



Helpdesk Research Report

Factors supporting the emergence of democracies

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Question

What are the enabling factors/conditions that support the emergence of democracies (transition from an undemocratic/autocratic regime to a more democratic one)? What are the triggers for this: is change precipitated by crisis?

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1. Overview

This report looks at the experience of five countries to identify factors that support the emergence of democracies after authoritarian/undemocratic rule and triggers for this. The empirical case studies are: South Africa (1986), Ghana (2000), the Philippines (1986), Indonesia (1999) and Ukraine (2004). They were chosen for both geographic spread and diversity of democratic transition. The report takes a 'minimalist' definition of democracy: 'the removal of an autocratic regime and the establishment of a system for free and fair multi-party elections' (Jennings, 2012: 5). It focuses on enabling factors to bring about such democratic *transitions*, and does not look at the factors required for democratic consolidation or to sustain democracies.

There is a considerable body of literature on theories of democratic transition. These broadly fall into the following categories: a) structuralist approaches which see the emergence of democracy as tied to factors such as economic development, political culture, civil society and class conflict; b) strategic choice

approaches which focus on the calculations and decisions made by elites; c) institutionalist approaches which stress the impact of institutions on policies and patterns of political actions; and d) political economy approaches which stress economic determinants of political change and democratisation, in particular the impact of economic crises (Guo, 1999). The review of empirical case studies in this report suggests that, rather than a single theory to explain democratic transitions, a combination of these is usually applicable.

Key findings from the five case studies on enabling factors for the emergence of democracies are:

- **Unpopular incumbent:** With the exception of Ghana, all the incumbent regimes were deeply unpopular, often characterised by corruption, human rights abuses, mismanagement and denial of democratic freedoms. A breakdown of the 'authoritarian bargain' in Indonesia and the Philippines, whereby growth and development were provided with limited democracy, fuelled public opposition.
- **Economic situation and rising expectations:** Economic development was a significant factor in many democratic transitions, but the precise influence varied. Indonesia is the clearest example of transition advanced by economic crisis (effects of the Asian financial crisis); in the Ukraine, by contrast, growth had been strong overall but corruption and inequality fuelled public frustration. However, the theory that economic growth and development is a *prior* condition/enabling factor for democratisation rarely applied.
- **Emergence of middle class:** Changes in the structure of society, rising education and literacy levels, and the emergence of a middle class with raised expectations, were significant factors in a number of democratic transitions, notably Ukraine and Indonesia.
- **United opposition and strong leadership figures:** The ability of the opposition to unite around a common goal, particularly behind strong leaders, was an important factor in democratic transitions. The ANC and Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Cory Aquino in the Philippines, and Viktor Yushchenko in Ukraine played this role.
- **Strong civil society:** The presence of an organised civil society was seen to play a significant role in mass mobilisation, monitoring government actions (e.g. election fraud) and, if there was prior experience of opposition movements, in countering government measures to suppress them. In Ukraine, for example, many leaders of the 2004 Orange Revolution had taken part in anti-government protests in 2000-1; civil society groups in South Africa mounted a very effective civil disobedience campaign.
- **Mass mobilisation:** was a critical factor in successful democratic transitions, seen in the Ukraine, South Africa, the Philippines and Indonesia. This came about because of information dissemination through radio, television and the internet, as well as civil society groups. Mass protests created an irreversible momentum for change, and often led to defection/unwillingness to use violence against demonstrators on the part of the security forces.
- **International pressure/support:** Diplomatic/donor (e.g. IMF) pressure on an autocratic regime could force it to make concessions where indigenous factors alone would not. South Africa exemplifies this: without sanctions and international condemnation of the apartheid regime, reform would likely have taken much longer. Ghana's democratic transition arguably began primarily because of IMF pressure. External 'democratic aid', e.g. to raise public awareness of democratic values, for capacity building of civil society groups, also made a difference. In Ukraine a decade of such support meant civil society groups were able to effectively monitor and document electoral fraud by the Kuchma government.

- **Semi-autocratic, rather than fully autocratic, regimes:** Democratic transitions came about in countries where governments could be characterised as semi-autocracies, i.e. displaying some compliance with democratic norms (e.g. holding regular elections, even if these were rigged), and the absence of mass repression and violence. International pressure/spotlight often ensured that regimes remained semi-autocracies, even as opposition grew.
- **Divisions among regime's coercive forces:** Alongside mass mobilisation, this was perhaps the single most important factor once opposition movements got underway. Efforts to quell protesters with force in the Philippines, Ukraine and Indonesia were undermined by the refusal of security forces to use violence. In many cases it was the loss of military support that proved the final straw, persuading autocrats to step down.
- **Role of media and internet/social media:** Dissemination of information, greater awareness of regime abuses and failings, and of democratic values and norms in other parts of the world, were strong enabling factors for democratisation. The media and internet played significant roles in this dissemination and awareness-raising: effective communication once opposition movements got underway was particularly critical for mass mobilisation.
- **Crises:** The democratic transitions reviewed in this report were due to a mixture of long-standing structural issues (e.g. corruption) as well as to more immediate factors. In many cases the latter included a particular crisis/defining event/trigger. For example, the 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino in the Philippines, the Asian financial crisis in Indonesia, and election fraud in the presidential poll in Ukraine. Contrastingly, in South Africa and Ghana, democratic transition was more protracted and could not be linked to a specific crisis.

The five case studies show the diversity of factors supporting the emergence of democracies: diverse in terms of timeframe (some short-term, some long-standing) and diverse in terms of origin (some domestic, some external). In all cases it was a mix of these that enabled democratic transitions.

2. South Africa

The anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa stretched over many decades but gained real momentum in the 1980s, with widespread mass protests and international sanctions/pressure on the apartheid regime. Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 was followed by a lengthy period of negotiations between the government of F. W. De Klerk and the African National Congress (ANC) and other opposition parties, culminating in agreement on an interim constitution and the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. These led to the formation of a Government of National Unity with Nelson Mandela as President.

A number of critical factors emerge in South Africa's successful transition to democracy. Among domestic factors was the existence of a central opposition party, the ANC, and a universally accepted and iconic opposition leader, Nelson Mandela. However, much of the violence associated with South Africa's transition to democracy (in the final post-1990 phase) was between rival opposition parties: the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) led by Mongasuthu Buthelezei. Buthelezei feared a loss of power and influence, and was focused on safeguarding the interests of his KwaZulu-Natal region, while the ANC had a broader national unity agenda. The ANC was able to establish its dominance in the political arena, and the IFP – which first boycotted the 1994 election – agreed at the last minute to contest (defeating the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal).

The second was the presence of a strong civil society in South Africa. This was not homogeneous, it included a range of very different groups, such as trade unions, advocacy groups and

community/ratepayers' associations; nor were they uniformly committed to 'progressive', liberal values and democracy. Rather, in the period up to 1990 they were divided between those who opposed the apartheid regime and those who supported it (Camay & Gordon, 2002). Civil society groups had a long history of campaigning on various issues, for example: black trade unions COSATU¹ and NACTU² won the right to collective bargaining and to strike, and fought against the 1998 Labour Relations Act that undermined those rights; the National Committee Against Removals (NCAR) formed in 1984 helped communities threatened with removal from their land; in black townships, community-based CSOs allied to the anti-apartheid movement, such as the Soweto Crisis Committee, mounted rates and rent boycotts against what they regarded as illegitimate Black Local Authorities (BLAs, appointed by the apartheid regime) (Camay & Gordon, 2002). South Africa thus had a long-standing, organised and experienced civil society which was able to participate effectively in the anti-apartheid struggle that became so strong in the 1980s.

Linked to the strong civil society was the ability of the anti-apartheid movement to mobilise mass protests. Widespread awareness of democratic values and human rights in the South African population, stemming from the long apartheid struggle, greater access to information, civil society groups and democratic aid from abroad (see below), and contributing to the demands for change (Justings, 2012), helped this. The United Democratic Front (UDF), formed in 1983, comprised of 400 church, civic and student organisations with a membership close to 3 million.³ It carried out protests and boycotts with the aim of making South Africa ungovernable, and in 1988 allied with COSATU (which in 1990 claimed a membership of 1.2 million – Adler & Webster, 1995: 80) to launch the Mass Democratic Movement. The MDM organised a national campaign against the state of emergency declared in 1988, characterised by widespread acts of civil disobedience. The scale and spread of the mass protests forced the police to show restraint, and was a major factor in F. W. de Klerk's decision to release Mandela and subsequently re-permit the ANC.

The fourth important factor in South Africa's democratic transition was international pressure. The apartheid regime faced widespread international condemnation (South Africa had become a 'pariah state') and sanctions during the 1980s, the latter leading to divestment and taking an economic toll. Capital flight split the regime and business community into hardliners and reformers, with the latter urging accommodation with the ANC as a way to restore economic growth (Jennings, 2012: p. 10). The international community also provided direct 'democracy assistance' to opposition and civil society groups, e.g. technical and financial assistance to victims of regime harassment, trade unions, human rights groups, ANC operations, election systems (Jennings, 2012). Meanwhile, the post-Cold War break-up of the Soviet Union removed an important source of support for the ANC. The ANC did not have the capacity to defeat the South African government by force, while the latter's position had become very difficult because of diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions. As such, both sides had reached a stalemate. The literature highlights that external factors play a critical role in the decision to pursue negotiations, particularly by the government: 'Without such influences, it is unlikely the apartheid regime would have responded to domestic pressures alone, despite the courage of anti-apartheid activists and the agency of figures like Mandela, Tutu, and de Klerk' (Jennings, 2012: 24).

The final factor is consistent with strategic choice theories of democratic transitions – it is the calculations and decisions made by elites which determine political outcomes. In South Africa's case it was strong leadership on the part of both government and the opposition, the decision by both sides to pursue negotiations and eschew violence, and the willingness to make compromises in the national interest. This

¹ Congress of South African Trade Unions

² National Council of Trade Unions

³<http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/mass-democratic-movement-mdm-begins-their-defiance-campaign>

'alliance between reformers in the authoritarian regime and moderates among the pro-democratic forces in civil society, both of whom corral the extremists in their respective camps on the way to brokering a centrist pact' (Adler & Webster, 1995:76) is seen as critical.

3. Ghana

The process of democratic transition in Ghana was even more protracted than in South Africa. J. J. Rawlings came to power through a military coup in 1981. While there were calls from pro-democracy forces in Ghana for political change, the regime could not be considered as fragile or in jeopardy – on the contrary, in most respects it was a very strong regime (Handley, 2009; Awal, 2012). The democratisation process that started in 1988 came about because of Rawlings' 'executive decision' to hold elections. His main motivation was the desire for continued access to IMF resources (Ghana signed up to a World Bank structural adjustment programme in 1983), to promote economic growth (Jennings, 2012). The IMF's inclusion of liberalisation in aid conditionalities and diplomatic/other donor pressure to reform, influenced Rawlings – he also had confidence that he would win any election. In sum, 'liberalization in Rawlings' Ghana represented a controlled, pragmatic response to an area of key (financial) vulnerability by an otherwise remarkably successful regime' (Handley, 2009: 5)).

Non-party district elections were held at the end of the 1990s, followed by drafting of a constitution (approved through a referendum) and the first national, multi-party elections in 1992. Further elections followed at four-year intervals. Rawlings' party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) won in 1992 and again in 1996. During this period a process of electoral reforms and political liberalisation continued – greatly supported by external 'democratic assistance' to civil society and electoral institutions in Ghana (Handley, 2009). There was growing freedom of the press and of association, and opposition political parties grew more organised, with the contest between them and the ruling NDC became more even-handed. Independent print and media outlets slowly professionalised and engaged in investigative reporting, exposing government corruption and covering election preparations (Jennings, 2012). The democratisation process gained momentum and grew stronger on the back of incremental successes (ibid.).

Following the NDC's defeat in the 2000 elections, Rawlings opted to step aside and hand over power peacefully to John Kufuor, leader of the winning New Patriotic Party. Handley (2009: p. 4) argues that 'Rawlings was essentially trapped by the logic of earlier decisions and by the unacceptable trade-offs he would have faced if he had chosen to overrule the electorate'. A further consideration, both in his continuing the democratisation process started in 1988 and in his stepping down in 2000, was image and legacy: Rawlings felt 'pride at being the first African military ruler to become legitimate through elections' (Jennings, 2012: p. 20) and did not want to jeopardise that.

In Ghana's case, the democratic transition was therefore both drawn-out (essentially stretching from 1988 to 2000) and not triggered by any one specific crisis or event. Rather it came about because of interplay between international and domestic factors, which reinforced each other. Again, though, as in South Africa, it was external factors which played the decisive role – had Rawlings not believed that failure to reform would put IMF assistance at risk, he likely would not have done so (Handley 2009; Jennings, 2012).

4. The Philippines

After twenty years in power, Ferdinand Marcos was ousted as President of the Philippines on 25 February 1986 by the 'People's Power' revolution. In his early years, Marcos had tried to implement the so-called Pacific-Asia model of government seen in Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan; effectively an 'authoritarian bargain' in which the state implemented a limited democracy but promoted growth and development. This approach was successfully applied in the Philippines up to 1975, but thereafter mismanagement and corruption on a massive scale forced Marcos to rely on the traditional tools of dictatorship, notably martial law and imprisonment of opposition leaders (Overholt, 1986). By 1981 the Philippines' economy was in deep trouble and there was growing opposition to the regime among a range of groups – ordinary citizens, the church, the business community and sections of the army (Overholt, 1986).

While this was the background to the People's Power revolution, the assassination of charismatic opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983, as he returned to the Philippines from exile in the United States, could be said to have triggered it. Aquino represented a real threat to the Marcos regime, and Filipinos widely believed that the regime had orchestrated his killing (the government blamed the communists): some two million people attended Aquino's funeral. While there was already widespread opposition to the Marcoses, the killing 'precipitated broader public involvement and more explicit political action. Most notably, it drew the business elite and the clergy onto the streets' (Overholt, 1986: p. 1156). 'For the Marcoses, Aquino became a more formidable opponent dead than alive' (Dolan, 1991).

The emergence of Aquino's widow, Corazon ('Cory') Aquino, as the leading opposition figure was a second key factor. Under pressure at home and from long-time ally the United States, Marcos called a snap election for February 1986. Aquino ran against him and proved extremely popular. People were drawn by her down-to-earth manner ('I'm just a simple housewife'), reputation as a devout Catholic, honesty and integrity, position as Aquino's widow – and someone with personal experience of suffering at Marcos' hands (Overholt, 1986; Dolan, 1991). She formed a critical alliance with Salvador Laurel as her vice presidential candidate: Aquino provided the popular appeal and Laurel the organisational capacity and experience – the alliance was negotiated by Catholic Church leader Cardinal Sin.⁴

The limited effectiveness of government efforts to rig the election was the third factor contributing to the successful overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos. In the past this approach had always worked, but growing discontent meant many elements of the 'rigging machinery' did not cooperate (Overholt, 1986). For example, military units claimed communication failures meant they hadn't received Marcos' orders, and around 30 computer operators at the Election Commission famously walked out in protest at the mis-tabulation of results they were seeing (Dolan, 1991). The government still announced a victory for Marcos, but this was widely seen as discredited.

The fourth crucial factor was defection by elements of the government and military. There was already significant disillusionment with the Marcos regime in the army: officers resented the appointment of crony generals to senior positions and the side-lining of professional soldiers, as well as the undermining of military values and institutions (Overholt, 1986). Coupled with anger at the regime's actions (such as the assassination of Aquino) and corruption, some officers had formed the Reform of the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) and plotted a coup to topple Marcos. General Fidel Ramos became a rallying figure for these anti-government units within the armed forces. The defection of Defence Minister Enrile led to an

⁴ Salvador Laurel was an experienced politician, who had originally announced his own candidacy for the presidency. By negotiating his joint ticket with Cory Aquino, Cardinal Sin ensured that the opposition was united.

open revolt with the army split between those supporting Ramos and Enrile, and those with the government. Marcos' hesitation in taking action against the rebels, allowed time for thousands of ordinary citizens to reach the Camp where they were located – making it harder to launch a military assault (Overholt, 1986).

Mass mobilisation - organised and facilitated largely by business elites and the church (Overholt, 1986) - was what gave the Philippines democratic transition its name of 'People's Power'. Tens of thousands of people came out in the streets to protest the election result and demand Marcos' removal. The movement was broad-based, encompassing both urban and rural residents, the working-class, middle-class and professionals, members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the business elite, as well as a faction of the armed forces. People 'were united not by ideology or class interests, but by their esteem for Aquino's widow, Corazon, and their disgust with the Marcos regime' (Dolan, 1991). The church played a significant role, both in encouraging people to vote with their conscience and, through the church-controlled Radio Veritas, informing them about events on ground (e.g. calling on people to reach Camp Crame where Ramos and Fidel were based). The scale of the protests meant that, when Marcos did send military units to attack Ramos and Fidel, these ended up defecting and joining the protesters. With the loss of military support, Marcos finally negotiated safe passage for himself and his family and went into exile in Hawaii.

Despite being a long-time ally of Marcos, providing financial and military assistance to the Philippines, the United States only put pressure on him to step down towards the end of the regime. Marcos' representation of himself as the safeguard against communist takeover of the Philippines, and the presence of large US military bases in the country, meant however the US 'tolerated' his authoritarianism. The US did strongly condemn the killing of Benigno Aquino and US pressure led to Marcos calling for the February 1986 election, but it never took firm action against him (Overholt, 1986; Dolan, 1991).

5. Indonesia

Indonesia's shift to democracy is consistent with political economy theories of democratic transition, which identify economic crisis in particular as the trigger for change. In Indonesia's case it was the 1997 Asian financial crisis which ushered in deep economic and political reforms.

Suharto seized power in 1967, and established a one-party authoritarian state focused on development and economic growth. Investment in infrastructure, education, health and agriculture transformed the base of Indonesia's economy from agrarian to export-oriented manufacturing. Three decades of sustained economic growth (averaging 7% between 1985 and 1997), brought about a drop in the poverty rate from almost 60% in 1968 to 13% in 1997 (Kurlantzick, 2013: p. 1). But there were underlying weaknesses in Suharto's economic policies, notably unsustainable foreign debt, poor corporate governance and financial regulation, and massive corruption. Estimates put his and his family's wealth at US\$35 billion (ibid.). Thus, even in the midst of growth and improvement in ordinary people's lives, ostentatious wealth accumulation on the part of Suharto's associates highlighted inequalities in the country.

During the 1997 Asian financial crisis the weaknesses in the economy were exposed. Indonesian companies, many controlled by Suharto and his allies, could not service their debts; investors fled, depressing the rupiah; and many banks collapsed, wiping out people's savings. At the same time the price of oil – one of the country's chief exports – reached record lows. The financial crisis resulted in the economy shrinking by 13% in 1998, and pushed an additional 10% of the population into poverty

between 1998 and 2000 (Kurlantzick, 2013: p. 1). Suharto was forced to seek IMF assistance, which imposed limited economic reforms (e.g. break up of several monopolies) on the government.

Before the Asian financial crisis opposition to Suharto had been fractured and ineffective, and there were not any strong opposition leaders: Megawati Sukarnoputri, head of the Indonesian Democratic Party (IDP) and Amien Rais, leader of Muhammadiyah, one of the two biggest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, did criticise the government, but the real demand for Suharto's removal came from students. As the financial crisis intensified students, NGO activists, political leaders, academics and others had become more vocal in their opposition. Suharto's decision to conduct a 'presidential election' and start a fifth term as president on 10 March 1998, and the government's announcement in May of increased fuel and electricity prices, fanned the protests and mobilised ordinary citizens to join en masse. The killing of four students at Trisakti University on 12 March led to a nationwide wave of violent riots in which almost 2,000 people were killed, mostly from the Chinese community.⁵ Political allies began to abandon Suharto, and the military became divided: General Wiranto, chief of the armed forces, allowed student protesters to occupy the legislature on 18 May, and subsequently informed Suharto that the military would not use force against citizens. With the loss of military support, Suharto was left with no choice but to resign on 21 May 1998. His successor, former Vice President B. J. Habibie, ushered in political reforms and held free elections in 1999.

A number of factors were critical in Indonesia's democratic transition, the first being mass mobilisation of citizens from very diverse backgrounds, angered at the government's economic mismanagement and corruption, inequality, and Suharto's intransigence in the face of protests. Despite lacking a strong civil society base and obvious opposition leaders, the anti-Suharto movement was able to gain momentum quickly. A second key factor was elite choices: the calculations and decisions made by Suharto's political allies and by a faction of the military. Unlike Suharto, they opted to make concessions to the protesters (thereby encouraging others to join), and eventually abandoned him altogether, forcing him to step down. A third factor was 'reputational influence': the presence, in Jakarta and elsewhere, of international media outlets such as CNN was definitely a consideration in the military's exercise of restraint against demonstrators, and eventual refusal to use violence. However, there was little diplomatic pressure on Suharto to step down: the West viewed him as a useful ally. Further, there was none of the democratic aid provided as in South Africa and Ghana for example. Indeed, prior to the crisis 'most Western aid to the country was consciously steered away from "political" projects that might undermine the useful autocrat Suharto' (Jennings, 2012: p. 18). Ultimately, it was the Asian financial crisis which ruptured the 'authoritarian bargain' in Indonesia and precipitated democratic transition.

6. Ukraine

Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' in 2004 saw pro-democracy opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko elected as the country's third president, overturning a rigged election which had given victory to rival candidate, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich. Exit polls in the runoff presidential election on 21 November 2004 had given Yushchenko 52% of the vote and Yanukovich 43%, but when the result was announced Yanukovich had supposedly won by 2.5% (Karatnycky, 2005: p.1). The election fraud came on top of many months of efforts by the government to discredit Yushchenko and make it difficult for him to campaign. As soon as the result was announced mass protests began in Kiev and other parts of the country (largely in the west). Yushchenko had himself 'sworn in' as president and called for a nationwide general strike. In the days that followed, protests grew, with sit-ins outside parliament, President Kuchma's residence and key

⁵ 'Indonesians Overthrow President Suharto, 1998', Indonesia 19 Feb. 1998 to 21 May 1998, *Global Nonviolent Action Database*.

government buildings. On 27 November parliament met and by a clear majority voted to declare the poll invalid. Six days later Ukraine's supreme court accepted evidence of electoral fraud presented by the opposition, annulled the results and called for fresh elections. A new poll was held on 26 December: Yushchenko secured 52% of votes and Yanukovich 44%. On 27 December Viktor Yushchenko took over as Ukraine's president.

The success of the Orange Revolution can be attributed to multiple factors, broadly divisible into structural or medium/long-term factors and immediate causes. Among structural or long-standing issues, by far the most important was economic and political corruption. Under President Kuchma (elected in 1994) this became widespread and on a massive scale: oligarchies allied to the government were able to operate with impunity. Different oligarchies owned or controlled the national broadcast print media, funded political campaigns and even had their 'own' parties in parliament. Some idea of the scale of corruption and amounts involved can be gauged from the estimated net worth of one metallurgy baron – US\$3.5 billion (Karatnycky, 2005).

By the late 1990s and early 2000s this corruption and criminality began to be exposed. Journalist Georgiy Gongadze, founder of a website devoted to political exposés and critiques of oligarchic corruption, was abducted in September 2000 and his decapitated body found on 2 November. Secret tapes emerged in which President Kuchma was heard angrily demanding that his subordinates deal with Gongadze. This led to mass protests against Kuchma and (unsuccessful) efforts to impeach him. The exposure of government criminality and public anger at it, and the experience gained by activists of anti-government protests – many of the leaders of the 2004 protests had taken part in the 2000-1 protests was significant.

Public anger, declining GDP growth and per capita income, coupled with donor pressure for deeper economic reforms, motivated President Kuchma to appoint Viktor Yushchenko, a central banker, as prime minister. In office, Yushchenko launched a vigorous campaign against crony capitalism, and in just one year managed to recoup over US\$1 billion of revenue that had been siphoned off by energy oligarchs (ibid.). Reinvesting that money to address urgent social problems, e.g. paying wage arrears to teachers and health workers, Yushchenko was able to bring about significant increases in economic growth (up to 6% in 2000, 9.2% in 2001). These policies made him unpopular with the oligarchs and led to his dismissal after only 18 months. However they also established his reputation among Ukrainians for honesty, integrity and sound administration. In parliamentary elections in March 2002 Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party secured 31% of party-based seats (ibid) – clear evidence of his massive popularity. Yushchenko's record in office, his integrity and popularity were a major factor in the Orange Revolution's success.

The emergence of a new middle class in Kiev and other cities, as a result of strong GDP growth between 1999 and 2004 (Ukraine's GDP nearly doubled in this period – Karatnycky, 2005), was another factor. This middle class grew increasingly frustrated with the massive corruption among ruling elites, something that was, in turn, being increasingly exposed by the media. The internet also played a major role in disseminating information, both before and during the revolution (by 2004 out of a population of 48 million, Ukraine had 6 million distinct internet users – Karatnycky, 2005). While overall growth in Ukraine was strong, corruption led to huge inequalities; by 2004 the country was also experiencing inflation, rising unemployment and declining levels of public service delivery. Added to this was a frustrating lack of access to public goods. Increased access to information and awareness of Western consumer culture, contrasted with the corruption and difficulties they faced, created a fear among Ukrainians 'that the world was simply passing them by' (Jennings, 2012: p. 10).

One further longer-term factor was the strengthening of civil society in Ukraine in the years running up to the 2004 presidential elections. Civil society groups were able to overcome internal divisions and form

broad coalitions (McFaul, 2005), which had the dual effect of raising their domestic credibility (they could form a viable alternative to the existing regime) and attracting external aid. Technical and financial assistance from donors including the United States, European countries, the National Endowment for Democracy and private philanthropists such as George Soros, reinforced democratic values and raised awareness about procedures for conducting free and fair elections (Karatnycky, 2015). This capacity building proved critical in the 2004 elections: non-partisan civil society groups were able to monitor the voting (parallel counting systems) and document the rigging and fraud, and thereafter present irrefutable evidence to parliamentarians and the supreme court (McFaul, 2005).

Many of the immediate factors contributing to the Orange Revolution's success stemmed from those cited above: election monitoring by civil society groups to document and expose fraud; use of the internet to spread information (McFaul, 2005); and the growing media push for freedom and determination to report what was happening. Just days before the revolution began, 'journalists, bristling at government control and censorship, launched strikes and public protests, demanding the right to tell voters the truth' (Karatnycky, 2012). Government restrictions on Yushchenko's campaign, notably denying him access to national broadcast media, forced him to travel across the country holding lots of public meetings. This had the effect of creating a network of supporters and activists, who were able to mobilise effectively when the rigged result was announced. Protesters came from very diverse backgrounds, eventually topping one million just in Kiev (McFaul, 2005: p. 14). The regime's attempt to poison Yushchenko – he survived but was gravely ill – backfired, as pictures of his disfigured face were circulated by the media at home and abroad.

A critical factor in the Orange Revolution passing peacefully was the decision by elements of the security forces not to use violence. As the protests mounted, the military and security forces became more divided. When the Interior Ministry tried to send troops to attack the protesters, the secret service made it clear they would use force to defend demonstrators (Karytnycky, 2005). The presence of international news networks such as CNN also forced the security forces to show restraint, while the vilification of Yanukovich in the western press raised international and domestic support for the revolutionaries. The final immediate factor was the role of the international community during the crisis. While Russia actively supported (including with money – Smith, 2015) efforts by Kuchma and Yanukovich to suppress the opposition and secure victory, Western countries criticised the November poll. US Secretary of State Colin Powell asserted that the United States would not accept the result of the election as legitimate (Smith, 2015). The US also funded election observers to ensure a free and fair election (ibid). As protests continued and the crisis deepened, a number of international leaders (Poland's President Aleksander Kwasniewski, Lithuania's President Valdas Adamkus, and the European Union's Foreign Affairs Commissioner Javier Solana) went to Kiev to negotiate an agreement between the rival parties (Karytnycky, 2005). The Orange Revolution thus owed its success to a mixture of, one, longer-term and proximate factors, and two, domestic and external factors.

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