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Democracy in the post-Soviet region: ten years after the color revolutions

Following the much-heralded electoral revolutions in several post-Soviet countries, known collectively as "color revolutions," there was a prevalent expectation of democratization in affected countries and of further such movements in neighboring countries. The movements were intended, ostensibly, to cause a shift away from kleptocratic, semi-democratic systems (i.e., a shift from *formal* to *substantive* democracy). Yet a decade of experience since the revolutions in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan has frustrated optimistic projections of post-revolutionary democratic consolidation, and led some to question the complimentary and optimistic analyses of the movements (Lane 2009, Korosteleva 2012). Diffusion of color revolutions, moreover, largely halted after Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution; successive movements failed to affect, let alone dislodge existing authoritarian governments—in Belarus in 2006, and in Russia in 2011-2012, for example.

A decade on, what is the democratic condition of states that experienced a color revolution? Where was the level of democracy before, immediately following, and presently, ten years after the revolution? And, what do those answers cumulatively portend for future democratic development. This paper offers answers to these questions. Utilizing a variety of measures of democracy, it presents the evolving democratic conditions of three case countries: Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus. These three examples of color revolutions were selected because Georgia and Ukraine represent the height of the color revolution trend, and because Belarus's failed Denim Revolution in 2006 marks the cessation of successful revolutions. This study longitudinally examines democratic conditions within each case country, evaluating gains or loses from preceding circumstances. Thus, it offers an alternative and complimentary analysis to Ryan Kennedy's (2014) 'synthetic comparative' study, which evaluates contemporary democratic conditions against likely conditions had a color revolution not occurred.

The paper first reviews some of the literature and scholarly analysis of color revolution. Then, it discusses the difficulties and prominent studies of measuring democracy. The paper next applies a selection of democratic measures to the selected cases. Finally, it offers conclusions about the state of democracy in those states.

Color Revolutions Reviewed

The color revolutions attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. How could they not? Their multiple facets and implications spanned great swaths of political science research—electoral politics, regime change, protest and grass roots activism, civil society, transnational networks, diffusion, European enlargement. And, undoubtedly, the color revolutions invigorated study of democratization. Were these the last splashes of the far-famed 'third wave'? Or even…the initial upwelling of a fourth? Did Western democracy promotion work; can democracy really be actively exported? These burning questions compelled matching fervor in the firmament of democracy scholars. Concentrations ranged over comprehensive accounts of specific cases (Fairbanks 2004, Karatnycky 2005, Marples 2006, McFaul 2007, Silitski 2006, Wilson 2005), the role of foreign (i.e., Western) aid (Anable 2006, Welt 2006, Wilson 2006), diffusion of revolutionary methods from one country to another (Beissinger 2007, Beissinger 2009), conditions for electoral revolutions (Bunce and Wolchik 2006 and 2009, McFaul 2005 and 2010, Wolchik 2012, Way 2008 and 2009), and authoritarian backlash against democratic movements and democracy promotion (Carothers 2006, Finkel and Brundy 2012, Horvath 2011). But, much of those works were predicated on a laudatory presupposition that these were in essence democratizing movements.

A more skeptical branch of analysis stemmed from a simple contention asserted by Samuel Huntington (1991: 35):

> People sometimes assume that doing away with a dictatorship leads to the inauguration of a democracy. In fact, however, nondemocratic regimes are more likely to be replaced by other nondemocratic regimes than by democratic ones. In addition, the factors responsible for the end of a nondemocratic regime may differ significantly from those that lead to the creation of a democratic one. … At the simplest level, democratization

> involves: (1) the end of an authoritarian regime; (2) the installation of a democratic regime; and (3) the consolidation of the democratic regime. Different and contradictory causes may be responsible for each of these three developments.

Henry Hale (2005) applied similar reasoning to the color revolutions, arguing that analyzing them in a democratization paradigm is a fundamental misconception. Subsequent studies in this strain underscored elite manipulation of the ostensibly popular protest movements that drove the color revolutions (Lane 2009) and the nexus of regime vulnerability, the influence of foreign aid, and 'legitimate' suppression of color movements by authoritarian regimes (Korosteleva 2009). And most recently, scholars have attempted to discern precisely the enduring effects of these movements. Graeme Robertson and Grigorie Pop-Eleches (2014) track changes in the effected countries' (implicitly democratic) conditions, and concur with Hale's proposition that the revolutions were far more connected to patronage network dynamics than to a struggle between democratic and authoritarian forces. "The task facing the post-revolutionary leaders, then, was less one of building democracy and more one of reasserting control over clientelistic politics" (Robertson and Pop-Eleches 2014: 6). Ryan Kennedy (2014) ventures a counterfactual comparative analysis between their current democratic circumstances and their likely circumstances without having undergone a color revolution. Both these studies identify limited gains in Georgia and Ukraine—though considerably underwhelming given the prevalent high expectations and aspirations of their revolutions.

This paper affords a parallel evaluation of post-revolution democratic development by applying existing measures of democracy to a longitudinal examination of the foremost color movement cases.

The difficulty of measuring democracy

Conceptualizing an operable measurement of democracy is essential for the study of democratic systems and democratization. Without a standard of systematic comparison, "without some way of analyzing regime types through time and across countries we have no way to mark progress or regress on this vital matter, to explain it, to reveal its consequences, or to affect its future course" (Coppedge *et al*. 2011: 247). However, the task

of evaluating democracy poses numerous difficulties—whether qualitatively or quantitatively, comparatively and/or longitudinally.

First, one must identify defining characteristics of democracy; what concrete conditions aggregate to form a democratic system? While no consensus exists on defining democracy, Robert Dahl's work, particularly his theory of polyarchy arguably stands solidly at the forefront of modern theory in the field. He identified eight institutional guarantees for a responsive, democratically operationalized government (Dahl 1971: 3): (1) freedom to form and join organizations, (2) freedom of expression, (3) right to vote, (4) eligibility for public office, (5) right of political leaders to compete for support and for votes, (6) alternative sources of information, (7) free and fair elections, and (8) institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference. (Some criticism of this institutional concentration exist—notably David Beetham (1999)—favoring instead a focus on underlying principles; but such distinctions, though offering a different deductive approach, proffer few if any dissimilarities in practical analysis.) Distilled, these guarantees comprise essential individual and collective freedom respectively codified in personal autonomy rights and political participation rights (Alexander *et al*. 2011: 42).

Yet we know *a posteriori* that such institutional conditions are insufficient. Most of them were present in Soviet regimes, for example, but it would be specious to class those systems as democratic. This problem of spuriousness highlights the necessity of distinguishing between *formal* and *substantive* democracy. Second, therefore, one must isolate *conditioning* qualities without which *defining* qualities would be ineffectual. Amy Alexander, Ronald Inglehart, and Christian Welzel pursue this line of thought, writing, "Conditioning qualities are not part of a concept's definition, but are needed to put the defining properties into practice. Because democratic rights are defined by laws, the most obvious conditioning quality is the rule of law" (Alexander *et al*. 2011: 42).

Thus establishing necessary qualities arranges the parameters for measuring democracy. Several institutions and scholars have undertaken to operationalize these considerations and provide a standardized method of appraising democracy over time and between countries. Freedom House represents the preeminent authority in this field. Since

1972 it has annually produced comprehensive, detailed, and methodologically sound[1] surveys of levels of democracy in countries around the world. While Freedom House yet has some weaknesses (see Munck and Verkuilen 2002), it is strongly positioned, as Larry Diamond (1999: 12) describes it, as the "best available empirical indicator of liberal democracy."

Nevertheless, Alexander *et al*. (2011) contend that Freedom House measures can be improved. Its paired dimensions of 'civil liberties' and 'political rights' correspond to their duality of democratic rights: (1) personal autonomy rights and (2) political participation rights. But, Freedom House considers rule of law together with democratic rights, instead of separate, conditioning qualities as Alexander *et al*. prefer. Using indicators that focus solely on the rule of law—such as Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), the Control of Corruption Index (CCI) from the World Governance Indicators, or the World Bank's Rule of Law Index (RLI)—the authors argue that it is preferable to make a summative valuation of the *defining* quality of democratic rights and then weigh it by the *conditioning* quality of rule of law (Alexander and Welzel 2008 and 2011, Alexander *et al*. 2011). Among the available measures, the World Bank's Rule of Law Index appears the most encompassing measure (Kaufman, Kraay, & Mastruzzi 2007: 4), and therefore represents the best instrument for Alexander, Inglehart, and Welzel's compound index. Because it gauges both formal democratic principles and substantive effect thereof, they call this *compound* measure the 'Effective Democracy Index' (EDI).

This method is not unscathed by criticism, however. Carl H. Knutsen (2010), most notably, presents a handful of methodological problems that arguably degrades the EDI's validity and reliability (though only when using the CPI or CCI). Prominent among his criticisms: the accuracy of operationalizing rule of law as an encompassing measure of democratic quality, and the possibility of double-treatment. First, strong rule of law notwithstanding, he questions whether democratic rights may yet be undermined. Second, if Freedom House incorporates rule of law or corruption in its measure democratic rights and the EDI subsequently treats that measure with a factor of rule of law, is that not applying the same measure twice (i.e., double treatment). Alexander *et al*. (2011) counter

[1] For a detailed discussion of the Freedom House methodology, see the 2014 survey at Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Survey, 2014*, http://www.freedomhouse.org.

these arguments. Rule of law and its components (especially limited corruption[2]), they assert, is the predominant conditioning quality of democracy and dwarfs other considerations (Alexander *et al*. 2011: 46). The authors present a thorough refutation of the double treatment argument (Ibid.: 48-49). They show that the RLI and their Democratic Rights Index (DRI; the Freedom House measure simply converted to a hundred-point scale) have an "overlapping variance of just 46 percent" (Alexander *et al*. 2011: 48), indicating that the EDI employs a non-redundant weighting of the DRI. (Other problems exist—such as those of 'rank' and 'distance'—and remain somewhat valid even after responses by Alexander, Inglehart, and Welzel, but they are inconsequential to this study, which is longitudinal rather than comparative.) In this and other responses and independent proofs, the authors establish the EDI as a strong measure of substantive democracy.

Still other measures exist. The Bertelsmann-Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) represents a particularly useful resource for democratization studies since it focuses on the multivariate aspects that contribute to democratic transition—political transformation, economic transformation, and transformation management.[3] While its holistic measurements are most useful for its stated goal of identifying effective strategies for managing a peaceful democratic transition (Bertelsmann-Stiftung, 2014), this study isolates and exercises its 'political transformation' measure as a separate democratic indicator rather than as a piece of a broader systemic shift.

Finally, some scholars have endeavored to exploit the strength of the various existing measures by creating mass composites, averages of the major studies. Foremost among these are Hans-Joachim Lauth's Three-dimensional Combined Index of Democracy (*Kombinierte Index der Demokratie 3 Dimensionen*, or KID3D) and the Unified Democracy Scores (UDS) created by Daniel Pemstein, Stephen Meserve, and James Melton. Aside from an intriguing method of calculating variance from a mean measure of a country's level of democracy, these *averaged* measures proffer a reliable check against the biases of favoring one or two measures over the rest of the field. The KID3D, conducting biennial studies since

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[2] They cite Mark Warren's (2006: 803-807) contention that corruption control is an integral facet of rule of law.

[3] For a detailed discussion of the BTI methodology, see the 2014 survey at Bertelsmann-Stiftung, *Transformation Index BTI, 2014*, http://www.bti-project.org/index/methodology/

1996, creates a unified index of Freedom House, Polity[4], and the World Bank's Governance Indicators (Lauth 2015). The UDS (Pemstein *et al*. 2010) standardizes and averages ten measures of democracy: Arat (1991), Bowman, Lehoucq, and Mahoney (2005) (BLM), Bollen (2001), Freedom House (2007), Hadenius (1992), Przeworski et al. (2000) (PACL), Polity scores (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2006), the Polyarchy scale (Coppedge and Reinicke 1991), Gasiorowski's (1996) Political Regime Change measure (PRC), and Vanhanen (2003). (Were it not for the fact that all ten measures are predicated on similar conceptualizations of democracy, the UDS would not be a valid measure (Pemstein *et al*. 2010: 3).) The underlying method of these compound indices is to mitigate extreme variance at its data points; fortuitously for the objective of this study, their strength is the capacity to identify common trends and trajectories of democratic development found in a range of surveys.

Methodology

This investigation proceeds from the position that all of the existing measures of democracy are deficient in some respects. Given this, prudent study of a country's democratic conditions demands checking any analyses against alternative data sets. The study therefore marshals multiple valuations of levels of democracy in three countries affected by color revolution movements: Georgia (the 2003 Rose Revolution), Ukraine (the 2004 Orange Revolution), and Belarus (the 2006 Denim or Jean Revolution). These cases limit disparities of regional trends and historical experience, and ostensibly represent two successful revolutions (Georgia and Ukraine) and one failure (Belarus); that is, Georgia and Ukraine effected regime change while Belarus did not.

The mode of analysis is univariate (i.e., measures of democracy), longitudinal, and non-comparative. Since the object of this inquiry is to ascertain democratic development within a country (as opposed to a region, for instance) cross-case assessment offers no meaningful evidence. Instead, the study uses data from 2002, a base year before color revolutions occurred in any of the examined cases, and all subsequent years (when available) through 2014. Multiple, methodologically consistent measures allows a reliable comparison of democratic levels before the color revolutions, immediately after, and now, approximately a decade hence.

[4] Polity is another major democracy data series. It was begun in the 1960s by T.R. Gurr and continues today in an updated version, Polity IV.

Five data sets are used, including two isolated measures, two averaging measures, and one compound index; they are, respectively: Freedom House, BTI, UDS, KID3D, and EDI. To evaluate meaningfully and simultaneously these measures, a common scale must be established; in this instance, a hundred-point scale is a serviceable option. Alexander and Welzel (2008, 2011) devised such a transformation of the twin seven-point Freedom House scales for the purposes of the EDI, which they refer to as the DRI:

DRI = (14 – (PRR + CLR))/0.12

where PRR stands for the political rights rating and CLR stands for the civil liberties. Thus altered Freedom House becomes a hundred-point scale, '100' representing complete democratic rights. BTI offers biennial measures of democracy on a ten-point scale (except for 2003, when a five-point scale was utilized). Its country scores are easily transformed by multiplying by ten. In years when BTI did not conduct its survey, scores from the preceding survey are carried over as place holders; though not ideal, this practice will not seriously affect an evaluation of a decade-long trend and, furthermore, will be accounted for in this paper's analysis. The UDS involves a little more work to transform accurately. Its annual measures (excerpted herein from 2002 through the most recent year, 2012) vary; though all fall between negative and positive 2.5. A transforming equation that accounts for the highest and lowest observed scores represents the most accurate rendering; thus:

UDS Treated = (COS – LOS)/(HOS – LOS) * 100

where COS stands for a country's observed score, LOS for the year's lowest observed score, and HOS for the year's highest observed score. KID3D[5] employs a ten-point scale in its biennial survey. It is treated, therefore, the same as BTI. Finally, the DRI and the Rules of Law Index (RLI) are multiplied to calculate a country's EDI score for the year.

Georgia

The Rose Revolution in November 2003 ousted the regime of Eduard Shevardnadze and the Citizens' Union of Georgia party. Former government officials turned opposition leaders—most notably Mikheil Saakashvili and Zurab Zhvania—assailed the pervasive corruption of the governing regime. Following extensive and observed irregularities in

[5] Inexplicably KID3D does not include Belarus in its survey. However, since the study is non-comparative, it does not degrade the analysis of democracy in the selected countries, only provides an added instrument for the analysis of Georgia and Ukraine.

national parliamentary elections, these leaders galvanized well-established transnational advocacy networks (encompassing various civil society, grass roots, and media organizations) and thereby mobilized tens of thousands in a sustained mass demonstration campaign. The resignation of President Shevardnadze and succeeding snap presidential election swept Saakashvili into executive office and was swiftly followed by the victory of his United National Movement (UNM) party in rerun parliamentary elections. Saakashvili occupied the presidential office for two five-year terms (the constitutional limit), notably executing anti-corruption campaigns in police and intelligence services. Popular demonstrations against him in 2007 undermined hitherto laudatory assessments of his democratic *bona fides*, as he oversaw suppression of the protests. A pro-Russian businessman, Bindzina Ivanishvili lead a large 'Georgian Dream' opposition coalition to victory in the 2012 parliamentary elections, despite some duplicitous maneuvering by Saakashvili that passed beyond fair political competition (see Nichol 2012); and in November 2013 Giorgi Margvelashvili of the Georgian Dream coalition succeeded Saakashvili as President—the first peaceful transfer of power in Georgia's post-Soviet history. However, the Georgia Dream government has charged Saakashvili *in absentia* (he has not been back to Georgia since shortly after his departure from office) with "exceeding official powers, committed with use of violence and insult of victim's dignity" (Civil Georgia, 2014). Clearly, therefore, the legacy of the revolutionary leader—and the implicitly the revolution itself—is suspect.

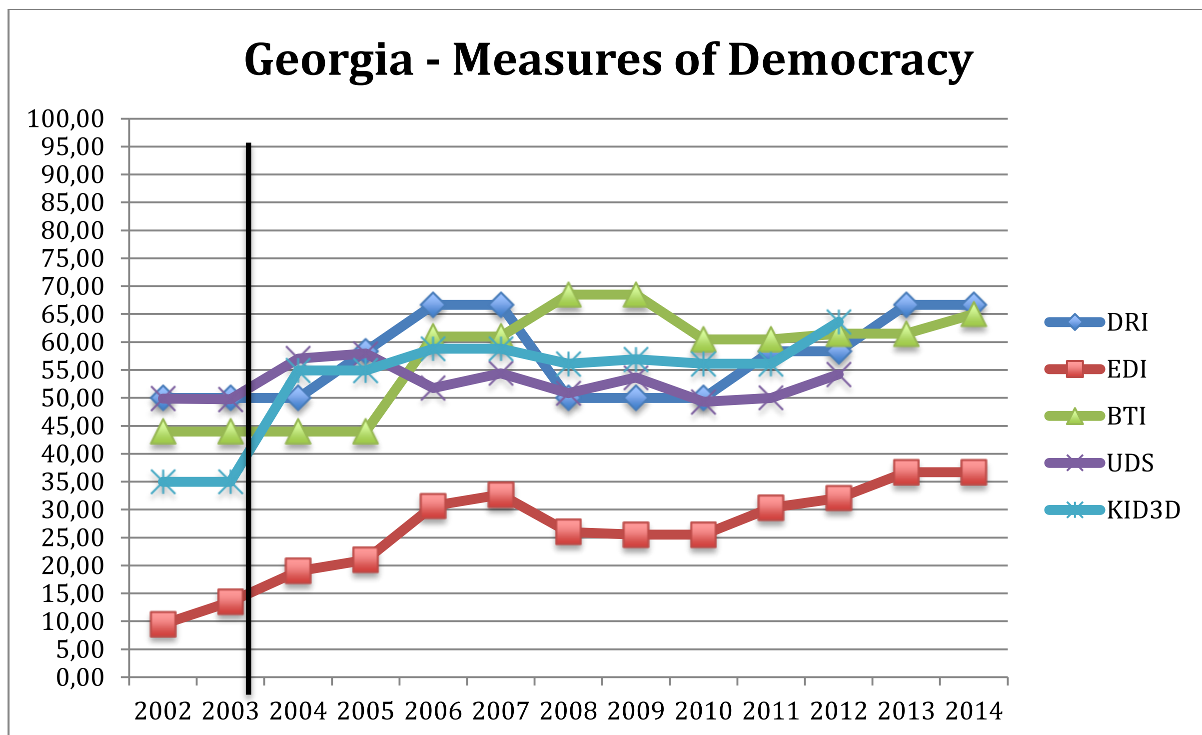

Figure 1 - Georgia's plotted democracy scores from 2002 to 2014. The solid black line (late 2003) represents the Rose Revolution.

As Figure 1 shows, Georgia's democratic development since the Rose Revolution was erratic, rife with progress and regress. Measures preceding the revolution suggest consistently low levels of democracy. Each data set similarly reflects marked advances in democracy following the revolution. The EDI alone indicates a preceding trend of increasing effective democracy; since the DRI remained at 50.00 percent, strong rule of law accounts for this rise. This suggests that the Shevardnadze government was lessening corruption, perhaps as a response to pressure from opposition figures like Saakashvili. Under the post-revolution UNM government democratic gains were made, but not decidedly so. Each measure demonstrates democratic regression in the second half of the 2000s—mostly between 2007 and 2008, corresponding to Saakashvili's suppression of popular demonstrations against the government and his presidency. Comparing the DRI and EDI, it seems that Kennedy (2014) is correct in his finding that one of the successes of the post-revolution regime is a modicum of corruption control, a reinforcement of rule of law.

Undeniably—as the measures reveal—Georgia's level of genuine democratic governance has increased significantly from the Shevardnadze regime. Four of the measures record double digit increases in democracy scores in a few years after the revolution—a substantial achievement. However, development receded and only recently recovered after

the gains of those early. The Georgian case supports Huntington's line of argument that ousting a non-democratic regime and establishing a stable (i.e., 'consolidated') democratic system are two distinct undertakings. Saakashvili's harsh, arguably authoritarian response to mass demonstrations undermined Georgia's democratic development; his peaceful departure from office strengthened it. At present it is difficult to discern the effect of Georgian Dream's governance on democratic levels, though measurements of the past couple years suggest stagnation. In short, democratic advances were made in the decade following the Rose Revolution, but they were limited and mostly resulting from increased rule of law.

Ukraine

The Orange Revolution unfolded over a two-month period between the suspect second round election on 21 November 2004, a protracted protest phase, and the inauguration of Viktor Yushchenko (another government official turned opposition leader by dissatisfaction, among other things, with the corruption of the ruling regime) as President on 23 January 2005, replacing Leonid Kuchma. The Ukraine case, however, displays a few crucial distinctions from Georgia; among them: Yushchenko was not so much the singular recognized leader as he was the slightly more prominent one, followed closely by Yulia Tymoshenko (who would become more of a political adversary than ally in the post-revolution government); and Yushshenko never received the sweeping mandate that Saakashvili did[6]. As Robertson and Pop-Eleches (2014: 35) highlight, "even in the presidential [election] re-run of December 26, 2004, Kuchma's preferred successor, Viktor Yanukovich took 44 percent of the vote" in a regionally divisive fashion.

For five years following the revolution, Ukraine largely languished in ineffective and unstable governance. And in the 2010 a seemingly epitaphic event heralded the defeat of the Orange Revolution: Yanukovich was elected president. Of course, Ukrainian politics has continued after this seminal outcome; indeed, if anything it has become more sensational. A trade agreement negotiated with the EU, but suddenly abandoned late in 2013 for closer ties with Russia; mass pro-Europe, anti-Yanukovich demonstrations; civil strife, political negotiation, and Yanukovich's *Tarquinian* flight from the state, seeking the assistance of

[6] In the January 2004 presidential election, Saakashvili was virtually unopposed and secured a victory over 95 percent of the vote.

foreign (i.e., Russian) muscle; the realization of a long-conspired revanchist agenda in Russia's annexation of Crimea (Kravtsova 2014, Reuters 2015), and the advent a sustained civil war that has only recently showed signs of resolution.

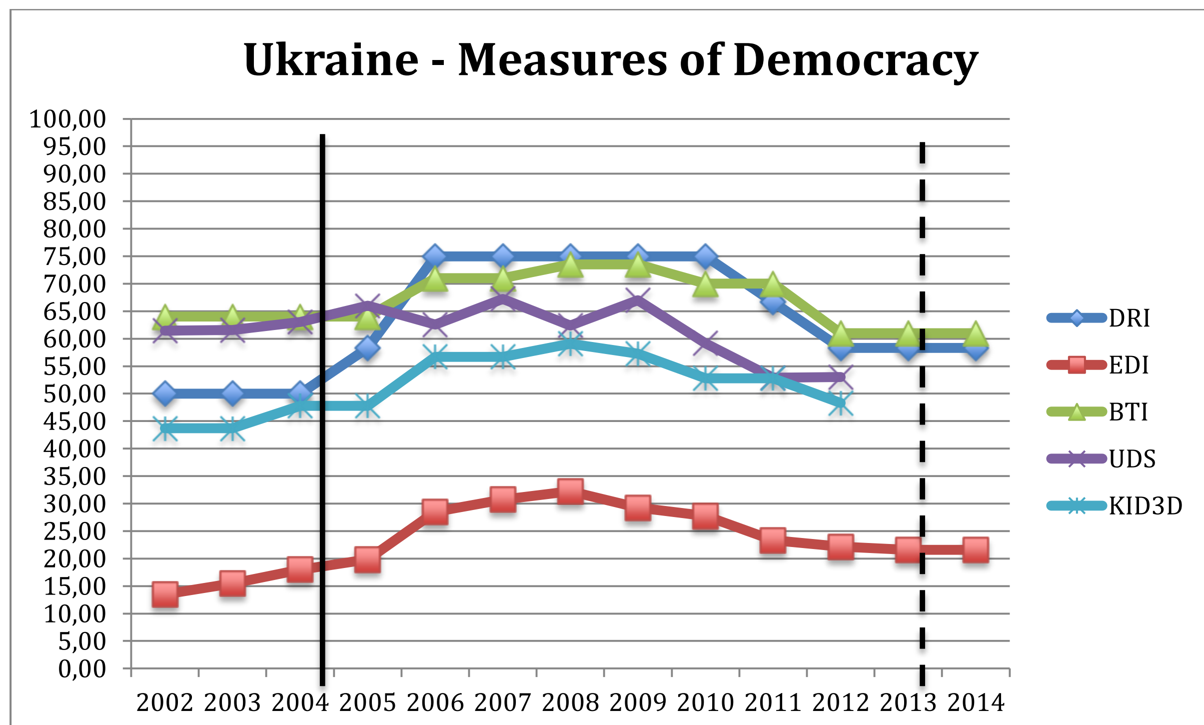

Figure 2 - Ukraine's plotted democracy scores from 2002 to 2014. A solid black line (late 2004) represents the Orange Revolution. A dashed black line (late 2013) marks the beginning of the crisis sparked by the EU trade agreement.

Such tumult bodes ill for democracy, but what do democratic measures indicate? Every measure finds an overall rise in levels of democracy in the two years following the Orange Revolution. However, this incline abruptly plateaus thereafter. Consistent with other findings (Kennedy 2014, Robertson and Pop-Eleches 2014), democratic stagnation is clearly represented in stable, middling scores from 2006 to 2009. Then, the 2010 election brings Yanukovich to power. In the space of a couple years Ukraine's democracy recedes to pre-revolution levels, lower even according to the BTI and UDS. Rather than being an exaggeration of melodramatic journalism, Yanukovich's presidency quite factually seems to be the death of the Orange Revolution. His election and rule highlights the retrospective view of most Ukrainians on the revolution; that is, only 18.7 percent of surveyed Ukrainians considered it a "mostly positive event;" 34.5 percent viewed it as mostly negative (Robertson and Pop-Eleches 2014).

While measures from 2014 simplistically present a leveling off of democratic recession, even the casual observer of contemporary global political affairs will know that

numerous formidable difficulties defy Ukraine's aspirations of democratic development and its associated benefits (e.g., a closer relationship with the EU). At present, the governing authorities in Kiev face practically the same challenge faced by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko in 2005. It remains to be seen if the likes of President Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk can overcome, surpass a decade of largely failed democratic development.

Belarus

Alexander Lukashenko has autocratically ruled Belarus for over twenty years, since his election to the presidency in 1994 on promises of fighting corruption and with ample Soviet nostalgia rhetoric. Small but persistent protest activity has been present during his tenure, particularly around elections. Only once, however, did opposition coalesce into a sizeable movement seeking to emulate the democratic upheavals of Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine: the March 2006 presidential election. A controversial 2004 referendum eliminated the two-term limit of the president, thereby constitutionally allowing Lukashenko to stand again for election. Occasional gatherings of several thousand preceded the 19 March vote from which opposition figures could scarcely have hoped for a free and fair result. The results were a foregone conclusion. The reported figures held that Lukashenko had received 83 percent of votes, Alexander Milinkevich 6.1 percent, Sergei Haidukevich (a pro-Lukashenko candidate) 3.5 percent, and Alaksandar Kazulin (an opposition candidate aligned with Milikevich's supporters) 2.2 percent (Центральная комиссия 2006). A protest movement of tens of thousands, which included a tent-village as in Ukraine's Orange Revolution, began in earnest immediately following the announcement of results. The denim blue color of jeans—an enduring symbol of the West and its democratic practices—became the a emblem of the opposition, along with the white-red-white flag used during Belarus's period of independence in 1918 (and unofficially thereafter). Unlike Ukraine, however, this movement was localized to the capital and lasted only a handful of days, ending in the clearing of the heretofore-occupied October Square and the arrest of over 300 lingering protesters. There was a multivariate failure in the case of the Denim Revolution: several preconditions were absent (e.g., Lukashenko retained major popular support, the regime's coercive forces were united, *et cetera*), the opposition's transnational network was weak, and the ruling regime implemented learned prevention measures (Korosteleva 2012).

Months later Lukashenko admitted to falsifying the election results, albeit in the opposite direction alleged by protesters:

> We falsified the last elections, I already told the westerners. 93.5 percent voted for Lukashenko. This is not a European figure, they said. So we made it 86… Before the elections they told us that if our election figures were European, that they would accept our election. We made European figures. But, as you see, they didn't accept them. (*BelaPAN* 2006).

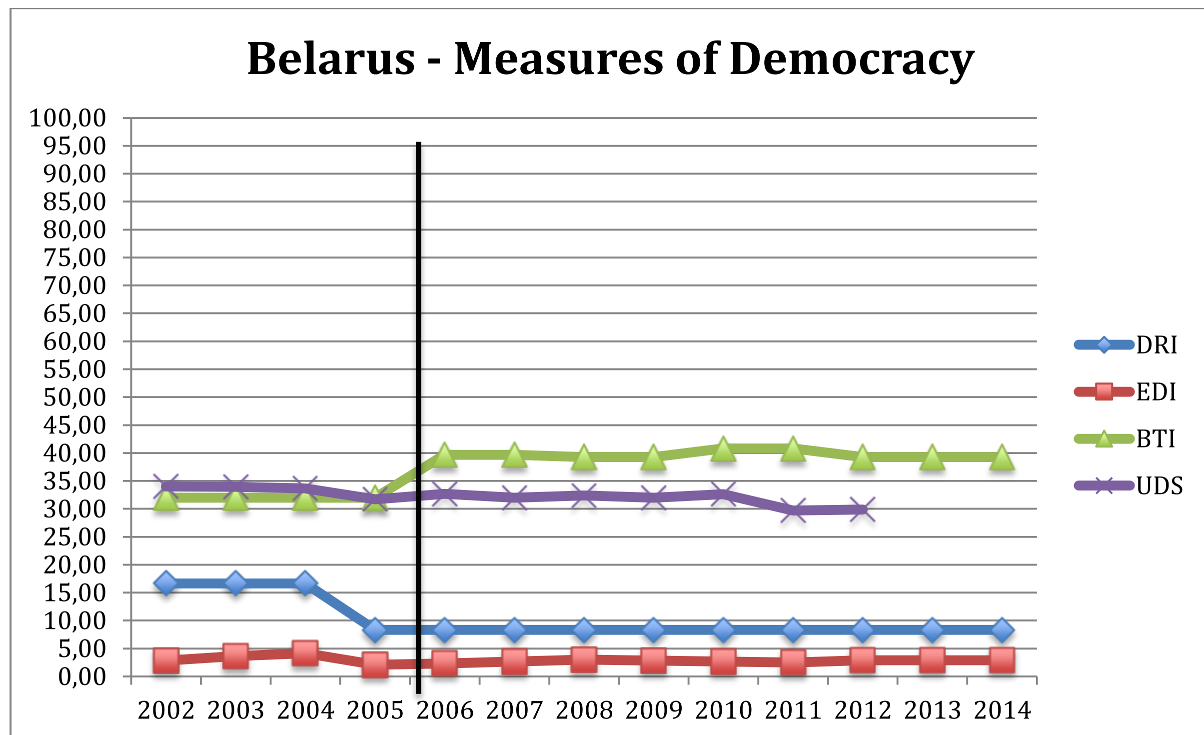

Figure 3 - Belarus's plotted democracy scores from 2002 to 2014. A solid black line (early 2006) marks the incidence of the Denim Revolution.

Given the state of political affairs in Belarus before the 2006 election, the surprise is not that the Denim Revolution failed, but rather that it occurred at all. Still that ineffectual achievement is hollow consolation. None of the considered democratic measures suggest any effect whatsoever (let alone a positive effect) as a result of the Denim Revolution. (The slight uptick from 2003 to 2006 according to the BTI is inexplicable and likely results from a subtle shift in the data gathering or analysis between those two studies. BTI's country reports of Belarus for 2003 and for 2006 do not describe any democratic gains.) The measures mark minute changes if any since 2006. Unsurprisingly, this reflects the absence of democratic development in the intervening years since the failed revolution. No signs suggest this pattern will change anytime soon.

Conclusions

Ten years later, the absolute gains of color revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus are negligible. Little if any enduring improvements resulted from the movements. Since the Denim Revolution failed to effect regime change—and in view of its preceding democratic experience, or more precisely, lack thereof—that Belarus would experienced no democratic development was foreseeable. The largely tarnished legacies of the Rose and Orange Revolutions, however, were not readily or widely expected. Both countries retain the potential for democratic progress. (They are both drastically more likely to liberalize and democratize successfully that Belarus.) Formidable challenges obstruct those paths though.

The peaceful transfer of power between Saakashvili and the UNM government, and Ivanishvili, Margvelashvili, and the Georgian Dream coalition was a positive, an unprecedented step for Georgia's democracy. But, while their case may have just cause, the current government's indictment of Saakashvili is a regressive step, conforming to a distinct pattern of post-Soviet power transfer wherein the inward authorities seek political points and consolidation of power by levying pointed legal action against outbound authorities. If this stroke by Georgian Dream leaders proves naught but one component within a recidivist trend, expect continued democratic stagnation, or even decline in Georgia.

Ukraine's democratic development may have exceeded that of Georgia in the years following the Orange Revolution—a twenty-point increase according to DRI, and fifteen-point on EDI and KID3D. Those spikes represent impressive democratization. Yet those gains were built on volatile foundations. The attitudinal disparities and loyalties between western and eastern Ukraine practically guaranteed that a western-driven revolution would find that responsibly wielding its power and consolidating its democratic achievements are far more perilous tasks than just ascending to authority. The vehement, staunch unrest that met Yanukovich's decision to withdraw from the EU trade agreement displayed the persistent concern and interest that most in Ukraine's west and central regions have for continued democratization and closer ties with Europe. Subsequently, however, a great many eastern Ukrainians exhibited matching ardor for their loyalties to their party affiliations and connection with Russia. The continuing clash of these oppositions represents the foremost impediment to Ukraine's democracy.

At this juncture and at practically any point over the last decade, prudent consideration of these countries' democracies, particularly in Georgia and Ukraine, necessitates awareness of the tremendous foreign influence affecting them. The color revolutions were lead by patriots and national leaders, but their efforts were irrefutably underwritten—significantly if not exceedingly so—by the democracy promotion organs of the United States and Western Europe. Foreign monetary resources, training, and numerous other forms of assistance were essential to the successes of the Rose and Orange revolutions. Conversely, Russia's *realpolitik* foreign policy tenet of undermining the color revolutions (as edifices of encroaching American influence) and governments in the post-Soviet space that oppose its influence has weighed oppressively on most affected systems. While apparently not exercising any other influence on Georgia besides frozen diplomatic relations (and, well, its military forces on *de jure* Georgian territory, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia), President Vladimir Putin heralded the "appearance of 'more responsible forces' in the Georgian legislature and stated that the ruling United Russia Party—which had 'always stayed in touch' with some political forces in Georgia—was ready for further dialogue on Georgia-Russia ties" (Nichol 2012: 7). And, in Ukraine, Russia has manifestly and egregiously intruded upon another country's sovereign affairs. Troop deployments to and annexation of Crimea, fomented and supported violent uprisings in eastern Ukraine, and continued antipathy toward the presiding Poroshenko government—these infringements retarded the democratic development of a unified Ukraine. (Though perhaps successful democratization of a unified Ukraine is not possible.) The persistence of foreign pressure on Georgia and Ukraine—particularly from Russia, but arguably from elsewhere as well—epitomizes the trials that must be confronted to realize the democratic objectives touted by the color revolutions.

Those movements manifest the hopes of large swaths of the populations in the countries where they occurred. Governmental performance failed to honor the high and arduous task to which it was called. Potential remains present for democratic development in many countries, like Georgia and Ukraine, but for now the color revolutions were just a flash of hope and transient advances in an otherwise unpromising post-Soviet struggle for democratization.

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APPENDIX I – Compiled democratic measures for Georgia, 2002 to 2014.

Georgia														
	FREEDOM HOUSE			RULE OF LAW				EDI	BTI	UDS				KID3D
Year	Civil Liberties	Political Rights	DRI	HOS	LOS	COS	RLI	EDI Score	BTI Score	HOS	LOS	COS	UDS Treated	KID3D Score
2002	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.92	-1.91	-1.17	0.19	9.50	44.00	2.00	-1.97	0.01	49.87	35.00
2003	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.96	-2.11	-1.00	0.27	13.50	44.00	2.01	-1.97	0.01	49.75	35.00
2004	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.99	-2.32	-0.67	0.38	19.00	44.00	2.00	-1.98	0.29	57.04	54.90
2005	4.0	3.0	58.33	1.95	-2.21	-0.73	0.36	21.00	44.00	2.00	-1.97	0.33	57.93	54.90
2006	3.0	3.0	66.67	1.98	-2.55	-0.47	0.46	30.67	61.00	2.25	-2.00	0.20	51.76	58.80
2007	3.0	3.0	66.67	2.00	-2.62	-0.34	0.49	32.67	61.00	2.00	-1.97	0.19	54.41	58.80
2008	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.96	-2.67	-0.26	0.52	26.00	68.50	2.25	-1.98	0.17	50.83	56.10
2009	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.97	-2.50	-0.21	0.51	25.50	68.50	2.00	-1.97	0.16	53.65	56.90
2010	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.98	-2.45	-0.21	0.51	25.50	60.50	2.26	-2.00	0.10	49.30	56.10
2011	3.0	4.0	58.33	1.96	-2.36	-0.13	0.52	30.33	60.50	2.15	-1.99	0.08	50.00	56.10
2012	3.0	4.0	58.33	1.95	-2.45	-0.03	0.55	32.08	61.50	2.15	-2.00	0.25	54.22	63.60
2013	3.0	3.0	66.67	1.97	-2.44	-0.02	0.55	36.67	61.50	-	-	-	-	-
2014	3.0	3.0	66.67	1.97	-2.44	-0.02	0.55	36.67	65.00	-	-	-	-	-

Formulae:

- DRI = (14 – (PRR + CLR))/0.12
- RLI = (COS – LOS)/(HOS – LOS)
- ELI = DRI * RLI
- UDS Treated = (COS – LOS)/(HOS – LOS) * 100

APPENDIX II – Compiled democratic measures for Ukraine, 2002 to 2014.

Ukraine														
	FREEDOM HOUSE			RULE OF LAW				EDI	BTI	UDS				KID3D
Year	Civil Liberties	Political Rights	DRI	HOS	LOS	COS	RLI	EDI Score	BTI Score	HOS	LOS	COS	UDS Treated	KID3D Score
2002	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.92	-1.91	-0.87	0.27	13.50	64.00	2.00	-1.97	0.47	61.46	43.70
2003	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.96	-2.11	-0.84	0.31	15.50	64.00	2.01	-1.97	0.48	61.56	43.70
2004	4.0	4.0	50.00	1.99	-2.32	-0.75	0.36	18.00	64.00	2.00	-1.98	0.53	63.07	47.80
2005	3.0	4.0	58.33	1.95	-2.21	-0.79	0.34	19.83	64.00	2.00	-1.97	0.65	65.99	47.80
2006	2.0	3.0	75.00	1.98	-2.55	-0.81	0.38	28.50	71.00	2.25	-2.00	0.66	62.59	56.70
2007	2.0	3.0	75.00	2.00	-2.62	-0.74	0.41	30.75	71.00	2.00	-1.97	0.70	67.25	56.70
2008	2.0	3.0	75.00	1.96	-2.67	-0.69	0.43	32.25	73.50	2.25	-1.98	0.66	62.41	59.10
2009	2.0	3.0	75.00	1.97	-2.50	-0.77	0.39	29.25	73.50	2.00	-1.97	0.69	67.00	57.30
2010	2.0	3.0	75.00	1.98	-2.45	-0.81	0.37	27.75	70.00	2.26	-2.00	0.52	59.15	52.80
2011	3.0	3.0	66.67	1.96	-2.36	-0.83	0.35	23.33	70.00	2.15	-1.99	0.20	52.90	52.80
2012	3.0	4.0	58.33	1.95	-2.45	-0.79	0.38	22.17	61.00	2.15	-2.00	0.20	53.01	48.30
2013	3.0	4.0	58.33	1.97	-2.44	-0.83	0.37	21.58	61.00	-	-	-	-	-
2014	3.0	4.0	58.33	1.97	-2.44	-0.83	0.37	21.58	61.00	-	-	-	-	-

Formulae:

- DRI = (14 – (PRR + CLR))/0.12
- RLI = (COS – LOS)/(HOS – LOS)
- ELI = DRI * RLI
- UDS Treated = (COS – LOS)/(HOS – LOS) * 100

APPENDIX III – Compiled democratic measures for Belarus, 2002 to 2014.

Belarus														
	FREEDOM HOUSE			RULE OF LAW				EDI	BTI	UDS				KID3D
Year	Civil Liberties	Political Rights	DRI	HOS	LOS	COS	RLI	EDI Score	BTI Score	HOS	LOS	COS	UDS Treated	KID3D Score
2002	6.0	6.0	16.67	1.92	-1.91	-1.27	0.17	2.83	32.00	2.00	-1.97	-0.62	34.01	-
2003	6.0	6.0	16.67	1.96	-2.11	-1.20	0.22	3.67	32.00	2.01	-1.97	-0.62	33.92	-
2004	6.0	6.0	16.67	1.99	-2.32	-1.26	0.25	4.17	32.00	2.00	-1.98	-0.64	33.67	-
2005	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.95	-2.21	-1.19	0.25	2.08	32.00	2.00	-1.97	-0.71	31.74	-
2006	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.98	-2.55	-1.29	0.28	2.33	39.70	2.25	-2.00	-0.61	32.71	-
2007	6.0	7.0	8.33	2.00	-2.62	-1.14	0.32	2.67	39.70	2.00	-1.97	-0.70	31.99	-
2008	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.96	-2.67	-1.01	0.36	3.00	39.30	2.25	-1.98	-0.61	32.39	-
2009	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.97	-2.50	-1.00	0.34	2.83	39.30	2.00	-1.97	-0.70	31.99	-
2010	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.98	-2.45	-1.04	0.32	2.67	40.80	2.26	-2.00	-0.61	32.63	-
2011	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.96	-2.36	-1.08	0.30	2.50	40.80	2.15	-1.99	-0.76	29.71	-
2012	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.95	-2.45	-0.92	0.35	2.92	39.30	2.15	-2.00	-0.76	29.88	-
2013	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.97	-2.44	-0.89	0.35	2.92	39.30	-	-	-	-	-
2014	6.0	7.0	8.33	1.97	-2.44	-0.89	0.35	2.92	39.30	-	-	-	-	-

Formulae:

- DRI = (14 – (PRR + CLR))/0.12
- RLI = (COS – LOS)/(HOS – LOS)
- ELI = DRI * RLI
- UDS Treated = (COS – LOS)/(HOS – LOS) * 100