

Knockout Elections and Framing Processes as Source of Political Instability in Post-Soviet Area: the case of Post-Electoral Revolutions

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“In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten;
in the human kingdom, define or be defined.”

Thomas Szasz

1. Framing Processes Perspective in the Post-Electoral Revolutions Analysis as an Indicator of Political Instability

The so-called Rose Revolution, Georgia November, 2003; Orange Revolution, Ukraine, November and December, 2004; and the Tulip Revolution, Kyrgyzstan in March, 2005, were processes in which an abrupt transfer of power took place by non-institutionalized means. These events were led by opponents' coalitions that defied the state power after elections evaluated by domestic and international organizations as not being in correspondence with international standards. This paper takes into account the limited conceptualization of revolution made by Tilly [1] to define the *Post-electoral Revolution* as a type of transfer of power in which at least two blocks have different, incompatible aspirations to control central institutions of the State as both the executive and legislative power. The said blocks' actions are carried out by non-constitutional means, and with the active participation of a significant sector of the society in the shape of social mobilization, after not obeying one of the parts of the official result of an electoral process.

From revolution studies and the social movement approach, the main interest has relapsed into the numerous peculiarities contained in the colour revolutions [2], in measuring the causal value that they had, and finally, in thinking if these and other characteristics were making authentic revolutions. The structure of social mobilization, more similar to those of the new social movements than to the classic revolutions, has driven to explain the post-electoral revolutions more on the basis of the conceptual tools from the theory of the social movements, rather than the revolutions studies approach. Thus, the specialists have concentrated on the existence of determined structural and institutional short term pre-conditions [3] that made possible the opening of the structure of political opportunity in the moment of electoral fraud, making easier the activation of new structures of mobilization, strategically non-violent and endowed with a sophisticated organization that ended up provoking the desertion of key sectors of the State [4]. Social and institutional conditions that joined the diffusion of a new type of non-violent collective action have allowed us to theorize about the causality of the process of diffusion of a “electoral revolutionary model” [5]. These theoretical contributions would be completed by those who see a causal logic in electoral fraud by means of the popular indignation and the raise of a moral obligation to take part in the social protest [6].

So, in relation to the Eurasian Post-electoral Revolutions analysis, scholars investigating from a perspective of Social Movements or Revolution Theories have been too focused on 1) the immediate prior political opportunity structure and 2) resource mobilization and mobilization

structures or collective action strategies (especially non-violent strategies from the Gene Sharp model). However, this emphasis has led to the omission of the influence of Communication management, the mass media, and the discursive investments of political actors. That is, the collective interpretative and social making processes which mediate between political opportunity and collective action: the framing processes defined by Snow and Benford [7]; a theoretical group which is close to communication and media studies as Pan y Kosicky or Scheufele have emphasized [8].

The combination of political opportunities and structures of mobilization provides the groups with a certain potential for action, but " a mediating element is necessary among opportunity, organization and action: the shared meanings and concepts by means of which the people tend to define their situation". In order that people take part in a collective action process, firstly they must feel offended by a certain situation, and secondly, they must believe that the collective action can help them to solve this situation.

Snow and Benford initiated the approach with the creation of the framing process concept: "conscious strategic efforts realized by groups of persons in order to forge shared ways of considering the world and themselves that legitimize and move to the collective action" [9]. So, building frames involve subjective interpretations of objective events, situations or actors, it doesn't mean that these subjective significances are true or false, the important thing is that they are subjectively made.

Contributions like that of Gusfield [10] guaranteed the cultural dimension of the approach proposing the "analysis of the processes by means of which the individuals attribute meanings to the events, they interpret the situations in which they live and that way they can decide to take part or not take part in the mobilizations". In brief this theoretical group underlines the use of cultural resources as: identity investments, public discourse, communication, collective beliefs and cultural meanings of mobilization [11]. Conceptual tools concerning the participation in the collective action were condensed by Klandermans [12] into two phases of 'formation' and 'mobilization of consensus'. In the first phase, the political discourses proceed from social movement organizers, intellectuals and mass media. They produce competitive definitions of the events and of the actual actors in the frame of their communication respective social networks. In the second phase the 'mobilization of consensus', the same actors realize a frenetic activity to legitimize their points of view and delegitimize those of their opponents, creating and spreading alternative meanings of the situation. Therefore " a real symbolic conflict, a dramatic fight for be defining and not to be defined " takes place.

Two aspects are important to point out in order to justify the necessity to complete the views from the other perspectives with the communication and framing processes perspective in Post-electoral revolutions analysis. First, there were electoral frauds in previous electoral processes without any societal riots in response. In Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan there was significant evidence revealing previous unfair behaviour from the side of the ruling elite during elections [13].

A second element is the common origin of both authorities and opposition revolution leadership. Thus, every key member of the opposition coalition in the post-electoral revolution contexts was inside the ruling elite for as many as three years before the crucial elections [14]. So they needed -especially the new opposition forces- to distinguish themselves from the current ruling elite in order to have a possibility of success in an electoral or a post-electoral confrontation. And, supposedly it was not easy to convince people they were different from the corrupt and authoritarian ruling elite they were denouncing.

So, there are two questions with a difficult answer without analyzing the framing processes in Eurasian post-electoral revolutions:

1) Why other former electoral frauds in the same States didn't cause mobilization processes similar to the wave of colour revolutions?

2) How could such a dramatic and polarized atmosphere rise among both the elites in contention and the ruling elite and a part of the society two or three years before all of them were together?

2. The framing processes in Eurasian post-electoral revolutions: change and veto actors in Knockout elections

Following the phases described by Klandermans a phase of formation of consensus began in which the ruling elite, the opposition elite, international actors, and organizations from the civil society, mass media and communication management and public relations agencies produced competitive definitions of the events and of the actors themselves. Being important, especially in the case of Ukraine, the novel use of what in the Eurasian space has been called political technology. The members of the ruling elite who went into the opposition needed to distinguish themselves from the authorities in the aim of getting not only vote support but mobilization support as well in a possible post-electoral scenario. So, in the period prior to elections different political actors fought for vote mobilization by means of intense discourse activity –which involved communication management strategies and discursive investments- in order to legitimize their own position and to delegitimize their adversary's position, a fight where actors and their allied mass medias tried to define and not to be defined. In the paper two framing processes developed in the period prior to elections which provided meaning to an event (elections to a *Knockout elections*) and actors (political contenders divided in change and veto actors) in order to give sense to further mobilizations are analyzed.

The framing process of a political event: *Knockout elections*

Two aspects tied directly to the nature and quality of what Dahl defined as poliarchy are the uncertainty of the results in the political process - emphasizing the electoral process - [15], and the certainty of the pre-established mechanisms, procedure and institutions and acquaintance by the participants of the political game [16]. That is to say, what Przeworski names an *institutionalized uncertainty*. For that reason if the results were predetermined, or the mechanisms were completely indeterminate, the groups would not have any motivation to be organized. The uncertainty bases the fulfilment of the procedures and the obedience of the results. In principle, the poliarchy is a system in which some parties lose elections, but "in that the defeat constitutes neither a social misfortune nor a crime". The contenders in the poliarchy do not perceive the electoral defeat as a threat with such added charges such as prosecution, expulsion from the country or the loss of goods or assets. In the period in the opposition the certainty continues that in a prearranged period of time the candidate will be able to run again for a elected office moves to the obeisance of the results. Thereby the losers do not give up the right to compete in new elections, to renegotiate, influencing the legislation, pressuring the public organisms or appealing against the decisions of the courts.

Nevertheless, in low quality poliarchies or in what has been called the *hybrid regimes* elections are semi-competitive or a not competitive at all mechanism- endowed with certain certainty that increases when elections concern the executive government.

In addition, the ruling elite perceives the elections not only as a threat of losing their public offices, but also their status as an economic elite, their goods and patrimony, it is necessary to add the fear towards reprisals that could threat their integrity, safety or juridical freedom. In Milosevic's case, Putin's actions against certain oligarchs from Yeltsin's period, and the Shevardnadze and Akayev cases undoubtedly feed these fears. These fears increase, prior to elections, the incompatibility between the ruling elite and the opposition to live together in the bosom of the institutions of the State. The incumbent feels motivated to want to keep his current

official status or an influence over it at any cost, because negotiations of immunity, even when they supposedly solve the problem, can't be guaranteed to be respected later on.

Meanwhile, the opposition perceives the distribution mechanism of public charges as interfered, and in relation to the government, the perception of inability to "apply" for it only through an electoral route increases. Thus, the elections are perceived as a moment of expansion in the structure of political opportunity inside a type of regime accustomed to restricting the public space, an opportunity to "frame" successfully the loss of legitimacy of the authorities by means of framing the electoral fraud. This interpretation has demonstrated in the dealt with cases that it does not depend on if the elections were bringing into play the President's position or not, since in the Georgian and Kyrgyz cases the elections were parliamentary ones. Neither the framing of losing of legitimacy by the authorities has depended on if detected electoral fraud was concealing a victory of the opposition.

With the concept of *Knockout Elections* a kind of electoral process is defined which is perceived by the actors in confrontation not only as a contention for the citizenship representation or the distribution of public offices and political power, but as a confrontation where only a winner will emerge and those who lose will be out of the real political game. The concept of *Knockout Elections* has been chosen because of the similarity of this kind of elections with the *knockout* or *heat* round in sport competitions where the loser is inexorably out of the competition. Normally in this kind of elections the contenders argue to have opposed political projects for the whole political community with a change in the rules of the game in question (some examples could be the 1996 Russian's Presidential Elections and the 2006 Venezuela's Elections).

In the case of the colour revolutions in the absence of real opposed political projects, in order to put drama in the plays it is important to emphasize that in Eurasian countries the actors were not risking just political power, but properties and economical status on the one side, and their own freedom and legal security on the other hand went hand-in-hand with the election results. For these reasons questions like the immunity for the current incumbents and the re-privatization of assets and properties were continuously in the press around the time prior to elections.

The high possibility of electoral fraud guided some opposition sectors to understand that there was a probable scenario where the victory in the electoral recount was not sufficient to proceed to the transfer of power. They should be, in addition, competent defending the result if they were arguing a victory, or in any case, if the victory was not sure, denouncing the lack of legitimacy of the elections due to irregularities. The possibility of what here has been defined as a *Knockout Elections of two legs* was opening. The *Knockout elections* has, as sport competitions, one or two confrontations which could be resolved in two phases, that is *two legs*. The end of the conventional electoral process is the finish of the first part dominated by the institutional collective action. But due to the accumulated drama, the possibility of electoral fraud and the high cost to the opposition of accepting the official results makes it easier to start a second phase, a post-electoral phase of transgressive collective action.

With the emergence of a second phase the opposition needs to finish two tasks successfully: the first one, the framing of the absence of legitimacy in the official electoral results, and in second place, the activation of a new collective action that the prior framing takes advantage of.

Framing process of "Formation of categories"

The mechanism of formation of categories has been defined by McAdam et al. [17] in relation to social categories, but his logic can move the formation of categories in more limited and exclusive groups such as the political elite. A formation of categories is based less on the belonging to the category, and more on the interpretation of the category. The mechanism, as is defined by McAdam et al., is possible to be produced by means of three submechanisms: the

invention, the borrowing and the meeting. In Eurasian processes the diffusion of ideas, definitions and strategies was very important, thereby making borrowing the type of submechanism that took place. The framing actors were found in the discourse against corruption and the oligarchy, a common background inherited from the collective identity division of the Soviet times between nomenclature and society. They will be able to combine these allegations with cultural regional distinctions of their electoral feuds especially in the immediately pre-electoral moment.

By means of this causal mechanism a division of the political class was formed in which two categories directed to create two identities: *change actors* and *veto actors*. Both categories appear in Morlino and Amichai in an analysis centred on the promotion of democracy and that precisely categorizes the political elites, either as actors who are opposed to the reforms instead opting for the implementation of the constitutional state and the market economy, the actors of veto; or actors -who inserted in the domestic system- mobilize the pressure towards the executive and the legislators to adopt democratic procedures and to stimulate the persuasion and the learning of the negotiation among the political class [18].

The causal mechanism of formation of categories hazards interpretation and creation by means of discursive investments from both the actors of change, a category that corresponds to a type of political actor compromised with the implementation of the Constitutional State and the end of corruption inside the institutions; and on the other hand the actors of veto, those that prevent the legal frame of a Constitutional State from developing with satisfaction, and they contribute to put the regime at a non-democratic level. The formation of these categories is supported by reinforcement mechanisms like “*suddenly imposed grievances*” [19] and that of “*Certification and Decertification of actors*”. In the first case the reinforcement of the interpretation of the authorities like veto actors would take place having carried out a punishment or an authoritarian action that is going to untie unexpected consequences for the authorities in relation to their loss of prestige and their allies’ realignment.

Finally, the reinforcement mechanism of certification and decertification of actors links itself to the influence that in the process of formation of categories had the treatment that international actors – foreign powers and International Organizations – give to the actors in contention, legitimizing their position or delegitimizing it, approving or dismissing it, providing indifference or pressuring it.

3. The application of the framing processes in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

The interpretation and redefinition of the elections in a *Knockout* comprehension was opened initially in the first case of the colour revolutions, Georgia, by the framing that the opposition newcomer and ex-ruling elite sectors did of the following elections as the unique and last opportunity to demolish an authoritarian government, that is to say, the elections as a mechanism of returning to the State its nature as a Constitutional State.

One year later the notion of interaction in the process of interpretation reached its climax in Ukraine with the intense and constant intervention of party-liners and opposition; finally in Kyrgyzstan, the authorities themselves would be the principal protagonist of the process of interpretation, though different organizations and individualities intervened in the above mentioned process. Previously in three countries a high degree of dissatisfaction was registered against the president, along with a high level of corruption and regression with regards to freedoms and constitutional laws. Perceptions that helped to fulfil the actors' framing but also to open the structure of political opportunities favouring a framing of *lack of legitimacy* of the president after the electoral fraud.

Georgia framing processes

It was not difficult to foresee that the irregularities of the 2000 presidential elections would be repeated. Nevertheless, only Saakashvili prepared himself strategically and organizationally to repel the fraud. In the whole period that the framing lasted (from the summer of 2001 to autumn of 2003), Saakashvili realized a frenetic labour of public relations, both internal and international to frame himself as *change actor* and to present Shevardnadze and the new party created under his sponsorship, For a New Georgia, as veto actors. Saakashvili worked actively with some of the youth organizations such as *Kmara!*, or with NGOs financed by western entities like the Liberty Institute, among others. He even managed to take part in training camps in mobilization strategies. Shevardnadze knew these movements and he denounced it as an exercise of submission to foreign interests and as a revolutionary threat.

In the years 2000-2001 Saakashvili was already using permanently the sharpest rhetoric against the ills of the elite, managing to be perceived by the public as an opponent. Another leader of the *young reformists*, Zurab Zhvania, was the most probable new Shevardnadze, the person capable of continuing the balancing of interests between the old and new elites, he was also easier to be framed as a reformer than as *actor of change*. Finally, Nino Burdjadnadze was, and she continues being, a seemingly efficient but grey technocrat in charisma that, with independence of the one who will be in the power, is going to have her Minister's portfolio.

In the summer of 2001 Shevardnadze announced his intention of not appearing in the following presidential elections and instead declared his retirement from the position of leader of the party in power, the UCG. In this context Saakashvili resigned as Minister of Justice and went on to the opposition. A few months later, in the autumn of 2001, the first example of the mechanism named *suddenly imposed grievances* happened in the Eurasian space with the police attempting the occupation of TV channel Rustavi-2. After the Rustavi-2 events, the unpopularity of Shevardnadze rocketed. In addition, the context facilitated Zurab Zhvania's exit from the UCG. The atmosphere was dramatic, the local newspapers were titled: "Georgia is facing her worse political crisis after the 1992 Civil war", "The people in Tbilisi are speaking about the end of Shevardnadze's age" [20]. Shevardnadze described what was happening in Tbilisi as a "political theatrical play with which someone tries to replace the government, including the president (...) the fight for the power has exploded in the country, and these events are a manifestation of this fight". He did not reject that foreign forces were influencing the internal situation of Georgia.

An acceleration in both framing processes was given in the context of the electoral campaign of Tbilisi's Presidency elections in February 2002. Shevardnadze said that Saakashvili's electoral campaign with the slogan, "Georgia without Shevardnadze", could cause a new destabilization in Georgia [21]. The slogan according to Gela Kvaratskhelia, one of the leaders of the presidential group in the still existing UCG, "was a call to the population towards a coup d'état against the government" [22]. The interaction in the interpretation of a *Knockout elections* had begun.

In June, 2003 the first dress rehearsal of the *rose revolution* would be carried out with around five to ten thousand people assembled in the building of the parliament in the Avenue Rustaveli in Tbilisi to demand the dissolution of the CEC and the reform of the Electoral Code. Though the opposition said that the manifestation was of a peaceful nature it made calls to "the capture of the government power in order to give it to the people" [23]. Saakashvili commented: "If the government does not make any grants in the following hours we will take radical measures to create the conditions for a parliamentary democratic election, we are going to take parliament". In addition, the leading opponent added that the new parliament would "seek to limit the presidential constitutional power or an early retreat" [24].

Shevardnadze suffered the western certification of Saakashvili and Zhvania and his own lack of certification from States and international organizations as well. The pre-electoral period in the spring of 2003 entered a decisive phase of public concentrations, fights, representatives being insulted in parliament, and daily appeals to the embassy of the USA [25]. One thing that is certain is that in this context, not at least when the conversations of Saakashvili and Zhvania

with diplomats of the USA increased of pace [26], the USA stopped the aid programs to the country, and Georgia continued being one of most favoured countries of USAID worldwide [27].

On other occasions Shevardnadze had been threatened he relied on the support of the USA, but this time it was not like that, neither the EU appeared that it would intercede for him. Specifically, Bruce George, president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE was the first one in intervening due to the lack of certification of the presidential option in the electoral context on having affirmed one day after the elections that these were not fulfilling "the international standards" [28]. The following one was the USA ambassador, Richard Miles, who in the middle of the post-electoral crisis assured that in "a democratic State the people have the right to meet peacefully". But the one who had the hardest words - and slightly lucky - was the vice-assistant of the Secretary of State of the USA, Lynn Pascoe, present in Tbilisi, who said that Shevardnadze had time to rectify and to accept the "entirely fair" demands of the oppositions: "The USA tried to do the best thing by assuring that nothing was going badly in the Georgian elections, but the Georgian authorities did the best thing to do just the opposite; they have failed in following the advice of the civilized community" [29].

On the other hand, the action of Moscow during the crisis was more balanced and all the actors: Shevardnadze, Saakashvili, OSCE and the USA admitted that the negotiations of Sergey Ivanov, Russian Secretary of State at the time, had been decisive to give a non-violent ending to the crisis. Moscow, unlike what they would do in the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan did not take a partial position of certification or lack of certification towards the actors and appeared as a mediator who continued respecting Shevardnadze as President of Georgia.

Ukraine framing processes

The formation of the framings was initiated by civil society organizations and other political entities, especially Aleksandr Moroz's Socialist party, but it remained led by Yulia Tymoshenko, once she was dismissed by Kuchma in February 2001. The opposition experienced a process of progressive unification in which the principal element was Yushenko's transformation from popular politician but without an opposition's brand [30] to turning into the charismatic leader of an opposition coalition composed by antipresidential organizations with a long career and with a profile of radical opposition. Tymoshenko marked the framing pace since she moved to the opposition with the aim of framing herself as radical opposition to Kuchma [31], and it is important to point out that Yulia Tymoshenko's social perception, like one of the first two oligarchs for the Ukrainian population in 2001, was not helping her in her political aspirations. She tried to capitalize on the *anti-Kuchma* discourse of the campaigns that arose after Gongadze's murder and the so called *Kuchmagate*. She was the main framing actor among the political with regards to the change and veto actors' framing, as well as of the *knockout elections* and for it she relied on the media possibilities of Internet, the local and regional media of the Central and West Ukraine, an active labor of international public relations, and finally on the media groups that would support Yushenko in 2004, especially the TV Channel 5.

Kuchma had also taken advantage of his presidential office to carry out media and communication management campaigns directing his own framing as father of the nation. But all these efforts went away to the backside with *Kuchmagate* that acted as a typical mechanism of suddenly imposed grievances [32]. The opposition took to the streets for weeks arguing as a principal aim Kuchma's dismissal and prosecution [33]. In vain, the progovernment media continued ensuring that there was evidence that Gongadze was still safe and sound, while Kuchma was travelling to Moscow for support [34].

Without going into many details, from winter 2000 until the outcome of November and December 2004 there was an authentic discursive and media battle in which each actor and media gave their own vision about candidates and the event to analyse. The examples of discursive investment in the attempt to frame a Knockout Elections in Ukraine are numerous, especially on

each occasion the opposition went to the street [35]. Already in 2004 the *kuchmism* repeatedly warned that the opposition was determined to play "the Georgian scenario" of the previous year. The adviser to Kuchma, Volodymyr Malynkovich said: "Some of the people of Yushenko think in terms of victory or death (...) they are asking the people to take to the streets to determine the election result. They want approximately the same that happened in Georgia last year ". The deputy minister, Myjailo Korniyenko, said "There will be no Georgian scenario in Ukraine (...) if the need arises, the police will use force to prevent it .

As the mechanism of certification of actors, the attitude of the United States and the European Union towards Kuchma changed in the winter of 2000-2001 following the *Kuchmagate* [36] case, in 2002 there were specific actions due to the allegations of the sale of a radar system to Iraq with a temporary suspension of the assistance of the US to Kiev and the threat of converting Ukraine into an international pariah. In response, Kuchma strengthened its relations with Moscow, since Putin was not requesting accounts on his internal behaviour [37]. The weakness of Kuchma in their own country made it an ideal partner for Moscow [38]. On the contrary, Yushenko succeed in presenting to the Ukrainian people as the choice of USA, an element that helped to frame Yanukovich as the choice of Russia when he was nominated. Already the parliamentary elections in 2002 were seen as a geopolitical battle between US and Russia for the influence over who would be the next Ukrainian incumbent. The western decertification of Kuchma was answered with the Russian decertification of the opposition, the ideologue of the Kremlin, Sergei Markov ensured that the opposition would not break down Kuchma and that the Belgrade scenario [39] would not be repeated. In parallel, the Assembly of Parliament of the European Council in Strasbourg on 26 April 2001 after learning the cessation of Yushenko pulled a resolution with the single vote of Russia against in which stated that the Council of Europe would expel Ukraine if it was not capable of ensuring respect for democracy and freedom of press in June [40]. In 2003, Kuchma controversially agreed the Russian demand to reserve the pipeline of Odessa – Brody in benefit of Russia and the same year, Kiev joined Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in the "Single Economic Space". The Ukrainian president clearly saw this new orientation as an antidote to Western criticism and the lack of support or political and economic aid.

In the election year, investments of funding and discursive pressures increased pace. The EU expressed "deep concern" by the development of events in the Ukraine parliament, ensuring that the future of relations between Kiev and Brussels depended on how the elections were conducted. In the spring of 2004 after the incidents with the media, the government was again criticized by Western governments, EU and the European Council. Meanwhile, Russia was taking advantage of the increasing isolation of Kuchma to ensure concessions and to increase its influence. Kuchma will end shortly after withdrawing its request for membership in both the EU and NATO. When the immediately pre-election period came, Putin, twice visited Yanukovich in Ukraine with the intention of increasing his image as president. Yushenko wrote to Putin saying that his visits could be viewed as interference in Ukrainian internal affairs, and vice president of Parliament, Janusz Onyskewicz, spoke directly about the interference from Russian. However, Putin did nothing that the Western governments have not done, especially the USA.

Kyrgyzstan framing processes

One factor that differentiates the Kyrgyz case from the Ukraine and Georgia is the absence of an opposition long term election campaign working discursively for a formation of the change actors category that only took place in the wake of the post-electoral revolution influenced by the Orange Revolution. It is true that Akayev exemplified its veto actor so well that it contributed to the formation of the change actor category as a result of the mere otherness that rested with the opposition, being apparent that the victory of an *Akayevian* electoral brand made difficult implement the rule of law. While Akayev's contribution both in discourse and in

the result of their actions was higher in the Knockout elections framing elections. His actions showed the rest of the clans that his circle had intended to consolidate and enhance the accumulation of power and property has raised in recent years.

In addition to Akayev's *successful* framing as veto actor it should be emphasized some NGOs, such as *Coalition NGO* or a few youth organizations [41]. Among the regional political actors, in the north the stark persecution that Akayev had turned against Kulov expanded the view of many that Akayev deserves an ouster. Finally in the south, a time of inflection, the events of Ak-sy in 2002 are analyzed here as a sudden imposition of grievances.

The serious political events in March 2002 in Ak-sy [42] were just after Kyrgyzstan joined the global terrorism Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), giving the US Army ample operative opportunity in the airport at Manas, near Bishkek, which was positioned at the rearguard of the military operations in Afghanistan. Ak-sy was relevant to the Tulip revolution for three reasons, first because the mobilizations in defence of Beknazarov would lead to the experience in a process of social mobilization that would last until November 2002. Secondly, Ak-sy events determined the departure of the new opposition's leader Bakiyev.

On the other hand the authorities accelerated the framing of the Kyrgyz opposition as revolutionary following the events of Ak-sy [43]. Then the parliamentary deputy opponent Akajam Madumarov described the facts of Ak-sy as "a turning point in the history of the country" and called for a change in the direction of the country. The People's Congress of Democratic Forces again requested Akayev's resignation after Ak-sy: "the country's situation is critical, if measures are not taken the situation can get out of control" [44]. In May the government resigned as a whole, and the head of the presidential administration resigned.

Finally, although there was a progressive decertification from USA regarding Akayev [45], the Western's criticism was limited by the role of Kyrgyzstan in the American intervention in Afghanistan; as well as the lack of a clear choice alternative to Akayev to certify. In December 2001, the United States established an air base outside Bishkek, the capital of the country. In response, Moscow assured that by the middle of 2002 [46] it would establish a military agreement with Kyrgyzstan to lease the Kant air base [47]. Subsequently the neighbouring China launched common exercises against the forces of Kyrgyzstan within the country. However, USA at the same time, permitted to benefit or collaborated with Akayev, funded politicians like Otumbayeva who assured that without the external financing their political activities wouldn't have been possible. There were also some movements to tighten Akayev's regime on behalf of the American diplomacy. All this while Akayev denounced everyday that an attempt of revolution was coming [48]. Moscow, on the contrary supported the government of Bishkek in the resolution of their internal problems, in what was a clear certification of Akayev and an election of the opposition south. Specifically, statements from the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Vladimir Rushailo, on the thirteenth of June 2002 ensured that: "Russian special services know the names of the people who organized the altercations in Ak-sy (...). We won't remain indifferent by providing assistance to Kyrgyzstan in their efforts to stabilize the situation" [49].

The last phase of formation of consensus was largely determined by what was happening in Ukraine, so the certification and decertification of actors were keys. Akayev, concerned by a potential velvet revolution in Kyrgyzstan, sought protection and support in Moscow, going to Moscow to consult what type of support he would receive from Moscow before a hypothetical Ukrainian scenario in his country in parliamentary elections whose first round would take place on 27 February 2005. Akayev understood that the US, EU and the OSCE had been openly supporting the opposition through their embassies and offices in the country. Framing the Knockout elections in a precise way, Akayev in a speech to the nation in parliament convened to "resist the provocateurs and those trying to export the velvet revolutions (...) the most dangerous aspect is that now they have trainers who have learned how to make the provocations to conclude velvet revolutions". Putin pressured in the Organization for Cooperation of Shanghai to conduct

an electoral observation mission in Kyrgyzstan, with which it could neutralize the "interference" from the Western observers [50]. While this happened, the Kyrgyz opposition seemed ready to repeat a post-electoral revolution. Otumbayeva said that the "Ukrainian revolution could probably be repeated in Kyrgyzstan (...) not excluding the possibility that the people take the streets after the parliamentary elections" [51].

References:

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- 2) On the one hand, the innovations have affected the implied actors, first, with the renewed prominence of the post-soviet civil society by means of the collaboration between youth organizations and international NGO, and secondly, due to two aspects in relation with the structures of mobilization used: the sophisticated use of the strategy of non-violent civil *disobedience*, and the mechanism of diffusion that has expanded in the Eurasian region. Nevertheless, on the other hand, especially the scanty transformative dimension present in the colour revolutions has led many Revolution studies scholars to deny their condition as a revolutionary process.
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- 13) According to the OSCE, the Electoral Observation Mission's final reports found that there weren't transparent and fair elections in Georgia (legislative elections in 1999 and 2003, and presidential elections in 2000), Ukraine (legislative of 1998 and 2002, and presidential elections in 1999) and Kyrgyzstan (legislative elections 2000 and 2005 and presidential elections in 2000).
- 14) In the case of Georgia, after Shevardnadze resigned to take part in the next presidential elections in the summer of 2001, there was a step by step exit from the ruling elite to the opposition: Saakashvili (2001, September), Zurab Zhvania (2001, autumn) and Nino Burjanadze (2002, autumn). The so-called Rose Revolution came after parliamentary elections in November 2003. In Ukraine Tymoshenko was a member of the government until February 2001, and Yushenko Prime Minister until April 2001. For instance in January 2001 in the index of public perception of oligarchs in Ukraine, Tymoshenko was in second place between her own patron Pavlo Lazarenko in first place and Leonid Kuchma in third place. Yushenko didn't resign after Tymoshenko's expulsion, so he signed an official letter with Kuchma accusing the new opposition forces of fascism. In the third case, Kyrgyzstan, the current president and one of the main leaders of the so called Tulip Revolution, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, has occupied different bureaucratic positions under Akayev's administration since 1994. He was Prime Minister in 2001-2002.
- 15) Przeworski, A. (1995). *Democracia y Mercado: Reformas políticas y económicas en la Europa del Este y América Latina*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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- 17) McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., Tilly, C. (2005). *Dinámica de la contienda política*. Barcelona: Hacer Editorial.
- 18) *The veto actors (veto players)* had been originally defined in Tsebelis (2002). The first reference to *change actors* in Finnemore y Sikkink (1998), quoted in Morlino, L & Amichai, M (2009). **International actors, democratization and the rule of law : anchoring democracy?**
New York : Routledge.
- 19) McAdam, D.(1982). *The Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 20) (2001, November). *Kommersant*, 2nd. (1-11).
- 21) (2002, May 20). *Civil Georgia*.
- 22) (2005, May 15). *Civil Georgia*.
- 23) Kutikov, Y. (2003, June 5). *Izvestia*. (4).
- 24) Sakevarishvili Revaz, *Georgian Poll Scramble Begins*. In Institute for War and Peace Reporting (CRS No. 197) Available in: http://www.iwpr.net/?apc_state=hruicrs2003&l=en&s=f&o=159730. Saakashvili would receive the support of related civil society organization such as the Liberty Institute. David Zurabishvili, leader of the organization was commenting on Shevardnadze before the elections of 2003: "simply he was not understanding that his faction was going to leave the power. I gave an interview to the newspaper 24 Hours, and said: 'Today, this government has two options: to retire gradually or to retire through a revolution' ". (Karumidze y Wertsch: 2006:59) (Ed.) *Enough. The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia 2003*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
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- 26) Zhvania and Saakhashvili conversed on 29th April 2003 with the USA ambassador, Richard Miles, who previously directed the USA military board in Belgrade and supported active contacts with pro-western groups of opposition. Two days later, Miles and the British ambassador Deborah Barnes Jones met Shevardnadze. Miles said to him: "The Georgian authorities must be the guarantor of the transparency of the elections". (2003, June 5). *Izvestia*. (4).
- 27) Between 1995 and 2000, Georgia received seven hundred million American dollars of direct aid. In 2002-2003, it was the biggest per capita recipient of the USA agency for the international aid of the development (USAID). In 2000, USAID spent 200 dollars per person in Georgia compared with 1.25 dollars in Russia (Jones, 2006:41 - 42). The George Soros Open Society Institute (OSI) played an important role in the general development not only of Georgian ONG but also of the civic actions, which contributed to Shevardnadze's fall. It was Soros whom promoted the "Serbian model" of the *non-violent* change of the regime. The OSI financing allowed *Kmara!* creation and the training of his activists in skills of non-violent protest by Serbian activists from *Otpor*. (Mitchell, 2004:346; Fairbanks, 2004:115). Mitchell, L (2004). Georgia's Rose revolution, *Current History*, 103, n°675, 342–348. Fairbanks, C.H. (2004) Georgia's Rose revolution, *Journal of Democracy*, 14, n°2, 110–124.
- 28) (2003, November 3). *Vremya Novostei*.
- 29) (2003, November 11). *Vremya novostei*.
- 30) The party led by Viktor Yushenko, Our Ukraine, was perceived by the 33% of the public as an opposition party, the 33.6% thought that was not an opposition party, the rest was difficult to respond. Survey developed by the Centre Razumkov analysed in: (2002, 31 August — 6 September). *Zerkalo Nedeli*. 33 (408).
- 31) (2001, January 22). *Vremya novostei*. (1).
- 32) The murder of journalist Georgy Gongadze and the discovery of the tape on which supposedly appeared the own Kuchma giving instructions to the operation. The tapes also implicate Kuchma in other cases of corruption and arms trafficking. Gongadze was co-editor of *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (an online newspaper) focused on corruption cases.
- 33) (2000, December 27). *Vremya Novostei*.
- 34) (2000, December 23). *Sevodnya*. (2).
- 35) In September 2002 up to 100,000 people integrated in opposition protests led by Tymoshenko in Kiev. The campaign Get up Ukraine! claimed that more than one million people had participated throughout Ukraine under the slogan Down with Kuchma!, although the figure seems exaggerated. Aleksandr Turchinokov, leader of Block Tymoshenko "We have no other objective to elect a new president in the early elections". Tymoshenko: "the ideas of this revolution are pure and therefore they will triumph". *Izvestia*, 16th and 17th September 2002, pp1-2. The 26th September 2002 the opposition leaders were planted in front of the building of the presidential administration and threatened to launch a hunger strike if Kuchma did not meet with them. Tymoshenko said "The president is frightened of the internal situation of the country and the attitude of the rest of the world towards Ukraine. Now it is an opportune period to push to the end with the resignation of Kuchma ". While Yushenko was less radical: "Ukraine is in a political crisis. The only desirable means, though difficult, is understanding ". "We should not depend on emotions and think that going to the streets will solve everything". 25th September Kommersant. In 2003, a year before the orange revolution, following the context of Rose revolution, Yulia Tymoshenko added that "the Georgian option is the most acceptable at the present time for the Ukrainian authorities, if not they will have to face a

- Romanian scenario” (supposedly the destiny of Ceaucescu and his wife). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 27th November 2003, p5.
- 36) (2000, December 19). *Vremya Novostei*. (6).
 - 37) (2001, January 22). *Vremya novostei*. (1).
 - 38) (2001, February 10). *Sevodnya*.(1).
 - 39) (2001, February 16). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*.(5).
 - 40) (2001, April 27). *Vremya novostei*. (1-6).
 - 41) Akayev was obsessed with the 300 member student group Kel-Kel, showing their fear towards a reissue of the previous post-electoral revolutions.
 - 42) In Ak-sy crystallized in the form of protest demonstrations that had caused the imprisonment of MEP opponent Azimbek Beknazarov, to which the prosecution of the State accused of prevarication. On the seventeenth of March several thousands of their supporters in the city of Kerben, in the district of Ak-sy, poured into the streets and encountered the brutal repression of the security forces, which caused five deaths and dozens were wounded. The fighting lasted until the following day and the sixth fatal victim joined the casualty list. On March 19, the Prime Minister Bakiyev went to Kerben to defuse the situation, informing them that Beknazarov had been released and promising a government investigation to clarify who had ordered the shooting at the demonstrators.
 - 43) (2002, April 19). Akayev and his partners warned against the possibility of a revolutionary Kyrgyzstan. *Kommersant*. (10).
 - 44) (2002, March 27). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. (5).
 - 45) Less than a month before 9/11 with the beginning of the Operation Enduring Freedom, the Congress of the US declared: "The countries of Central Asia are ruled by authoritarian regimes, and Kyrgyzstan is no exception". The authorities in Bishkek felt that the document "contests to honour and dignity". (2001, August 18). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. (5).
 - 46) (2002, June 14). *Kommersant*. (3).
 - 47) (2002, November 19). *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. (6).
 - 48) When Beknazarov was imprisoned in 2002, Senator and leader of the majority Democrat, Thomas Daschle, visited Kyrgyzstan and expressed hope that Beknazarov was released prior to their return to the US. Beknazarov was not released but Akayev replied on the collusion "outside" with protests of destabilization. (2002). *Current digest*. 54(4). (18). Days later, the press secretary of the Department of State for USA, Richard Boucher said that the US was closely watching the situation in Kyrgyzstan. (2002, March 20).*Nezavisimaya gazeta*. (5).
 - 49) (2002, June 21). *Vremya novostei*.
 - 50) (2005, January 24). *Kommersant*. (9).
 - 51) (2005, February 12). *Kommersant*. (4-6).