JOURNAL OF DEMOCRACY

Islamist Parties and Democracy

Tamara Cofman Wittes ▪ *Husain Haqqani & Hillel Fradkin*
Tarek Masoud ▪ *Ihsan Dagi* ▪ *Malika Zeghal* ▪ *Laith Kubba*
Bassam Tibi ▪ *Amr Hamzawy & Nathan J. Brown*

A New Look at Ethnicity and Democratization
Mark R. Beissinger

Donald K. Emmerson on ASEAN
Scott Mainwaring & Timothy R. Scully on Latin America
Hahm Chaibong on South Korea
Kateryna Yushchenko on the Orange Revolution
John Coakley on Northern Ireland
Seth Kaplan on Somaliland
Maina Kiai on the Crisis in Kenya

The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions
Lucan Way

THE REAL CAUSES OF
THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

Lucan Way

Lucan Way *is assistant professor of political science at the University of Toronto. He is completing two books:* Failed Authoritarianism and the Sources of Political Competition in the Former Soviet Union *and (with Steven R. Levitsky)* Competitive Authoritarianism: International Linkage, Organizational Power and the Fate of Hybrid Rule.

The fall of autocrats throughout postcommunist Eurasia between 1996 and 2005[1] did not always bring full-scale democracy. Yet these turnovers have inspired a number of insightful studies examining the politics of authoritarian breakdown.[2] The recent scholarship focusing on this "second wave" of transitions in Central and Eastern Europe, sometimes known as "color revolutions," has notably advanced our understanding of how and why certain postcommunist authoritarian regimes collapsed in the face of opposition mobilization.

However, this literature's focus on the effects of regional diffusion, leadership strategy, and popular protest provides only a limited understanding of the sources of postcommunist authoritarian failure. Although diffusion throughout the former Soviet sphere has been extensive, it has not in most cases been decisive in shaping outcomes. Thus it is in many ways misleading to conceptualize these events as a "wave." Drawing on a study of competitive authoritarian regimes with Steven R. Levitsky, I identify a set of longer-term variables—including the degree of state and party capacity as well as the strength or weakness of links to the West—that more fully explains why some postcommunist leaders have successfully consolidated authoritarian rule while others have failed. This approach provides a means of identifying *a priori* which regimes may be most vulnerable to opposition challenges.

Works on recent postcommunist authoritarian turnovers or "revolutions"[3] have tended to fuse an emphasis on strategy and contingency, common to regime studies in the late 1980s and 1990s, with a more recent and growing literature on regional diffusion.[4] One important and highly

influential strain of this approach asserts that the fall of postcommunist autocrats in the early 2000s was driven by the spread of a particular set of opposition strategies developed in Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia between 1996 and 1998 and in Serbia in 2000. These strategies were later applied successfully in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, but then failed when autocrats in Belarus, Russia, and other countries devised better ways to weaken opposition. While virtually all these proponents of diffusion recognize that deeper structural factors played an important role in authoritarian breakdowns, they place an overwhelming emphasis on the diffusion of both opposition and autocratic strategies.[5]

Discussions of recent revolutions have focused on the opposition's use of an "electoral model" of transition. This included the use of such means as elections, opposition unity, nonviolent popular protest against vote fraud, youth movements, humor, and foreign assistance, as well as various forms of election monitoring and parallel vote counts, to defeat illiberal incumbents. Transnational networks of previously successful activists, with assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other organizations as well as from experts in nonviolent protest such as Gene Sharp, are credited with stimulating transitions in countries that lacked sufficient prerequisites for revolution and where the fall of autocrats was "not predicted by most analysts."[6] In turn, autocrats in countries such as Belarus and Russia have learned to counter this model, thwarting electoral observation and stepping up repression, with the result that the remaining postcommunist autocrats have held on to power since the fall of Kyrgyzstan's President Askar Akayev in March 2005.[7]

Diffusion has dominated the scholarship on recent revolutions because there has in fact been an enormous exchange of ideas, skills, and people within the postcommunist region. Indeed, each successful revolution generated new cadres of revolutionaries to spread ideas and train opposition movements under other postcommunist authoritarian regimes—beginning in Romania and Slovakia and spreading to Serbia, and from Serbia to Georgia, and then to Ukraine. It is striking that activists frequently and intentionally linked their revolutions to similar events in the region. Finally, Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik have rightly acknowledged the importance of the considerable U.S. support for opposition movements in Central Europe (a point often overlooked by analysts who focus on the European Union's role).

The Limits to Diffusion

Yet there are a number of reasons to think that diffusion has played a less determinative role in recent postcommunist authoritarian breakdowns than in other recent "waves," such as the spread of nationalist mobilizations across the Soviet Union between 1987 and 1991,[8] or the collapse of communism and single-party rule in Eastern Europe and

Africa from 1989 to 1992. The political liberalizations in Africa and Eastern Europe came as near-immediate responses to events in other countries—as when communism fell across Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, and Romania in just weeks, or when Tanzania's Julius Nyerere began efforts to dismantle long-stable one-party rule in his country weeks after witnessing firsthand the collapse of the Ceauşescu regime during a trip to Romania in late 1989. Here, authoritarian failure in one country made seemingly secure and well-entrenched single-party regimes suddenly and almost magically appear doomed to failure.

By contrast, the departure of autocrats in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine occurred in accord with each country's regular and domestically prescribed election cycle, and authoritarian breakdown in Georgia and Ukraine had been predicted years before. In Georgia, President Eduard Shevardnadze's ruling party had lost major allies and largely disintegrated by 2001–2002. While few expected the Georgian president to resign as early as 2003, Shevardnadze was widely expected to leave office at the end of his term in 2005. Similarly, in 2002 Ukraine's autocratic president Leonid Kuchma had single-digit approval ratings, while ex-premier Viktor Yushchenko's opposition "Our Ukraine" Bloc had won a plurality in that year's parliamentary voting. Although no one predicted the precise course of the Orange Revolution, almost all observers of Ukraine had known long before Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution that the highly popular Yushchenko would present a serious threat to Kuchma's handpicked successor in 2004.

In Serbia as well, sanctions and NATO bombing during the Kosovo conflict had weakened President Slobodan Milošević, prompting him to call early elections in September 2000 for fear that the country's collapsed infrastructure and electricity grid would not survive the winter.[9] While not predicted by everyone, these "revolutions" were (with the partial exception of Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution) not "beyond the imaginable" in the same way that, for example, the collapse of communism had been in Bulgaria and Romania at the beginning of 1989. Rather, it is perfectly plausible that revolutions in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine would have occurred even in the absence of successful opposition movements in the neighborhood.

Indeed, diffusion may explain fewer aspects of recent postcommunist revolutions than is sometimes argued. As Bunce, Wolchik, Mark Beissinger, and other serious proponents of diffusion have recognized, similar behavior across cases does not by itself indicate diffusion. A succession of cars may pull into a gas station because the drivers are emulating the cars in front of them, but it is more likely because each has run out of gas. Likewise, it is entirely possible that the postcommunist opposition movements chose to use elections and protests—as opposed to armed rebellion—to overthrow dictators less because they had recently witnessed the use of such tactics in nearby countries and more because

elections and protests have arguably been the easiest, most effective, and most internationally acceptable mechanisms for bringing down incumbents. Indeed, in many of these cases, the opposition's only realistic alternative to the use of elections and protest would have been the admission of defeat.

In fact, we could argue that certain elements of the postcommunist "electoral model" were in use long before the defeat of the autocratic Ion Iliescu in Romania's 1996 election—first, when Albania's anticommunist Democratic Party prevailed over hard-line Socialists in the 1992 general election, and then in Belarus in 1994, when Alyaksandr Lukashenka, an unknown independent parliamentarian who had earlier decried a new "Belarusian dictatorship," won the first presidential election against an entrenched member of the Communist *nomenklatura*. As in subsequent color revolutions, large-scale election monitoring probably helped to dissuade the government from significant fraud in1994.[10] As in Kyrgyzstan, however, neither of these turnovers resulted in democracy.

A close examination of each revolution suggests that diffusion was sometimes weaker than assumed. For example, despite Serbian youth activists' training in Gene Sharp's techniques of nonviolence, in 2000 Serbian opposition leaders relied heavily on violence. Bands of young people armed with Molotov cocktails set fire to the federal parliament building. In addition, scores of police and military veterans organized into armed paramilitaries with the aim of taking over key government buildings.[11] Zoran Djindjić, the main architect of the Bulldozer Revolution, subsequently declared that to overthrow dictators "opposition forces must clearly show they are ready to use violence to fight back in case of repression . . . security forces must realize they cannot resort to violence without risks."[12] Thus the violence was not simply incidental but rather considered a core element of opposition strategy. (This does not mean, of course, that violence was actually responsible for the success of the revolution.) In Kyrgyzstan as well, ties between local NGOs and Western actors could not prevent the revolution there from devolving into mass looting. Very few died in these two cases, not because the opposition relied on nonviolent strategies but because the military and police quickly dispersed in the face of mass protest.

In Ukraine, meanwhile, the opposition did successfully apply the strategy of nonviolent resistance in 2004. Here, however, the most convincing case for nonviolence arguably came less from foreign advisors than from the fact that street violence during earlier anti-Kuchma demonstrations had severely discredited the opposition in 2001.

Furthermore, revolutions have often failed even when oppositions have adopted the "right" strategies from abroad. The most striking case is Belarus, which garnered serious attention and input from Serb, Slovak, Ukrainian, and other activists in the run-up to the 2006 presidential elections. Lukashenka's opponents seemed to do everything they were supposed to and arguably followed the "model" much more faithfully than

did Kyrgyzstan's successful opposition in 2005. Just as in Serbia in 2000 and Ukraine in 2004, the major opposition leaders in Belarus put aside their personal political ambitions to support a single candidate, Alyaksandr Milinkevich. The opposition also had its own youth movement, Zubr, which received extensive support from its Serbian counterparts and others. Regime opponents focused their efforts on elections, remained consistently nonviolent, used humor, had their own color, and set up tents following fraudulent elections, just as in Ukraine. Yet no large-scale support materialized, and Lukashenka never came close to being unseated.

Similarly, in 2004 and again in 2008, the opposition in Armenia consciously modeled its efforts on the Rose Revolution in Georgia, but both times failed to unseat the regime. On the other side, Kuchma in Ukraine fell from power even after he had carefully studied the Georgian case and made every effort to avoid Shevardnadze's fate. Thus it is not clear that the diffusion of lessons from abroad has had a strong impact on the success or failure of autocratic rule.

Finally and most important, while diffusion probably increased the strength of protest in certain cases,[13] the scale of mobilization itself has been a surprisingly poor predictor of opposition success. Thus, while autocrats in Serbia and Ukraine fell as a result of extremely large protests, others collapsed in the face of relatively small and sporadic demonstrations. Shevardnadze in Georgia, for example, fled when confronted by "undersized" crowds (generally estimated to have been in the tens of thousands), largely because he "no longer controlled the military and security forces" and was therefore "too politically weak" to order repression.[14] Likewise in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, a few hundred protestors were able to take over regional governments before Akayev abandoned power in the midst of an antigovernment rally of about ten thousand in the capital.[15]

At the same time, autocrats in other cases were able to hold on to power despite far greater opposition mobilization, as in Armenia where crowds of a hundred to two-hundred thousand protested following the rigged 1996 presidential election, and in Serbia where hundreds of thousands took to the streets of Belgrade for 88 days in 1996 and 1997 in opposition to Milošević. Furthermore, authoritarian leaders remained in power in Armenia in 2003, 2004, and 2008; Azerbaijan in 2003 and 2005; and Belarus in 2006 amid postelection demonstrations that were about the same size as or larger than those of the Georgia or Kyrgyzstan revolutions. Thus opposition mobilization per se cannot explain the relative success of opposition movements.

Linkage and Organizational Power

In order to understand why postcommunist autocrats have fallen in some cases but not others, we need to go beyond regional diffusion, leadership strategy, and the opposition's power to mobilize. Steven Levitsky and I have developed a framework for a study of hybrid or competitive

authoritarian rule that brings to light two key structural explanations for why some postcommunist authoritarian regimes have been more vulnerable than others to opposition threats.[16]

Authoritarian stability is most affected by: 1) the strength of a country's ties to the West; and 2) the strength of the incumbent regime's autocratic party or state. In a nutshell, postcommunist autocrats have been more likely to hold onto power when their countries have weaker ties to the West and when they have access to at least one of the following sources of authoritarian organizational power: a single, highly institutionalized ruling party; a strong coercive apparatus that has won a major violent conflict; or state discretionary control over the economy, through either de jure state control or the capture of major mineral wealth, such as oil or gas.[17]

First, strong linkage or dense economic, political, and social ties with the United States and Western Europe create overwhelming obstacles to authoritarian consolidation by increasing the extent to which Western powers are willing to invest in regime change.[18] Where linkage is high, as in Central and Southeastern Europe, not a single authoritarian regime has survived the post–Cold War era. Where linkage is relatively low, as in the former Soviet Union, Western commitment to democratization has been less intense. There, close to half of all nondemocratic governments or their chosen successors have survived intact since 1992. In such low-linkage cases, the success or failure of authoritarianism hinges to a greater extent on domestic factors.

Students of recent postcommunist revolutions have tended to emphasize similarities in Western engagement among all the cases, such as the presence of foreign election monitors and U.S. assistance to domestic civil society groups and political-party activists. Yet such similarities obscure the great disparity in the intensity of external pressure for democratization experienced by Central and Southeast European countries on the one hand, and the post-Soviet states on the other. Most obviously, the EU has offered membership to the former but not the latter. Such decisions have almost certainly been tied to geography. Thus in 1993, the EU offered the prospect of membership to Romania, even though Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine were all considered more democratic at the time.

As many have noted, the prospect of EU membership, with its stringent democratic conditionality, created enormous obstacles to the development or maintenance of autocratic rule.[19] It meant that authoritarian abuses threatened a country's overall road to prosperity, thereby heightening both elite and popular opposition to authoritarian rule. The incentive of EU membership thus significantly constrained authoritarian behavior and may explain why, in stark contrast to their post-Soviet counterparts, diehard autocrats such as Iliescu in Romania and Vladimír Mečiar in Slovakia never attempted to steal an election outright. Moreover, oppositions gained a huge advantage by rightly claiming that they, and not the reigning autocrats, would be in the best position to achieve EU membership.

But EU conditionality was neither the only nor the most common type of pressure faced by autocrats in Central and Southeastern Europe. Geographic proximity also meant that authoritarian and ethnonationalist policies in the Balkan states threatened the security of Western Europe, via the spread of ethnic conflict or the onslaught of refugees, to a much greater extent than the actions of autocrats in the former Soviet Union or other parts of the world. As a result, the United States and Europe have been far more likely to intervene directly through aggressive sanctions (against Serbia) or military engagement (in Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Serbia).

In the late 1990s in Serbia, increasing international isolation put enormous strain on the government, spurring the defections of the heads of the military and secret police and other high-level loyalists. Most notably, Serbia's proximity to Western Europe explains why NATO opted for a military response to ethnic abuses in Kosovo, but took little action in response to similar or worse crises in other parts of the world. While the invasion generated "an initial wave of xenophobic solidarity behind the regime,"[20] the combination of bombings and sanctions stripped the Serbian leader of key resources to fund patronage or state salaries. By the fall of 2000, Milošević was in an even more precarious position as Serbia faced looming blackouts in the dead of winter.

This crisis likely did more to motivate opposition to Milošević than did the mobilization tactics of Otpor, the nonviolent youth movement often credited with toppling the regime. Within the state-security services and other key agencies, the "prevailing mood . . . was that Milošević's sell-by date was nearing and that the service's corporate and professional interests should somehow be protected."[21] In this context, state actors readily sought agreement with opposition forces and backed down almost immediately in the face of the large-scale October 5 protest over late September's stolen presidential election. As one account noted, "The throne on which the regime sat was already rotten. When the first leg was kicked away, everything crashed to the ground."[22] Thus in Serbia, as in Romania and Slovakia, authoritarian regimes fell in the face of overwhelming and seemingly insurmountable Western pressure.

The United States and Western Europe also played an important role in many post-Soviet countries—most notably in Ukraine, where the United States provided significant aid throughout the post–Cold War era. But not a single autocrat in the non-Baltic former Soviet Union faced the pressure of EU conditionality or experienced large-scale Western military intervention of the kind witnessed in the Balkans. In Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine, authoritarian practices did not actually threaten the countries' prosperity in the way they were thought to have in Romania or Slovakia. As a result, autocrats in the former Soviet states did not have nearly the same external obstacles to maintaining their authoritarian coalitions.

Furthermore, the opposition in these countries, particularly in Ukraine, received an overwhelming share of their campaign resources from major

domestic businesses and other national actors rather than foreign sources.[23] In fact, it is estimated that foreign funding accounted for just 2 percent of the resources of the youth movement Pora, the Ukrainian equivalent of Otpor.[24] And, of course, the United States has provided significant aid to a number of other post-Soviet oppositions and civil society groups—most notably in Russia—but they have been unable to achieve success.

Failed Authoritarians

In those low-linkage cases where Western pressure played a less decisive role in defeating postcommunist autocrats, regime collapses have resulted more from authoritarian weakness than opposition strength. In Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, for example, the opposition leadership that won power in the mid 2000s emerged almost wholesale from the old regimes. And in Serbia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan (though not in Ukraine) opposition succeeded in large part because the military and security services quickly dispersed in the face of serious protest.

To understand the relative vulnerability of autocrats in the former Soviet Union, we need to examine state and party capacity that helps autocrats to preserve the loyalty of allies and to defuse, coopt, or crush protest. The capacity for authoritarian rule can be identified *a priori* by the presence of a single, highly institutionalized ruling party; an extensive and well-funded coercive apparatus that has won a major violent conflict; or state discretionary control over the economy. Regimes that are strong in one or more of these key dimensions are far more secure than those that lack capacity in any.

First, Barbara Geddes and others have argued that well-established ruling parties are paramount in preventing regime allies from defecting to the opposition when times get tough.[25] In the former Soviet Union generally, the widespread banning of the Communist Party after the failed August 1991 hardliners' coup, coupled with the absence of revolutionary struggle, deprived most autocrats of any cohesive organizational base. In cases such as Kyrgyzstan under Akayev, Ukraine under Kuchma, or Moldova in the 1990s, leaders either had no party organization or relied on a loose coalition of competing parties. The only thing holding these alliances together was short-term patronage.

In such cases, old allies readily abandoned their autocratic leader once they had lost internal battles for resources or after the autocrat began to look weak. Kuchma's reliance on a loose coalition of competing oligarchic parties in Ukraine fundamentally hampered his efforts to concentrate political control. Even when he had solid popular support in early 2000, quarrels between allies prevented Kuchma from instituting stronger presidential rule. And after the release of tapes pointing to corruption and ties to illegal arms sales, the president's popularity declined, and previous allies, including Yuliya Tymoshenko, Yushchenko,

and numerous other officials, moved into the opposition. Virtually the entire leadership of the Orange Revolution had in fact been closely allied with the president just a few years prior to the 2004 presidential election that brought the collapse of the Kuchma regime.

In Georgia, President Shevardnadze did successfully establish a single party—the Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG)—in the mid-1990s. The CUG, however, lacked any obvious ideology and was in large measure a patronage machine for Shevardnadze loyalists. Thus after the president's popularity began to wane, his major allies—Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania, and Nino Burdjanadze—abandoned him, and the party disintegrated in late 2001 and early 2002. These same politicians led the Rose Revolution in 2003.

By contrast, autocrats can hang on to the reins of power more easily when they base their control on a single-party structure rooted in more than just short-term patronage—a highly salient ideology, a history of violent struggle, or a long track record of electoral success. In the former Soviet Union, the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) that came to power in 2001 best approximates a strong party. PCRM's ability to draw on an established ideological tradition as well as a powerful Leninist organizational structure has enabled the government to remain cohesive and to consolidate central control over the Moldovan state in a way that the autocratic leaders who lacked solid party structures could not in the 1990s.[26]

Next, the autocrat's command over an extensive, cohesive, well-funded, and experienced coercive apparatus that can reliably harass opposition and put down protest is key to authoritarian stability. The most effective source of coercive capacity has come from success in large-scale violent conflict. Indeed, many of the more stable post–Cold War authoritarian regimes (in North Korea, China, Cuba, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe) were founded in war or violent revolutionary struggle.

In the former Soviet Union, the clearest example of a strong coercive state is Armenia, which in 1994 successfully captured 20 percent of neighboring Azerbaijan in a war over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. That war has directly facilitated authoritarian stability by providing leaders with a force that has the experience, the stomach, and the cohesion to put down one of the most mobilized oppositions in the postcommunist world. Thus in 1996, after a rigged presidential election set off demonstrations of more than a hundred thousand protesters, the military, the police, and the Yerkrapah Union of Karabakh War Veterans successfully sealed off the capital, shut down the offices of antiregime parties, and arrested 250 opposition leaders, thereby successfully suppressing the resistance.[27] Since then, forces partly consisting of war veterans have put down major protests of up to 35,000 demonstrators following fraudulent elections in 2003 and 2004, and most recently in March 2008, when security forces killed seven civilians and imposed martial law in the capital.

By contrast, regimes with little coercive capacity—owing to small or underequipped security forces, substantial wage arrears, or loss in a major war—have had far more difficulty coping with even modest protest. The coercive state was weak in Georgia, which lost territories to secessionist forces before descending into civil war in the early 1990s. The Georgian state throughout the 1990s and early 2000s faced constant regional rebellion and owed massive amounts in back pay, making the regime distinctly unprepared to stem the sporadic protests that broke out in 2003 following fraudulent parliamentary elections. Thus as tens of thousands demonstrated on November 22, Saakashvili and his allies faced almost no police resistance when they stormed parliament. The opposition leader, rose in hand, forced President Shevardnadze to flee (he resigned the next day). As the interior minister later admitted, the police "had not been paid at that point for three months. So why should they have obeyed Shevardnadze?"[28]

Similarly, before the Bulldozer Revolution, Serbia had lost four wars and was significantly behind in paying state wages. When faced with a massive protest in Belgrade on October 5, its military and police simply stepped aside. Kyrgyzstan also lacked coercive capacity. Although the state had not suffered any military defeats, Kyrgyz police were severely underpaid and often had to buy their own fuel and uniforms. As a result, according to political scientist Scott Radnitz, the police in southern Kyrgyzstan made agreements with protestors to stand aside as the opposition stormed local government headquarters at the outset of the Tulip Revolution.[29]

Ukraine's coercive capacity during the run-up to the Orange Revolution, meanwhile, was somewhere between that of Armenia and that of Georgia. In contrast to Armenia, Ukraine had not successfully weathered a large-scale violent conflict. In contrast to Georgia, however, it did control an extensive and well-paid security apparatus. So while the agents of coercion were either unwilling or unable to put down protests, they nevertheless remained cohesive in their defense of government buildings, forcing the opposition to stage a massive, three-week demonstration in the capital. The relative strength of the Ukrainian state made regime overthrow impossible without large-scale protest.

Control Wealth, Control Power

Finally, authoritarian stability has been shaped by the extent to which state leaders have discretionary control over wealth in society—whether through direct state control over the economy or through reliance on energy revenues that are relatively easy for even weak autocrats to capture. A leader with complete or near-complete control over wealth can bribe or withhold resources from opponents, in extreme cases even denying opposition activists any stable livelihood.

Postcommunist autocrats in Belarus, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have

maintained state economic control by refraining from large-scale priva-tization. The absence of economic liberalization in these cases has made it easier for autocrats to stop private funding of opposition movements. In Belarus, for example, where the state controls about 80 percent of the economy and has much of the populace on short-term work con-tracts, the opposition has had virtually no access to domestic financing. Most of the activists whom I met in my research were jobless, or made money through small trade. In other words, only those prepared to make extraordinary personal sacrifices can take part in opposition activities. At the same time, Russia's generous gas subsidies to Belarus have helped to prevent the kind of severe economic crisis witnessed in other post-Soviet countries. Thus Lukashenka's success at remaining in power has less to do with any particular strategies adopted in response to postcommunist revolu-tions than with his already overwhelming domination over the opposition.

In countries where there had been extensive privatization, however—Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine, for example—the opposition was able either to draw on domestic business support or to benefit from the business community's neutrality.[30] Most notably in Ukraine, the business oligarchs provided major financial backing to Yushchenko's Our Ukraine move-ment beginning with the 2002 parliamentary elections. Campaign funding for Yushchenko in the 2004 presidential election, estimated at more than US$100 million, helped to pay for campaign offices and staff throughout Ukraine; nearly ubiquitous banners and logos; transport for poll observers and thousands of $300 video cameras to record violations on election day; enormous video screens and other equipment for rock concert–like dem-onstrations all over the country in the aftermath of the fraudulent election; and tents, camp kitchens, and other equipment to facilitate the occupation of central Kyiv. This scale of domestic support puts Western aid in critical perspective. Western aid did fund certain key exit polls and other activi-ties. Yet even if that support had not been forthcoming, the opposition would have likely still been able to pay for such actions.

Apart from avoiding privatization, leaders have also been able to keep control over wealth when a large share of the national income comes from mineral rents such as oil or gas. Even weak autocrats have eas-ily captured and monopolized large rents from energy exports. Securing control over a more diverse industrial economy has generally been more difficult and economically costly. In this sense, both nonprivatization and reliance on resource rents promote authoritarianism in the same way—by making it easier for incumbents to use a greater part of a country's wealth to prop up their regime while starving opponents of necessary resources.

Thus in Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and to a less-er degree Uzbekistan, autocrats have been able to use de facto or de jure control over gas and oil rents to pay friends, starve foes, and fund large, well-paid, and well-trained coercive agencies to intimidate antiregime forces. Partly as a result, the opposition in each of these countries has

remained extraordinarily weak and marginalized. As in Belarus, these autocrats have benefited much more from preexisting structural advantages than from any lessons learned from nearby revolutions.

Cracks in Authoritarian Foundations

The approach outlined above, with its emphasis on structural factors, certainly does not provide a complete explanation for postcommunist authoritarian survival or collapse. Most notably, it excludes more proximate factors such as incumbent popularity or economic crisis as well as those aspects (including diffusion) that facilitate popular mobilization.[31] Yet this approach enables us to identify which regimes are more vulnerable to opposition threats than others.

Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine all lacked key economic and organizational resources, which made these regimes particularly vulnerable to elite defection or modest opposition mobilization—even in the midst of robust economic growth, as in Georgia or Ukraine. By contrast, other post-Soviet autocracies have been able draw on one or more important sources of authoritarian strength—a single, highly institutionalized ruling party; an extensive, battle-tested, and well-funded coercive apparatus; or state discretionary control over the economy—that have allowed leaders to suppress protest, starve the opposition, and discourage defection of allies.

At the same time, this approach allows us to identify potential cracks in the authoritarian foundations of the post-Soviet regimes that have so far been stable. While demonstrably more robust than their counterparts in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, or Ukraine, other autocrats in the former Soviet Union lack the combined authoritarian state and party strength found in China, Cuba, or Malaysia—rooted in armed struggle or a long history of ruling-party electoral success—that has allowed autocratic governments in these countries to withstand severe crises. None of the post-Soviet cases possesses all sources of organizational strength outlined here.

Regimes in Belarus and Armenia are particularly vulnerable. In both cases, autocrats are especially susceptible to defection by allies due to the weakness of the ruling parties. In Belarus, Lukashenka has so far used economic control and an extensive security apparatus to preempt any serious opposition challenges. Yet the regime lacks a ruling party as well as the kind of ideology or common experience with large-scale violent struggle that could facilitate the suppression of mass unrest or dissuade allies from turning on Lukashenka in the event of crisis. The relatively weak cohesion within the security apparatus was demonstrated in the fall of 2004 when, following fraudulent parliamentary elections, Leanid Yerin, the head of the KGB, met with protestors in an apparent show of sympathy. Although Yerin was later dismissed, this could be a sign of broader disloyalty within the security forces that may haunt Lukashenka in the future.

In Armenia, the powerful coercive apparatus that emerged from of

the war in Nagorno-Karabakh has facilitated the rapid and effective suppression of large-scale opposition unrest throughout the 1990s and 2000s. At the same time, the regime's grounding in a loose coalition of competing ruling parties makes it more vulnerable to high-level defections. Thus, in response to the relatively mild international reaction to electoral abuse in a November 2005 referendum, several members of the government, plus a number of "progovernment" parliamentarians, openly denounced the election as "undemocratic" and blamed other progovernment parties for the fraud. Competing groups within the presidential camp did "everything to boost their standing by discrediting each other."[32] More recently, the crisis surrounding the fraudulent February 2008 presidential election was accompanied by the defection of numerous high-level government officials. Such events suggest that while the regime is effectively able to beat back opposition protests in the street, it remains vulnerable to defection from within.

Just because so many post-Soviet authoritarian regimes have survived until now does not necessarily mean that they will remain stable in the medium to long term. An examination of authoritarian party and state capacity reveals potential fissures in the foundations of authoritarian rule that may lead to regime collapse in the future.

NOTES

1. Autocrats fell in Romania in 1996, Slovakia in 1998, Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004, and Kyrgyzstan in 2005.

2. Mark R. Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (June 2007): 259–76; Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, "Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes," unpubl. ms.; Henry Hale, "Regime Cycles: Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *World Politics* 58 (October 2005): 133–65; Katya Kalandadze and Mitchell A. Orenstein "Electoral Protests and Democratization: Beyond the Color Revolutions," unpubl. ms., 2008; Michael McFaul, "Transitions from Postcommunism," *Journal of Democracy* 16 (July 2005): 5–19; Scott Radnitz, "The Color of Money: Privatization, Economic Dispersion, and the Post-Soviet Revolutions," unpubl. ms., 2008; Joshua Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (September 2007): 537–53.

3. By most social-science definitions, these events would not be considered revolutions, but rather changes of regime or simply authoritarian breakdowns. However, for simplicity's sake and in line with most observers of the color revolutions, I use "revolution" to refer to the postcommunist cases of authoritarian turnover.

4. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Jeffrey S. Kopstein and David A. Reilly, "Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World," *World Politics* 53 (October 2000): 1–37.

5. Bunce and Wolchik suggest that diffusion of the electoral model is most likely to be a decisive factor in creating revolution when regimes are made structurally vulnerable by economic crisis among other factors ("Defeating Dictators"). Beissinger, who analyzes a number of potential structural sources of revolutions, provides a nuanced examination of the interaction between domestic structural conditions, demonstration effect, and democratization. See "Structure and Example," 260.

6. Beissinger, "Structure and Example," 260.

7. Vitali Silitski, "Preempting Democracy: The Case of Belarus," *Journal of Democracy* 16 (October 2005): 83–97; Beissinger "Structure and Example," 269–70. See also Scott Radnitz, "What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?" *Journal of Democracy* 17 (April 2006): 132–46.

8. Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

9. Damjan de Krnjević-Mišković, "Serbia's Prudent Revolution," *Journal of Democracy* 12 (July 2001): 103.

10. See Alyaksandr Lukashenka, "Diktatura: Belarusskii variant?" (Dictatorship: The Belarusian version?) *Narodnaia hazeta* (Minsk), 25 May 1991, 1, 3. See Aleksandr Feduta, *Lukashenko: Politicheskaia biografiia* (Lukashenka: A political biography) (Moscow: Referendum, 2005), 169.

11. Albert Cevallos, "Whither the Bulldozer? Nonviolent Revolution and the Transition to Democracy in Serbia," United States Institute of Peace Special Report, No. 72, 6 August 2001, available at *www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr72.html;* Dragan Bujosevic and Ivan Radovic, *The Fall of Milosevic: The October 5 Revolution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 12–14, 30, 88–95.

12. Eugen Tomic, "Serbian Premier Reviews Role of Opposition," *RFE/RL Newsline,* 25 September 2001.

13. Even in Belarus, where the opposition failed, protests were larger than many had expected—an outcome that can probably be traced to diffusion effects. See Vitali Silitski, "Belarus: Learning from Defeat," *Journal of Democracy* 17 (October 2006): 138–52.

14. Lincoln Mitchell, "Georgia's Rose Revolution," *Current History* (October 2004): 345, 348; Zurab Karumidze and James V. Wertsch, eds., *Enough! The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia* (Hauppauge, N.Y.: Nova Publishers, 2005), 13; *RFE/RL Caucasus Report,* 24 November 2003. Available at *www.rferl.org/reports/caucasus-report/2003/11/41-241103.asp*.

15. Radnitz, "What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?"

16. Steven R. Levitsky and Lucan Way, "Competitive Authoritarianism: International Linkage, Organizational Power and the Evolution of Hybrid Rule," unpubl. ms.

17. This approach touches on some factors also suggested in other works. In particular, Beissinger ("Structure and Example," 269–72) and McFaul also mention control over coercive agencies; Kalandadze and Orenstein ("Electoral Protests") discuss proximity to the West; and Radnitz ("The Color of Money") also brings in privatization. See also Dan Slater, "State Power and Staying Power: Durable Authoritarian Leviathans in Malaysia and Singapore," unpubl. ms.

18. Steven R. Levitsky and Lucan Way, "International Linkage and Democratization," *Journal of Democracy* 16 (July 2005): 20–34.

19. See for example, Milada Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration After Communism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005).

20. Lenard J. Cohen, "Post-Milosevic Serbia," *Current History,* March 2001, 99.

21. *Transitions Online,* 29 May 2001.

22. Bujasevic and Radovic, *Fall of Milosevic,* 140.

23. Lucan Way, "Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (April 2005): 131–145.

24. Vladyslav Kaskiv et al., "It's Time! Pora and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine," in Joerg Forbig and Pavol Demes, eds., *Reclaiming Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall Fund, 2007), 134.

25. Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 115–44.

26. Lucan Way, "Pluralism by Default in Moldova," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (October 2002): 127–41.

27. Liana Minasian, "The Role of the Military in Armenia's Politics," *CRS,* No. 5, 4 November 1999.

28. Quoted in Karumidze and Wertsch, *Enough!,* 39.

29. Personal communication.

30. Lucan Way, "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave," *World Politics* 57 (January 2005): 235, 237, 250, 255; Radnitz, "Color of Money."

31. For an arguably more comprehensive set of factors that predict postcommunist transitions, see McFaul, "Transitions from Postcommunism."

32. Ruzanna Khachatrian, "Dashnaks 'Not Responsible for Referendum Fraud," *RFE/RL Armenia Report,* 22 December 2005; A. Bedevian, "Ruling Parties Pledge Continued Cooperation," *RFE/RL Armenia Report,* 6 February 2006.