The overthrow of Slobodan Milošević in Serbia’s so-called October Revolution four years ago was briefly celebrated by the international press, and it also received extensive attention from scholars. Such accounts focused on why and how the opposition won the September 2000 presidential ballot as well as on the organizing of the ensuing uprising. But the link between the regime’s disregard for the election results and the subsequent mass mobilization has not been adequately explained. Of course, most scholars recognize that Milošević’s electoral defeat and his attempts to manipulate the results contributed mightily to his fall. Yet it has not made clear exactly why this stolen election had such a revolutionary outcome.

Elections are considered stolen when a regime hinders an opposition victory through blatant manipulation of the vote count or through the annulment of the electoral results. In Serbia, it was only after such stolen elections had fundamentally transformed the political setting that mass protest became successful; prior to the dramatic changes brought about by the 2000 polls, attempts to organize Milošević’s overthrow had failed repeatedly. The closest the opposition had previously come to toppling the regime was during the startling antiregime protests that followed the government’s annulment of the November 1996 municipal-election results.

The importance of developing a theory around stolen elections goes beyond the Serbian case. Scholarly research on electoral or competitive
authoritarianism—sometimes termed pseudodemocratic rule—atttempts to capture the absurdity of nondemocratic regimes’ holding of competitive elections. In the post–Cold War setting, some form of democratic legitimacy has become essential to the survival of many authoritarian regimes. In such countries, elections are often just competitive enough to allow the opposition some room to maneuver, which strengthens domestic support for the regime as well as its international standing.

The structural ambiguity of electoral authoritarianism creates a degree of uncertainty for power holders. It is difficult to strike a balance between the regime’s substantive authoritarian characteristics and its procedural democratic ones: When the regime acts openly authoritarian it risks appearing dictatorial, but it is endangered if democratic procedures are taken too seriously. For the regime, stolen elections combine these “evils”: Not only does the competitive nature of elections enable the opposition to emerge as the true winner, but by manipulating or simply ignoring the results, the regime cannot avoid revealing its true, dictatorial colors.

The academic literature on electoral authoritarianism documents how regimes, in order to retain power, steal elections that they have lost, but the consequences of such maneuvers have not been systematically explored. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way point generally to the dangers faced by regimes that too blatantly violate the electoral process, but the authors do not discuss what happens when a regime suffers a clear defeat and then ignores the results. In his analysis of the “nested game of democratization by elections,” Andreas Schedler regards the possibility that the “game” may end after a stolen election because the regime then either surrenders power or cracks down on the opposition. But he does not consider whether it might be possible for the regime to disregard the election results and still lose power. Other theorists who have considered this option have concluded that it is likely to result in a bloody and prolonged civil war.

**Elections and Revolutions**

In countries ruled by autocratic regimes, stolen elections often create conditions favorable for the outbreak of democratic revolutions. Elections cannot be stolen unless they are “stunning”—that is, elections in which the regime is surprised by the defeat it suffers at the hands of opposition candidates. In Nicaragua’s 1990 elections, the Sandinistas, stunned by their loss, briefly considered manipulating or annulling the results before finally acknowledging defeat. Similarly, Iranian conservatives gave in to the equally surprising victory of reformist candidate Mohammad Khatami in the 1997 presidential polls (although they continued to exercise power by holding on to reserve domains). And in 2000, Zimbabwe experienced a political earthquake
when President Robert Mugabe lost a constitutional referendum that he had believed to be a mere formality. He likewise admitted defeat, but as a consequence stepped up intimidation against his opponents to be better prepared for the parliamentary elections later that year.

But what if a regime outright refuses to accept the results of the balloting? That is when a stunning election turns into a stolen one. In a normative sense, all forms of electoral manipulation involve stealing votes. But the consequences for political change are usually far greater when the opposition actually receives more votes, despite the regime’s attempts to rig the results. Because they have an enormous potential for triggering mass protest, stolen elections are critical junctures for the government and the opposition alike: A social movement emerging in the wake of a stolen election may be powerful enough to enforce the outcome denied to the people through the ballot box.

What exactly accounts for this link? In the analysis of revolutions, events that turn revolutionary ferment into actual revolutions are termed “triggers” or “accelerators.” Stolen elections are triggers both in society and the regime. In society, stolen elections contribute to mass mobilization by first increasing expectations that the opposition will win, and then causing popular outrage when voters are robbed of the victory. Elections also document exactly how widespread dissatisfaction with the regime has become (as it has lost the election, often with an overwhelming majority) and serve to increase the organizational capabilities of the opposition. On the regime side, stolen elections test the loyalty of regime personnel by causing splits between those who are willing to ignore the voters’ will in order to stay in power and those who favor accepting the opposition victory or at least calculate that the opposition is likely to take power anyway. Such elite divisions weaken the regime at a time of mass mobilization, which in turn makes regime collapse in the face of societal protest more likely.

Each of these points calls for brief elaboration. Elections increase expectations that an authoritarian regime can be changed peacefully through the ballot box. No matter how naïve it may appear to outsiders, voters enthusiastically participate in elections, although there is little chance that the regime would ever accept defeat. Outrage when the election is stolen is correspondingly great, as the disappointment of high expectations leads to widespread anger. Moreover, stolen elections provide a focus for discontent against the regime, which better allows the opposition to mobilize the population than at times when popular dissatisfaction is general and diffuse. Even if the regime had little popular legitimacy before the election, the stealing of the results draws a clear moral line of confrontation between the people’s will and an evil regime bent on thwarting it. The last remnants of regime legitimacy are ripped away as millions of citizens feel personally offended by the stealing of their votes. Such a situation is likely to generate the
sense of moral obligation necessary to overcome the “free-rider” problem of rebellion; that is, this sense of moral obligation can motivate people to protest for the public good, instead of trusting other people to achieve the results from which all of society would benefit.

Stolen elections also contribute to societal mobilization by creating an “imagined community” of robbed voters. When the opposition wins an election, citizens learn they are not alone in their dislike of the regime. A widespread—but hidden—anger with the regime may be long in existence, but it is the election that brings that anger into the open. This communication effect shows that further collective action is likely to receive broadbased support within society. Meanwhile, the shattering of the powerholders’ nimbus of invincibility sends yet another signal that an opportunity for toppling the regime has emerged. This image of vulnerability may be reinforced by the postelectoral behavior of a stunned elite struggling to cope with its unexpected defeat.

A final point pertaining to societal mobilization concerns the opposition’s organizational capabilities. The selection of an opposition candidate for president or prime minister often fosters opposition unity. Campaigning then creates strong ties between the candidate and the voters, particularly through personal campaign appearances given that opposition presence in the media is often severely limited. Preelection efforts such as door-to-door canvassing and an election-day push to “get out the vote” further contribute to the opposition’s capability to organize. Perhaps most importantly, the opposition often tries to create a network of independent election observers who come up with a vote count parallel to that of the government. Not only is this crucial in showing that the elections have in fact been stolen, but it also creates a network of activists that can be mobilized for further collective action after the balloting.

In addition to extensive popular mobilization, stolen elections can lead to splits within the regime itself. Even when its legitimacy is low, a regime can hold on to power by retaining the loyalty of key civilian officials and military elites. But a stolen election is likely to undercut such loyalty enough to severely weaken the regime. Because the unjust character of the regime has become so obvious, members of the elite—despite having long cooperated within a pseudodemocratic framework—become disgusted by the blatant disregard of the people’s will. Another factor likely to fuel dissension among the elite in the wake of stolen elections is the perception that the regime’s power relative to that of its opponents has diminished. This gives rise to opportunistic calculations, as elements of the regime begin to consider whether it might not be better to switch over to the opposition side before it is too late.

Within the ruling circle, there may be a faction of longstanding, quiet dissenters, for whom the stolen elections provide an opportunity to attempt an open rebellion. After such an election, they can count on
the support of a large part of the population. At the same time, however, the outcome of the ballot will limit potential putschists’ options: Replacing the current leadership with another dictatorship would be difficult since the newly surfaced center of power is backed by an unambiguous popular mandate. Splits among the regime’s leaders can be taken as yet another sign of its weakness, which in turn will spur the willingness of citizens to engage in acts of protest. The probability for a revolutionary outcome further increases if the lack of cohesion among the elites affects the security apparatus.

In short, our model suggests that stolen elections serve to amalgamate the opposition, improve its organizational capacities, and motivate the development of its mobilizational network. Outrage, in combination with the sense that the moment of decision has arrived, increases the robbed voters’ willingness to participate in protests against the regime. Popular mobilization subsequently helps to create a split in the regime—due to both genuine shame at the regime’s undemocratic actions and opportunistic calculations about the advantages of defecting to the opposition. The regime split then spurs further popular protest, helping to create a revolutionary situation. At the same time, it also undermines the regime’s ability to maintain security and to repress mass mobilization, thereby increasing the chances for a revolutionary outcome.

Political Protest in Milošević’s Serbia

When the Milošević regime was brought down in October 2000, commentators were eager to point out that the last member of Europe’s socialist nomenklatura had finally gone.9 True as this may be from a grand perspective on post–Cold War history, it glosses over crucial, pseudodemocratic changes that had taken place within the regime since Milošević first emerged as a leading Serbian politician in the mid-1980s. Pseudodemocratic elements became an essential element of Milošević’s rule when he was no longer able to resist the powerful diffusion effects created by the political changes in Eastern Europe and the neighboring Yugoslav republics. A system of regular multiparty elections was introduced in 1990, which soon led to the founding of numerous independent political organizations. It is difficult to imagine an unrestrained Serbian dictatorship enduring for more than ten years in a European neighborhood of well-established or nascent democracies. Serbia’s strongman avoided the appearance of outright despotism, considering himself capable of playing the “game of semiauthoritarianism.”10 This strategy worked for the better part of a decade. Milošević proved to be a skillful tactician, cleverly using the resources at his disposal in order to manipulate the political process. In addition, he could rely on a notoriously splintered opposition, rarely seen as a trustworthy alternative in the eyes of the electorate. Elections, despite their substantive
flaws, bestowed a kind of procedural legitimacy upon Milošević, while underscoring the weakness of his opponents.

During the 1990s, Milošević’s rule also became increasingly sultanistic. The center of power consisted of Slobodan Milošević and his wife, Mira Marković. Milošević’s family and circle of friends acted like a mafia group in the economy. Those loyal to Milošević and his wife were awarded with patronage and leading government posts, thus ensuring a high degree of regime control over Serbia’s political and economic elite. While this brought short-term stability, growing popular fury at the ruler and his clique eroded Milošević’s nationalist credentials. How could he claim to be fighting for the Serbian cause while he was plundering the Serbian nation?

Notwithstanding these tendencies, Serbia never descended into full-blown sultanism. Most significantly, formally democratic institutions persisted and continued to shape and influence political life until the very end of Milošević’s reign. Even during the last years, when the regime increasingly turned to overt repression, more than just a constitutional façade remained. Yet, while formal-democratic institutions in general and elections in particular served to stabilize the system in the short term, they ultimately led to its collapse.

On several occasions during the 1990s, large numbers of citizens protested against the Milošević regime. In 1991, they demanded liberalization of the media. In 1992, major antiregime demonstrations recurred when UN troops moved into Serb-occupied Croatian territory. But these protests were only able to wring minor concessions from the government. In the following couple of years, as fighting in Bosnia captured world attention and began to dominate domestic politics in Serbia, Milošević enjoyed a respite from antiregime protests.

The largest wave of demonstrations occurred in the winter of 1996–97, about a year after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in December 1995. These protests were particularly remarkable because they came about at a time when apathy seemed to prevail in Serbian politics—the population was exhausted by years of intra-Yugoslav conflict, and Milošević appeared stronger than ever. Demonstrations began when the regime nullified the results of the November 17 second-round municipal elections, in which the Zajedno (Together) opposition alliance had won Belgrade and other major cities. The protests soon spread beyond these cities to places where opposition candidates had not won. The demonstrations lasted for 88 days—the parallel student protests went on for 120—despite the cold winter and the risk of police violence. Many rallies drew more than 100,000 demonstrators; during the Orthodox New Year and Christmas celebrations, an estimated 500,000 participated. Trying to keep spirits high, the opposition found ever more creative ways to express its antiregime fury—which made for an often carnival-like atmosphere at the peaceful rallies.
What accounts for this powerful mass mobilization that emerged so unexpectedly? The cancellation of Zajedno’s victories provided a perfect focus, a common grievance for the opposition to rally people around. Compared with earlier protests, the opposition was now able to point to a specific injustice that many citizens had experienced personally—the regime had nullified their votes. Rising expectations turned into widespread dissatisfaction when the authorities refused to accept the opposition’s triumph, and the outrage of the robbed voters provided the emotional energy that fueled the movement for several weeks. The protests’ impressive staying power was further underpinned by their “deeply moral” nature: In the words of Mladen Lazić, the fraud “gave the citizens who voted against the party in power irrefutable proof that they had been right. This was no longer merely a question of a violation of their will but a savage attack on their honor.” Such deeply felt grievances went well beyond the group of genuine Zajedno supporters. They even reached into the ranks of Milošević’s long-loyal followers.

Nevertheless, the Serbian autocrat was able to undercut opposition protests by giving in to opposition demands, as he had successfully done in the past: The regime accepted Zajedno’s municipal victories, but without really endangering the government’s hold on power in the country as a whole. The fragile anti-Milošević coalition broke up soon after its victories in local government were officially acknowledged. The collaboration of Vuk Drašković’s Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) with regime forces in Belgrade at the expense of its former opposition allies shows just how far-reaching this disintegration was. The consequences of the opposition’s self-destructive behavior for the prospects of a democratic Serbia were devastating: A sense of hopelessness and apathy spread over the country, and it was to prevail for three years.

The Serbian “October Revolution”

When the Kosovo war ended in June 1999 with Belgrade’s de facto loss of control over Serbia’s “sacred places,” Milošević’s image as a savior of Serbia was irrevocably shattered. The country’s bleak economic outlook also undermined any chance he had of regaining legitimacy through economic performance. The regime’s own behavior revealed how tense the situation had become: Increasingly, it resorted to blatant oppression, abandoning the more subtle modes of domination that it had favored earlier. For more than a year the opposition waged an increasingly desperate struggle to unseat the regime. Having assembled as the Alliance for Change (SZP), the opposition again split, with Vuk Drašković once more declaring that he was going his own way. Under the guidance of Zoran Đinđić of the Democratic Party (DS), the SZP tried to wring concessions from the regime by organizing
daily marches and rallies starting in September 1999. But the number of participants declined steadily and the movement ultimately fizzled out in mid-December as demonstrators lost faith in the efficacy of street protests.

Pressured by Western countries, influenced by a change of government in neighboring Croatia, and outraged by a car accident involving Drašković that was widely believed to have been an assassination attempt, the various opposition groups intensified efforts to bridge their differences. In a joint declaration issued on 10 January 2000, they demanded democratic elections. On April 14, more than 100,000 demonstrators turned up for a long-prepared rally in central Belgrade. Leaders of the major opposition parties—urged to cooperate by the student-led grassroots movement Otpor (Resistance)—appeared on stage in a show of unity. But opposition solidarity remained fragile and the new round of protests failed to gain momentum.

In September 1999, one journalist observing the SZP’s activities had noticed that “most protesters agree that the opposition needs a catalyst such as a repressive act by the authorities . . . to gather momentum.” Although repressive acts abounded (the most dramatic was a police raid on an opposition broadcasting center in May 2000) they did not provide the necessary impetus to the anti-Milošević movement. In order to overcome its inability to attract crowds large enough to bring down the regime, the opposition needed a stronger trigger.

Ironically, it was Milošević himself who took the step that sealed his fate—by calling early elections. He brought forward presidential elections to 24 September 2000, even as his term as Yugoslavia’s president had been scheduled to last until July 2001. He did this not due to pressure from his opponents, but rather because they appeared so weak to him. Yet like many other autocratic rulers involved in electoral politics, Milošević miscalculated: He overrated the support he would still be able to draw from certain segments of Serbian society, and he underestimated the skills and passion of his opponents once presented with the opportunity of early presidential elections. They grabbed the chance by forming the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), a broad electoral alliance comprising 18 parties from across the political spectrum. Even though they had to dispense with the participation of the SPO, the formation of a broad coalition led Drašković to be stigmatized as a selfish defector. The DOS could also count on Serbian civil society organizations to mobilize the electorate against the regime, and to prepare for the task of elections observers.

As a number of observers have rightly emphasized, the choice of Vojislav Koštunica as presidential candidate was crucial to the opposition’s success. Given his nationalist credentials, he could not be accused of being a traitor, intending a sellout to the West. On the contrary, he was able to argue that it was Milošević who had betrayed the
Serbian people since 1987. Koštunica also had an image as an honest and incorruptible politician, which was very helpful in an increasingly criminalized state like Serbia, and it was also a quality rarely found among other oppositionists. But it should also be remembered that the agreement on Koštunica as opposition candidate would have been to no avail had Milošević reacted more cleverly: If the Serbian autocrat had taken seriously the opinion polls indicating that his rival held a clear lead, he might have canceled the presidential contest altogether. But in a show of increasing unworldliness, Milošević refused to recognize how events were developing against him.

On the evening after the polling on September 24, the opposition presented provisional but reliable numbers—the result of its parallel vote tabulation—which made it clear that the presidential challenger had defeated the incumbent in the first round. Milošević reacted with complete disbelief. The Federal Election Commission (SIK) found itself caught in visible disarray; it soon ceased the official vote count altogether and expelled all opposition members from its session. Throngs of people poured spontaneously into the streets in the thousands, celebrating their victory against Milošević.

At this point, Milošević, once the master tactician with a well-oiled political machine, lacked a clear strategy. Through SIK’s promulgation of the final results—Milošević, 38.62 percent; Koštunica, 48.96 percent—he admitted defeat. But he maintained that since Koštunica had not won an absolute majority, a runoff was to be held on October 8. Even though Milošević’s call for a second round was supported by electoral rules set up by the SIK, the opposition rejected this offer (suspecting that Milošević had rigged the results to force a runoff) and instead resorted to the tactics of civil disobedience and massive demonstrations. The runoff was soon canceled altogether.

On September 27, an estimated 300,000 people gathered in Belgrade to celebrate Koštunica’s triumph over Milošević. This time, without lengthy preparations, the opposition was able to attract a much larger number of participants than during previous efforts, and the optimistic and joyful atmosphere of the crowd likewise did not bear any resemblance to the subdued mood of the earlier rallies in 1999 and 2000. Two days later the workers at the Kolubara coal mine went on strike to support the opposition, endangering the supply of fuel for important Serbian power plants. One year earlier, the opposition’s calls for a general strike had simply been ignored. Moreover, attempts by the police to clear the

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Kolubara complex were thwarted by thousands of citizens who rushed to the scene to defend the miners.

The final act unfolded on October 5, one day after the Constitutional Court had annulled the results of the presidential poll altogether. About 700,000 people gathered in Belgrade. Though most of the demonstrators remained peaceful, the atmosphere was tense. Footage of angry crowds storming the Federal Parliament and the buildings of the despised state television station was broadcast worldwide as the revolution drew mounting international attention. While a closer look at these incidents reveals that there had been a significant element of planning in the uprising, it should not be forgotten that such arrangements behind the scenes were only possible in the context of a citizenry ready to defend its electoral decision.

Not unlike in 1996, it took stolen elections to overcome the general state of political apathy: The stealing of the popular vote triggered widespread outrage. The result was the emergence of a political opportunity. Expectations had been rising sharply over the summer preceding the presidential ballot, and many looked forward to the election, thinking it would provide a way out of their current misery. While attacks on demonstrators and journalists had occurred, they did not affect a large part of the population. In contrast to the 1996 municipal elections, the fact that this was a presidential election ensured that the regime’s manipulation affected voters throughout the country. Then, by canceling the indisputable opposition victory, “Milošević had crossed a tacit line that the majority of the Serbian people—however apathetic, cynical, and fearful they might be—simply would not tolerate.” Improved chances of revolutionary success could also be inferred from the cracks that appeared within the regime. As Milošević’s power itself was at stake, elite defection went much further in 2000 than it had during the 1996–97 protests. Opportunistic calls for impartial reporting suddenly emerged from within the proregime media. Army chief of staff Nebojša Pavković had before the election still openly sided with Milošević and given ominous warnings to the opposition, but after seeing how many people—and how many soldiers—opposed Milošević’s rule, he publicly declared that the armed forces would take a neutral stance and respect the electorate’s decision. Even Milošević’s special paramilitary units cooperated with the opposition in order to avoid bloodshed. Lacking the support of the security forces, and facing massive popular protests, Milošević had no option but to surrender. Thus splits
within the regime that appeared following the stolen election contributed to the successful outcome of the Serbian October Revolution.

**Stolen Elections Beyond Serbia**

Empirical evidence for the link between stolen elections and democratic revolutions is not restricted to the Serbian case. In the Philippines, a stolen election had likewise sparked the 1986 “people power” revolution that toppled dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Long before the 1986 presidential election, a group of senior military officers had been plotting against Marcos, but their endeavor only gained civilian backing after the regime doctored the poll results. When their plot was discovered and they sought refuge in two Manila military bases, millions of people peacefully took to the streets to defend them against advancing pro-Marcos forces. This case highlights some mechanisms that were not present in the Serbian case: In the Philippines, it was a faction of the military that prompted the events that led to the ouster of the dictator, while in Serbia the security forces never actively conspired against Milošević—even though they eventually withdrew their support for him. Moreover, while the Philippine opposition’s electoral victory presented an opportunity for military rebels, it also imposed important constraints on them. The rebels could not themselves assume power as they had wished, because the masses that had rallied behind presidential ballot winner Corazon C. Aquino presented a serious obstacle to any usurpation attempt by the military.19

A lesser-known example of the relationship between stolen elections and democratic revolutions is Madagascar. In 2002, President Didier Ratsiraka was ousted from office by a popular movement after manipulating election results that would probably have given his challenger Marc Ravalomanana a first-round victory. In contrast to Serbia and Philippines, however, foreign observers in Madagascar were less united in their condemnation of the incumbent’s behavior. Only after the popular uprising led by Ravalomanana—and the expression of U.S. support for this insurgency—did the French government give up its support for the Ratsiraka regime, allowing international recognition of the new government.

The most recent in the family of uprisings sparked by stolen elections took place in Georgia in November 2003, after then-president Eduard Shevardnadze manipulated the parliamentary elections in his favor. There is a direct link between this case and the fall of Milošević: Long before the actual poll, opponents of the Georgian regime had sought advice from Serbian activists. Antiregime protests began when the official results claimed that Georgia’s main opposition party had come in only third—contradicting the evidence from several exit polls. The demonstrations resembled those in Serbia three years earlier, and were just as effective. Demonstrators forced Shevardnadze not only to
interrupt the formal opening of the new parliament, but to flee the building. He resigned shortly thereafter. The Georgian example thus serves as another reminder that we “should attend more closely to instances of election fraud as moments when prodemocratic forces can expose the underlying illegitimacy that plagues pseudodemocracy.”

While we have argued that stolen elections provide a favorable context for staging a democratic uprising, they alone are by no means a sufficient condition for creating a revolutionary situation, let alone a revolutionary outcome. Stolen elections in Burma (1990), Algeria (1992), and Nigeria (1993) did not lead to the overthrow of these countries’ authoritarian regimes. Many factors help explain this difference, but one is particularly prominent: Stolen elections are unlikely to lead to successful democratic revolutions against fully authoritarian regimes. The main reason may be sheer intimidation: Hard-line regimes are more willing and able to kill or injure demonstrators, thus repressing or deterring popular demonstrations.

In 1990, for example, Burmese would-be demonstrators knew from the massacre of peaceful demonstrators in 1988 that the military was willing to kill thousands in order to suppress protests. This was crucial in keeping people from defending their overwhelming vote for Aung San Suu Kyi. Fully authoritarian regimes are moreover less likely than electoral authoritarian regimes to develop an electoral tradition, and in most cases, such dictatorships have not been preceded by any kind of democratic political system. In electoral authoritarian regimes, people bestow a certain degree of significance upon elections—they view voting as a right that cannot be simply “taken away”—and the moral outrage sparked by manipulated results is therefore often greater than it would be under a hard-line regime. In truly authoritarian systems, citizens know that elections are a sham and do not expect anything but a regime victory.

While a repressive authoritarian regime replaces the need for clever tactics with brute force, the ruler of an electoral authoritarian regime must constantly prove his skills in manipulating political life. Under normal circumstances, this can help him gain a reputation as a political survivor. But the stealing of an election shatters this image, and the leader loses his shield of supposed invincibility—in turn making the regime even more susceptible to popular overthrow.

Unlike fully authoritarian regimes that lack an electoral tradition, have the capacity to repress or deter protest, and need not rely on clever tactics, electoral authoritarian regimes are likely to be destabilized by stolen elections. The opposition, even if weakly organized and divided, can mobilize popular support around the ballot box. A subsequent manipulation of the results is then certain to stir up widespread outrage. In such times of revolutionary ferment the regime often splits, as the loyalty of regime personnel is put to the test. The fall of Milošević during
the Serbian October Revolution epitomizes this model, clearly illustrating why stolen elections make electoral authoritarianism so vulnerable to democratic revolution.

NOTES


8. In this section, we borrow heavily from the literature on social movements. This theoretical debt cannot be adequately expressed in a single footnote. In short, we draw upon Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contention Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds., Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).


17. See, for example, the surveys carried out by the Centar za Proucavanje Alternativa (Belgrade), available at [www.cpa-cps.org.yu/cpa-cps/cps](http://www.cpa-cps.org.yu/cpa-cps/cps), and those produced for the National Democratic Institute (Washington, D.C.), available at [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).

