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After the Revolution

Long-Term Effects of Electoral Revolutions

Grigore Pop-Eleches and Graeme Robertson

Although none of the color revolutions has proved to be completely successful in bringing about long-term democratic change, differences in outcomes among them cast light on both the possibilities and the limitations that countries face when liberalization opportunities present themselves. Comparison of Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan is instructive.

THE color revolutions in the former Soviet bloc and the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa demonstrate once again that dictators can be overthrown by pressure from the streets and that seemingly stable authoritarian regimes can unravel in a matter of weeks. The capacity of such revolutions to contribute to longer-term democratic development is, however, far less certain. While politicians and journalists highlight the transformative power of revolutions in the street, political scientists and sociologists tend to be more skeptical, stressing the importance of deep structural factors in shaping longer-term regime trajectories.

In this article, we look at four key cases in former communist states where authoritarian incumbents were overthrown in large part in response to protest in the streets and attempt to identify and explain the long-term effects of such “revolutions.” Specifically, we consider the cases of Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. Given the relatively small number of cases and the high degree of correlation between different domestic and international factors that shape outcomes, our goal is not to test general theories about the effects of electoral “revolutions” on democratization but rather to look in some detail at the causal mechanisms at work in each case and to see how fairly similar political “shocks” reverberate in different socioeconomic and political environments. Rather than focusing on why each of the revolutions has disappointed many observers (Haring and Cecire 2013), we examine differences in outcomes among them to cast light on both the possibilities and the limitations that countries face when liberalization opportunities present themselves. We show, for example, how varia-

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tions in postrevolutionary governance trajectories, such as Georgia's impressive progress against corruption or Ukraine's more competitive electoral process, can be explained by the nature of governing coalitions, which in turn are rooted in structural and contextual differences such as the importance of ethnic and regional cleavages or the distribution of economic resources. However, we also show how structural factors can work in ways that are difficult to predict based on existing theory. In particular, we show that state autonomy, a factor often associated with democratization, can sometimes represent an obstacle to progress, whereas ethnic and regional cleavages—usually thought to make democratization more difficult—can act as a barrier to authoritarian consolidation. Thus, we argue that variation in outcomes across the four cases confirms some of what we think we know about democratization but also challenges us to rethink the importance of context in influencing general relationships between democratization and structure.

Popular Protest and Democratization

When communism collapsed across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, hopes were sky-high that the “other Europe” would soon take its rightful place in the community of democratic nations. Moreover, with the end of the seventy-year communist detour in the former Russian Empire, many believed that the Third Wave of democratization would quickly spread far beyond Europe and well into Eurasia. The high hopes of the early 1990s, however, quickly ran into a complex reality in which the more Western, richer, higher-capacity, and more homogeneous states did indeed make a rather rapid transition to democracy, while most of the countries without such structural advantages either had great difficulty in consolidating democracy or did not even embark on democratization.

Nevertheless, just as the academic community experienced disappointment with the results of the first post-Soviet decade, events on the ground seemed to give democratization a major push forward. Street protests brought to an end the horrors of the Milošević regime in Serbia in 2000; and self-described democratic forces rapidly overthrew authoritarian leaders in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. These so-called “color revolutions” were greeted with great excitement (Aslund and McFaul 2006) and were seen as kick-starting stalled democratization projects in the region. Moreover, analysis of the protests suggested that they shared several common elements that suggested a model for democratic advancement in the post-Soviet space.

They all centered on protest against electoral fraud and involved aggressive popular mobilization on the part of the opposition in alliance with international forces. Their shared success meant that the “electoral model” of transition became the default approach to opposition organizing in the post-Soviet space (Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Karatnycky and Ackerman 2005).

It is now more than a decade since the color revolutions began and none of the revolt leaders remains in office. In Serbia, the 2012 elections marked the return of two parties associated with the Milošević regime—the Serbian Progressive Party (a splinter of the extreme nationalist Serbian Radical Party) and the former main party of power, the Serbian Socialist Party. In Kyrgyzstan, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who had emerged as the preeminent leader from the 2005 Tulip Revolution, was himself overthrown as a result of street protests in 2010. In Georgia, the revolutionary leadership is also gone, with Mikheil Saakashvili being replaced by Giorgi Margvelashvili in the October 2013 presidential elections. In Ukraine, the Orange Revolution ended with Viktor Yanukovich's victory in the 2010 presidential elections. Even though Yanukovich was overthrown in February 2014, the clear first-round defeat of Yulia Tymoshenko in new presidential elections in May 2014 suggests that the EuroMaidan protests should not be interpreted as a revival of the Orange Revolution. As a result, it is a good time to reflect on the medium-term political consequences of the four color revolutions.

The conclusions that we draw, it should be noted, are based on analysis conducted before the EuroMaidan protests and revolution in Ukraine. These events are still unfolding as we write and lie beyond the scope of the current analysis, though several features of our analysis—poor performance in fighting corruption combined with relatively competitive politics and autonomous security forces—play a clear role in the revolutionary events of 2014.

With the passage of time since the color revolutions, analysts have become much more skeptical of their power to bring meaningful democratic progress to the countries in question. Kalandadze and Orenstein (2009) argue that while Serbia and Ukraine have seen some improvement in the extent of democracy, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan have been stagnant at best. Others have been even more skeptical. Henry Hale (2005) proposes that to interpret the color revolutions in terms of democratization is to misunderstand the nature of the events. Rather than being conflicts between democratic and autocratic forces, as both journalists and participants perceived these revo-

lutions, the events actually consisted of collapsing and subsequently reforming patronage networks. The task facing the postrevolutionary leaders, then, had less to do with building democracy than with reasserting control over clientelistic politics. In this context, expectations of democratic improvements were misplaced.

Nevertheless, as we show in the next section, the results of the color revolutions are less uniformly baleful than the existing literature might suggest. Although early expectations were most certainly overblown, it is nonetheless clear that there is significant variation in postrevolutionary performance across the four countries. Moreover, once we move beyond simple democracy scores to more disaggregated measures of progress in the direction of a more democratic, law-bound state, then the variation across the cases becomes more, not less, marked. At the extremes, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia have gone in different directions—moving closer, we argue, to levels of electoral competition, media freedom, and other aspects of democracy that are typical of their geographic subregion. Nevertheless, as the analysis below shows, there are positive aspects of the Kyrgyz experience and negative aspects of the Serbian experience that complicate the simple picture. In the middle, both Georgia and Ukraine have had mixed democratic governance results since the color revolutions, but we argue that the mixtures are very different for reasons that are closely related to the contexts in which the respective revolutions took place.

In the rest of this article, we illustrate the variation across countries and suggest some explanations. While much of that variation—particularly Serbia’s progress compared to Kyrgyzstan’s stagnation—is in line with structural legacy-based theories of post-communist democratization (Pop-Eleches 2007), we identify some key dimensions on which performance is not well explained by the existing literature, such as the significant reduction of corruption in Georgia or the better-than-expected electoral competition and media independence in Ukraine. In these cases, we argue, the revolutions did have a significant effect on politics, but the specific effects vary from place to place and depend on the interaction of politics and structural conditions, most notably the nature of political cleavages, the structure of ownership, and the degree of state autonomy.

Democratic Governance After Color Revolutions

As a first step, in this section we present the temporal evolution of the four color revolution countries in terms

of certain important dimensions of democratic governance as measured by the Nations in Transit (NIT) indicator series: (1) *electoral process*, which covers the quality of elections and electoral processes, including party development and popular participation; (2) *media independence*, which gauges press freedom in terms of both legislation and actual outcomes; (3) *judicial framework and independence*, an indicator that captures human rights and minority protections, as well as judicial independence; and (4) *corruption*, including legislation to combat corruption, the efficacy of anticorruption initiatives, and public perceptions of corruption (Freedom House 2013). Figure 1 shows the trajectory of our four cases from 2000 to 2012 compared to one another and to the average annual score of the other former communist countries covered by Nations in Transit.

Two broad patterns are worth highlighting at the outset. First, the four countries experienced very different trajectories after their respective color revolutions. Serbia improved considerably along all dimensions after the Bulldozer Revolution and experienced little or no backsliding, whereas Kyrgyzstan experienced no real governance boost after the Tulip Revolution, then embarked on a uniformly downward trajectory until Bakiyev’s ouster from office in April 2010. Ukraine and Georgia occupied intermediate positions; on average (and in specific areas such as electoral process), the net change in governance scores under their “color revolutionary” regimes was minimal.¹

The graphs also highlight a second, more nuanced, point, however—one that illustrates the benefits of our more disaggregated governance measurement approach. Particularly in the two intermediate cases (Georgia and Ukraine), the averages conceal large variations across both issue areas and time periods. Thus, both countries had areas of genuine and lasting improvement—corruption control in Georgia and media independence in Ukraine—as well as areas where governance became less democratic, such as media independence in Georgia and judicial independence in Georgia and particularly Ukraine. Furthermore, the graphs reveal instances—the electoral process in Georgia and media independence in Serbia, among others—where noticeable progress in the early postrevolutionary period was followed by subsequent backsliding.

Ukraine experienced significant early improvements in media independence in the first few years after the Orange Revolution, followed by moderate backsliding after 2007. The electoral process and corruption remained unchanged, while the judicial framework and indepen-

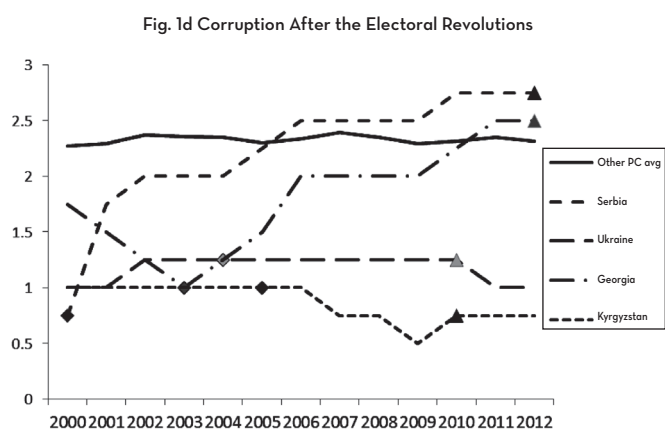
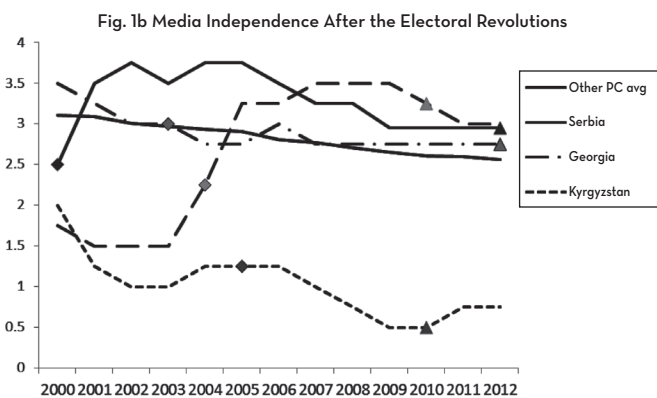
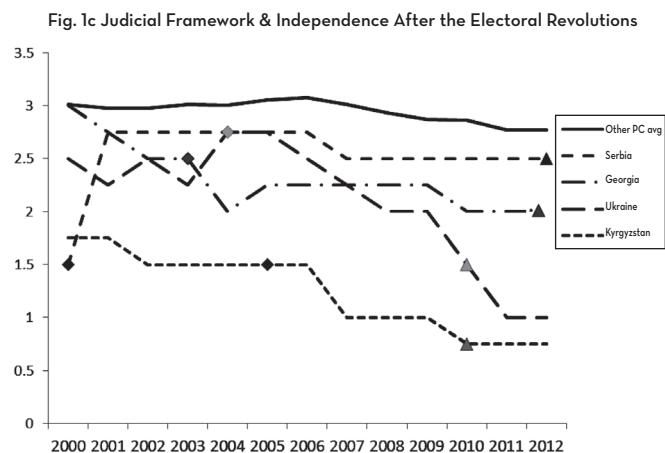
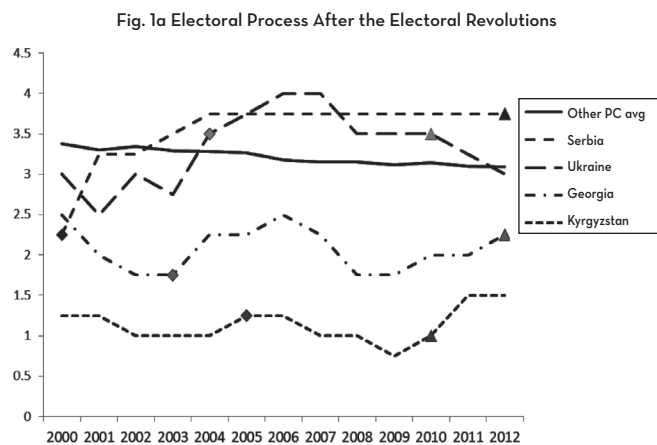


Figure 1. Comparison of Democratic Governance in the Color Revolution Countries

Note: ◆ indicates timing of Color Revolution; Δ indicates end of CR regime. PC—Post-Communist.

dence declined consistently and rather sharply until the end of the Orange regime in 2010. Meanwhile, Georgia experienced spectacular and sustained progress in fighting corruption, a success offset by modest declines in media and judicial independence and by post-2006 deterioration in the quality of the electoral process (after an initial improvement in the years right after the Rose Revolution).

As a next step, Figures 2–5 focus in turn on the trajectories of individual countries and provide subregional averages as reference points against which to judge the relative performance of the color revolution regimes. This approach allows us to gauge how these regimes performed vis-à-vis their immediate peer group and can help us disentangle the impact of the color revolutions from broader regional trends in governance.

Figure 2 illustrates Serbia’s consistent progress since the fall of Milošević. Although the improvement was most impressive and uniform with respect to corruption

and somewhat more equivocal for media independence and judicial independence, Serbia managed to close or even eliminate the large initial gap between it and its immediate peer group—other Balkan countries—across the four indicators. Given that much of the progress was arguably fueled by the long-term goal of European integration, however, the considerable and persistent remaining gap compared to the new ex-communist European Union (EU) members forces us to view this progress in a more somber light. Finally, the remaining wide gaps with respect to corruption and especially judicial independence suggest a more enduring legacy of the Milošević era—particularly the fallout from the Yugoslav wars—on the country’s rule of law.

At the other end of the spectrum, Figure 5 illustrates the difficulties that Kyrgyzstan has experienced in maintaining its early superior performance compared to its neighbors. For most of its first decade of independence, Kyrgyzstan was much more politically open than any of its neighbors, making it one of the few democratic “over-achievers” in the former Soviet space. Unfortunately, rather than the Tulip Revolution representing a return to that period of overperformance, the data reveal a steady

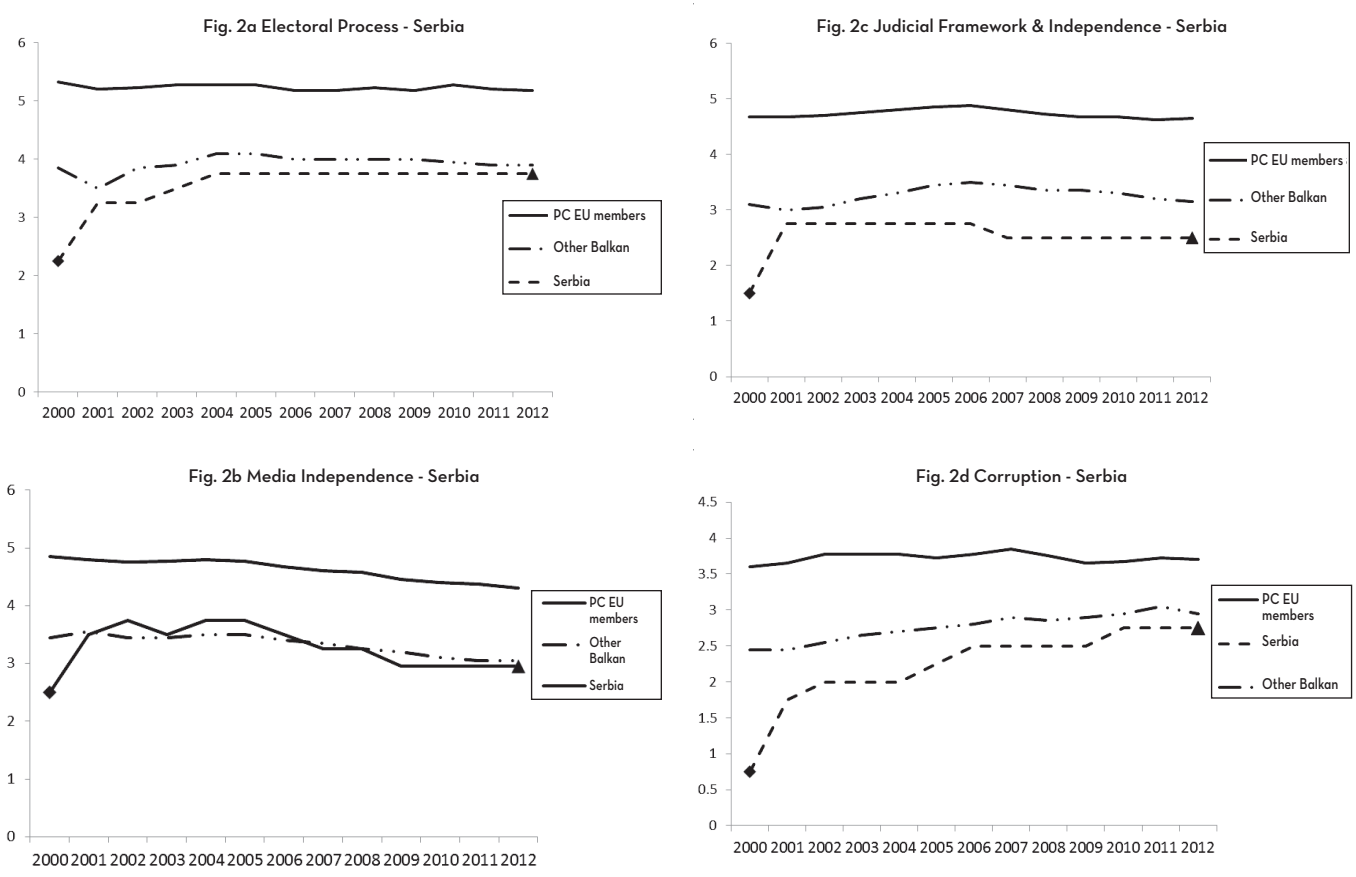


Figure 2. Democratic Governance in Serbia in Comparative Perspective

Note: ◆ indicates timing of Color Revolution; Δ indicates end of CR regime. PC—Post-Communist.

decline on most indicators. The Tulip Revolution did not reverse but rather accelerated this trend. Bakiyev’s administration set about attempting to consolidate its control over the Kyrgyz political system as fast and completely as possible, trying to build a more centralized patronal presidency on the model of the other Central Asian states. Only after Bakiyev’s ouster did Kyrgyzstan return to the more pluralistic if fractionalized politics of the 1990s.

The picture in Ukraine and Georgia is much more nuanced than in the other two states. In Ukraine, as Figure 4 illustrates, the Orange Revolution does seem to have brought some real gains, if not across the board. Perhaps most notably, the media landscape in Ukraine has improved considerably since the Kuchma era and continues to be one of the best in the post-Soviet space. Despite some disappointments in this sphere, discussed below, the relative vigor of Ukraine’s media was an important bulwark against the Yanukovich administration’s attempts at authoritarian consolidation. Judicial inde-

pendence, in contrast, was already weak under President Leonid Kuchma and has continued to deteriorate in the post-Orange era. In the early years after the revolution, there were no consistent efforts to reform the courts and to improve the judicial system. After the election of President Viktor Yanukovich, the picture worsened considerably, with high-profile political prosecutions being added to the list of existing weaknesses in the judicial system. As we now know, discontent with poor performance on corruption combined with a relatively free media proved to be a fateful combination for Yanukovich. Protests heavily influenced by discontent at endemic corruption began late in 2013 and eventually led to Yanukovich’s ouster in a violent revolution in February 2014. This latest round of revolutionary upheaval in Ukraine is still very much underway at the time of writing (May 2014) and it is too early to evaluate its likely impact on democratic governance. Nevertheless, our analysis suggests both possibilities and limitations on what might be expected from the new regime in Kyiv.

Finally, Figure 3 illustrates the complex path that Georgia has walked since the Rose Revolution. At first, the quality of the electoral process in Georgia improved: the 2004 parliamentary and presidential elections fea-

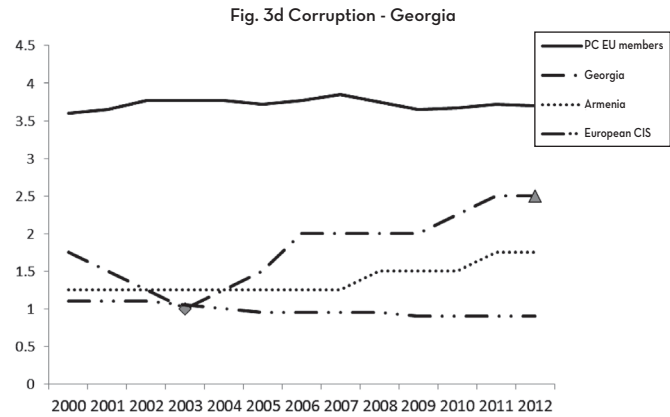
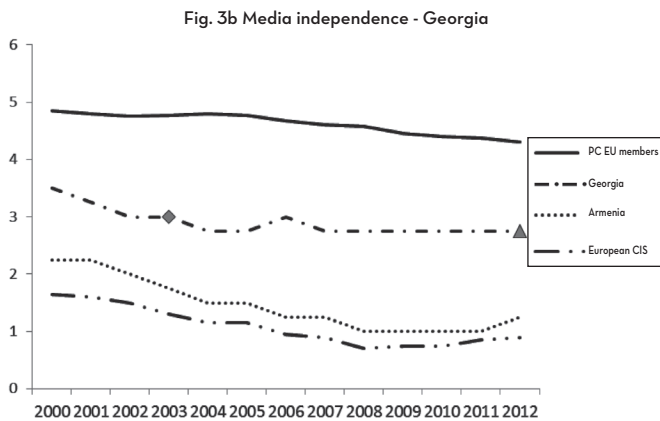
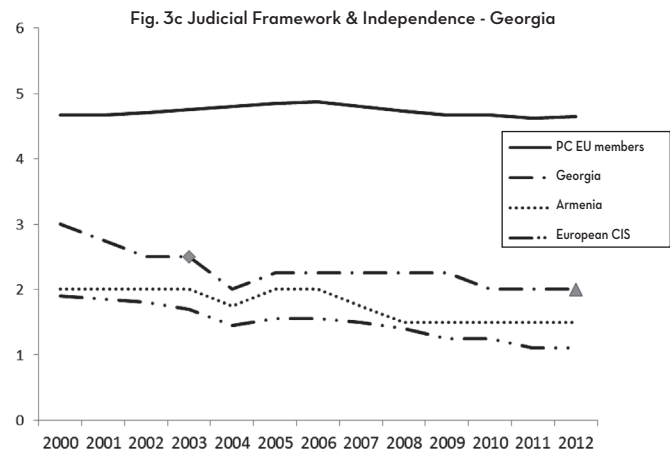
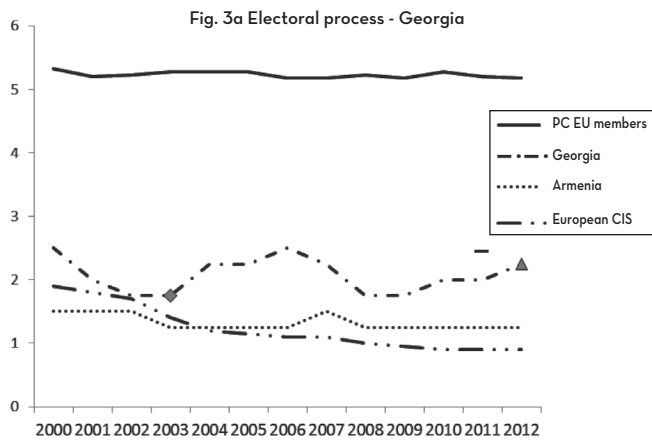


Figure 3. Democratic Governance in Georgia in Comparative Perspective

Note: ◆ indicates timing of Color Revolution; Δ indicates end of CR regime. PC—Post-Communist.

tured fewer irregularities than the 2003 elections that had triggered the electoral protests. This progress was largely reversed from 2006 to 2008 as President Saakashvili and the ruling United National Movement (UNM) responded to mounting political challenges from the opposition by using electoral rules and its control of administrative resources to tilt the electoral playing field in its favor. Although media independence also did not improve in this period, Georgia's relative performance was well above its ex-Soviet peers even under Eduard Shevardnadze, and this difference increased marginally by 2011 as the rest of the region experienced a gradual erosion of press freedom.

If the Rose Revolution was not genuinely democratizing in terms of electoral or press freedom, its real achievement has been the large turnaround in its control of corruption. Whereas in 2003, Georgia performed worse than neighboring Armenia and on a par with the rest of the European Commonwealth of Independent

States (CIS) countries, by 2011 it was significantly outperforming its regional peers and had closed about half the gap between itself and the post-communist reform frontrunners. This is a major achievement that is not well explained by existing theories of the color revolutions. At the same time, the NIT indicators in Figure 3c, combined with field interviews and media reports from the region, make it clear that at least some of the gains against corruption have come at the cost of further empowering an already dominant set of security ministries and institutions that have worsened not just judicial independence but also the protection of human rights in the country.

The story of developments in each of the color revolution states raises a number of important explanatory challenges. Here we focus on two. The first is the question of how to understand the apparent phenomenon of “reversion to the mean” that we see in each of these cases. Far from representing dramatic historical ruptures, the color revolutions seem mostly to have had the effect of “correcting” deviations from the kind of governance performance visible in each country's near neighbors. Sometimes this reversion effect is positive. Serbia, for example, had lagged behind its subregional neighbors on

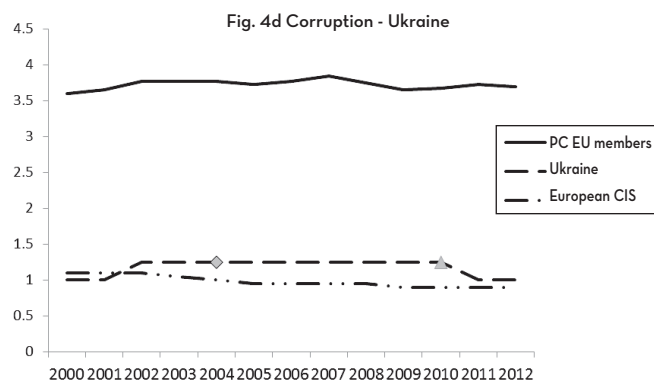
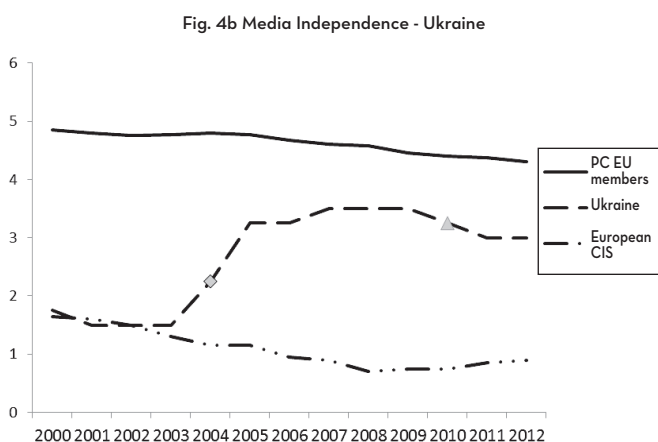
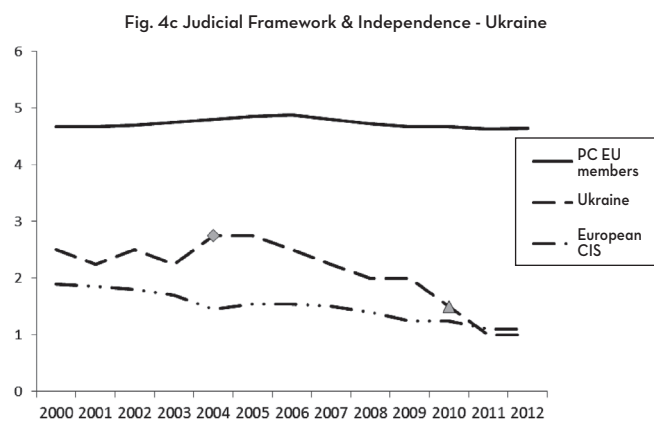
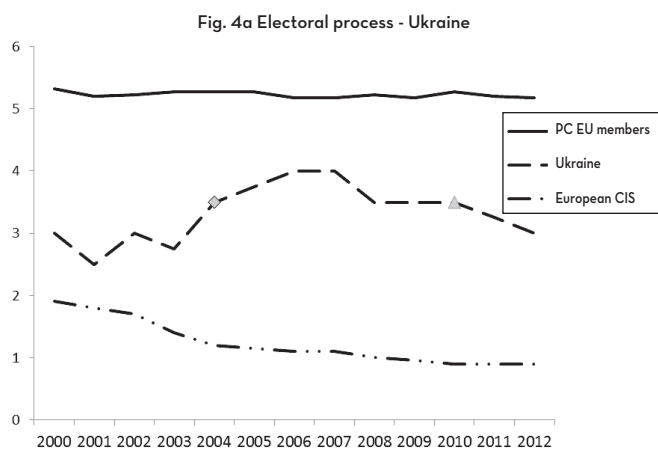


Figure 4. Democratic Governance in Ukraine in Comparative Perspective

Note: ◆ indicates timing of Color Revolution; △ indicates end of CR regime. PC—Post-Communist.

multiple indicators of democratic governance before the revolution. After the revolution, the gap between Serbia and the other Balkan states narrowed considerably. Reversion can also, however, mean negative trends in governance. Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan were actually ahead of their subregional peers prior to their electoral revolutions but then experienced more modest governance gains or even declines in the postrevolutionary period. Although the political openings created by the color revolutions were effective in helping countries catch up to the governance levels of their regional peers, they were much less useful in helping these countries pull away from their peers. In the Kyrgyz case, the Tulip Revolution seems to have reduced its democratic governance “surplus” compared to its Central Asian neighbors, and a similar trend can be observed in Ukraine’s judicial framework and independence ratings. The only exception to this statement is the dismal corruption situation in pre-2004 Georgia,

which represents the area of greatest progress in governance of any of the three countries. A key issue, therefore, is to understand how reversion takes place.

The second key question that emerges is how to understand departures from the “reversion to the mean” phenomenon. Convergence to the subregional mean is obviously far from complete and understanding the dynamics of exceptional cases is crucial. Consequently, a central issue is to understand the mixed nature of the Georgian and Ukrainian experience. Why did Ukraine perform so well on media independence and so badly on judicial independence? And why has Georgia proved disappointing on both of these counts but performed so strongly on corruption control? The challenge is to develop an answer to these questions that is not entirely ad hoc and fits within the general intellectual framework established by structural theories.

Understanding Reversion to the Mean

How should we interpret the powerful “reversion to the mean” trend evident in the data? The easiest answer would be to look for diffusion effects, which have been shown to affect regime trajectories in ex-communist countries (Kopstein and Reilly 2000). While such neighborhood

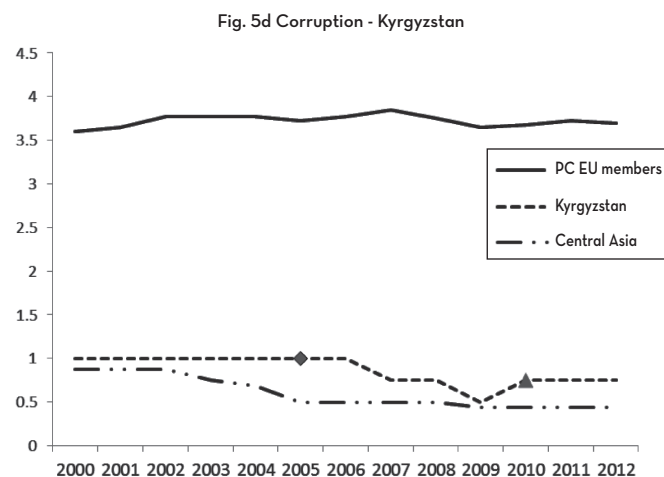
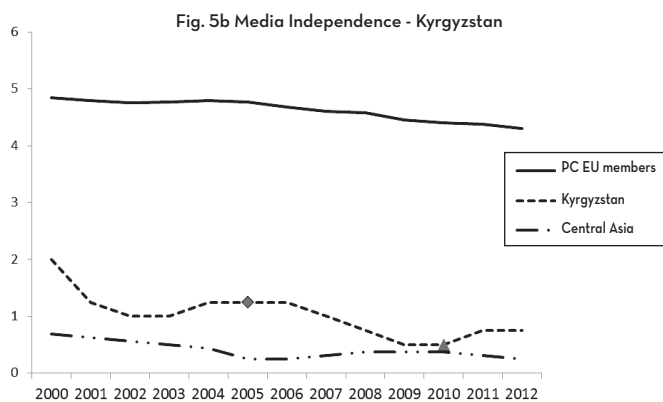
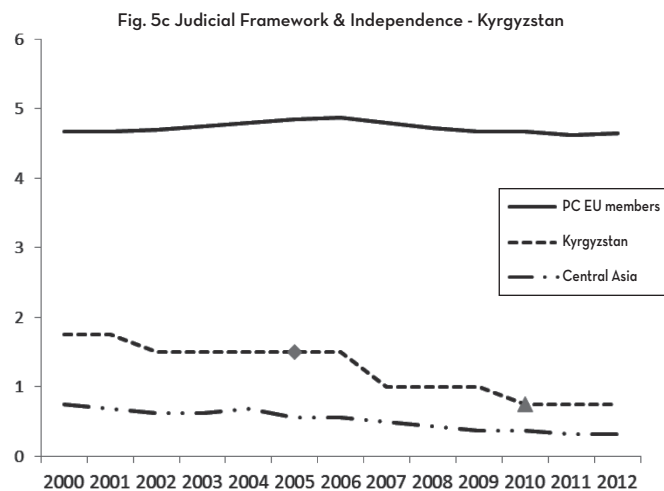
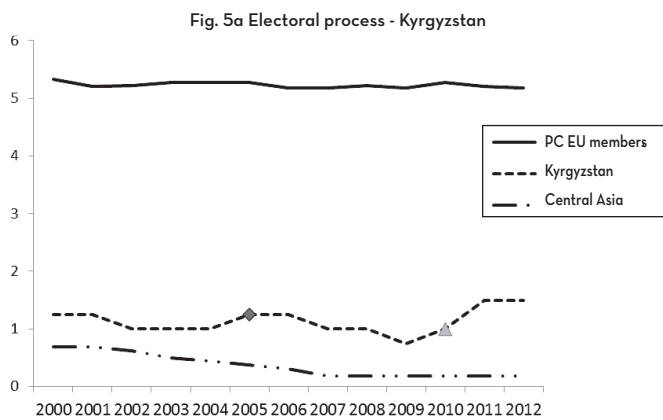


Figure 5. Democratic Governance in Kyrgyzstan in Comparative Perspective

Note: ◆ indicates timing of Color Revolution; △ indicates end of CR regime. PC—Post-Communist.

effects are undoubtedly important, there are reasons to be cautious in assigning them too much explanatory weight in this particular case. First, we need to be careful about defining peer groups in purely geographical ways, especially for countries like Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, which have explicitly tried to emphasize their democratic/Western distinctiveness compared to their immediate neighbors. Moreover, the contagion process that caused the color revolutions to spread beyond their Serbian prototype (Beissinger 2007) transcended immediate borders and subregional locations. Second, a country’s geographical location may correlate with a broad range of domestic and international differences, which may be the real drivers of different post-communist democratic governance trajectories (Pop-Eleches 2007). From this perspective, what we see is primarily a reversion to a legacy-based “normality” rather than to a subregionally defined peer group.

To highlight the important structural differences among our four cases, in Table 1 we compare them along a number of key dimensions that emerged based on our

interviews as potential explanations for differences in governance outcomes. Table 1 not only confirms that the four countries differed in terms of how democratic their neighborhoods were and in their prospects for European integration (most promising in Serbia and least promising in Kyrgyzstan) but also highlights broader domestic legacy differences that were roughly in line with the governance patterns discussed above. Thus, whereas Serbia’s socioeconomic development was broadly comparable to the region’s new EU members (despite a noticeable gap in per capita gross domestic product [GDP]), Kyrgyzstan appeared much more similar to Central American or North African countries in terms of output levels, poverty rates, and overall human development. Meanwhile, Ukraine and Georgia occupied intermediate positions, although the latter had noticeably worse inequality rates and poverty headcounts.

Another important dimension along which the four countries differed both among themselves and compared to the region’s more democratic reform states was in the nature of the challenges to their statehood.

Table 1

Overview of Structural Differences

Factors	Serbia	Georgia	Ukraine	Kyrgyzstan	EU-PC median
<i>International factors</i>					
EU prospects	H	M	M	L	N/A
Neighborhood democracy	H	L	M	L	H
External security threat	L	H	L	L	L
<i>Socioeconomic development</i>					
GDP/capita PPP (2000)	6,501	2,502	3,696	1,507	12,240
% population below \$2/day PPP	1%	34%	3%	67%	0.5%
% Urban population	53%	53%	67%	35%	63%
Income share of top 10%	26%	31%	23%	25%	24%
HDI (2000)	0.81	0.73	0.75	0.68	0.84
<i>Ethnic/regional conflict</i>					
Regional cleavage	no	no	yes	yes	no
Separatist challenges	serious	serious	minor ^a	moderate	no
% ethnic minorities	17%	16%	22.5%	29%	13%
% largest ethnic minority	3.5% (Hungarian)	6.5% (Azeri)	17% (Russian)	14% (Uzbek)	7%
<i>State capacity</i>					
Pre-1989 statehood	yes	minimal	minimal	none	yes
Security apparatus (at time of color revolution)	M	L	M	L	

Notes: a. Coding reflects the situation until November 2013. If we take into account the events of the first six months of 2014, the coding would obviously change to “serious.” H, M, L—high, medium, low.

Broadly speaking, we can distinguish two main patterns: in Georgia and Serbia the main challenges to the state came from ethnically based separatist movements—especially Kosovo in the case of Serbia and South Ossetia and Abkhazia for Georgia.² In both cases, these conflicts have played a central role in both domestic politics and international relations since the 1990s, but by the time the color revolutions took place, the central governments of both countries had effectively lost control over these territories. Given that these losses occurred in conjunction with outside support for the separatists (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] in the case of Kosovar Albanians and Russia in the case of Abkhazians and South Ossetians), the nationalism fueled by these conflicts essentially served a unifying “rally-around-the-flag” function, as the vast majority of elites and ordinary citizens regarded these losses as illegitimate and supported efforts to try to reverse them.³

A related unifying result of these successful separatist movements was that they resulted in more ethnically homogeneous societies: both Serbia and Georgia had

considerably lower proportions of ethnic minorities than either Ukraine or Kyrgyzstan and were more comparable to the more homogeneous East-Central European countries. As a result, neither Serbia nor Georgia experienced significant ethnic and regional political cleavages in the aftermath of their color revolutions. The combination of nationalist rhetoric and lawlessness that resulted from the violent conflict surrounding the separatist wars should, however, be expected to have longer-term negative repercussions for democratic governance in these two countries.

By contrast, although neither Ukraine nor Kyrgyzstan experienced significant ethnically based separatist challenges to their territorial integrity during the post-communist era, they faced a different set of political challenges related to ethnic and regional differences. In both countries, historically based regional cleavages—between east/south and west in Ukraine and between north and south in Kyrgyzstan—played a major role in post-communist politics. Given that the regional divisions in the two countries were fairly evenly split in

terms of population, this cleavage set the stage for alternating episodes of attempts at unilateral domination by one side (often at the expense of democracy) and efforts to build broader cross-regional coalitions (frequently buttressed by broad patronage-sharing deals). Moreover, both countries had large ethnic minorities—Russians in eastern Ukraine and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan—so that the minorities contributed to a pronounced ethnic cleavage in the politics of both countries even in the absence of separatist challenges.⁴ Although ethnic conflict has been considerably more violent in Kyrgyzstan, which experienced large-scale deadly interethnic riots in 1990 and 2010, Ukraine has also experienced its share of heated political disputes along ethno-linguistic lines, and these disputes took a markedly violent turn in the aftermath of the February 2014 revolution. To make matters worse, both minorities were largely concentrated in areas bordering co-ethnics in larger and more powerful neighboring countries, adding an international dimension to the conflict.

Viewed from another perspective on state building, however, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan suffered a greater disintegration of the state apparatus in the post-Soviet period. In Kyrgyzstan, under both Akayev and Bakiyev the state was turned into a tool for personal and family enrichment, with key posts and institutions being controlled by family members of the president (Engvall 2011). Moreover, although Ukraine and Serbia did not have to look far to find severe problems in state quality, Georgia came close to being a failed state in the 1990s. A certain degree of recovery had taken place by the time of the Rose Revolution, yet it was widely recognized among the elite that the state was barely functioning by then. By contrast, particularly in Serbia and Ukraine, elements of the state were coherent enough to ensure relative autonomy from the political sphere. As we will show, these contrasts in the nature of the state also have significant consequences.

Serbia

From our comparison of the governance trajectories of the four color revolution cases, Serbia emerges as by far the most consistent success story. This assessment is at odds with the much more critical and pessimistic tenor of many of the analyses of post-Milošević Serbia (Pribičević 2004; Ramet and Pavlaković 2005). Arguably, these differences largely have to do with comparative references: although Serbia undoubtedly improved in most respects compared to the abysmal situation in the late 1990s, and

while its progress was faster and more durable than in the other three color revolution countries, Figure 2 indicates some clear reasons for disappointment. After an initial sharp improvement in governance across the board in 2000–2001, Serbia stagnated for much of the next decade and even experienced some backsliding with respect to media and judicial independence. The Serbian government also failed to close the significant governance gap that separated it from Eastern Europe’s more advanced reform states, and for the most part it even lagged behind its regional peers in the Balkans. Therefore, it is perhaps less surprising that despite absolute gains in governance scores, both political analysts and Serbian voters have been underwhelmed with the achievements of the post-Bulldozer Revolution regime. In this section we explain both why Serbia outperformed its revolutionary peers and why its trajectory ultimately fell short of geographically and developmentally based expectations.

The first part of this task is more straightforward and can be summarized as follows: by toppling the Milošević regime, the Bulldozer Revolution removed the artificial constraints on the country’s democratic development and brought it closer to the “normal” levels we would expect given the country’s socioeconomic development and international incentives. Even under Milošević’s repressive regime, Serbia had a reasonably well-developed civil society and political opposition; we would expect the anti-Milošević coalition, once in power, to pursue significant democratic reforms in line with societal demands for cleaner and more democratic governance and with the aligned incentives of European integration. One example of this type of “easy” reform, which explains the initial improvement in democracy and governance scores, was the repeal in 2001 of Milošević’s highly controversial 1998 Law on Public Information, which had been one of the main impediments to the development of otherwise active independent mass media prior to the Bulldozer Revolution (Ivanišević et al. 2000). Similarly, within the first year the new government targeted some of the most visible agents of corruption from the Milošević era—reforming the customs service (a major source of funding for the previous regime) and prosecuting several high-ranking former officials, including Milošević himself, on corruption-related charges (Freedom House 2003).

If we turn to the question of what went wrong—or at least not sufficiently right—in post-Milošević Serbia, two factors stand out: the conflictual dynamics of the fragmented anti-Milošević coalition and the entrenched institutional and attitudinal legacies of the old regime.

In itself, the fact that the broad and diverse Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) coalition suffered from internal disagreements after the achievement of its *raison d'être*—the overthrow of the Milošević regime—was hardly surprising, especially considering the earlier experiences of its Romanian and Slovak counterparts. Nevertheless, the disagreements arguably ran even deeper in the Serbian case, where they involved fundamental questions about the country's international orientation (including the status of Kosovo and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia [ICTY]) and how to deal with the institutional legacies of the Milošević regime. As a result, this conflict did not simply slow down the pace of democratic reforms but in some cases actively undermined democratic governance. For example, when the intense personal rivalry between Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić and President Vojislav Koštunica reached its height in mid-2002, Đinđić removed forty-five members of Koštunica's Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) from parliament on the grounds that they had boycotted parliamentary meetings. Đinđić then ignored a Yugoslav Constitutional Court ruling that questioned his constitutional authority to dismiss the members of parliament (MPs) and took advantage of the altered parliamentary balance of power to vote in six new Constitutional Court judges, who promptly delivered a favorable ruling (Freedom House 2003). Although Đinđić reinstated the DSS MPs after Koštunica's clear victory in the December 2002 presidential elections, the incident illustrates the negative repercussions of these conflicts for democratic governance reforms in Serbia.

Beyond the coalitional conflicts facing the new government, certain unfavorable institutional and attitudinal legacies of the Milošević regime complicated reform efforts. In particular, Milošević's security apparatus, which had famously switched sides in the decisive moments of the Bulldozer Revolution, proved resistant to post-2000 reform efforts. In part, this resistance was probably the result of the new government's halfhearted approach to reforms, which in turn grew out of sharp disagreements among the coalition partners. For example, the Democratic Party (DS) favored a significant overhaul of the police and security forces, whereas Koštunica opposed significant personnel changes on the grounds that "it would be quite irresponsible, at the moment when we are controlling things, to start experiments with the police and the secret police" (quoted in Pavlaković 2005, 30). The problems with security reform run much deeper, however, and are based on powerful links between the Serbian

security forces and organized crime dating back to the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of these difficulties was the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić by a member of the Zemun gang, an organized crime organization, in cooperation with the Unit for Special Operations (Red Berets) of the State Security Service in March 2003. While Đinđić's death triggered the dissolution of the Red Berets less than two weeks later and led to more decisive action against organized crime, Đinđić's successors stopped short of a genuine reform of the state security service (Freedom House 2005). This failure arguably had an important negative impact on Serbia's progress with respect to both corruption and judicial independence.

Another important and resilient legacy of the Milošević era was the prominence of ethnic nationalism in Serbian politics, which was reinforced by the successive collective traumas of the Yugoslav secession wars and the Western embargo, and more recently by the secession of Kosovo and the NATO bombings. Milošević's skillful use of the ethnic card had been one of the main reasons for his prolonged ability to hang on to power, and even after his fall successive free elections confirmed the broad electoral appeal of nationalism: not only were the extreme-nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and its somewhat more moderate offshoot, the Serbian Progressive Party, the most consistent electoral performers in the post-2000 period (with 28–30 percent of the popular vote), but even important parts of the democratic opposition, particularly Koštunica's DSS, featured important nationalist electoral appeals, including staunch opposition to Kosovo's independence and to surrendering Milošević and other suspected Serbian war criminals to the ICTY. These issues contributed to the conflict within the new government, undermined Serbia's prospects for European integration, and therefore reduced the incentives to pursue additional democratic governance reforms as part of EU integration.

As a result, whereas Serbia's relatively advantageous socioeconomic development and geographical position facilitated rapid initial progress in democratic governance, the legacy of the violent conflicts of the 1990s, particularly the entrenched links between organized crime and parts of the security apparatus and the continued salience of ethnic nationalism, continue to cast a long shadow over democratic reform efforts. The balance between this difficult past and the potential promise of a European future are again being put to the test after the 2012 electoral victory of the Socialist People's Party and the Socialist Party of Serbia, the two politi-

cal parties most closely associated with the Milošević regime. Although both parties have recently moderated their stance, it is uncertain whether they will be willing and able to continue the far-from-complete governance reforms initiated by their predecessors.

Kyrgyzstan

At the other end of the spectrum of color revolutions, and in some ways the mirror image of Serbia, is Kyrgyzstan. Whereas Serbia has been the democratic laggard in its region, Kyrgyzstan has stood out from the rest of its neighbors in Central Asia as an island of rambunctious competitive politics in a sea of largely consolidated authoritarian regimes. Much of Kyrgyzstan's exceptionalism can be understood as a function of initial political and economic conditions and structural factors that have inhibited the consolidation of power. Paradoxically, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan represented an attempt to consolidate power that ultimately moved Kyrgyzstan toward its neighbors and away from democracy. Although the failure of the Tulip Revolution encouraged the adoption of different institutional solutions after the second revolution in 2010—changes that so far have prevented the renewed dominance of any single faction in Kyrgyz politics—the improvement in governance indicators has so far been modest (Freedom House 2013).

Since independence, Kyrgyzstani politics have followed a different path from those elsewhere in Central Asia. Rather than move into the new era with its communist-period leadership intact and no real political competition (as did Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan) or fall into civil war (like Tajikistan), Kyrgyzstan has seen two decades of quite robust, rather chaotic, but mostly peaceful political competition. Kyrgyzstan's first post-Soviet president, Askar Akayev, enthusiastically endorsed a democratic vision for Kyrgyzstan, which rapidly became the darling of the international community as the "Switzerland of Central Asia." Akayev, however, was unable to fulfill the promise of his vision, and over time his rule became both more authoritarian and more corrupt. In 2005, he was overthrown in the Tulip Revolution amid protests against fraud in the parliamentary elections of that year.

After the revolution, there was a period of uneasy cohabitation among the various factions that had united against Akayev. The new president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, was a former mayor, regional governor, and prime minister and was reputed to be one of the richest men in the country. Prime Minister Feliks Kulov—also a former

mayor, regional governor, and cabinet member under Akayev—was a northerner with a background in state security. After two years of tense competition, instability, and growing political violence, Bakiyev managed to gain the upper hand, firing Kulov and launching criminal cases against many of his other competitors (Engvall 2011, 99–100). Bakiyev proceeded to integrate the running of the state with his family, notably his two sons and his brother, clamping down on the media and on the courts. Although Bakiyev emerged dominant, he alienated so much of the ruling elite that he was ousted by street demonstrations in April 2010.

The ouster of Bakiyev opened up a new era in Kyrgyz politics. On the one hand, having twice suffered under centralizing presidents, the Kyrgyz elite drew up a parliamentary constitution designed to prevent any one group from consolidating authority. After a referendum that endorsed the new constitution and relatively high-quality elections, a new parliament met in Bishkek. Despite intense and prolonged wrangling, Kyrgyzstan has now seen two different ruling coalitions in office. On the other hand, the ouster of Bakiyev was also followed by ethnic violence in and around the southern city of Osh that resulted in hundreds of deaths and hundreds of thousands of ethnic Uzbeks being forced from their homes. As a result, the future of Kyrgyzstan remains uncertain, and pessimists seem to outnumber optimists in the Kyrgyzstan expert community.

In looking at the trajectory of Kyrgyzstani politics, we can see clear evidence of how it has been shaped, sometimes in unexpected ways, by structural factors that limit and direct the impact of big political reversals like the Tulip Revolution. Perhaps counterintuitively, low levels of economic development combined with the absence of a natural resource stream, contributed to Kyrgyzstan's democratic "overperformance" in the 1990s. Faced with low levels of economic development and a severe economic crisis at the moment of independence, the new regime in Bishkek was extremely dependent on international financial support from bilateral and multilateral donors. International donors, consequently, became heavily involved in donating money that shaped both policy and the political landscape. This process has worked through at least two different mechanisms.

First, in return for substantial support from international financial institutions (IFIs), and in the absence of any obvious alternative development model, the Kyrgyz government undertook a rapid and thorough program of economic reform, including privatization. This pro-

gram is credited with creating a dispersed structure of ownership in the country that produced many small local “oligarchs” but no dominant center of wealth that could be used to consolidate political power (McMann 2006; Radnitz 2010b). This meant that maintaining control at the national level has required leaders to negotiate with local power centers rather than disciplining them through use of clientelistic resources.⁵

Another mechanism through which aid dependency contributed to Kyrgyzstan’s overperformance in the 1990s was the growth of organized civil society. Aside from balance of payments and budget support from the IFIs, international aid money was often channeled through civil society groups, which produced a burgeoning (by Central Asian standards) organized third sector. Scholars have questioned the role of such aid-dependent civil society groups in democratic development (Knack 2004), and it is clear that Kyrgyzstan is no exception. Many, indeed most, of these groups were not grassroots organizations but political vehicles for local elites or organizations conjured up by and answerable to the donor community rather than to the communities they claimed to serve. In a country that often lacks policy specialists with international training, however, these groups, for all their imperfections, played an important part in liaising with the government and restraining its power.⁶ This role has continued, with representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) chairing three of the four subcommittees charged with drafting the new constitution in 2010 and exerting considerable influence on passages of the constitution relating to human rights and religion.

Diffuse ownership and an aid-dependent NGO sector are not enough to create a durable democracy, however, and structural factors have made it difficult for Kyrgyzstan to break out of its cycles of instability. The absence of a strong, taxable economic base has obstructed state building. The weakness of the Kyrgyz economy and the diffuseness of political power among regions, clans, and ethnic groups have made building a usable state extremely difficult. Corruption is not simply a drain on the economic system but a central part of it (Engvall 2011). There is a strong tendency to treat government positions as personal or family assets; under both President Akayev and President Bakiyev authoritarianism increased together with family involvement in affairs of state (Huskey 2002).

Furthermore, high levels of poverty, particularly given a relatively young population, have ensured that there is always a “reserve army” of the underemployed willing

to participate in the political projects of the elite. As a result, paid groups of young, rural underemployed men played a significant role in the revolutions of 2005 and 2010 and in many other street conflicts that have shaped politics in the post-Soviet era (Radnitz 2010a; 2010b, 38).⁷

In addition, relative poverty makes the Kyrgyz political balance vulnerable to changing flows of money from abroad. The delicate equilibrium among Kyrgyzstan’s competing regions, clans, and business people was disturbed by the U.S. desire for an air base in the country to pursue its war in Afghanistan. An agreement was reached to set up the base at the end of 2001, and President Akayev funneled the financial windfall in rents and contracts to his own family, cutting out other members of the Kyrgyz elite who had shared in the resources from international aid. These efforts to centralize the flow of resources ultimately gave rise to accusations of growing authoritarianism and contributed to the Tulip Revolution and Akayev’s ouster from power. Kurmanbek Bakiyev tried a similar policy and met a similar fate (McGlinchey 2011, 81).

A weak state and a weak economy have kept Kyrgyzstan from building on the relatively favorable human development legacies of the Soviet period. Furthermore, the country’s infrastructure has deteriorated in response to insufficient investment and a severe shortage of specialists trained to operate, maintain, and develop it.⁸ These circumstances have hindered both economic development and state capacity and probably will continue to do so. In short, although Kyrgyzstan has clearly outperformed its neighbors in terms of political competition, media freedom, civil-society development, and judicial independence, maintaining that position has proven increasingly difficult, and indicators suggest a strong regression to the broader pattern of regional politics, one that the Tulip Revolution accelerated rather than reversed.

At the same time, the weak state and weak economy have inhibited the ability of any single group to monopolize political power. The Kyrgyz elite drew clear lessons from the bloody and dangerous aftermath of the Tulip Revolution and has taken steps to raise institutional barriers against dictatorial consolidation. Although the Tulip Revolution did not improve the country’s democracy and good governance, the revolution’s failure did play an important role in highlighting the need for alliances to protect political freedom in the country and may have paved the way for a more durable political compromise after 2010.

Georgia

The fall of Eduard Shevardnadze's government in response to popular protests after the fraudulent elections of November 2003 had as much to do with regime weakness as with the strength and unity of the Georgian opposition. Long before the elections, Shevardnadze's government had lost some of its most charismatic ministers and the ruling Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG) had splintered (Welt 2006, 9–11). As a result, the opposition needed only a small push at what was already an open door. Protests in the first weeks after the November 2 elections were small—the largest involved no more than five thousand people (Mitchell 2004, 345).⁹ Even after an aggressive television campaign to mobilize protests, the largest crowd on the day Saakashvili and his supporters stormed the parliament included not more than sixty thousand (Welt 2006, 14). Although there is a vigorous debate about whether Shevardnadze had the capacity to try to repress protests (Welt 2006, 20–23), he made no serious attempt to do so. In fact, Shevardnadze's Georgia was far from being a fearsome dictatorship but instead allowed a high degree of media independence and tolerated significant political dissent (Ó Beacháin 2009). It was, however, a thoroughly corrupt and ineffective state, over which the central government had limited control and which was thoroughly delegitimized in the eyes of most citizens. Moreover, even the capacity it did have was limited in scope, with South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Ajaria outside Tbilisi's control. Consequently, the international media spin presenting the Rose Revolution as a victory for democracy over dictatorship is misleading. This revolution was not about democracy but about building a new state, a fact that has strongly shaped developments in the post-Rose era.¹⁰

The almost complete lack of a functioning state in the wake of the Rose Revolution, combined with widespread poverty and a rapidly deteriorating infrastructure, turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the new government. On the one hand, the state weakness created a massive political challenge for the country's new rulers, particularly given their youth and lack of real political experience. On the other hand, the implosion of the old regime and its thorough delegitimization among the population allowed the revolutionary cadres around Mikheil Saakashvili to pursue an unprecedented remaking of the Georgian state. Although others have discussed the details of these changes at length (e.g., Mitchell 2012), a number of elements emerged that did not appear in the other color revolution cases. Thus, in 2004 the govern-

ment disbanded the notoriously corrupt traffic police and created a new patrol police, whose officers were selected on a competitive basis (Freedom House 2005). Georgia also drastically overhauled its customs and border protection departments. At the same time, the government waged an aggressive campaign against public-sector corruption, firing and arresting a broad range of public officials (including ministers of the new government).¹¹ It pursued tax evasion and theft among the economic elite through a "plea bargain" system whereby individuals could avoid criminal charges as long as they agreed to pay estimated back taxes or turn over their stolen property to the state.¹² These measures were supplemented by the simplification of many official procedures, which lowered the opportunities to demand bribes, and significant increases in the wages of many public officials in an effort to ensure a reasonable living standard and thus reduce the temptation to rely on bribes as a source of income. This sustained anticorruption campaign led to an immediate and noticeable reduction in low-level corruption that, despite more modest and contested progress than the drive against high-level corruption, was reflected in growing public perceptions of corruption and a related improvement in corruption scores (Figure 5).

In line with its anticorruption efforts, the new government launched a sustained campaign to gain greater control of its territory. The campaign included a highly publicized string of military operations against smugglers and local strongmen directed by Interior Minister Giorgi Baramidze.¹³ This campaign scored some remarkable successes, most notably in Ajaria, which had been run by Aslan Abashidze as a semi-independent fiefdom since 1992 with minimal intervention from the Georgian government. Even though this progress was more modest in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and was completely reversed after the 2008 war against Russia, the central government's greater ability to monopolize the legitimate use of force within its territory was crucial for the success of its anticorruption campaign because it allowed for more consistent implementation of anticorruption measures and boosted the government's credibility in the eyes of its citizens. At the same time, the increased legitimacy and higher tax revenues associated with the fight against corruption arguably bolstered the government's ability to intervene against local mafias. Thus, the two most notable successes of the Rose Revolution—the reduction of corruption and the centralization of political power—mutually reinforced each other in important ways.

In other areas, however, the interaction among aspects of governance reform was less complementary.

Thus, in the name of anticorruption efforts in the judicial system, the Saakashvili government replaced most Supreme Court judges within three years after the Rose Revolution through a combination of attractive retirement packages and disciplinary measures (Freedom House 2007). Furthermore, a number of critics, including the ombudsman Sozar Subari, have charged that in its zeal to punish corruption and organized crime, the government routinely pressured judges to deliver guilty verdicts against criminal suspects, thereby violating judicial independence.

Excesses associated with the anticorruption campaign also contributed to the significant human rights violations that Georgia continued to experience after the Rose Revolution. These violations included the use of excessive and even deadly force during arrests, the increase of pretrial detentions from thirty to ninety days, and the poor treatment of prisoners, which raised the number of casualties in prisons. In part, these problems may have been unfortunate side-effects of the government's successful anticorruption campaign in a country with a weak institutional and physical infrastructure: the rise in the number of court cases overburdened the country's legal system and contributed to the high proportion of prisoners held awaiting trial. Similarly, the explosion in the number of prisoners, which rose from six thousand in 2003 to thirteen thousand in 2006, led to prison overcrowding and thereby contributed to the noticeable deterioration of prison conditions (Freedom House 2007).

In part, though, these problems arose because the state relied heavily on police measures to achieve its ends and the new police force developed personal loyalty to Saakashvili rather than the state.¹⁴ In this context, human rights abuses were justified as a necessary consequence of state building and anticorruption campaigns. These practices have included arresting opposition activists on bogus charges and seizing their property when "the accused person failed to prove his innocence."¹⁵

Similarly, the government justified its restrictions on media freedom after the 2007 antigovernment protests, which included the temporary shutdown of the opposition television station Imedi, by citing the threat of a Russian-backed coup allegedly planned by Imedi's owner Badri Patarkatsishvili. Even certain problems in the electoral process were linked to the fight against corruption: opposition politicians have repeatedly asserted that the government has used fabricated corruption or criminal charges to intimidate its political opponents and argued that laws supposedly intended to increase transparency in party financing in fact provided disin-

centives for businesses that supported opposition parties (Freedom House 2007).¹⁶

At first glance, the Georgian case illustrates the importance of human agency in governance reforms: a relatively small group of young revolutionaries in the inner circle of President Mikheil Saakashvili managed to achieve a radical transformation of the Georgian state, a feat impossible to imagine under the country's previous political leadership. Nevertheless, a closer analysis reveals an important role for certain structural constraints. First, the rapid rise to almost uncontested power of the Rose revolutionaries is intimately tied to the legacy of poverty, corruption, and state failure under Shevardnadze, which left behind a population willing to back even radical political solutions and a morally exhausted and weakened political elite that neither could nor would resist. Second, the country's traumatic loss of territory in the early 1990s and the continuing security threats from Russia shaped the key strategic priorities of the Georgian government and arguably had far-reaching effects on the nature of governance reforms. Thus, the early focus on reforming and strengthening the state's security institutions can be more easily explained in the context of the fears of and preparations for a possible conflict with Russia over the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. From this perspective, the improvements in governance can be seen as part of a broader economic reform effort designed to improve tax collections in order to raise defense spending. Furthermore, the presence of a serious and immediate outside threat contributed to government unity even as it weakened the political opposition, which became vulnerable to government accusations of undermining the national cause.

A third important set of structural constraints lie in the country's dependence on foreign aid. Although high even before the Rose Revolution due to a combination of poverty and lack of natural resources, this dependence further increased after 2003 because of the growing salience of the economically and militarily uneven Georgian-Russian conflict. But despite large amounts of aid, a lack of coordination among donors limited Western leverage, especially when the United States directed its assistance away from building democracy toward providing direct support to the government after the Rose Revolution.¹⁷ Aid continued even as media freedom and judicial independence eroded, although the Saakashvili government remained sensitive to donors' criticisms. The government's agenda featured not just Western aid but integration into Western institutions, especially NATO. Fear that backsliding would limit prospects for

integration certainly played a role in limiting the extent to which the Georgian government would deviate from democratic norms and may have been crucial in its willingness to accept electoral victory in the 2012 parliamentary elections.

One may, of course, ask why Georgia's political reforms, which were so successful in terms of state building and corruption control, yielded such modest dividends in other crucial areas of democratic governance, especially given the close Western partnership discussed above. Based on our interviews, one possible answer lies in the pathologies of decision making by a small group of politicians without meaningful input from either the political opposition or civil society—particularly the siege mentality triggered by the Russian conflict, which led those in power to dismiss their critics as either corrupt or as tools of Russian interests in Georgia.¹⁸ But here, too, structural constraints played an important role. First, the political dominance of Saakashvili's United National Movement party resulted less from government repression than from the weakness of the opposition, which suffered from the implosion of the Shevardnadze regime and the subsequent inability of government opponents to articulate a genuine and unified alternative platform.¹⁹ This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that when the opposition managed to present a united front under the leadership of Bidzina Ivanishvili in the 2012 elections it was able to defeat the UNM, which then accepted defeat and went into opposition.

Second, in the early years after the Rose Revolution, the lack of improvement in media independence grew out of structural economic problems, not the laws governing the mass media (which actually improved, especially with respect to libel). Restrictions on advertising revenues, imposed by Georgia's small size and relative poverty, meant that a small number of business people controlled most of the television stations and used them to further economic and political interests, which in turn left political reporting vulnerable to indirect manipulation by the government (Freedom House 2007).²⁰ Finally, limitations on human capital and the venality or incompetence of many judges from the Shevardnadze era—which made them easy targets for government attempts to replace them with political cronies—increased the vulnerability of the judicial system to government pressure.

Ukraine

Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2004 was, with the Rose Revolution, the archetype of the color revolutions:

postelection mass protests forcing out a supposedly authoritarian regime and the anticipation of a major shift in political orientation toward more democratic, pro-Western politics. Like the Rose Revolution, the Orange Revolution is now viewed critically by most political analysts and scholars. The verdict of ordinary Ukrainian citizens is similarly negative: in a nationally representative public opinion survey conducted in December 2012, only 18.7 percent of respondents thought of the Orange Revolution as a "mostly positive event," while almost twice as many (34.5 percent) viewed it as mostly negative.²¹ When asked about the lessons of the Orange Revolution, Ukrainians endorsed a variety of interpretations, but by far the most popular sentiment (29.3 percent) was that the leaders of the Orange Revolution had betrayed its fundamentally sound goals. Only 14 percent of Ukrainians professed continued support for the leaders of the Orange Revolution, whereas 23 percent said that they had supported the leaders at the outset but no longer did.

As we demonstrated above, however, the actual legacy of the Orange Revolution is mixed. Real progress has been made since December 2004, particularly in electoral processes and media freedom, but the hoped-for transition to a less corrupt and more law-bound society has not materialized. This scorecard is in many ways the opposite of Georgia's. Let us consider why.

Many analysts, politicians, and observers of Ukraine blame the personality of the leader Viktor Yushchenko for the disappointing results of the Orange Revolution. The virtual consensus is that Yushchenko was not the right person to lead Ukraine after the revolution despite all the hopes and dreams that had been pinned on him. The particular problem with Yushchenko's character varies: he was a conformist in revolutionary clothing; he was corrupt; he wanted to rewrite Ukrainian history, not implement real-life reforms; he had no agenda; and he was too ill to conduct reforms even had he wanted.²²

Although some of these charges may have a basis in reality, Ukraine's political successes and failures since the Orange Revolution can also be understood in terms of the structural conditions that have strongly shaped the context within which politics in Ukraine has played out. These include a polarized and divided society and a dispersed structure of ownership and wealth that have favored political pluralism while hindering campaigns against corruption. Relative prosperity and a large domestic market, at least relative to Georgia, have also helped shape the competitive nature of politics in Ukraine. Paradoxically, the relative resilience of the Ukrainian state,

compared to Shevardnadze-era Georgia, has also made fighting corruption more difficult.

Whatever disagreements exist regarding Yushchenko's character, there is no doubt that the group that took power after the Orange Revolution was a much broader and more fissiparous coalition than the United National Movement in Georgia. The so-called Orange team was bitterly divided between Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. This division reflected the poorly focused nature of the coalition that had brought the two leaders to power (Beissinger 2013), as well as interpersonal conflicts between them. Yushchenko saw Tymoshenko as determined to destroy him in the belief that she would inherit his supporters, while Tymoshenko believed Yushchenko was in the pocket of the Russian-allied oligarch Dmytro Firtash, who supposedly intended to destroy her.²³ Moreover, unlike the vast authority vested in Georgia's President Saakashvili, the institutional compromise that made the Orange Revolution possible robbed Yushchenko of key powers. Ironically, had Yushchenko stormed the parliament like Saakashvili, as Tymoshenko allegedly advised, he might not have been forced to cooperate with either her or Yanukovich after the revolution, and the infighting might have been less.²⁴

Personal and political conflicts, however, formed only part of the story of a divided Ukrainian polity and society. Unlike Saakashvili, Yushchenko did not enjoy a huge mandate from the population to sweep away a morally bankrupt regime. However morally bankrupt the Kuchma regime may have been, even in the presidential runoff on December 26, 2004, Kuchma's preferred successor, Viktor Yanukovich, took 44 percent of the vote. That vote was geographically concentrated, creating a situation in which Yushchenko had a substantial mandate in the west and center and little support in the industrial east and south, including Crimea. Regardless of whether regional divisions reflect deep cultural differences, as some argue, the lack of a mandate certainly hindered the implementation of Georgian-style changes in Ukraine.²⁵ For example, traffic police officers dismissed for corruption in 2005 by Yushchenko, in direct imitation of Saakashvili, were reinstated by Yanukovich in 2006 after he became prime minister (after Tymoshenko's resignation in 2005).

Conflicts among the oligarchs that fund Ukrainian political parties mirrored the social divisions. Like Kyrgyzstan but unlike Georgia, privatization had left Ukraine with a dispersed structure of ownership. Despite high levels of inequality, no single group dominates capi-

tal in Ukraine. Nor does a single place: Kyiv does not dominate the economic picture in Ukraine as Tbilisi and Moscow do in Georgia and Russia, respectively. Instead, members of the economic elite disagreed about politics both regionally—with financial clans from Donetsk, Kyiv, and Lviv differing in their political sympathies—and across sectors, with big capital more reliant on Russia and therefore more supportive of Yanukovich and mid-sized capital tending to favor Yushchenko.²⁶

Another crucial difference that affects the divergent political trajectories of Georgia and Ukraine after the color revolutions is the radically different nature of these countries' states. In Georgia, the state had become so debilitated that Saakashvili was able to make dramatic changes by decapitating the bureaucracy, establishing tight control over the Ministry of the Interior, and using this police tool to solve a range of problems, notably corruption and nonpayment of taxes. In Ukraine, by contrast, the security forces were much more institutionalized and consequently retained far more autonomy from politics. Changing the leadership of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) did not suffice to subordinate it to politicians, never mind change its culture of operations.²⁷

These regional, political, and financial divisions and the relative autonomy of the Ukrainian state are central to understanding the postrevolutionary paths of the two countries. The real gains of the Orange Revolution came in terms of media freedom and electoral processes, both of which are closely related to the sociological and political divisions and the regional/sectoral dispersion of wealth that provide money and audiences for different political parties and interests.²⁸ The Orange Revolution performed less well at building a law-bound and limited state and fighting corruption. In these respects, the smaller and more unified context and, paradoxically, the less autonomous state in Georgia proved much more conducive to change than the situation in Ukraine, where agents of the security forces enjoyed greater autonomy from political control.

Our analysis of the experience of the Orange Revolution suggests some clear lessons for the current revolutionaries at the helm of the Ukrainian state in Kyiv. The failure to take significant action on corruption was one of the key factors connecting the post-Orange period to the revolution of 2014. Particularly in western and central Ukraine but also in the east, survey respondents interpreted the EuroMaidan protests as being heavily driven by discontent with corruption (KIIS 2014). Second, it seems that failure to deal with corruption is particularly dangerous for incumbents in the context of relatively

competitive politics and open media. Last, a key challenge for the new regime will be building a state and particularly security apparatus that is loyal to the center. We identified the relative autonomy of the security forces in the post-Orange era as a barrier to efforts to put the state's house in order. The extent of this problem was graphically illustrated by defections within this apparatus after the 2014 revolution. Rebuilding a state that is both effective and loyal is one of the primary challenges that will shape the outcome of Ukraine's latest revolution.

Conclusion

In this article, we have set out to evaluate and explain the democratic governance trajectories of the four most prominent cases of color revolutions in the post-communist world: Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. Although our analysis confirms earlier findings (Hale 2005; Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009) about the significant gap between the high initial hopes for the democratizing potential of these second-generation post-communist revolutions and their more modest and uneven achievements, our focus on a broader range of democratic governance aspects, including not only elections but also judicial independence and corruption control—has revealed some significant variations, which are at odds with Hale's (2005) interpretation of the color revolutions as business as usual. Serbia experienced significant progress along all dimensions in the immediate post-Milošević period and largely stabilized thereafter; Kyrgyzstan experienced a brief and modest electoral opening after the Tulip Revolution followed by significant backsliding and authoritarian consolidation after 2007; Georgia and Ukraine had mixed and highly uneven trajectories in different areas of democratic governance.

One of the most striking findings—especially based on the comparison of four countries that experienced dramatic and unexpected political opportunities and brought to power a new set of leaders—is that much of the post-color-revolution change conforms to structural-legacy-based expectations. Thus, the significant progress in Serbia largely represented an (albeit incomplete) convergence with the governance patterns we would expect based on its favorable geographic location and socioeconomic development, whereas Kyrgyzstan's backsliding under Bakiyev was consistent with its economic backwardness and authoritarian regional environment. From this perspective, it appears that with a few exceptions (corruption control in Georgia and media indepen-

dence in Ukraine), the color revolutions simply moved countries closer to their structurally "normal" governance profiles—a process we have called reversion to the mean.

Beyond these broad patterns, our case studies have identified a number of mechanisms linking structural conditions to governance trajectories. We found that in both Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan the high salience of regional cleavages and the fairly broad distribution of economic assets has made it difficult to achieve the type of unified government that Georgia had after the Rose Revolution. The inherent instability of governments in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, which oscillate between uneasy cross-regional coalitions and ultimately unstable efforts at consolidation by one side (as under Bakiyev from 2007 to 2010), has mixed implications for democratic governance: on the one hand, the compromises required to forge coalitions undermine the type of drastic reforms of the state along the lines implemented by the Saakashvili government in Georgia. On the other hand, this situation also acts as a bulwark against authoritarian consolidation, which poses a greater threat in Georgia than in Ukraine and may explain why Kyrgyzstan continues to be more democratic than its Central Asian neighbors.

The nature of the state has also been vital in shaping postrevolutionary trajectories, although again with somewhat paradoxical effects. State weakness has become a growing problem in Kyrgyzstan, as state institutions are increasingly hollowed out and turned into private fiefdoms of the ruling families. Similarly, before the Rose Revolution, the Georgian state was thoroughly penetrated by organized crime. In both cases, state weakness was a key cause of corruption and discontent.

But state weakness also makes it easier to take action. State deterioration sparked the revolutions in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan by providing reasons for discontent and undermining the state's ability to hold off relatively small mobs in the streets. State weakness also helped Saakashvili and his allies take over key ministries and force through dramatic changes. State weakness thus laid the groundwork for Georgia's remarkable gains in corruption control. The failure of anticorruption and state capacity-building efforts in Kyrgyzstan, however, illustrate that state failure in itself cannot enable governance "revolutions"; governments need political incentives to adopt such risky reforms. In Georgia's case, the security threat posed by its conflictual relationship with Russia provided such an incentive.

The relative strength of the state, especially the re-

pressive apparatus, in Serbia and Ukraine sent their revolutions and subsequent reforms along different paths. In Serbia, Milošević faced down his opponents many times before finally succumbing in 2000. In Ukraine, it took a preplanned, well-financed, and tightly organized national campaign, as well as significant and later costly institutional compromises, to make the Orange Revolution happen. When the revolutionaries did take power, the strength and autonomy of the bureaucracy and repressive apparatus severely compromised their ability to reform the state in general and the security services in particular. While post-Milošević Serbia achieved greater and more lasting progress in fighting corruption and restoring judicial independence, this progress—largely a response to the incentive of European integration—fell short of even the modest standards of its Balkan neighbors.

Beyond the distinctive features of these four post-communist cases, our findings suggest rather pessimistic conclusions about the prospects for democratic governance breakthroughs in structurally disadvantaged countries that experience revolutionary upheavals, as happened most recently during the Arab Spring. The current political convulsions in Egypt echo the disappointing trajectory of Kyrgyzstan after the Tulip Revolution, while the Georgian case highlights the potentially significant tradeoffs between different aspects of democracy and state-building efforts. In contrast, the relative success of Serbia suggests that countries that currently punch below their legacy-based weight in terms of democracy or other governance aspects—such as Cuba, Belarus, or Russia—could be relatively promising candidates for real and sustainable progress following some kind of political opening.

Notes

1. Kennedy (2012) identifies a similar pattern among the four cases but uses different indicators and methodology and highlights different causal mechanisms.

2. Both countries faced additional territorial challenges, such as Montenegro's ultimately successful drive for independence from Yugoslavia and Ajaria's long-standing autonomy within Georgia, but these played a less central political role.

3. However, the fact that Georgian nationalism was anti-Russian and therefore pro-Western, whereas Serbian nationalists were inclined to blame the West (particularly NATO) for their woes, arguably influenced the likelihood that each country would embrace Western political models.

4. There were brief calls to incorporate Uzbek-dominated areas in southern Kyrgyzstan into neighboring Uzbekistan in 1989–1990, but they have not resurfaced in the last two decades.

5. Authors' interview with Dmitri Shevkun, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (June 2010).

6. Authors' interview with Sheradil Baktygulov, Office of the President,

and with Asyl Aitbaeva, International Center, Interbilim, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (June 2010).

7. Authors' interview with Ishkak Masaliev, leader of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (June 2010).

8. The authors are grateful to Sean Roberts for pointing this out.

9. Mitchell notes that the grandiose rhetoric of the protest leaders "appeared out of place for what seemed like small demonstrations largely by the political class" (2004, 345).

10. Authors' interview with Ghia Nodia, Tbilisi (June 2011).

11. Authors' interview with Akaki Minashvili, member of the Georgian parliament, United National Movement, Tbilisi (June 2011).

12. Authors' interview with Irakli Alasania, Free Democrats Party, Tbilisi (June 2011).

13. Authors' interview with Hans Gutbrod, regional director of the Caucasian Research Resource Centers, Tbilisi (June 2011).

14. Interview with Giorgi Gogia, Human Rights Watch, Tbilisi (June 2011). Gogia recounts how police officers involved in clashes with opposition demonstrators in 2009 were heard to chant "Misha! Misha!" as they fought with protesters.

15. Interview with David Usupashvili, leader of the Republican Party, Tbilisi (June 2011).

16. Interview with Irakli Alasania, leader of Our Georgia—Free Democrats Party, Tbilisi (June 2011).

17. Authors' interview with Alexander Rondelli, director of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, and with George Khelashvili, Tbilisi (June 2011). Several sources noted that U.S. aid again flowed to civil-society projects after President Barack Obama took office.

18. Authors' interview with Hans Gutbrod.

19. Of course, the government still used its control over administrative resources, and even outright intimidation, to tilt the electoral playing field in its favor. Interview with David Usupashvili.

20. By 2011, four pro-government channels dominated the airwaves, with the formerly critical Rustavi-II and Imedi providing strongly pro-government accounts of sensitive issues such as the 2008 War with Russia, opposition protests, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Interview with Giorgi Gogia.

21. We designed the survey of 1,804 adult Ukrainian citizens, conducted by the Razumkov Center on December 14–20, 2012.

22. We heard all these interpretations of Yushchenko's character flaws during interviews in Kyiv in June 2012.

23. Interview with Oleh Rybachuk, former chief of staff to President Yushchenko and with Roman Olearchuk, Kyiv (June 2012). For more on the alleged relationship between Yushchenko and Firtash, see http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20614&Itemid=132, accessed May 9, 2014.

24. Interview with Roman Olearchuk.

25. Interview with Myhailo Mishchenko, Razumkov Institute, Kyiv (June 2012).

26. Interview with Roman Olearchuk.

27. Interview with Oleh Rybachuk.

28. Interview with Sergei Kvit, president of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla, Kyiv (June 2012).

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