

# **The Orange Evolution? The Political Realignment and Regional Divisions in Ukraine**

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## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes changes in political parties, political leaders, and regional political orientations in Ukraine in 2002-2006. The question is whether these changes are revolutionary or evolutionary. Most previous studies describe the culmination moment of these changes during the 2004 presidential elections as a revolution (the Orange Revolution). My hypothesis is that not a revolution but a major electoral realignment occurred in the Ukrainian politics since 2002. A realignment theory refers to elections that produce significant and relatively long-term changes in dominant parties, leaders, issues and preferences of voters. This study employs comparative analysis of regional support for pro-Yushchenko parties in the 2002 and 2006 parliamentary elections and support for Viktor Yushchenko in the 2004 presidential elections. The paper uses surveys conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology and the Razumkov Center in 2002-2006 to compare changes in political orientations in regions of Ukraine. This paper concludes that the changes in political leadership, regional political orientation, and political parties are best described as an evolutionary electoral realignment and not as a revolution.

# **The Orange Evolution? The Political Realignment and Regional Divisions in Ukraine**

## **The question of the “Orange Revolution”**

Significant changes that culminated in the “Orange Revolution” have occurred in the Ukrainian politics. Viktor Yushchenko won the repeat second round of the 2004 presidential elections with backing of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators and support of the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) and the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU). The 2004 presidential elections witnessed a rise of the Party of Regions, led by Viktor Yanukovich, and a significant decline of support for the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU). Viktor Yushchenko received overwhelming support in Western and most Central regions; while Viktor Yanukovich prevailed in Eastern and Southern regions. (See Aslund and McFaul, 2006; Central, 2004; Copsey, 2005; Katchanovski, 2006; Wilson, 2005a).

The question is whether the changes in political leadership, political parties, and regional political values which occurred as a result of the 2004 elections and mass demonstrations are revolutionary or evolutionary, i.e., whether the “Orange Revolution” was a revolution. A popular view characterizes a culmination moment of these changes during the 2004 presidential elections as a revolution, which was named after orange color used by Viktor Yushchenko and his supporters. The “Orange Revolution” is often viewed as a continuation of a wave of democratic revolutions, which include the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia and the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan. (See Aslund and McFaul, 2006; Wilson, 2005a).

My hypothesis is that the ascendancy of the Orange camp to power represents evolutionary changes in the political leadership, party system, and regional political values in Ukraine. The victory of Viktor Yushchenko in the 2004 presidential elections with help of mass protest actions is best described as a political or electoral realignment. This realignment started

with the rise of the “Our Ukraine” Bloc which got the most votes in the 2002 parliamentary elections.

In contrast to most theories of revolution, a realignment theory implies that shifts in support for political leaders and parties are not accompanied by fundamental changes in political values. In case of Ukraine, comparison of regional attitudes before and after the “Orange Revolution” serves as a way to analyze the nature of the changes in political values. Political culture in historically Western Ukraine had traditionally pro-nationalist and pro-Western orientation, in contrast to pro-Communist and pro-Russian orientation in historically Eastern regions. Since 1991, nationalist and pro-Western parties and candidates received strongest support in Western Ukraine, while pro-Communist and pro-Russian parties and candidates were dominant, with some exceptions, in Eastern Ukrainian regions. Seven Western Ukrainian regions experienced Polish, Czechoslovak, and Romanian rule between World War I and World War II. Political culture in some of these regions, especially Galicia, was also influenced by the legacy of Austro-Hungarian rule before World War I and by the Greek Catholic Church. In contrast, pro-Communist and pro-Russian political culture evolved in regions of Eastern Ukraine, as result of long periods of the Russian rule and then Soviet rule. (See Birch, 2000; Katchanovski, 2006; Katchanovski, forthcoming).

Theories of electoral realignment refer to elections that produce significant and relatively long-term changes in dominant parties, leaders, issues and preferences of voters. An ascendancy of the Democratic Party during the New Deal and rising influence of the Republican Party in the United States, especially in the South, the end of the 20s century are examples of realignments. For instance, for most of the twentieth century, the Democratic Party dominated Southern politics, especially at the state and local levels. However, by the end of the

1990s, the Republican Party had won the majority of Congressional seats and Governorships in the Southern states. A shift in electoral support from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party culminated in the Republican victory in the 1994 Congressional elections. Although this victory was described by the Republicans and journalists as the “Republican Revolution,” political values in the United States, particularly in the South, have not changed as rapidly as party support did. Survey data show that Southerners remained more conservative on political and social issues than do Northerners. Many voters who traditionally supported conservative Democrats in the South shifted their support to conservative Republicans. (Glazer, 1996; Miller and Shanks, 1996; Speel, 1998; Weakliem and Biggert, 1999).

Most theories of revolution imply profound and comprehensive political and social changes that are advanced by both revolutionary leaders and revolutionary masses who stage a popular revolt against the old regime. Although scholars differ in their definitions of revolution, for example, in the role of violence, such a change is a key element in defining a revolution and contrasting it with a reform movement or a popular rebellion. For example, Skocpol defines social revolutions as “rapid, basic transformations of a society’s state and class structures” that “are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below.” Political revolutions “transform state structures but not social structures, and they are not necessarily accomplished through class conflict.” (Skocpol, 1979, p. 4). Another definition of classical or “great revolutions,” such as the French Revolution or the Russian Revolution, refers to “rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and governmental activity and policies.” Revolutions differ from rebellions, coups, and wars of independence. (Huntington, 1968, p. 264).

There are broader definitions of a revolution, for example, as “a forcible transfer of power over a state in the course of which at least two distinct blocs of contenders make incompatible claims to control the state, and some significant portion of the population subject to the state’s jurisdiction acquiesces in the claims of each bloc” (Tilly, 1993, p. 8). However, such a definition turns many forcible changes of the government, successful rebellions, civil wars and wars for independence into revolutions. For example, the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and Ukraine’s independence in 1991 become revolutions. Many Ukrainian Cossack rebellions in the 16-18<sup>th</sup> centuries turn out to be revolutionary in nature but not in outcome according to this definition. (See Tilly, 1993, pp. 203, 235). However, most studies of Ukrainian politics and history do not regard Ukraine’s independence in 1991 as a revolution and the Cossack uprisings as attempted revolutions.

There is no scholarly consensus on whether the collapse of Communism in East European and Central European countries represented revolutions even though changes in most of these countries were much more radical and comprehensive than they were in Ukraine during the “Orange Revolution.” For instance, only political changes in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union in the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s completely fit even the broad definition of revolutions. (Tilly, 1993, p. 235). In contrast, the fall of Communism in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and many former Soviet republics, such as Central Asian states, is often not regarded as revolution, because either situations or outcomes in these countries were not fully revolutionary. (See Bremmer and Taras, 1997; Siani-Davies, 1996; Tilly, 1993).

In contrast to almost consensus views in Western and Ukrainian mass media that a democratic and pro-Western “Orange Revolution” took place in Ukraine, academic researchers

only have begun to access the nature of these events and political changes in Ukraine. Previous studies use the term “Orange Revolution” either without brackets or with brackets. However, some of these studies also express certain doubts whether a revolution has taken place in Ukraine. They note that, apart from mass non-violent actions of popular protest, the “Orange Revolution” lacked in comprehensiveness and deepness of changes in a number of areas. However, the “Orange Revolution” remains the preferred term in most of these studies. (See Aslund and McFaul, 2006; D’Anieri, 2005; Wilson, 2005).

Definitions are important not only for theoretical reasons but for their practical implications. Uncritical adoption of politicians-made and journalists-made definitions of revolution, and other politically laden terms such, terrorism, genocide, empire, and democracy, brings value judgments into academic studies. (See Weber, 1949). For example, the political definition of Europe as a continent with no clear Eastern borders and the use of the term “Russia” to identify the whole Soviet Union with exception of the Baltic States, often result in an exclusion of Ukraine from Europe and questioning whether Ukrainians are Europeans. (See, for example, Pagden, 2002). As a consequence, Ukraine is not considered for membership in the European Union (EU) even if it would meet all conditions of such membership. In contrast, Turkey for political reasons is often identified as part of Europe and it is in process of negotiations for an EU membership. The use of the term “Orange Revolution” implies that the developments in Ukraine will be, evaluated accordingly, i.e., whether the revolution succeeded or failed, and many commentators and journalists already have been doing this.

### **Data and methodology**

This paper focuses on analysis of political changes, in particular political leadership, political parties and regional political attitudes in Ukraine from 2002, and in some cases for

reasons of availability of comparable public opinion data from the mid 1990s, to 2006. This study uses election data and opinion poll data to determine whether the changes in political leadership, political parties, and regional political attitudes have been revolutionary or evolutionary. It employs comparative analysis of regional support for political parties in the 2002 and 2006 parliamentary elections and support for Viktor Yushchenko in the 2004 presidential elections.

This paper uses surveys conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) and the Razumkov Center to compare changes in political orientation in regions of Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> Polls conducted or commissioned by these three centers have a relatively good track record in the previous elections.<sup>2</sup> For example, KIIS and the Razumkov Center with support of

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<sup>1</sup> The poll results reported in this paper include only likely voters who made up their mind.

<sup>2</sup> Polls produced by many other polling organizations in Ukraine are not used in this study, because they often deliberately manipulated results of their public opinion polls as result of political preferences or in exchange for money. For example, a February 2006 poll by the National Institute for Strategic Studies placed support for the Party of Regions and the Yushchenko Bloc within several percent, i.e., a statistical margin of error. However, this institute is subordinated to President Yushchenko; and it is headed by Yuriy Ruban, Yushchenko's former speechwriter and a Yushchenko Bloc candidate in the 2006 elections to Kyiv City Council. A poll conducted by the Center "Sotsiovmir" in February 2006 put the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc at the second place several percent, i.e., within a statistical margin of error, behind the Party of Regions, while polls by KIIS and the Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF) put distance between the party of regions and BYuT between 14 and 17 percent. Similarly, in contrast to DIF and KIIS, "Sotsiovmir" predicted that the Pora-PRP Bloc was likely to pass the 3 percent threshold and enter the Ukrainian parliament. It is hardly a coincidence that this new polling center is headed by well-publicized political scientists Volodymyr Polokhalo and Sergiy Taran. Volodymyr Polokhalo, the editor-in-chief of the *Politychna Dumka* [Political Thought] journal, was running to the parliament on the BYuT list. Sergiy Taran, a head of a Ukrainian NGO and a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Political Science at Duke University, was running on the list of Pora-PRP, while his father was a top candidate on the BYuT electoral list. Many other polls that gave similar results were produced by unknown and probably fake organizations, such as Kyiv Sociological Academy, Ukrainian Sociology Online Group, and the All-Ukrainian Center for Political Studies. Such virtual polls and virtual organizations, created by political technologists on request of their political sponsors, are akin to virtual political parties which appear during election campaigns in Ukraine (See Wilson, 2005b). Official results of the March 2006 parliamentary elections gave the Party of Regions 32 percent of the national vote,

Democratic Initiatives Foundation provided the most reliable exit poll data during the 2004 presidential elections. However, neither of these polling organizations releases to other researchers original datasets of their polls. Comparison of their past performance, professional levels of their polling experts, and their political associations shows that the public opinion data on political party support provided by the Razumkov Center are somewhat less reliable than the data reported by KIIS. For example, Mykola Martynenko, the leader of the “Our Ukraine” faction in the parliament heads the board of the Razumkov Center. Anatoliy Hrytsenko, the director of the Razumkov Center in 1999-2004, worked for the Yushchenko campaign during the 2004 presidential elections, and he became minister of defense of Ukraine in 2005. Therefore, poll results reported by the Razumkov Center and KIIS are unlikely to be biased against the Yushchenko Bloc, NATO, the EU, and in favor of the Party of Regions and pro-Russian orientation of Ukraine.

### **Political Leaders**

An analysis of the background and behavior of the leaders of the “Orange Revolution” is more revealing than their revolutionary speeches on *Maidan* and their election campaign slogans. Many key representatives of the Yushchenko-led Orange coalition were once supporters of President Kuchma or members of the Soviet elite. Viktor Yushchenko headed the National Bank and was prime minister during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma, and he supported Kuchma during the tapegate scandal. Yushchenko became a leader of the opposition only after his government was dismissed in 2001.

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compared to 22 percent for BYuT, 14 percent for the “Our Ukraine” bloc, 6 percent for the Socialist party, and 4 percent for the Communist Party. All other parties and electoral blocs, including Pora-PRP bloc which received 1.5 percent of the votes, failed to clear the 3 percent threshold.

Yushchenko's ideology combines elements of liberalism, nationalism, and populism. His foreign policy orientation is pro-Western but not anti-Russian. Although his ideology and foreign policy orientation differ significantly from ideologies and foreign policy orientations of Leonid Kuchma and Leonid Kravchuk in some key aspects, they also have some similarities. For example, Viktor Yushchenko is much more pro-Western than Leonid Kuchma and Leonid Kravchuk, but he embraced evolutionary changes in foreign policy and opposed a revolutionary break with Russia that would include, for example, an immediate withdrawal from the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS) and abandoning the Common Economic Space in favor of NATO and the EU memberships. In comparison, Leonid Kuchma advocated multivector foreign policy that included both the integration in Russia-led Common Economic Space and the CIS and NATO membership.

Yulia Tymoshenko, who was a key supporter of Viktor Yushchenko during the 2004 elections and became prime minister of Ukraine, is a power-seeking oligarch, who frequently changed her political allies and political orientation. She started her political career by joining a pro-Kuchma faction in the parliament of Ukraine. Yulia Tymoshenko soon became a leader of the pro-Lazarenko party *Hromada*, which had the most support in the Dnipropetrovsk region in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> She turned to the anti-Kuchma opposition as a result of her personal conflict with the former president and his inner circle over economic revenues from controlling natural gas delivery. After Tymoshenko was briefly imprisoned on corruption charges in 2001, she became one of the leaders of the anti-Kuchma opposition movement. Before the 2004 presidential elections, Yulia Tymoshenko had agreed, in a written secret agreement with Viktor Yushchenko, to support his bid for the presidency in return for the position of prime minister of

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<sup>3</sup> Pavlo Lazarenko is charged in the US with criminal actions, such as large scale money laundering.

Ukraine. She de facto joined the anti-Yushchenko opposition after her dismissal. For example, her faction voted against the nomination of Yuriy Yekhanurov as new prime minister of Ukraine in September 2005, and it voted in favor of dismissing his government in January 2006. (See Katchanovski, 2006).

Similarly, Petro Poroshenko, a wealthy businessman who became the head of the National Security and Defense Council after the “Orange Revolution,” started his political carrier by organizing a pro-Kuchma faction in the parliament and becoming one of the leaders of a party which was a predecessor of the Party of Regions. He joined the “Our Ukraine” bloc during the 2002 parliamentary elections and supported Viktor Yushchenko in the 2004 presidential elections. Oleksandr Zinchenko, the first head of the administration of President Yushchenko and an organizer of his presidential campaign, was a *Komsomol* leader in charge of propaganda in Soviet Ukraine and the Soviet Union in the end of the 1980s. From the mid 1990s until 2003, he was one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United), an oligarchic political organization that supported Leonid Kuchma.

Yurii Yekhanurov, the second orange prime minister of Ukraine and the number one on the list of the Yushchenko Bloc “Our Ukraine” during the 2006 parliamentary election, was a member of various governments during Kravchuk’s and Kuchma’s presidencies. Yekhanurov served as the first deputy head of the presidential administration under Leonid Kuchma. Roman Bezsmertny, a leader of the People’s Union “Our Ukraine” Party, was Kuchma’s representative in the parliament in 1997-2002. Anatolii Matvienko, the first deputy head of the presidential secretariat and the number 12 on the electoral list of the Yushchenko Bloc during the 2006 parliamentary elections, was the head of the *Komsomol* in Soviet Ukraine.

Many key ministers in two orange cabinets were also members of previous governments. For example, Borys Tarasyuk, the foreign minister in Tymoshenko's and Yekhanurov's governments, the leader of the People's Movement of Ukraine (*Rukh*), and the number 3 on the electoral list of the Yushchenko Bloc during the 2006 parliamentary elections, was a top official in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Ukraine and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Soviet Ukraine until 1991. He became deputy foreign minister in 1992-1995 and foreign minister in 1998-2000. Viktor Pynzenyk, finance minister in two orange governments, was a first-deputy prime minister in charge of the economy during both Kravchuk's presidency and Kuchma's presidency.

Oleksandr Moroz, the leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine, which conditionally supported Viktor Yushchenko in the second round of the 2004 presidential elections and joined both "orange governments," was the leader of the Communist faction in the parliament of Soviet Ukraine in 1990-1991, and the speaker of the parliament in 1994-1998. Anatolii Kinakh, the number two on the list of the Yushchenko Bloc during the 2006 parliamentary elections, a deputy prime minister in the Tymoshenko cabinet, and then the head of the National Security and Defense Council, served as prime minister of Ukraine in 2001-2002. He was one of the leaders of pro-Kuchma "For United Ukraine" during the 2002 parliamentary elections, but he switched his support to Viktor Yushchenko in the second round of the 2004 presidential elections.

Because many orange leaders were linked by personal ties and business dealings with previous government leaders and pro-Kuchma oligarchs, it was not surprising that former government leaders and oligarchs were not prosecuted on charges of large scale corruption and various other criminal offences. For example, top officials who ordered the murder of Heorhii (Georgiy) Gongadze, falsification of the 2004 presidential elections, and corrupt privatization of

Kryvorizhstal and many other large state enterprises, avoided prosecution in spite of incriminating evidence provided by the Melnychenko tapes and many other sources.

### **Political Parties**

Political parties, which came to power as a result of the “Orange Revolution,” differed in their ideological orientations not only from previous parties of power, such as the People's Democratic Party (NDP), and the oligarchic parties, such as the Social-Democratic Party (United), but also among themselves. The Yushchenko Bloc “Our Ukraine” included from 2002 to 2005 nationalist parties, such as the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists and two main successor parties of *Rukh*, liberal parties, such as the Reform and Order Party (PRP), and oligarchic organizations, such as *Solidarity* led by Petro Poroshenko. Similarly, the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc in 2006 included an oligarchic party (*Bat'kivshchyna*) led by Tymoshenko and a social democratic party (Ukrainian Social Democratic Party), and this bloc absorbed a faction of a nationalist party (the Ukrainian Republican Party),<sup>4</sup> an oligarchic party named *Yabloko*, an oligarchic faction of the For United Ukraine bloc, and many former pro-Kuchma and pro-Yanukovich deputies and businessmen.<sup>5</sup>

The Socialist Party, which had supported a Communist Party candidate in the second round of the 1999 presidential elections, decided to support Viktor Yushchenko in the second round of the 2004 elections. The SPU was organized by the former functionaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Ukraine. The Socialist Party gradually moved towards social-democratic ideology, after its more radical and pro-Russian wing split and formed the

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<sup>4</sup> BYuT also includes a former nationalist leader of the Ukrainian National Assembly and a former leader of the Democratic Party of Ukraine.

<sup>5</sup> Oleksander Volkov, a former pro-Kuchma oligarch and a leader of the Democratic Union party, became a supporter of Yulia Tymoshenko after the 2004 presidential elections. However, he was not included on the electoral list of BYuT during the 2006 presidential elections.

Progressive Socialist Party. However, the SPU has not yet become a truly social-democratic party. For instance, during the 2006 parliamentary elections, more than one fourth of the SPU's parliamentary candidates were managers and businessmen, while none were workers. The Socialist Party maintains ties with both social-democratic parties of the Socialist International and Russian socialist and nationalist *Rodina* party. In contrast to “Our Ukraine,” SPU opposes privatization of land, advocates much stronger role of the government in the economy, opposes NATO membership, and supports making Russian as the second state language in Ukraine.

Orange color, which was adopted by Viktor Yushchenko during the presidential campaign and by his supporters during mass actions of protest against the falsification of the election results, was an ideologically neutral color in Ukraine prior to these events. The orange color had no association with colors employed by leading political parties or politically controversial colors in Ukrainian history. For example, the moderate nationalist *Rukh*, both factions of which joined the Yushchenko Bloc “Our Ukraine” during the 2002 parliamentary elections, adopted a yellow and blue flag, which was used by Ukrainian organizations in the Galicia province of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by the short-lived Ukrainian People’s Republic after the Bolshevik Revolution. Yellow and blue colors became colors of the official flag of independent Ukraine. Several radical nationalist organizations, including the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, which was a member of the Yushchenko Bloc, adopted black and red colors which were used by the Western Ukraine-based radical Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists which waged a partisan war against the Soviet authorities and their Ukrainian supporters after the end of World War II. The Socialist Party, like the Communist Party of Ukraine, continued to use red color, which was the official color of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

The Orange coalition, which was formed during the 2004 presidential elections, was united not by common revolutionary ideology, but by their opposition to the regime of President Kuchma and Viktor Yanukovich, Kuchma-backed successor who had a criminal record and led a semi-oligarchic party (The Party of Regions). This coalition consisted of liberals, nationalists, populists, socialists, and politically active businesswomen and businessmen, including a few oligarchs. The Orange alliance was formed on the basis of the “Ukraine without Kuchma” opposition movement, but without the Communists. In 2001-2002, such diverse parties as BYuT, the SPU, the CPU, the radical nationalist Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA), and several parties which later joined the “Our Ukraine” Bloc, united in an unstable and shifting alliance in an attempt to oust President Leonid Kuchma after Oleksandr Moroz made public secret recordings of president’s conversations which implicated him in the murder of a founder of *Ukrainska pravda* online newspaper, large scale corruption, and other crimes.

Viktor Yushchenko, who initially refused to support this movement and even condemned it as fascist in a joint public statement with the president and the speaker of the parliament, became a popular leader of this opposition after he was dismissed as prime minister of Ukraine. Although the Communist Party abandoned the loose anti-Kuchma coalition, the anti-Kuchma vs. pro-Kuchma cleavage became one of the main sources of the electoral realignment, which was manifested in results of the 2002 parliamentary elections and which culminated during the 2004 presidential elections and the 2006 parliamentary elections.

A defeat of Kuchma’s plans for his reelection to the third term and a popular but peaceful defeat of Viktor Yanukovich, who run as Kuchma’s successor during the 2004 presidential elections, meant that the orange coalition’s *raison d’etre* came to an end. Therefore, the orange coalition fractured soon after the elections. For example, Viktor Yushchenko

dismissed Yulia Tymoshenko from her from the position of prime-minister because of intense internal conflicts less than a year after the 2004 elections; and she de facto went into opposition to the Yekhanurov government, which mainly consisted of representatives of the Yushchenko Bloc “Our Ukraine” and the SPU. Because of Tymoshenko’s opposition, which allegedly included plans to impeach the president, Viktor Yushchenko signed an agreement with the Party of Regions in September 2005. In exchange for support of the Yekhanurov government, the agreement provided de-facto immunity to leaders of the Party of Regions and an amnesty for organizers of the falsification of the 2004 presidential elections.

The ideological and personal differences hinder a restoration of a coalition of the “Our Ukraine” Bloc, Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, and the Socialist Party after the March 2006 parliamentary elections. Although such a coalition can be formed again, it is unlikely to be stable and survive until the end of the five year long term of the current parliament. A coalition that would not include all orange parties but would be formed by the Party of Regions and one or two of the orange parties is a real possibility after the 2006 parliamentary elections.

### **Regional Changes in Political Attitudes**

Viktor Yushchenko won the first and the repeat second rounds of the 2004 presidential elections not only in Western Ukraine (78 and 89 percent respectively) but also in Central regions (54 and 76 percent respectively). (Figure 1). However, a comparison of the regional results of the parliamentary elections in March 2006 and the regional results of the 2002 parliamentary elections does not show revolutionary changes in the political orientations of Ukrainians in different regions. Support for the Yushchenko Bloc<sup>6</sup> and three other blocs, whose

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<sup>6</sup> This electoral bloc during the 2006 elections included the Yushchenko-led People's Union “Our Ukraine” party, the People’s Movement of Ukraine, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Christian Democratic Union, and the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. The Ukrainian

parties or leaders belonged at the time of the 2002 elections to the “Our Ukraine” Bloc, remained during the 2006 parliamentary elections much stronger in Western Ukraine (42 percent) than in geographic Center (19 percent), South (8 percent), East<sup>7</sup> (7 percent), and Donbas (2 percent). (Figure 1).

[Figure 1 and 2 about here]

The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc became a leading political force in the Center (35 percent) before the 2006 elections. In comparison, four years before, this bloc along with two small parties, whose leaders transferred their backing to BYuT after the 2004 elections, received 12 percent of the votes in the Center. BYuT was more popular in 2006 in historical regions of Western Ukraine (32 percent) than in the South (10 percent), the East (13 percent), and Donbas (3 percent). The Socialist Party, which had distanced itself from the other ex-Communist parties by its support for Viktor Yushchenko in the final round of the 2004 presidential elections, has continued to enjoy its strongest support in the Center (14 percent in 2002 and 10 percent in 2006). Its popularity before the March 2006 elections was lower in other regions of historically Eastern Ukraine and in Western Ukraine (3-5 percent). (Figure 2). Supporters of BYuT and the SPU differ significantly in their political values from the supporters of the Yushchenko Bloc. For example, the KIIS poll in February 2006 shows that likely BYuT and Socialist voters (40 and 57 percent respectively) are much more in favor of Ukraine joining a union of Russian and Belarus than the supporters of the Yushchenko Bloc (19 percent) are.

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People’s Party and the Party of Reforms and Order (PRP), which were members of the Yushchenko Bloc from 2002 to 2005, run as members of other blocs during the 2006 parliamentary elections. For example, the Party of Reforms and Order run in the 2006 elections in a bloc with Pora party, which was formed by a part of the anti-Kuchma youth organization with the same name.

<sup>7</sup> The East in this survey included the Kharkiv region, the Dnipropetrovsk region, and the Zaporizhzhia region.

After the 2004 presidential elections, the pro-Russian Party of Regions, which is led by Viktor Yanukovich and backed by Renat Akhmetov, a Donbas-based oligarch, has become the leading party in most regions of historically Eastern Ukraine with an exception of the geographical Center of the country. The March 2006 elections shows that the Party of Regions enjoys support of 74 percent of the voters in Donbas, 49 percent in other geographically Eastern regions, 51 percent in the South, 13 percent in the Center, and 6 percent in Western Ukraine. The popularity of the Party of Regions before the 2006 elections has increased dramatically compared to the 2002 elections.<sup>8</sup> (Figure 3).

[Figure 3 about here]

A massive realignment of voters from the support of the Communist Party of Ukraine and several other less popular pro-Communist parties in Southern and Eastern regions, in particular Donbas, has been responsible for much of the rapid rise of the Party of Regions popularity. The Party of Regions combines a pro-Russian orientation, which is also advocated by the CPU and the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), with populist policies. The Communist Party, which was the dominant party in these regions during most of previous elections, including the 2002 parliamentary elections, lost much of its support by 2006.<sup>9</sup> Electoral support for the CPU

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<sup>8</sup> In the 2002 parliamentary elections, the Party of Regions was a part of the For United Ukraine electoral bloc. The fact that this pro-Kuchma bloc received much higher percentage of votes in Donbas (29 percent), which was base region of the Party of Regions, than in other regions of Eastern Ukraine (from 9 to 12 percent) and in Western Ukraine (5 percent), and the fact that the Party of Regions formed the biggest parliamentary faction among the members of this bloc indicate that a significant part, if not the majority, of the electorate of the For United Ukraine bloc represented supporters of this party in 2002.

<sup>9</sup> A KIIS poll conducted during the first round of the 2004 presidential elections showed that the CPU had support of 20 percent of the respondents, who made up their mind, compared to 18 percent support for the Party of Regions. However, this poll listed separate parties, and it did not list the Yushchenko Bloc as a separate party. A Razumkov Center poll conducted after the second round of the 2004 elections, gave the Communists 8 percent level of popular support, compared to 18 percent support for the Party of Regions.

during the 2006 parliamentary elections was from 4 to 5 percent in the Center, the South, the East, and Donbas and 1 percent in Western Ukraine. (Figure 3).

The popularity of the Party of Regions was boosted during the presidential election campaign in 2004 and through the use of administrative resources by then Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych. For example, such administrative methods as *temnyky* (detailed coverage guidelines issued by the administration of President Kuchma) ensured favorable and free-of-charge television coverage for Viktor Yanukovych during the 2004 presidential election campaign.

The mass action of protests over falsification of the presidential elections in 2004 did not represent a sudden rise of revolutionary Central Ukraine, in particular Kyiv city. Like many regions of Western Ukraine, Kyiv witnessed large anti-Soviet, anti-government and pro-independence demonstrations and other mass actions, such as tent cities erected on *Maidan* and other central locations, in 1989-1991. (See Motyl and Krawchenko, 1997). Relatively smaller protest actions against President Kuchma also took place in Kyiv city in 2001-2002.

Kyiv city has a large concentration of Ukrainian intelligentsia, students, and migrants from Western Ukraine. Numerous elections and surveys conducted since 1990 show that political culture in the Ukraine's capital city differs significantly from culture in other historically Eastern Ukrainian regions. Kyiv city in its relatively strong pro-nationalist and pro-Western orientation and weak pro-Russian and pro-Communist orientation is closer to Western Ukraine than to most of the other Eastern regions. (See Katchanovski, 2006). However, results of the 2006 parliamentary elections show that, like in other regions of Central Ukraine, combined support of the Yushchenko Bloc "Our Ukraine," Pora-PRP, the Ukrainian People's Bloc, and the

Karamazin Bloc (21 percent) in Kyiv city is significantly lower than the combined support for the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (39 percent) and the Socialist Party (6 percent). (Central, 2006).

Media reports and personal observations showed that the absolute and relative size of pro-Yushchenko demonstrations and rallies in Western Ukrainian cities and towns significantly exceeded their size in Eastern Ukraine, including Central regions, with the exception of Kyiv city. For example, more than half of the signs displayed by participants of a mass rallies, held on *Maidan* in Kyiv city in support of Viktor Yushchenko, indicated that they came from localities in Western Ukraine. Similarly, Western Ukrainian participants of the rallies left at least half of more than 400 signatures on the facade of the central post office building located near the center of *Maidan*. (See Katchanovski, 2006).

It is a mistake to completely equate popular support for Viktor Yushchenko with support for the ideas that he advocated, because many of his voters were motivated not by his ideology but by his personal charisma, charisma of Yulia Tymoshenko, and by their antipathy to Viktor Yanukovich due to his criminal record and his association with Leonid Kuchma and oligarchs. For example, a Razumkov Center poll in the end of 2002 showed that the leading reason for his popularity among the respondents in Western Ukraine (45 percent), the Center (38 percent), the South (17 percent), and the East (14 percent) was a belief that Yushchenko improved the economic situation in Ukraine while serving as prime-minister, in particular by dramatically reducing wage and pension arrears. Many Yushchenko voters in Central regions of Ukraine, in contrast to Western Ukraine, could have switched their support to a charismatic pro-Russian politician, had one been available. For instance, the Razumkov Center poll in November 2002 showed that majorities of the respondents in the Centre (60 percent), the South (72 percent), and the East (84 percent), in contrast to a minority in Western Ukraine (44 percent),

had a favorable view of Vladimir Putin, the charismatic Russian president. The 2005 survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine revealed that Putin was more popular in Ukraine than was Viktor Yushchenko even after the 2004 presidential elections. (Panina, 2005, p. 30). Similarly, popularity of the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc has been based to significant extent on popularity of its leader. For example, KIIS and Razumkov Center polls conducted during the 2004 presidential elections gave *Bat'kivschyna* party, led by Yulia Tymoshenko, support of only one percent of likely voters.

Survey data show that only Western Ukrainian regions have remained consistently supportive of key ideas put forward by Viktor Yushchenko during his presidential campaign, such as Ukraine's membership in NATO and the European Union, and opposition to full integration into the Russia-led Common Economic Space. In contrast, regions in Eastern Ukraine, including the geographic Center, which overwhelmingly voted for Viktor Yushchenko, have stayed more supportive of aims advanced by Viktor Yanukovich, such as opposition to NATO membership, support of Ukraine's integration into the Common Economic Space, dual citizenship with Russia, and Russian as the second state language in Ukraine.

For example, Razumkov Center polls show that public support for Ukraine joining NATO has declined in all regions since 2002. It remains much stronger in Western Ukraine (49 percent), compared to the Center (28 percent), the geographic East (8 percent), and the South (7 percent). While the absolute majorities of Ukrainians, who made up their minds on this issue, in all four regions supported the EU membership in 2002, the level of support declined, especially in the East and the South in 2004 and 2005. (Figure 4).

[Figure 4 and 5 about here]

Revolutionary moves in foreign policy, such as Ukraine's withdrawal from the Commonwealth of Independent States was favored by 45 percent of the respondents in Western regions, compared to 28, 14, and 11 percent in Central, Southern, and Eastern regions respectively. The rise in support for this move in 2005 compared to 1995 is recorded in all regions, but it is the biggest in the Center. (Figure 5). The 2005 KIIS/Razumkov Center survey shows that overwhelming majorities of the respondents in Central regions (73 percent), Southern regions (84 percent), and Eastern regions (93 percent), compared to a minority (41 percent) in Western regions, agree that Ukraine should join the Common Economic Space, which includes Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

Comparison of surveys conducted in 2005 and 2006 and the second half of the 1990s shows certain changes in regional views on relations between Ukraine and Russia. However, these changes are more evolutionary than revolutionary. Western Ukrainian regions, compared to Eastern Ukrainian regions, including the Center, have remained much bigger proponents of Ukraine and Russia becoming completely independent countries. The support for Ukraine and Russia uniting into one state has declined in the South and the East, and support for Ukraine joining the union of Russia and Belarus decreased in the South. However, if a referendum were to be held on the issue of joining a union of Russia and Belarus, Ukraine would be as sharply divided along the same regional lines as in 1998. Surveys<sup>10</sup> show that the majority of the respondents, excluding undecided, in the geographic East (92 percent), the South (84 percent), and the Center (53 percent), compared to 31 percent in Western regions, favor such a union for Ukraine. (Panina, 2005, p. 36.) (See Figure 5 and Table 1).

[Table 1 about here]

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<sup>10</sup> These surveys provide only general trends because of the differences in regional samples and formulation of questions.

The 2005 KIIS/Razumkov Center survey reveals similar regional differences in attitudes towards making Russian the second state language in Ukraine and towards the introduction of dual citizenship with Russia. For example, 91 percent of the respondents in geographically Eastern regions, 80 percent in Southern regions, and 50 percent in Central regions, compared to 20 percent in eight Western regions, favor Russian as the second state language. The Razumkov Center poll in December 2005 shows that a minority of the respondents in Western Ukraine (16 percent), in contrast to the majority of Ukrainians in the East (52 percent), the Center (53 percent), and the South (73 percent), want restoration of the Soviet Union and the socialist system. The KIIS poll in January of 2006 demonstrates that, in contrast to a majority of their counterparts in Western regions of Ukraine (54 percent) and most of Western media, only a minority of Ukrainians in the East (6 percent), the South (11 percent), and the Center (33 percent), blame Russia for a conflict between Ukraine and Russia over natural gas prices and delivery.

### **Conclusion**

The victory of Viktor Yushchenko and the mass actions of protest during the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine are often described as the pro-Western “Orange Revolution.” This paper shows that changes in political leadership and political parties that came to power as a result of the events known as the “Orange Revolution” are not revolutionary but evolutionary. Many political leaders in the orange camp were key members of previous governments, and some of them belonged to the Soviet elite. The orange coalition that was formed in support of Viktor Yushchenko during the 2004 presidential elections represented a temporary electoral alliance of political parties which had differing ideologies and interests.

Similarly, the comparative analysis of the opinion poll data reveals evolutionary but not revolutionary changes in the political values of Ukrainians in different regions. Poll results show that regional shifts in support for Viktor Yushchenko during the 2004 presidential elections were much more significant than regional changes in support for the Yushchenko Bloc since the 2002 elections. Ukrainians in historically Western regions and Eastern regions have remained divided on such issues as Ukraine's membership in NATO, the EU, the CIS, and the Common Economic Space, and official status of Russian language. Only Western Ukrainians consistently supported pro-Western orientation and the Yushchenko Bloc parties. In contrast, historically Eastern regions, including in most cases the Center, have continued to support pro-Russian orientation.

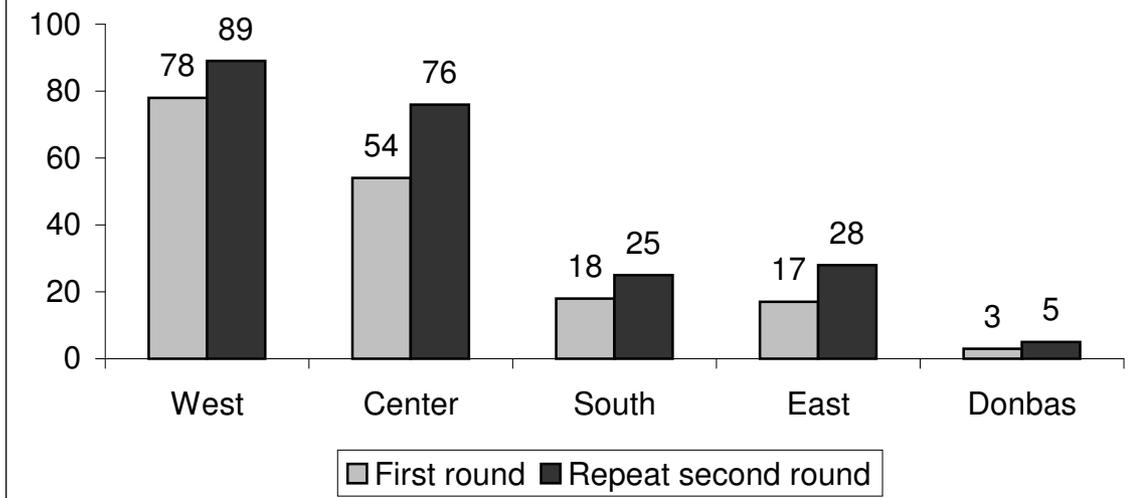
Changes in support for political parties in Ukrainian regions in 2002-2006 reflect not a revolution but a major electoral realignment that culminated in the victory of Viktor Yushchenko in the 2004 presidential elections. The emergence of anti-Kuchma/pro-Kuchma cleavage, charismatic personalities of Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko, and administrative resources used by Viktor Yanukovich contributed to this realignment. This political realignment includes the rise of the Yushchenko Bloc "Our Ukraine" and the ascendancy of the Party of Regions. The Yushchenko Bloc along with smaller parties, which belonged to the Bloc from 2002 to 2005 but run separately during the 2006 elections, continues to have the overwhelming support in Western Ukraine; while the Party of Regions has attracted strong popular support in Eastern and Southern regions, especially Donbas, and replaced the Communist Party as the leading political force in these regions.

Viktor Yushchenko, and to lesser extent, his bloc of parties and some of his key ideas received relatively strong support in the Center, in particular in Kyiv city. However, changes in political culture of this region are not revolutionary. Along with Western regions, Kyiv city was

the main place of mass actions of political protest in Ukraine before the “Orange Revolution.” The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc is the main beneficiary of the electoral realignment in Central regions, including Kyiv city.

The 2006 parliamentary elections resulted in the defeat of the “Our Ukraine” Bloc, rising support for the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, and strong showing by the Party of Regions, which has significant chances of forming a temporary coalition with some Orange parties. However, the results of these elections mean not a failure of the revolution but a new stage of the electoral realignment in Ukraine.

## Yushchenko in the 2004 presidential elections



## Yushchenko Bloc "Our Ukraine"/Pora-PRP/Ukrainian People's Bloc/Karmazin Bloc

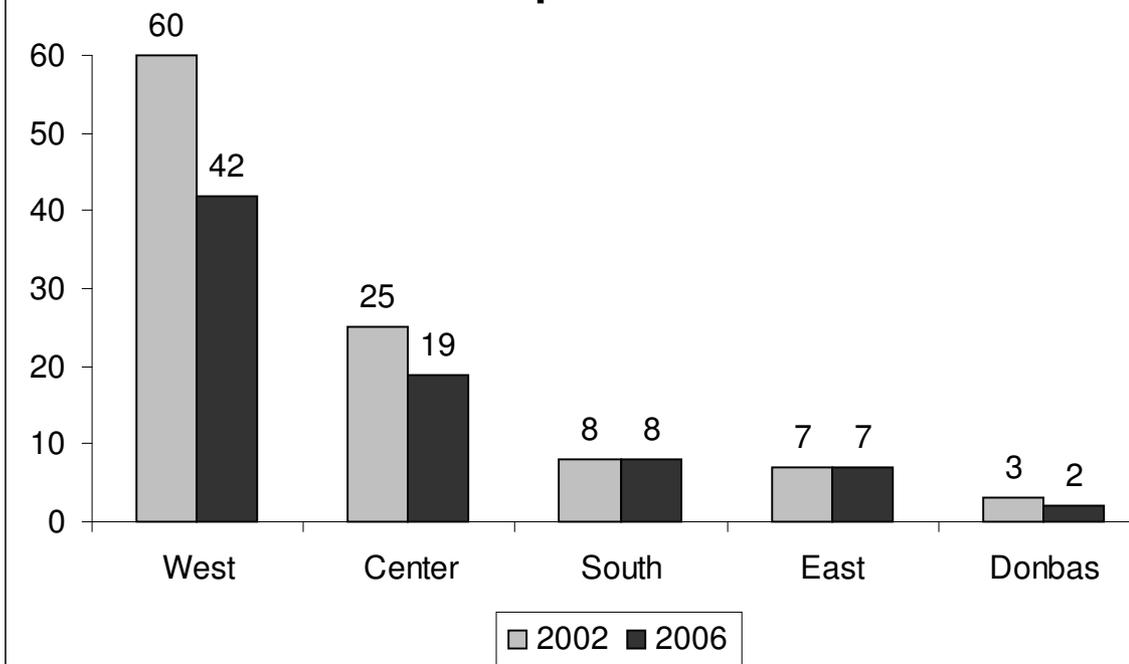
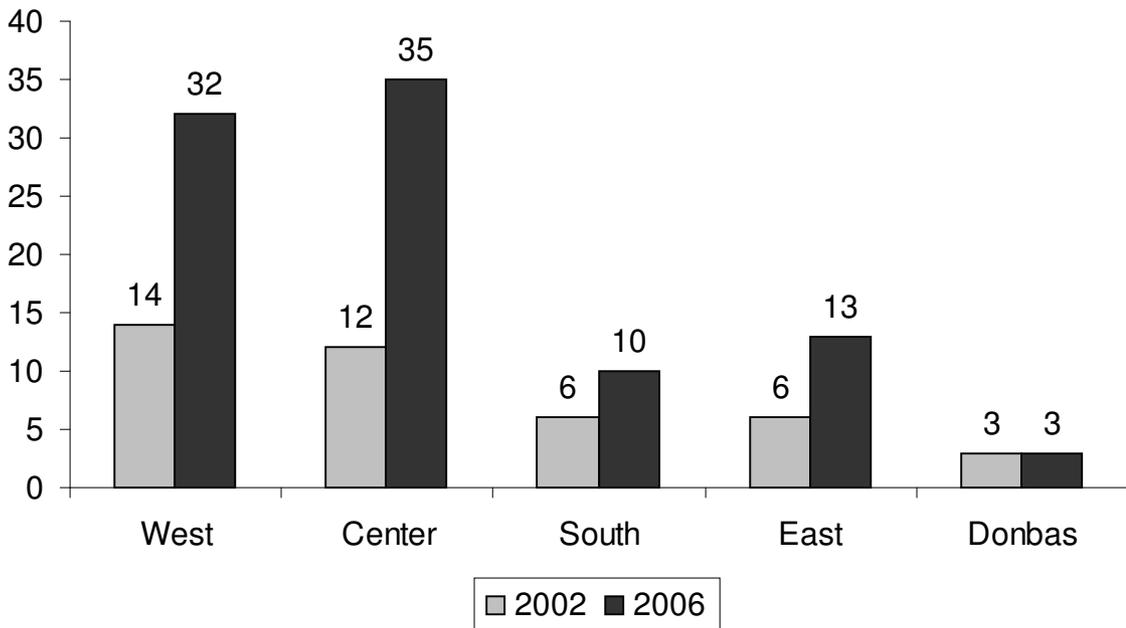


Figure 1. Regional support for Viktor Yushchenko and the Yushchenko Bloc, official results of the 2004 presidential elections, the 2002 and 2006 parliamentary elections, (%)

Source: Central, 2002, 2004, 2006.

## Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc/Apple/Democratic Party-Democratic Union Bloc



## Socialist Party

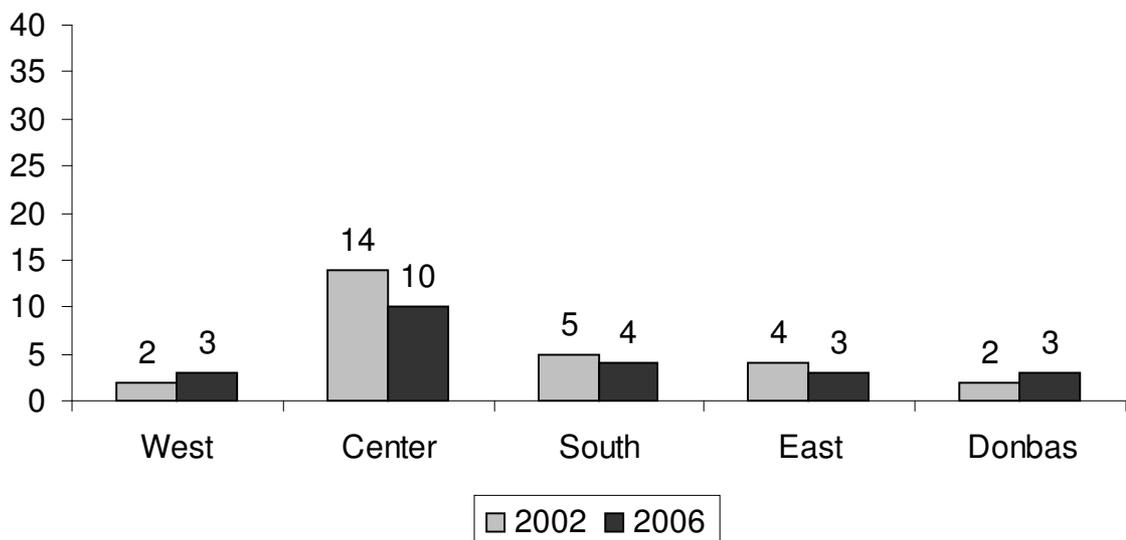
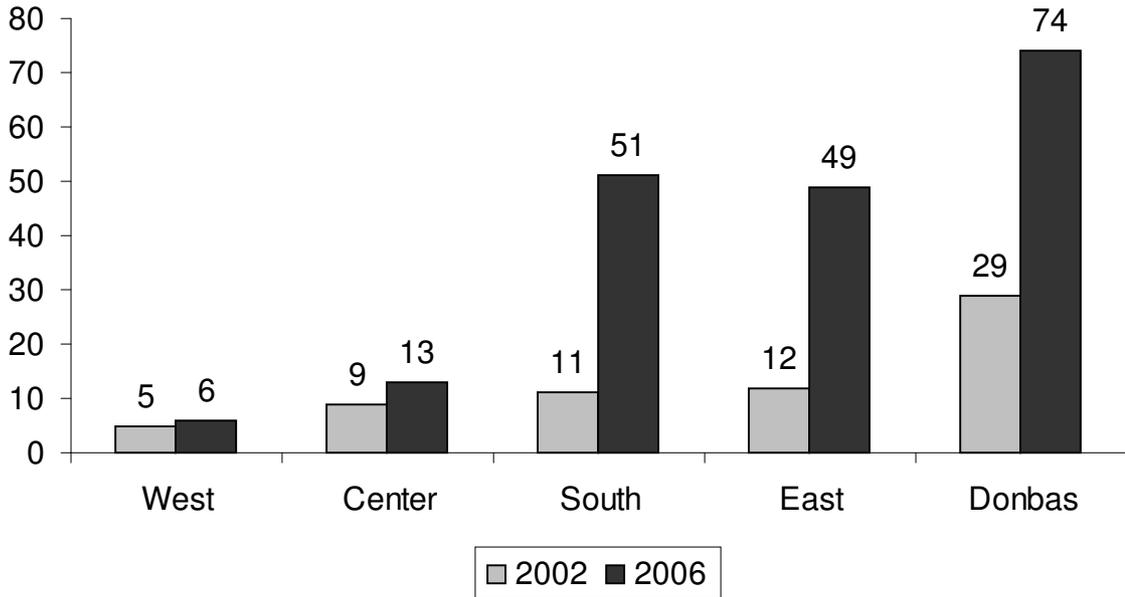


Figure 2. Regional support for the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc and the Socialist Party, official results of the 2002 and 2006 parliamentary elections, (%) Source: Central, 2002, 2006.

## Party of Regions/For United Ukraine



## Communist Party

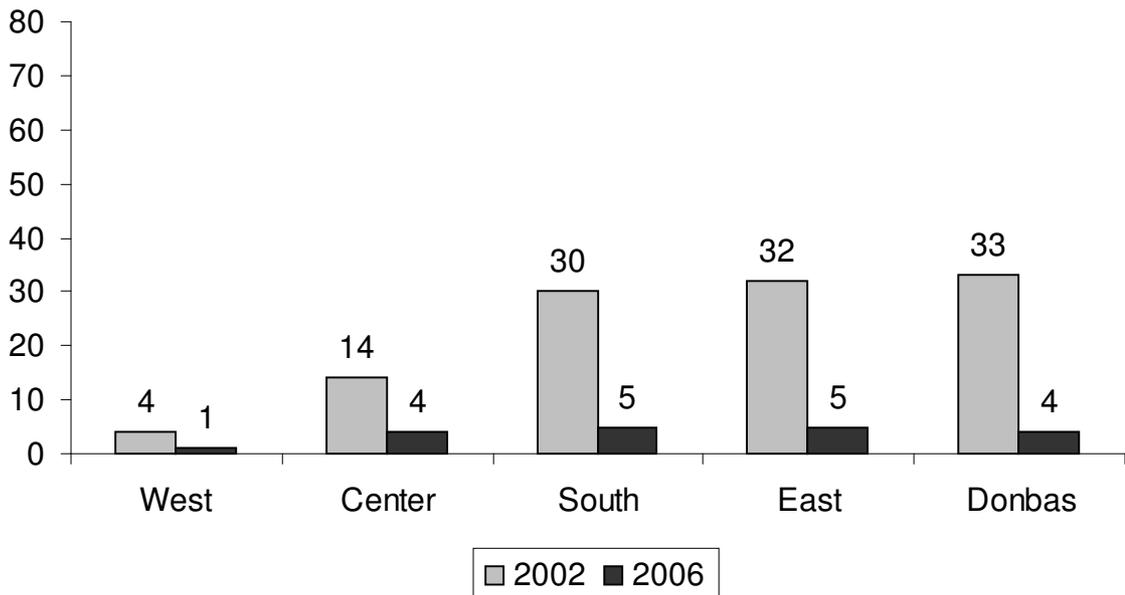
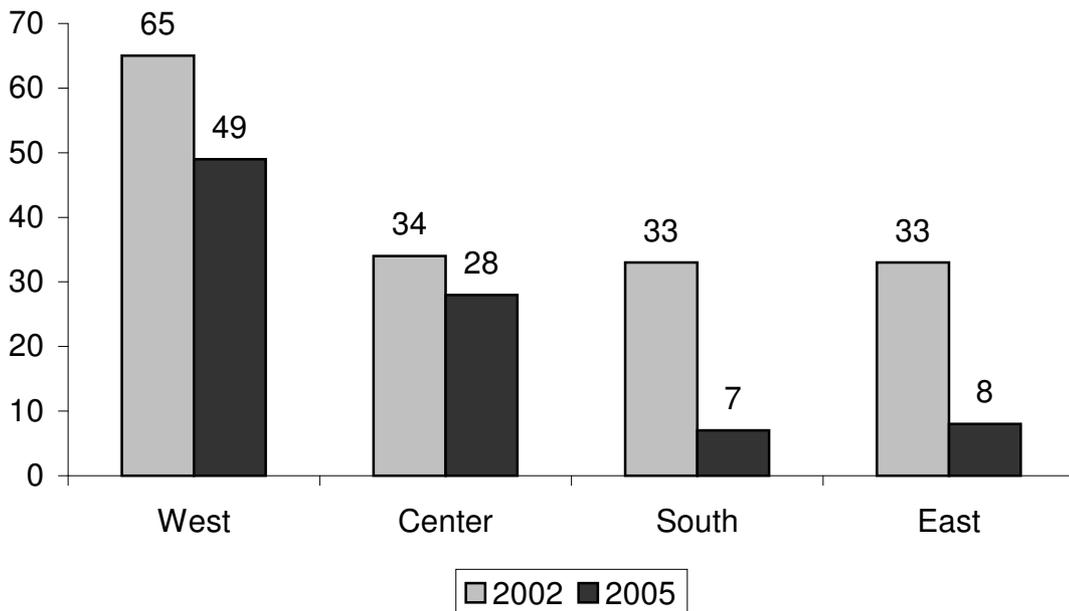


Figure 3. Regional support for the Party of Regions and the Communist Party, official results of the 2002 and 2006 parliamentary elections, (%) Source: Central, 2002, 2006.

### Support for NATO membership in regions of Ukraine (%)



### Support for EU membership in regions of Ukraine (%)

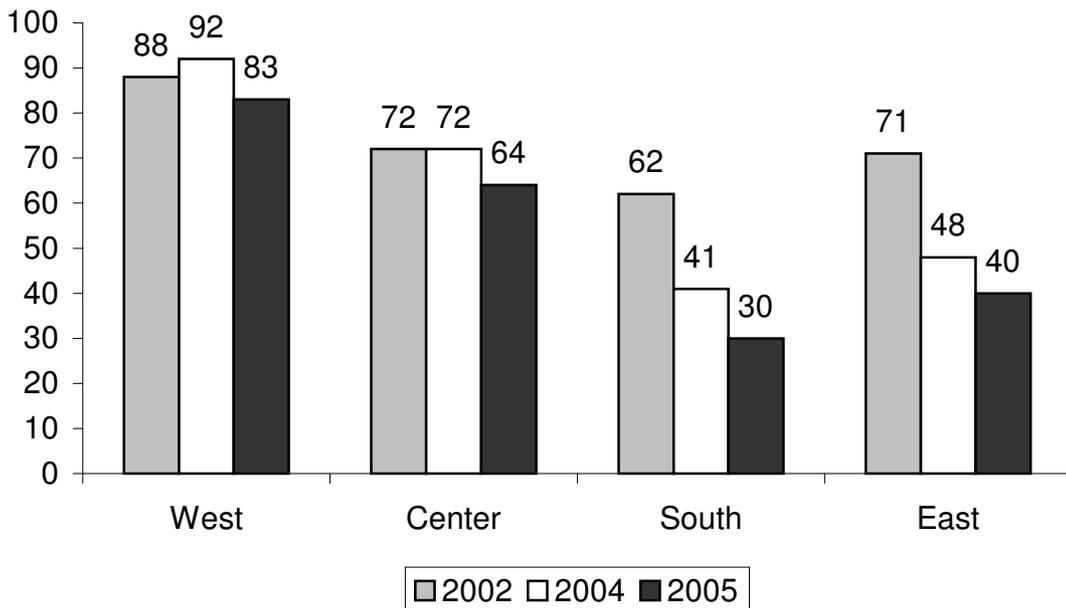
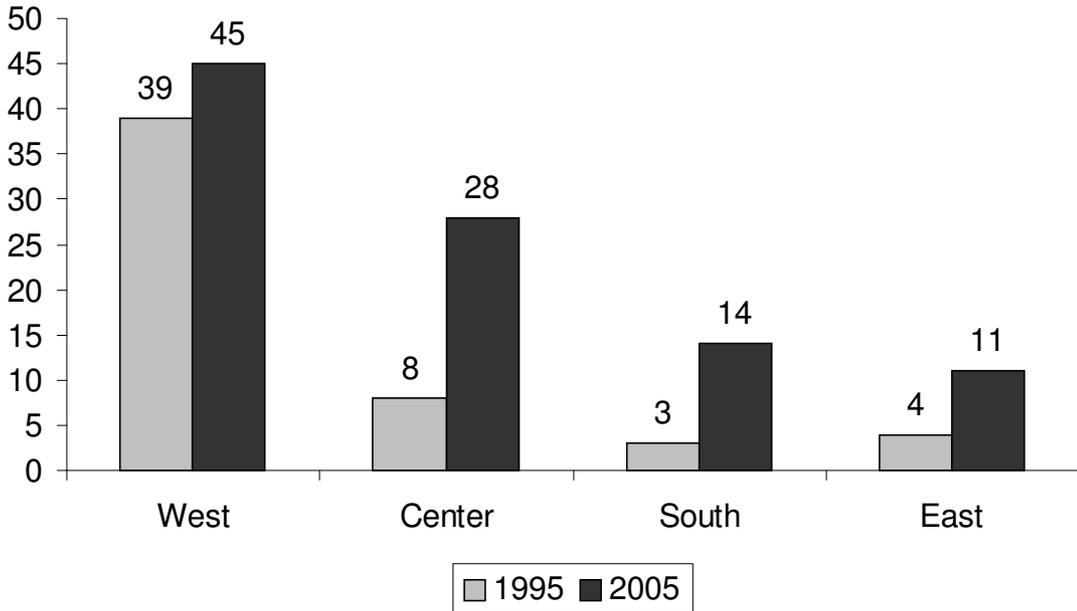


Figure 4. Regional support for Ukraine's membership in NATO and the EU, Razumkov Center polls, (%)

### Support for Ukraine withdrawal from the CIS (%)



### Support for Ukraine joining a union of Russia and Belarus (%)

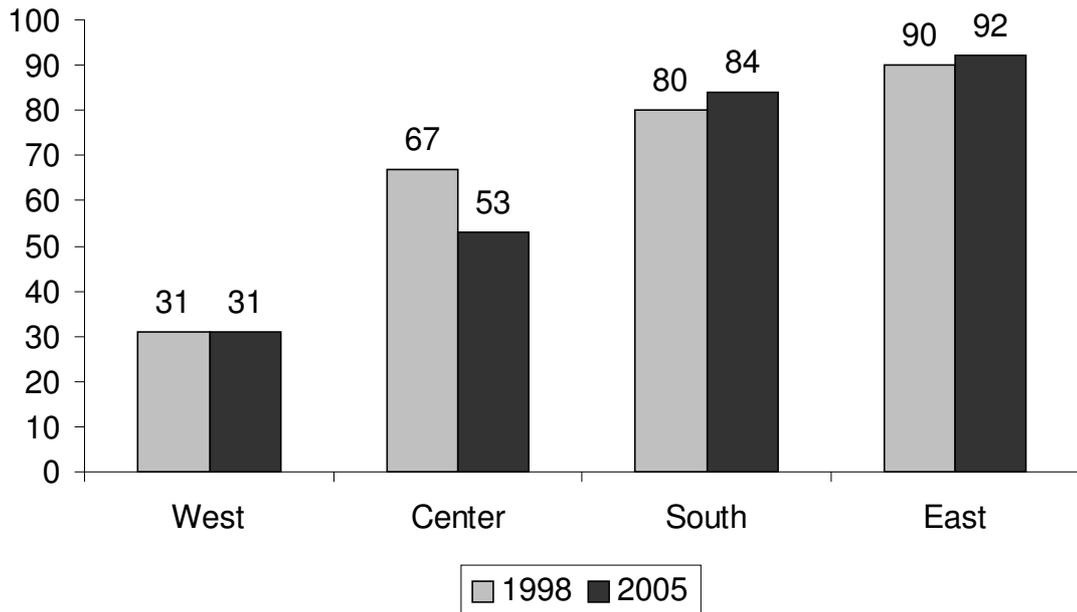


Figure 5. Regional support for Ukraine's withdrawal from the CIS and joining a union of Russia and Belarus, KIIS and the Institute of Sociology polls, (%)



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