolution are confirmed by the statistics of the 2005 monitoring survey (table 11).

Finally, it is necessary to mention some peculiarities of national public activity that became apparent during the Orange Revolution, such as citizens’ initiatives, which were not institutionalized by NGO structures, and the appearance of spontaneous grassroots self-organization. In particular, it is worth mentioning the experience of self-organization in the Sumy region. The Sumy self-organized a local coalition of citizens for fair elections, the Night Guard, which appeared to be much more effective than some electoral political headquarters and organizational structures of semiprofessional NGOs. The Orange Revolution’s success

TABLE 11. Regional Geography of the Orange Citizens’ Activity†

Participation/nonparticipation in protest actions	Region (%)				Total (%)
	West	Center	South	East	
Took part in the actions in Kyiv	8.9	9.3	—	1.2	4.8
Took part in the actions at another city (village)	31.1	11.5	3.0	7.4	12.8
Helped the participants of the political mass-meetings (providing provisions, food, money, etc.)	13.9	5.8	1.9	1.2	5.2
Did not participate	51.1	76.7	95.6	90.6	79.0
No response	—	—	—	—	0.3

Note. Survey conducted in 2005.

†Because some respondents found multiple responses relevant and selected more than one, the total percentage of the responses to the questions about one’s participation or lack of participation in the Orange Revolution exceeds 100 percent.

had proved that although the number of NGOs, their membership size, and the organizational structures of civil society are important, it is not sufficient to explain what makes a formal democracy efficient. Besides that, sociological surveys indicate that Ukrainian NGOs, for diverse reasons, still lack broad public support and trust.²⁶

The persuasiveness of the Orange Revolution lies in that it was not the revolution of “the agencies for development” and numerous semiprofessional NGOs (although the indubitable contribution of organizations such as Pora, Clean Ukraine, I Know How, and others in preparation of revolutionary background and triggering the mechanisms of public mobilization requires a separate study). However, as the previous experience of forming numerous preelection NGO coalitions in Ukraine showed, the superficial lobbying of political changes at the level of democratically oriented elites and the circle of professional democratic managers without attracting wide public participation cannot be successful. Probably the most important sociopolitical results and the greatest lessons of the orange events were the proof of the constitution’s statement about “the people as the only source of power” and the people’s display of its practical ability to overcome the authorities and put them in their place.

The Orange Revolution has also proved that civil society is not only about a public opposition to the government and the civil external control on its institutions. There is another component that is not less important, but sometimes neglected in postcommunist circumstances—the values and practice of tolerant coexistence of different political and sociocultural differences. Ukrainian society has demonstrated a great potential for this. At the time of confrontation between high-ranking officials and political leaders, the so-called “street” and the Maidan—thousands of ordinary people and nonprofessional politicians—owing to their tolerant communication and, sometimes, fraternization between the representatives of the orange and blue political camps, showed the highest examples of democratic political culture and of civic values.

The Ukraine’s Democratic Chance

The Orange Revolution marked a new stage of Ukrainian society development and identified the end of the previous political epoch of the hybrid Soviet-type system. This new stage is also associated with the political bankruptcy of the Kuchma regime. Taras Kuzio has identified these events as the “second and final stage in the Ukrainian revolution that began toward the end of the Soviet era.”²⁷ The significance of the Ukrainian revolution exceeds Ukraine’s borders and certainly will positively influence the development of democratic movements and tendencies toward semiauthoritarianism and authoritarianism in post-Soviet space.

Chance and hope—these are still the main political meanings of the Orange Revolution. As monitoring surveys of the postrevolutionary period show, the level of societal expectations and hopes for the best in Ukraine were high after the change of political power in the country. But for any country, even one with a historically long democratic tradition (and thus all the more so for Ukraine), democracy, transparent market economy, and civil society are not once and for all completed social

projects or the results of the activities of the political elites. They require everyday efforts from the whole society in affirming their own vitality and reproduction ability through the upcoming generations.

The Ukrainian Orange Revolution has identified only the first, but essential stage of this work. In the ideology of Europe's anticommunist democratic movements, this stage was determined as "citizens against the state," or in the present Ukrainian case, "citizens against the authorities." There are more complicated tasks and challenges on the agenda. Among them are consolidation of a still friable democracy, formation of new civil purports for the divided orange-blue nation, evidence to millions of citizens the realities of achieving the aspirations and hopes declared by millions of citizens during the Orange Revolution of their own improved economical welfare, and a civilized European breakthrough of Ukraine.

NOTES

*The regular annual nationwide representative survey "Monitoring Ukrainian Society" by the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (sample = 1,800 respondents) conducted in February–March 2005. Throughout the text I will be referring to the data of this survey, if not otherwise cited.

1. See Taras Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine's 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution," *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 2 (March/April 2005): 29–44; Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: The Opposition's Road to Success," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 2 (April 2005): 117–30; Paul D'Anieri, "The Last Hurrah: The 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections and the Limits of Machine Politics," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 38 (2005): 231–49; Lucan A. Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 2 (April 2005): 131–45; Robert K. Christensen, Edward R. Rahkikulov, and Charles R. Wise, "The Ukrainian Orange Revolution Brought More Than a New President: What Kind of Democracy Will the Institutional Changes Bring?" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 38 (2005): 207–30; Iryna Bekeshkina, "Aktsii Pomarancevoyi revolutsii: Sho sponukalo lyudei vyity na vulytsiyu?" *Politychnyi portret Ukrayiny* 32 (2005): 59–66.

2. For a more detailed background, see Viktor Stepanenko, "Ukrayinska suspilna transformatsiya kriz prysmu Pomarancevoyi revolutsii," *Politychnyi portret Ukrayiny* 32 (2005): 34–46.

3. Taras Kuzio, "Regime Type and Politics in Ukraine under Kuchma," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 38 (2005): 167–90.

4. D'Anieri, "The Last Hurrah."

5. Lucan A. Way, "Rapacious Individualism and Political Competition in Ukraine, 1992–2004," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 38 (2005): 191–205.

6. Kimitaka Matsuzato, "Semipresidentialism in Ukraine: Institutional Centrim in Rampant Clan Politics," *Demokratizatsiya* 13, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 45–58.

7. Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko," 42.

8. Anders Aslund, "Betraying a Revolution," *Washington Post* (May 18, 2005).

9. D'Anieri, "The Last Hurrah," 248.

10. "Zakulisie oranzhevoy revolutsii," Interview with Y. Karmazin and P. Barnatskiy. *Vesti Versii Sobytiya* 6, no. 135 (2005).

11. Kuzio, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," 125.

12. See Valeryi Khmelko, "Dynamika reityngiv i sotsialnyi sklad elektorativ V. Yushchenko ta V. Yanukivich u vyborchyi kampaniyi 2004 roku," *Politychnyi portret Ukrayiny* 32 (2005): 13–25.

13. Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko," 35.

14. Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Lib-*

eration (Boston: Albert Einstein Institution, 2002).

15. Jonathan Steele, "Ukraine's Postmodern Coup d'Etat," *The Guardian*, November 26, 2004.

16. Quotation of Jeremy Bransten, "Ukraine: Part Homegrown Uprising, Part Imported Production?" *RFE/RL*, December 20, 2004.

17. See D'Anieri, "The Last Hurrah," 244–45.

18. For a more detailed analysis of the trajectory of Ukraine's political regime, see Kuzio, "Regime Type and Politics"; D'Anieri, "The Last Hurrah"; and Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution."

19. See Volodymyr Fesenko, "Vybory napolovynu z revolutsieyu," *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy* 32 (2005): 5–12.

20. Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Marylin Rueschemeyer, and Björn Wittrock, eds., *Participation and Democracy: East and West, Comparisons and Interpretations* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998).

21. See Evgen Holovakha and Natalia Panina, "Gotovnist do sotsialnogo protestu: dynamika, regionalni osoblyvosti i chynnyky formuvania," in *Ukrayinske suspilstvo: desiat rokiv nezalezhnosti* (Kyiv: Institut sotsiologii, 2001), 188–201; Yuri Yakymenko, "Hromadianska aktyvnist v Ukraini: chy pryrecheni my maty te, shcho maiemo," *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* (October 26, 2002).

22. Holovakha and Panina, "Gotovnist do sotsialnogo protestu," 189.

23. Yakymenko, "Hromadianska aktyvnist v Ukraini."

24. Ibid.

25. Holovakha and Panina, "Gotovnist do sotsialnogo protestu," 189.

26. See Viktor Stepanenko, "Hromadianske suspilstvo v Ukraini: vid praktyk 'agentsiy vplyvu' do polityky hromadianskoi uchasti," in *Natsionalna bezpeka Ukrainy: The Conference of Alumni of Educational Programs in USA, September 16–19, 2004* (Kyiv: Stylos, 2004), 106–21.

27. Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko," 42.