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SOCIAL, DEMOCRATIC AND COLOR REVOLUTIONS

Abstract

This text first outlines the sociological and philosophical meanings of the term "revolution", and then confronts the meaning of this term with the phenomena of "democratic" and "color" revolutions. Unlike the social revolution, neither democratic nor color revolutions imply a radical change in the production of life, and their goals are heterogeneous, because the intentions of the participants and supporters, who are not directly involved in the course of these revolutions, differ. On these grounds, democratic revolutions are analyzed in the countries of the Visegrad Group, particularly in Poland, as well as in the Balkans, with special attention paid to the comparison of the democratic revolutions in Ukraine and Serbia. In this paper, with the help of the previously defined research directions, the following hypotheses are constructed and defended: (1) Color revolutions manifest first in the form of democratic revolutions – in which the political system institutions are called into question; (2) The color revolutions of recent decades primarily had geopolitical goals, as opposed to the preceding period (the end of the previous and the beginning of this century), when they had a transitional peak; (3) Color revolutions cannot be identified with *civil disobedience*, since there is no solid moral principle at their core, but rather a diffuse justification.

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary political theory, *color revolutions* are defined as methods of non-violent overthrow of legal forms of political power. Therefore, their cause is always transcendent in comparison to the legal and political system of states in which color revolutions occur, most often including various forms of economic pressure (i.e., suspension of financial aid), creating condition for "non-violent protests", rallies, marches and demonstrations organized by *internal* social groups, influenced indirectly or directly – through financing their activities or indoctrination through media and social networks (Сорокин 2014, 16). In the said context, *color revolutions* have quite an illusory social sense, i.e., the dissatisfaction of the masses is directed not to establish a different political system, but towards an immediate change of the regime, without touching on the core of social issues, social distribution, or social order (Сундиев и Смирнов 2016, 44).

This paper aims to draw attention to the difference between social revolutions, which implied major and radical social changes, and the so-called "color revolutions", which, in our times, do not imply a change in the social paradigm, or, if such a change is asked for, it refers to the old, *pre-revolution* forms of social organization. Moreover, this paper will defend the belief that *color revolutions* are usually instigated "from above". This does not exclusively mean that and "external factor", i.e., the influence of a foreign country, that is, an intelligence service, is crucial for its organization, but that, above all, *color revolutions* presuppose certain (already) accepted social principles (Максимов 2010, 18) Therefore, their domain is primarily – *functional*, meaning that *color revolutions* do not imply leaving a specific social context, abandonment of ruling principles that define the social order (Parezanović 2024, 382).

A certain devaluation of the term *'revolution' in the syntagm' color revolution' is not accidental, but can also be marked as one of the distinguishing features* of this social phenomenon. This implies that a shift in the meaning of the term 'revolution' occurred in the social sciences, although this was not extensively discussed *in the* scientific

literature (Mesquita 2010, 460). In the social sciences, denouncing the term 'revolution' to describe the illegal actions of certain social groups attempting to achieve specific goals beyond established social rules has become a common practice. Upon providing such a definition, what is left in the background is what goals are at stake, whether the purpose of the actions of social groups is emancipatory, i.e., whether it can be universalized, that is, whether these goals require a radical change of social relations or just a change of roles in the existing social paradigm. In other words, contrary to *revolution* seen as a *production*, *color revolutions* are *reproductive*, which means that they are too short for the new-age synthesis of practical and poetical, i.e., they are *technical* in the pre-new-age sense of the word, as mere instruments of action.[1]

In this paper, it will be demonstrated that color revolutions emerged in the Cold War era, serving as a means to fulfill political goals with minimal military escalation.[2] In accordance with the previously mentioned terminological restrictions, we are, above all, speaking of *techniques* developed by intelligence services of capitalist states for dismantling socialist social orders and establishing social order and political systems that favor the interest of the large capital (Šolte 2009, 62), and then transformed into techniques for fulfilling geostrategic interests, the background of which is usually dominated by significant capital.

REVOLUTION AS A PHENOMENON

The term *"revolution" emerged within the natural sciences, specifically in celestial mechanics.* In this sense, the term *"revolution" was first used by Nicolaus Copernicus, denoting the circular movement of celestial bodies (their orbit* around the Sun). In his work titled *De revolutionibus orbium colestium*, Copernicus starts

[1] The synthesis of the ancient terms of *praxis* and *poiesis* was already hinted at by Machiavelli, for whom politics is characterized by *tehne*, and not *soprosyne* or *phronesis*. In other words, politics in the modern context is not just acting within the framework of an already defined measure, but transcending the existing state, implementing a political interest that is not tamed or subordinated to some measure (Habermas 1980, 54–60).

[2] The post-Cold War milieu implies a specter of innovative techniques, from hybrid war to causing migration crises (Matijašević and Todorović 2024, 29).

from the etymology of the Latin word *revolution*, based on the verb *re-volvo*, which we can translate as "to return", "to roll" (Divković [1900] 1990, 929). However, this term was also adopted in the field of social sciences, which necessitated its fundamental revision (Đurić 1979, 21). In social sciences, revolution implies change, not just any change, but a radically different human *practice*. In this sense, we can clearly differentiate its destructive and constructive characters: revolution destroys the existing social relations, *abolishes* the form of production of life in some epochal context, but at the same time, it *produces* different social relations (23). Contrary to evolutionary changes, which are gradual and accidental, revolution is "more sudden and faster", and besides that, its culprit is society, emancipated from the natural chains of causality (Filipović 1984, 299).

Before a revolution in the social sense of the word (which happened in 1789 in France), its meaning had already been conceptually prepared. For this reason, Karl Marks stated that Kant's philosophy enabled the French Revolution (Kangrga 1989, 54). Kant's definition of a man is based on moral autonomy, that is, on legislation that is not any natural determination ("natural law"), establishing a clear distinction between what should be and *should* not *be*. And just as the moral law is never naturally given, but represents an imperative of action which cannot be wholly fulfilled, that is, realized, so what is revolutionary in social action is in fact the establishment of previously inexistent social relations, what Marxist literature calls *the production of the lifeworld* (78). The negative side of the revolution is criticism of society, coming from the idea of freedom, and its positive moment is depicted in the production of social relations under the paradigm of freedom as autonomy (Arendt 1963, 34–40).

In simple words, this means that, in a revolution, a social order deemed insurmountable and cosmically necessary is confronted with the idea of freedom as indeterminacy, devoid of any external causality; in specific social circumstances where some estate or class cannot realize its freedom, a *revolutionary situation* arises, albeit revolution does not only imply the establishment of a political order that will enable the freedom of the rebelling estate, but an entirely new social context, a different *production* of the world and relations in it. The French Revolution and similar events in America and England did not imply only the establishment of new forms of government, but also

the development of science, the Enlightenment project, and a new socioeconomic order.

Socialist revolutions are also based on the idea of freedom as autonomy. At the root of these revolutions is the relation between producers (proletarians) and products of their work (production), which is not decided by the producers themselves, but by the owners of the production means. The socialist revolution is therefore not just a problem of income revolution, but the establishment of a social order in which there will be no appropriation of surplus value, but productivity will be directed towards the emancipation of the entire society. In other words, as Gajo Petrović succinctly puts it: "only a socialist revolution, which is not a replacement of *one* form of exploitation with *another*, more progressive, but the abolition of all exploitation is a revolution in its best and most comprehensive sense" (Petrović 1986, 76).

Therefore, revolution should be differentiated from *reform*, a change in the functioning of a society, which remains within the framework of the same social paradigm. For example, the so-called *welfare state*, a form of capitalist state in Western Europe during the 1950s and 1960s, still implied capitalist frameworks and not socialist social relations, and thus represented only a *reform* within the capitalist social order (Meretz and Sutterlütti 2023, 42).

Given that we are speaking of a sudden and radical change, revolution implies the use of violent means. In other words, revolution is a conflict with existing social circumstances, with the forces firmly resisting the establishment of new social relations. In fact, social revolution can be more or less violent, but it necessarily implies *violence*, because it is faced with the resistance of representatives of these groups that are rooted in the existing social reproduction.[3]

[3] This can also manifest through the imposition of a certain form of social production, which members of the ruling class resist in the previous social order. In Marxist literature, the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" is used to denote this phenomenon, emphasizing that it is not about the exploitation of any stratum or social class, but about the introduction of production relations that enable universal class emancipation. Bourgeois revolutions also included an element of force, which was more consistently implemented in revolutionary Paris (the so-called "revolutionary terror").

THE EVE OF THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

The idea of non-violent resistance against the incumbent government was born during a significant liberation movement in India, when this country was a British colony. Admittedly, some forms of civil disobedience were recorded during the so-called *Quaker rebellion, which occurred* due to religious discrimination at the end of the 17th century in America and racial discrimination in the 19th century (Molnar 2001). Although these protests were designed around the idea of resistance through non-violent means, by ignoring regulations or not paying taxes, the forms of disobedience did not imply protests that expressed a clear political attitude opposed to the current government's policies. However, Mahatma Gandhi, who led the large protests in India against racial discrimination, was influenced by David Thoreau's work, in which he explained his reasons for refusing to pay taxes in slaveholding America. Gandhi successfully applied Thoreau's methods during the strongly non-violent actions, aiming for India's independence. The first of Gandhi's actions was directed against the Salt Act, which led to a 300-kilometer-long march joined by thousands of Indians. All subsequent actions also had a pronounced non-violent character, in which Gandhi resisted not only the British Empire but also the violent form of Indian nationalism (Fleisch 1989, 97).

Gandhi's path of political struggle indeed has elements of revolutionary action, but in the sense of establishment of a nation-state, thus adopting the character of the Indian capitalist revolution, and therefore, it is not an accident that, after gaining independence, a war broke out in India between Muslims and Hindus (Molnar 2001, 268). However, the effectiveness of non-violent struggle will soon be applied as an integral part of the strategies of so-called civil unrest that is likely to break out in countries with a socialist social order.

During the Cold War, the techniques of resistance that did not involve direct military engagement or denouncing them were perfected in the West. In a certain way, such techniques resulted from the Cold War ambiance itself: the division of the world into the spheres of influence of socialist and capitalist countries conditioned global fight, especially form the Third World countries; in these countries existed suitable conditions for socialist revolutions, and on the other hand,

the previously mentioned countries represented a potential source of natural resources and cheap workforce, which made them attractive for neo-colonial aspirations of the rich capitalist nations of the West (Chamberlin 2014). Instead of direct military engagement, it turned out that the doctrine of foreign influence through international financial institutions, and above all, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, that is, inciting local right-wing organizations, is far more successful. Triggering an economic crisis and the simultaneous rise of pro-Western political parties led to uprisings that toppled pro-socialist governments. Examples from South America, deemed by the United States of America as its field of influence and of special importance for the US security, are especially striking.

The cause of the military coup in Chile is especially pragmatic. Namely, after the victory of the pro-leftist candidate Salvador Allende in the 1970 presidential elections, economic reforms threatened the interests of not only the Chilean bourgeoisie but also American companies. Instead of direct meddling, the US chose a much more cunning tactic. On one side, economic pressure was exerted on Chile, which strengthened popular discontent and encouraged the opposition, while on the other, under the guise of providing aid, young economists were educated in the US in the spirit of the new liberal capitalism – to prepare the economic takeover of the main economic resources, that is, their sale or lease to foreign companies, after the overthrow of Allende (Hellinger 2021, 214). A few months after Allende came to power, the US's economic support to Chile was suspended, reflecting the gradual loss of support for Allende's radical reforms. Two years later, in 1970, in Santiago, but throughout the country, anti-government demonstrations were held. The state of emergency was introduced in the Santiago province. In parallel, under the direct influence of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents, strikes were organized, of which the ones held in the Candelaria and El Toqui mines were indeed the most serious. It is reported that American intelligence services at the time spent ten million dollars on strengthening the Chilean opposition and liberal economic reforms propaganda (Kos-Stanišić and Šunjić 2020, 135).

In August 1973, a series of sabotage at power plants followed, and right-wing demonstrations in Santiago escalated into street riots (right-wingers clashed with left-wingers who pointed to the real source of the crisis in the country and defended President Allende).

The same month, around 150 officers and soldiers of the Chilean Army attempted to seize control of the Presidential Palace, but were thwarted by resistance from forces loyal to the legally elected president. Even though, after the foiled military coup, Allende succeeded in dealing with some of his right-wing opposers, the opposition in Parliament openly called for the army to take over, and thus, already in September, General Pinochet carried out a successful military coup during which Allende allegedly committed suicide in the besieged Presidential Palace. The economists schooled in the West begin their reforms, which lead Chile a few years later to the verge of bankruptcy, and the leftist resistance and new outbursts of popular discontent due to growing poverty are prevented by the extraordinary terror conducted by the military junta, leaving thousands of dead behind (Smith 2012, 85).

If we keep in mind the fact that Allende's reforms were conducted within a democratic social order that still maintained the traits of parliamentary democracy, the overthrow of a legally elected president was motivated primarily by economic interests. If, economically speaking, Allende's reforms were in the spirit of collectivism and thus had a revolutionary sense, his overthrow was a pronounced anti-revolutionary act and implied not only a return to the olden ways (economic system which suited foreign investors and shareholders the most), but to an even more pronounced exploitation of Chile, with the help of political and military elite which rose to power after the coup. Namely, even though the coup interrupted a decades-long democratic tradition in Chile, the US accepted and extensively helped the non-democratic military junta. The brutality of Pinochet's regime was justified by the need for a consistent fight against communism.

The events that led to the violent change in power in Chile represented merely a rehearsal of the establishment of *neoliberalism*, that is, the abandonment of the achievements of the so-called "humane capitalism" or welfare society, which dominated especially in Europe after World War II. Reaganism, on the one hand, and Thatcherism, on the other, represent a departure from the economic model of the welfare state, which was deemed the cause of recession, as the progressive tax rate allegedly limited investment development.

The Chilean experience demonstrated how a combination of economic pressure, incitement of parliamentary or non-parliamentary

opposition, and instigating unrest and civil protests can successfully influence a change in power in a country, without necessitating direct military engagement. In this way, the concept of a color revolution was created, which was later developed independently or within the context of *hybrid war* strategy. Given that hybrid warfare implies the application of a broad spectrum of activities to achieve a strategic advantage for the side that employs it (Mitrović 2017, 325), not only the activities of cyber warfare, but also propagandic and psychological actions gain prominence, influencing public opinion to change the government illegally.

These methods first gained prominence in the Eastern Bloc countries, and subsequently in the Soviet Union itself, ultimately influencing the dissolution of the country and the decline of the USSR in international relations. The systemic support for the Solidarity movement in Poland, which persisted despite the introduction of a state of war and the establishment of General Wojciech Jaruzelski's military power, was the first successful attempt at peaceful change of a social order in a country behind the Iron Curtain. The distinctiveness of the event in Poland lies in the fact that the agents of change were indeed the workers, who, at least declaratively, held power (sovereignty) in the socialist social order.

The so-called "Polish Transition" occurred in two phases, of which only the second one can be deemed the predecessor of contemporary color revolutions. Namely, the first phase was based on resistance against bureaucratic socialism and had a primarily leftist orientation. At the beginning of the 1970s in Poland, workers' protests and demands for the introduction of self-governed socialism, "like in Yugoslavia". This echo of the 1968 demand was not anti-socialist in spirit. Like student protests in Yugoslavia, in Poland as well, the demands for a consistent path to socialism that would improve workers' social position were at the forefront. Worker revolts followed, above all in Polish shipyards, due to harsh material conditions and the denial of the right to form a free trade union organization.

The foundation of "Solidarity" did not imply the promotion of any restoration of capitalism, but the trade union fight was directed towards the party bureaucracy. The fundamental demand referred to the rights of workers to form trade unions and pass decisions on workers' councils (assemblies) about their work and income distribution, which

is why this period is called "the workers' revolution" (Kowalewski 2001, 199).

The second phase of the transition in Poland occurred after the war and on the eve of elections, in the late 1980s. The inability of the state leadership to provide necessary goods, primarily food, and resistance to any political system reform, occur in parallel with problems occurring in the Eastern Bloc. The difficulties within the USSR enabled foreign organizations, partially with the help of the Catholic Church as well, to play a significant role in turning the dissatisfaction with the poor social position of most Polish inhabitants into a "democratic revolution". Even in Poland, just as in Chile before, the Chicago School of Economics is at play, and the program of economic transition, conducted after the victory of "Solidarity", was influenced by Jeffrey Sachs, a close collaborator of Milton Friedman himself (Kowalik 2012, 40).

Contrary to Chile, in Poland, the economic pressure from the West was not necessary, given that the mere political system accumulated social dissatisfaction with its inefficiency. Propaganda influence, characterized by the exaggeration of liberalism's advantages and a hint of abundant foreign economic aid in the event of the collapse of the socialist system, was the primary propaganda tool. It is without a doubt that money arrived in Poland through George Soros's organizations and was later invested in promoting a capitalist social order. All the previously stated caused mass mobilization. Therefore, the "democratic revolution" in Poland was, in essence, a *counterrevolution.* Introduction of radical liberal reforms, the so-called "shock therapy", will condition serious social issues, the burden of which will be borne most by those who were most responsible for the restoration of capitalism – the production workers (Konat 2009, 40–41).

The transitions in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary were initiated in a similar manner. The economic crisis, caused by an inefficient system of state socialism and the inability to service foreign loans, i.e., the financial problems faced by the population daily, was largely articulated as a means to restore the capitalist social system, thanks to propaganda and skilled mobilization methods. Citizen protests in the streets, the police siding with the demonstrators, and the collapse of state institutions all took place mostly without violence. In the end, the former socialist states became attractive destinations

for foreign investment, which, on the other hand, implied inevitable deregulation – that is, a reduction of social subsidies for a vast number of people who were left jobless and without any monthly benefits in the first years of the transition.

THE CONCEPT OF THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

The examples previously discussed, in Chile and Poland, show that the path from social revolutions to what is nowadays known as the color revolution implied, first, the devaluation of the term' revolution,' that is, denouncing it as merely a change of political regime. For this reason, the concept of society (sociopolitical order) remained in the background, and the need for democratization of society was emphasized. The regime changes in socialist countries essentially had a dual function: in this way, the victory in the Cold War was finalized, since the Eastern military alliance (the Warsaw Pact) practically dissolved with the exit of member states from the socialist bloc. On the other side, new markets opened, and a direct influence on the politics of sovereign states with the help of international financial institutions was enabled. The said changes occurred peacefully, through civil unrest, in the form of the so-called *democratic revolution.*

At the root of the so-called democratic changes in Eastern Europe were not only the inherent problems emerging from the statist economic model, but also the influence of foreign intelligence services of capitalist states. The inefficiency of the planned economy, characterized by almost non-existent competitiveness and government-regulated markets, resulted in a decline in the quality of goods and services, increased production costs, and reduced wages. The socialist countries behind the Iron Curtain had to take loans, and the most radical example is depicted in Romania, whose debt was increased by the unsuccessful reform of the then socialist leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, who attempted to revive the economy with the help of international loans, maintaining his statist assumptions about its functioning (planned economy).

The poor state of the economy and low living standards of citizens in Eastern Bloc countries created dissatisfaction, not only due to the domination of the Soviet Union, which largely exported social

tensions, but also with the state's handling of problems affecting its own citizens. The economic dissatisfaction thus took the form of a rebellion against the political order itself, which not only prevented the freedom of private initiative but also made it impossible to express dissatisfaction with the existing economic circumstances.

Samuel Huntington, who headed the so-called Trilateral Commission, argued that the existence of states with planned economies represents an obstacle to the economic growth of Western countries, as their capital seeks new markets and cheaper production methods (Fridman 2012, 54). The state deregulation model implied the withdrawal of the state apparatus from the social field, the dominant role of market relations, and the state apparatus's direction towards preserving the liberal economic order. In other words, economic freedoms were the primary goal, and the real democratization of society, secondary.

Liberalization of the economy, as Western economists knew well, does not lead to an increase in wages overnight. The initial effect is downsizing, since non-rentable companies should be closed first, and workers should be laid off while reducing social subsidies in unemployment cases. Only an economically efficient market guarantees the opening of new workplaces, and this process is too long for the "transition losers". Still, Western economists suggested "shock therapy", implying a lightning-fast transition to a market economy, privatization, and equally fast state withdrawal from the social sphere (Klajn 2008, 46).

Understandably, changes in socialist countries could only be successful if they stemmed from the dissatisfaction of the masses. Therefore, a revolt over low wages and shortages of certain items grew into dissatisfaction with the political system in which the socioeconomic model was built. The workers who demonstrated in democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe were indeed never told that the majority of them would become the losers of the transition, that their social position would first deteriorate drastically, and that there are no guarantees that this state will be "just temporary", since the market system also imposes personal competition on the labor market. Although the changes in the former socialist countries were referred to as "democratic revolutions", the primary focus was actually on economic liberalization.

Western theoreticians, on the other hand, clearly differentiated democratization from populism. Namely, in a democratic society, the majority should not decide on everything, but only on those issues allowed to be the subject of decision-making. For example, the people should not arbitrate populistically on the economic system, since they do not possess knowledge of autonomous market laws. Between the freedom of entrepreneurship and democracy, freedom based on a market economy takes precedence (Madžar 2000, 29).

The relationship between democratic processes and improved living conditions in the context of a market economy was first defended theoretically. According to Ralph Dahrendorf, introducing a market economy is impossible without democratization, since the authoritarian ways of managing the economy must first be dismantled. On the other hand, the underdevelopment of the economy suggests a weak state of democracy, characterized by the power of a small number of people who rule in the name of the communist party, the vanguard of the working people and citizens (Dahrendorf 1990, 93). However, the citizens' *free* decision-making should be limited; that is, its scope must be defined from the beginning to not interfere with the economic transition (Hertz 1955, 130).

The demands for democratization, therefore, have a hidden agenda, and political freedoms are primarily expressed through the liberalization of entrepreneurship, which entails "unburdening," a reduction in tax rates, and labor legislation. According to a liberal scenario, inciting entrepreneurship with deregulation should lead to opening up new factory facilities, and thus ensuring new workplaces, which should enable an increase in employment. In the first years of the transition, as previously stated, there is an inevitable decline in living standards for a vast population. This process is followed not only by deregulation, that is, the reduction of social subventions, but also a change in social values: solidarity and sympathy are not cherished anymore, and the level of competitiveness in social action is on the rise (Senet 2007, 45).

The democratic transition, therefore, represents a transition from socialism to capitalism (Švob-Đokić 2002, 180). Given that the democratic changes "cannot be realized democratically" (Puhovski 1990, 37), a non-violent illegal takeover is necessary to establish democracy. The term "revolution" thus gains a new meaning; its content does not imply anymore a radical change of the existing,

but the dissolution of a social order which prevailed in socialist revolutions (Сундиев и Смирнов 2016, 49).

Social revolutions implied a crisis of the ruling class: its inability to maintain its dominance. The crises of the capitalist social order, for example, caused the rise of poverty, that is, worsening of economic conditions for the majority of people, and the deepening of social antagonisms, which represent a consequence of this cleavage (Сундиев и Смирнов 2016, 69). In social revolutions, the political activity of the masses, mobilized around a clear idea, is rapidly on the rise, with immediate consequences including the improvement of the economic position and the establishment of a system that should permanently enable fair social distribution.

Following the collapse of socialism and the rise of liberal ideology worldwide, criticism of capitalism has gradually diminished. Conflicts, from ideological to political ones, therefore, do not hold a principal sense anymore, but are reduced to the efforts of actors to occupy the most favorable position in the geopolitical context. Rebellion and forms of civil disobedience in the so-called post-modern era are thus characterized by an absence of ideological content (McFaul 2005, 7). The doctrines insisted upon in the protests are mostly *simulations* of former principled demands, behind which immediate geopolitical motives are hidden (Minkina and Kaszuba 2021, 82). This significantly defines the characteristics of color revolutions as follows:

1) Unlike social revolutions, which require not only political and socioeconomic changes but the establishment of new axiological and ethical principles, color revolutions are not based on *grand ideas*. In other words, the values towards which color revolutions strive have long been adopted in the corpus of liberal-democratic values (Пономарева 2012, 88). Therefore, insisting on specific liberal values, which are not actually questioned even in the system being protested, represents a kind of smokescreen, and in essence, it is about efforts to bring about a *change of regime*;

2) One of the key differences in relation to social revolution lies in the fact that, in color revolutions, a so-called *revolutionary situation*, i.e., radical deterioration of economic conditions, which specifically affects a specific class or a social stratum, is absent. Therefore, the establishment of a *revolutionary class*, that is, a specific social group capable of abolishing the existing form of social production and establishing a new form of production, is also missing;

3) Color revolutions are not aimed at changing the *political system*, the form of distribution or living production as a whole, but their goal is only the change of the political regime, which, in practice, comes down to replacing the representatives of the government. By simulating a radical social change, color revolutions hide the real reasons for causing unrest (Bessinger 2007);

4) Unlike the relatively long-term maturation of *revolutionary conditions*, which characterizes social revolutions, everything happens without prior theoretical or organizational preparation in color revolutions. Instead, color revolutions rely on financial power (budget) and media propaganda (Сундиев and Смирнов 2016, 89);

5) Color revolutions do not involve highlighting movement leaders; organization and communication are never individualized. In this way, influence is achieved on the broadest constituency, because the movement's formulated goals lack specific social demands (of a class or social group). This shows not only that color revolutions are ideologically void, but that they are not based on the interest that is declaratively emphasized. In one word, color revolutions represent a Rorschach inkblot into which each social group projects its own dissatisfaction. For this reason, declared leftists, liberals, and rightists, not only ideologically distant but also principally opposed, participate side by side in color revolutions (Parezanović 2024, 384);

6) Color revolutions often activate after elections, when the opposition is expressing dissatisfaction with the results achieved, and the masses take to the streets, to significantly influence the public opinion about the current political regime in a situation of unrest and instability (Сундиев and Смирнов 2016, 92);

7) An important feature of color revolutions is the foreign factor. Some foreign power is financing the organizer, thus significantly contributing to the construction of motives that can move the masses, as well as strategies – action of demonstrators in the streets (Сундиев and Смирнов 2016*,* 93). The foreign factor acts indirectly, through non-governmental organizations or anti-regime movements. In an advanced phase of a color revolution, the foreign factors take up the role of the arbitrator, that is, they assess the demands of the demonstrators as justified, the possible election results questionable, and the regime's response to the citizens' revolt as inappropriate or excessive. For this reason, color revolutions are followed by foreign-policy ultimatums (Сорокин 2014, 11).

Even though many theoreticians, not only in Russia but in the West, stress the previously presented short concept of color revolutions, the notion that the causes of color revolutions are internal persists in scientific circles. According to Maksimov, Russian political sociologist, the theses on the immanent causes of color revolutions represent a testimony and social sciences have become a medium for masking the roles of powerful countries in regime changes in less developed countries (Максимов 2010, 10).

If color revolutions are generated on internal dissatisfaction, this would imply that each is authentic and thus etiologically differs from others. Even a brief look points to a similar methodology in the conduct of color revolutions worldwide, but also a variation of similar symbols – such as the clenched fist, which was a trademark of color revolutions in the last decade of the previous century.

Moreover, the phases that precede or follow demonstrations and other forms of citizen dissatisfaction during color revolutions are also similar. The analysis reveals that, in nearly all cases recorded during the last decade of the 20th century, the outbreak of unrest was preceded by sanctions or threats of sanctions from the IMF, the World Bank, or investment funds. The current leadership is blamed in the media (most often financed by foreign capital) for economic problems, i.e., the increase in prices, inflation, and the slowdown of social reforms (in transition societies). Of course, the reasons may differ, but the accusations made by current government representatives always involve a foreign-controlled media sector (Parezanović 2013, 88).

One of the first color revolutions took place in Georgia in 2003. The demonstrations and other forms of dissatisfaction lacked a clear ideological basis. It was clear from the beginning that the main target was Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze (*Эдуа́рд Амвро́сиевич Шеварднадзе*), a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. Shevardnadze, in fact, led a moderate policy, accepting liberalization in both the political and economic spheres, while also attempting to maintain good relations with Russia, as a direct, powerful neighbor and a significant foreign trade ally. It appears that this was the primary reason for Western support of the opposition in Georgia. The Western influence was secured through the foundation of the Liberal Institute in Tbilisi, right after Georgia gained independence. Through this Institute, the opposition movement "KMARA", which accused Shevardnadze of cooperating with Russia, was deemed as opposed

to Georgian national interests. Immediately after the 2003 elections, in which Shevardnadze won a convincing victory, the "KMARA" movement, then led by Mikheil Saakashvili (*Міхеіл Николозович Саакашвили*), stated that they did not accept the election results, setting in motion a series of demonstrations. The demonstrators clashed with the police and, at one moment, occupied the Parliament building. The army and police refused to intervene, encouraging protesters to gradually occupy other institutions in Tbilisi, after which Shevardnadze was forced to resign. These events, better known under the name *Rose Revolution* (Parezanović 2013a), opened the doors to a long-term foreign influence in Georgia. The long and successful career of Mikheil Saakashvili, who, after serving as Prime Minister, also served as President of Georgia in two mandates, was apparently ended by Russia's meddling, which sparked a media war against the president in Georgia (Šuvaković 2023, 22). After the second mandate, Saakashvili, who, per the Constitution, could not run to perform this duty for the third time, was accused of corruption and violence against the demonstrators (while he was President), ran away to the US, only to later continue his political career in Ukraine, as an "American man". Upon his return to Georgia in 2021, he was arrested and is currently serving time in prison.

The geostrategic efforts of the West to isolate Russia from other former Soviet Union republics continued a year after Georgia, in 2004, in Ukraine. In the second round of the presidential election, Viktor Yanukovych (*Ві́ктор Фе́дорович Янукó вич*) won against Viktor Yushchenko (*Віктор Андрійович Ющенко*), but immediately afterward, Yushchenko's campaign headquarters made accusations that the elections were stolen. One of the arguments put forward by Yushchenko's campaign team was the still unsolved "poisoning attempt" on the presidential candidate in September 2004 (Kappeler 2023, 277). Yushchenko also had a small lead in this round, but in the second round Yanukovych still won convincingly with 49.5% to 46.6% (277). Accusations that the election results were irregular soon followed. Foreign observers also confirmed this. Even on the night Yanukovych declared victory, demonstrations broke out. Because of orange-colored emblems and flags of Yushchenko's supporters, this event was named "Orange Revolution" (*Помаранчева революція).* Thanks to the support of the West, Yushchenko became the winner of the color revolution and Ukraine ended up being under a dominant

influence of the West for several years, until the new crisis broke, a specific *Color counterrevolution*, when after a cleavage between the Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko (*Юлия Володимиривна Тимошенко*) and President Viktor Yushchenko – the power transfered once again into the hands of Yanukovych (Petrović 2008, 182). However, this does not mark the end of color revolutions in Ukraine. From 2010 to 2013, Viktor Yanukovych was once again the President of Ukraine, while Mikola Azarov (*Микола Янович Азаров*) served as Prime Minister. The government's policy was pro-Russian, despite the President and Prime Minister simultaneously attempting to move closer to the European Union. This rapprochement, however, was for a certain period of time burdened by the conditions presented by the EU, which the Ukrainian leadership could not fulfill (they demanded the release of the former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who was legally convicted, from prison).

In the fall of 2013, a new color revolution occurred in Ukraine. The crisis emerged after Yanukovych and Azarov refused to sign the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU. The protests were led by a united opposition comprising a heterogeneous group, ranging from the extreme right-wing of Galicia to the former party of Yulia Tymoshenko (center-left) and supporters of Viktor Yushchenko (center-right). The crowning glory of this color revolution was the so-called Euromaidan, named after the main square in Kyiv (Maidan). The regime first tolerated demonstrations, which persistently did not simmer down. In January 2014, the Ukrainian Assembly (*Verkhovna Rada*) passed stricter laws on punishing protesters, which raised tensions and spread demonstrations throughout the entire country. According to Swiss historian Andreas Kappeler, none of the opposition leaders could control the protesters, as the "Euromaidan revolutionaries themselves determined the course of events" (Kappeler 2023, 285). Under pressure from protesters, the statutes on demonstrations were suspended, and a general amnesty for the protesters was declared. This, however, did not stop the protests and unrest, including occasional armed conflicts, from continuing throughout the country. The opposition's demands indeed radicalized, so Yanukovych was asked to resign, and the Verkhovna Rada reinstated the Constitution in force until 2004, which significantly reduced the president's powers. Since Yanukovych refused to step down, bloody clashes broke out between the protesters and the police, after which Yanukovych was ousted from

power in a coup on February 22, 2014. The violent takeover of power was approved by the Western media, deeming it a forced move due to Yanukovych's persistent ignoring of the *will of the people*. However, demonstrations surpassed the framework of violent protests, combined with international pressure. Due to dissatisfaction of the pro-Russian population, conflicts broke out in Crimea. The crisis ended with the Minsk 2 Agreement (Petrović and Bukvić 2019, 110–134).

A turbulent period in Ukraine, in fact, showcases the geostrategic fight between the West and Russia. At the same time, the West supports anti-Russian and pronouncedly pro-European political parties and movements; demonstrations and illegal takeover of power are taking place under the banner of economic prosperity. The protesters are mobilized by socioeconomic problems that are coming to the fore. The rapprochement with the European Union is non-critically equated with economic well-being, just as good relations with Russia are, thoughtlessly equated with social poverty and hopelessness. Specific elements of the color revolution were also used by Russia, using the second significant topic for mass mobilization: the corruption charges, which led to the ouster of Saakashvili in Georgia and Yulia Tymoshenko in Ukraine. Regardless of how much truth there was in these accusations, there is no doubt that the demonstrations against the pro-Western politicians in the two former Soviet republics were also fueled by the Russian geostrategic interests.

What also catches the eye is the term "revolution", which refers to the mobilization of protesters. This term should emphasize that the essence of a protest is radical, referring to a radical change that needs to be achieved because it is based on legitimate goals, even though illegal means may be used. In this way, the insufficiently defined goal of the demonstrations remains hidden; participants in color revolutions are not acquainted with the political program that should lead to fulfillment of their expectations (improvement of socioeconomic conditions), because such articulation indeed is not possible, due to the alliance of leftist, rightist, and liberal parties participating together in the uprising.

COLOR REVOLUTIONS IN YUGOSLAVIA

Comparing the 1968 student protests with the 1991 student demonstrations (these protests were named – "Velvet Revolution") as well as with other "events of the people" that later followed, calls for a strict differentiation between the protests of 1968 and the ones that followed, and then an assessment of their possible "revolutionary significance". The social position of students sparked the 1968 student protests, but the dissatisfaction was soon articulated into political demands, which were, by their vocation, consistently socialist. The demand for improving the material position of the University was only one segment of the final, fourth demand in the student demonstrations' Resolution, passed on June 3, 1968 (Jakšić 2020, 9). The most significant demand implied the establishment of social equality, so that the social structure of students reflects the social structure of the society, as well as the abolition of privileges emerging from political positions, democratization of all sociopolitical organizations, and especially the League of Communists, democratization of the media, and freedom of association and protest. Even though some of these formulations at first glance sounded quite liberal, as they were dominated by the demands of liberty and equality, for the Action Committee, which formulated the demands, the socialist framework was unquestionable for fulfilling the previously mentioned demands. The equality that the students demanded was not a legal equality before the law, which can only be achieved in a social context, but rather a redirection of "surplus knowledge" towards the social well-being of primarily the working class, and all citizens of Yugoslavia.

One should not lose sight of the fact that the student protests in Belgrade were, in a specific sense, part of the broader student rebellion that was incited in Paris. At the time, so-called pro-communist discourse was pronounced in Europe, and the Paris demonstrations bore that leftist stamp, as did other student protests in the Federal Republic of Germany and the US. The ideas of a permanent revolution, i.e., a social criticism, were understood through Marxist lenses, as a form of human self-production and the constant dominance of social causalities. The party bureaucracy in socialist countries was seen, in this sense, as an anti-revolutionary occurrence, while the student protests in Belgrade were understood as a revolutionary act,

in conflict with bureaucratization (Petrović 1986, 188), which initiates increasingly visible social differences.

The meaning of the 1991 student protests was completely different. These protests occurred in the aftermath of the large demonstration on March 9, which was relatively easily suppressed, despite the police being unprepared for this gathering and overestimating the number of participants (Marković 2009, 280). The tanks appeared on the streets of Belgrade in the evening, when the police had already dispersed the protesters.

The following day, a peaceful gathering of students occurred, first at the faculties and then in the streets, at the Terazije Fountain. These protests were called the "Velvet Revolution", and this name was supposed to stress their non-violent character. These protests, coordinated by the actor Branislav Lečić, had the form of a *democratic revolution* in Eastern Europe in 1989. The so-called "street parliament" was established. And the demands centered, above all, around political freedom, with a barely noticeable accentuation of the need to establish the liberal system, i.e., accelerated economic transition (abandoning the social economic model and establishing free market relations). A year later, in March 1992, in a month-and-a-half-long protest, the students formulated demands, among which only some referred to freedoms and rights at the university. Number one, the resignation of the then President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević was demanded, followed by the cessation of the regime's control over the media, the adoption of the law that would guarantee the autonomy of the university, the publication of the names of students who died in the war in Croatia, and the resignation of the leadership of the Belgrade Students' Union (Tomić 2015, 192). At first glance, not one of the demands touched on the political system, i.e., the future state structure, but the demand for the resignation of Slobodan Milošević was covertly directed towards the rest of the social system, as testifies the slogan "Red gang", which will remain in use for years later, when the student protests renew again.

The subsequent large student protests during Slobodan Milošević's time took place in 1996 and 1997. The cause of a student protest, which later evolved into a large-scale citizen rebellion, was the regime's attempt to avoid accepting defeat in local elections in dozens of cities and municipalities in Serbia, where the opposition had secured victory. The first student demand referred to the establishment

of an independent commission to determine election results. The second two demands, referring to the resignation of the rector and the student vice-rector of the University of Belgrade, were added to the list a few days after the beginning of the protests, because rector Veličković and student vice-rector Đurđević stated on the RTS that nothing but a handful of students were behind the protest (Tomić 2015, 195). The traces of the color revolution are also visible in these protests. First of all, the demonstrations occurred after the election results were presented, and soon enough, the entire case was internationalized, with the arbitration of the former Spanish President Felipe Gonzalez, and Milošević's admission of defeat in local elections in municipalities and cities throughout Serbia, in the form of a *lex specialis*. However, these protests, especially when they turned into civil demonstrations throughout Serbia, had a clear anti-regime angle. If we bear in mind the fact that removing Milošević from power in 1992 was one of the goals of the US and powerful European countries (and above all, Germany and Great Britain), mobilization to admit victory in local elections to an ideologically diverse and non-compact opposition should have weakened Milošević (or the protests should have spontaneously led to his removal). In any case, the anti-regime character of these protests is not contestable, as the absence of social demands is noticeable. The incoherence of the opposition came to the fore only a few months later, when in the Belgrade City Assembly, the Serbian Renewal Movement [SRM] broke off cooperation with the Democratic Party, after which the mayor, Đinđić, was deposed, and Milan Božić, one of the vice-presidents of the SRM, took his place. In other words, the reasons for the demonstrations were indeed an attempt at election theft (Marković 2009, 395–396), but the support coming to the protesters from abroad also had the form of pressure on the regime, motivated by completely different foreign-policy reasons.

A similar form of protest as in 1996 and 1997 was also applied after the first round of the 2000 presidential elections, whereas students were not put to the fire in this plan, but the united opposition. The course of the October 5th protests significantly resembled the events that several years later took place in Georgia and Ukraine: from the iconography of the resistance force to the legitimate inflow of funds from abroad and other forms of support, as well as propaganda media and economic activities conducted to topple Milošević's regime (Đurković 2000, 247). The October 5th changes included application of

force, segments of the former regime which switched sides, including the army and the police, but an enormous number of protesters played a pivotal role in all of that (Antonić 2000, 51). The protest's demands, which referred to the acknowledgment of Vojislav Koštunica's victory in the first round of elections, represented nothing but a matrix into which the protesters introduced their own motives. In this sense, the October 5th events had elements of a *democratic revolution* since afterwards a significant inflow of foreign capital and pronounced privatization were recorded, the geostrategic sense (after the victory of the DOS coalition, the Army of the FR Yugoslavia was downsized, tanks and cannons were destroyed, etc.), as well as "control" over the relations between Serbia and Russia.

COLOR REVOLUTIONS AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Unlike perceiving color revolutions as demonstrations incited from the outside, for geopolitical (geostrategic) reasons, there is a tendency among the professional public to understand color revolutions as forms of civil disobedience (Minkina and Kaszuba 2021). There are different perceptions of civil disobedience, and in recent times, the views of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas are the most influential in scientific circles. According to Rawls, civil disobedience is manifested in "public non-violent, conscious, but legally conflicted actions which, as a rule, should contribute to a change in the law or government policies" (Habermas 1989, 55). Therefore, Rawls constructs civil disobedience as a response to the nonconformity of moral imperatives and current legal norms. This means that every law, starting from the highest legal act, is measured by its conformity with the principles, and in Kant's sense of the word – therefore, with the possibility of universalization of the norm (a norm that cannot be viable universally, always leads to the fact that individuals and social groups are a means, and not the goal, and thus, too short for the moral law).

Rawls limits the right to civil disobedience by the inability to resolve the conflict between law and justice in the existing institutions of the system. Therefore, citizens can resort to violating the law and thus draw attention to the absence of fair solutions only if all institutional tools have been previously exhausted. Moreover, Rawls

insists on the non-violent character of civil protests, allowing this form of fight for justice only in exceptional conditions. As Rawls believes, those conditions are not met by socioeconomic dissatisfaction, because the demands for awarding special subsidies cannot be universalized. An objection could be raised to Rawls's attitude, stating that there are states in which democratic institutions are not well-developed, where the judiciary is not free from the influence of executive power, and where legislative power is in the hands of a specific, hermetic group of people. In other words, Rawls' insights imply that democratically developed societies are necessary, thus confirming the notion that one cannot transition from a non-democratic society to a democratic one through democratic means.

Habermas takes a much broader view of civil disobedience. Born out of student protests, for Habermas, civil disobedience is an expression of moral dissatisfaction with the *law*. Therefore, civil disobedience emerges in the cleavage between legality and legitimacy (Habermas 1989, 54). Civil protests emerge from the constant questioning of some legality; that is, they guarantee the constant legitimization of a social practice. In this sense, even the attitude of a legal order towards civil disobedience represents a test of its maturity. When stating this, Habermas had in mind exactly the intolerance towards civil disobedience that the politicians Zimmerman and Pinger characterized as a "form of non-violent violence", not understanding its deep democratic justification.

At this moment, a question arises as to whether student protests or other forms of demonstrations against the regime can be viewed uniquely from the perspective of the need for social legitimization of legality. Rawls and Habermas agree that moral imperatives are the root of civil disobedience and universal principles. This, however, cannot be said for the protests in which the goals are not clearly articulated, or the goals are, in fact, partial. On the other hand, a question of the legitimacy of the demands for legitimacy arises: each group of people protesting can invoke the legitimacy of the law. Who should decide in such a case whether the set demands are justified: the representatives of the regime, or an independent intellectual community? And in the end, if rational mediation of legality and legitimacy is an imperative, this still does not encompass the rational behavior of the actors involved in the dispute, the regime, and the protesting citizens.

In the context of Moderna, these problems highlight the need to establish an open society in which all members have the opportunity to become familiar with research conducted by social scientists. The assessment of legal norms, that is, the determination of their legitimacy, presupposes the institution of impartial judgment, the results of which should be made known to the general public (Apel 1987, 25).

However, the post-modern dispersion of sense calls into question the very universal principles. Color revolutions, therefore, do not require a rational foundation, but only a simulation of some principle whose satisfaction is sought. And when the principal foundation is lost, it refers to evoking the "natural state": *bellum omnium contra omnes*. In this sense, color revolutions are a force of argument hidden behind the seemingly legitimate rebellion, in which, however, at least a certain number of protesters project their social dissatisfaction.

Color revolutions, therefore, have their *form of manifestation,* which is nothing but a simulation of civil initiatives, based on some fundamental principle (noticing the unfairness of some legal provisions compared to morally universal laws), and their *current form*, the basic goal of overthrowing a regime, within specific geostrategic interests. The more diffuse and unclear the demands of protesters are, the less it is about the elements of civil protests, and more about a *color revolution*.

Of course, in specific social contexts, it is challenging to differentiate moral demands from the diffuse causes for demonstrations, and thus, exactly in the spirits of the open society, in the way Habermas and Appel view it – in terms of a critical communicational community – one should look not only at the manifestation of protests, but at the broader social context of their development and actions strategy as well.

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СОЦИЈАЛНЕ, ДЕМОКРАТСКЕ И ОБОЈЕНЕ РЕВОЛУЦИЈЕ

Резиме

Анализа обојених револуција у овом тексту подразумева два правца истраживања. Најпре је анализиран сам појам „обојена револуција“, а посебно промена значења термина „револуција” – а потом и значењски склоп појма „демократска револуција”. Други правац истраживања фокусиран је на особености обојених револуција, и њихову повезаност са десуверенизацијом, као последицом глобалног капитализма. На овим основама анализиране су демократске револуције, у земљама Вишеградске групе, посебно у Пољској – као и на Балкану, а нарочита пажња посвећена је поређењу демократске револуције у Украјини и Србији. У овом тексту, путем предочених праваца истраживања, постављене су и бранђене следеће хипотезе: (1) Обојене револуције манифестују се у форми демократских револуција – у којима се доводе у питање институције политичког система; (2) Обојене револуције током последњих деценија имају примарно геополитичке циљеве, за разлику од претходног периода (крај прошлог и почетак овог века) када су имале транзициону сврху; (3) Обојене револуције не могу да се идентификују са *грађанском непослушношћу*, зато што у њиховом средишту не постоји чврст морални принцип, него дифузно оправдање.

Кључне речи: револуција, демократија, обојена револуција, транзиција, грађанска непослушност.

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