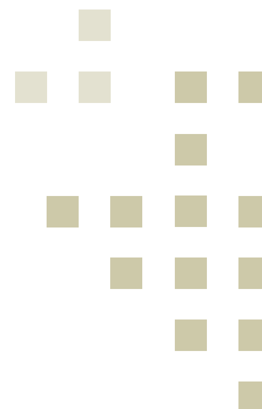
[713] Paper

Further Towards Post-Communism? From 'Left' to Regions in Ukraine

Sergey O. Kisselyov and Geir Flikke

No. 713– 2006

Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt



Utgiver: NUPI
Copyright: © Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt 2006
ISSN: 0800 - 0018
ISBN: 82 7002 152 0

Alle synspunkter står for forfatternes regning. De må ikke tolkes som uttrykk for oppfatninger som kan tillegges Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt. Artiklene kan ikke reproduseres – helt eller delvis – ved trykking, fotokopiering eller på annen måte uten tillatelse fra forfatterne.

Any views expressed in this publication are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

Besøksadresse: C.J. Hambrosplass 2d
Addresse: Postboks 8159 Dep.
0033 Oslo
Internett: www.nupi.no
E-post: pub@nupi.no
Fax: [+ 47] 22 36 21 82
Tel: [+ 47] 22 99 40 00

Further Towards Post-Communism? From ‘Left’ to Regions in Ukraine

Sergey O. Kisselyov and Geir Flikke*

[Abstract] This paper is based on an analysis of electoral support to left-wing movements of parties and blocs in Ukraine from 1998 to 2006. It argues that traditional left-wing ideologies and thereby the position of the left-wing parties have eroded in the political landscape of Ukraine. The authors hold that this is due not only to the decline of traditional left-wing ideologies in Ukraine’s electorate, but also to the return of a strong managed party for the Eastern regions of the country.

* This paper was co-written by Kisselyov and Flikke during Kisselyov’s research stay at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), August–September 2006. It was subsequently discussed at a NUPI – Mohyla Workshop in October 2006.

Introduction

Judging from the March 2006 elections to the Ukrainian parliament – the Supreme Rada – the left-wing movements and parties are experiencing a crisis.[1] True, some of the actors of this movement vociferously oppose any such suggestions, stressing how, after the collapse of the Communist system, left-wing ideas have experienced a renaissance as a tool for governing the state in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia. But the Ukrainian election results speak differently. The traditional left-wing parties are on a downward slope, and new parties are challenging these parties' 'hunting domains'. Although the 2006 elections returned the *Communist Party of Ukraine* (CPU) and the *Socialist Party of Ukraine* (SPU) to the Rada, and also to government with the *Party of Regions*, relations between these parties are ambiguous and based on votes from the Russia-friendly Eastern regions of the country.

This paper combines an analysis of the electoral system of Ukraine with Edward Shils' theory on elite competition for control over the state institutions and symbolic power of the centre. The rise of the *Party of Regions* has introduced a new strongly managed political party in Ukraine that challenges the left-wing parties, while in essence representing the same values as these parties. (Ragozin, 2006: 44.) Thus, the suggestion that Orange coalition mismanagement may have brought back former Kuchma politicians into office seems true, at least after the Yanukovich coalition entered government in August 2006. (See for instance Kuzio, 2006.) On the other hand, the new proportional electoral system will create incentives for parties that may push Ukraine further on the road toward post-Communism and force the Eastern regional elites to accept the new electoral system as the 'only game in town'. To be sure, this will depend on the outcome of the debates over constitutional reforms and government prerogatives. The *Party of Regions* has been pursuing an absolutist strategy aimed at reducing presidential powers and gaining decisive power over presidential ministries. The crucial question is whether certain issues will be removed from policies and to backroom huddles, or put out to the people in terms of clear choices and structured political conflict. Abandoning hegemonic partisan rhetoric and confrontational political demands will be the true test of Ukraine's transition.

We start by arguing that Ukraine is a special case in the comparative dimension of post-Communism, and that theorists should not see Ukraine and Russia as following identical paths in the post-Communist space. Although recent studies on 'virtual democracies' have maintained that Ukraine's transition has been managed to the same degree as that of Russia (Wilson, 2006) and even that the 2004 presidential elections have revealed fingerprints of manipulation similar to Russia (Myagkov et al. 2005), we hold that the decline of Communist parties in Ukraine and the incentives of the new electoral system may place the country on a different trajectory.

---

[1] By 'left-wing parties' we understand the CPU and the SPU. The Progressive-Socialist Party of Ukraine (PSPU) also belongs here, but will not be analysed, since it failed to cross the threshold in the 1998 elections.

Post-Communism – One Size Fits All?

Post-Communism is a slippery concept in the burgeoning literature on the post-Soviet space. Its ultimate purpose is to provide theories for understanding transitions in an area formerly dominated by the single-party structure of the Soviet Union, its ideology and its hegemonic reach into Eastern Europe. This involves both the aspect of comparison between systems of the same region, and a distinction between the new, unexplored empirical field of Eurasia and the Latin American states that gave birth to the extensive theories of transitions in the so-called 'second wave' of democratization. To the extent that transition studies have been applied on the post-Communist states, this has been under the following conditions: unlike the Latin American countries, the post-Communist states all emerged from beneath the rubble of a system heavy on ideology and state control. Moreover, they were new states, with only limited experience as independent ones, and thus forced to make a transition within several fields at the same time.

Clearly, the built-in assumption that the Communist system and ideology has been dismantled in the space of the former Soviet Union has in no way engendered an assumption that all post-Communist states are now underway to a clear-cut transition toward democracy. In fact, re-building the state may be the overriding priority for some of them – Putin's Russia being a prominent example. The simultaneous transitions in Russia proper have produced a feeble party system that in the 1990s was more multi than consolidated, a fractured civil society and a strong presidency, which under Putin has sought to exert heavy influence on politics in bordering states – Ukraine included.

Subsequently, the erstwhile argument that 'institutions matter' has been severely undermined by Russia's aborted transition. A comparison of the post-Communist systems with the Soviet past may inspire some to suggest that the installation of competitive elections was the most important institutional change in the post-Soviet space (Remington, 2004: 14–15; McFaul, 2005). Others, however, find their performance in Russia less convincing. As observed by Lilia Shevtsova (2006), 'Russia's experience has clearly undermined a basic assumption of the transition paradigm: the determinative importance of elections'. As the Russian case has unfolded, the assumption that what happens between elections has proven fundamentally important, as it is in the period between elections that the hegemonic structures of control and manipulations that characterize a competitive authoritarian regime are made. (See for instance Levitsky & Way, 2002; Schedler, 2002.)

While institutions may perform differently, one can also question whether there are ideological variations that may capture distinct features in post-Communist transitions – or whether ideology simply does not play any role at all. This in turn raises the question whether a distinction between right wing, left wing and centrists is at all applicable to post-Communist transitions, not least since traditional Communists have moved rightwards. (See Sakwa, 1998; March 2001; and Flikke, 1999.) While the classical scheme for most post-Communist analysis has been that of left-wing radicals, right-wing conservatives and centrism, which could be understood as a compromise between conservatism and radicalism, it is hard to distinguish between what is 'traditional' and what is 'radical' in the former Soviet space. In the relational game between these alternatives, the 'centrist' position has even

sculpted itself as distinctly 'non-ideological', with the reformists as their 'radical' counterpart (McFaul, 1993). Voting in parliament may give a more accurate picture of 'radical', 'centrist' and 'conservative' preferences (see Arel, 1994.) Add to this the low survival rate of erstwhile reformist political parties and the constant re-invention of various 'centrist' alternatives, and the field of ideologies becomes limited to what various elites see themselves and competitors as representing in an elite context – not what they actually represent in terms of popular mandates.

Should political developments Ukraine be any different from Russia's in this respect, or does the post-Communist paradigm represent 'one size fits all'? Some differences are obvious.

1. Firstly, in the Ukrainian context, there has been no explicitly 'national' brand of Communism. The argument of independent nationhood has been taken on by movements which, from the beginning of 1991 and earlier in dissident circles, defended a radical change of the political system on a wave of protests against the Soviet system. Movements like *Rukh* have held the flag of nationhood and language high in post-Communist Ukraine, effectively fencing out any transformation of the former Communists to a nationalist ideology. Subsequently, the Communists in Ukraine have been embedded in a clearly distinct region of the country – its industrialized Eastern parts, associated with the influence of traditional Russian culture and language. Hence, to a large extent their collective incentives[2] have been associated with a specific brand of regional management values stemming from Eastern Ukraine. Thus, Ukrainian Communists are intertwined with the fate of the elites of the Eastern region, and have little support in the more independence-minded Western parts of the country.
2. Secondly, even if there has been a distinct type of 'centrism' in post-Communist Ukraine, the statehood focus of centrist blocs has been oriented toward independence and sovereignty. As these blocs have largely been state-builders rather than nation-builders, they have not seen this process as being detached from the question of being a separate and independent state.[3] In fact, research on voting patterns in the Rada has revealed that the language issue, which has mobilized parties on issues of nationhood and independence, was not an independent variable explaining the vote on independence in the early 1990s. To the extent that spoken language mattered, it was on issues that involved economic and cultural ties to Russia. (Arel, 1994: 152.)
3. Thirdly, unlike Russia, the attempt to 'manage' a hand-over of presidential powers to a new 'party of power' from the regions backfired in Ukraine in 2002–2004, creating the huge elite divisions evidenced by the

[2] For a definition of this term, see Angelo Panebianco (1988): 10. Panebianco holds that parties are hierarchies that offer complex, immaterial incentives for association – identity, solidarity and ideology being the main ingredients. It remains to be discussed whether the regional dimension in Ukraine is an incentive of identity.

[3] In fact, many theorists claim that Ukrainian post-Communist nation-building has been led by the state, and that the focus on building institutions is the main driver in securing long-term unification of a split nation. See D'Anieri and Kuzio (2002).

Orange Autumn of 2004.[4] This rupture was clearly about not jeopardizing democracy for state-building and elite-governed backstage deals. Thus, in 2002–2004 the centrist position found itself in crisis. State-building through the presidency has not reduced divisions in the elite and the party system, but rather increased them.

4. Finally, Ukraine is the only post-Communist country that has taken the step toward a fully proportional system. While the March 2006 'founding elections' brought back the *Party of Regions*, the subsequent transition toward a proportional electoral system can be expected to lessen the possibilities of forming 'state-saving' centrist factions in parliament, and thus increase the significance of party allegiance. Attempts to build a state-building 'centrist' faction on administrative presidential resources may not be possible if a stricter system of factional alignment is introduced in the Rada. Whereas the 'centrist' label has come to designate a blurring of traditional ideologies and party lines, and the subsequent creation of 'catch-all' administrative parliamentary blocs, a strong proportional system is likely to lead to a narrowing down of the space for political back-stage manoeuvring – at least if it is consistently applied.

An analysis of the 1998–2006 electoral cycles reveals a move from Communism that clearly marks a de-ideologization of politics. Socialist parties, in decline since 1998, have now been replaced by new political forces. A partial explanation may be found in the fact that the electoral system has contributed to the formation of a cluster of non-partisan elites from the Eastern regions. In the following we will discuss the general framework of the electoral mechanism and the downward spiral of left-wing parties since 1998.

The Mixed Electoral System: Favouring Regional Values?

There are numerous ways to conceptualize the performance of electoral systems in transitional countries. On one hand, the electoral system is widely considered to be 'the most specific manipulative instrument of politics'.[5] This has generated significant interest in both the process of adoption of these electoral systems, and also the effect of systems that mixed proportional systems (PR) and single mandate elections (SMD), like that adopted in post-Communist Russia in 1993, and also Ukraine in 1997. Importantly, findings from post-Communist Russia have offered no clear-cut conclusions concerning the effect on the political landscape of a mixed PR and SMD formula (Moser, 1997). As suggested by Robert Moser, 'proportional representation has strengthened political parties, whereas plurality elections have fostered an influx of independent candidates that has undermined the role of parties' (ibid: 285). This is basically due to the fact that in post-Communist Russia, factions were formed partly as caucuses in the Duma after the found-

4 In popular consciousness, left-wingers are Communists, or those who share their values, whereas the right wing consists of those who share the opposite values. To this we could add the trivial assumption that any political ideology is first and foremost a system of political values, in this case a system of clearly opposing political values.

5 Giovanni Sartori, quoted in Lijphart (1994): 139. Lijphart rightly adds that the degree of manipulation depends on the willingness of politicians to apply the electoral system as a system of managing elections. Roughly said, we suggest that this may be more frequent in transitional states than in established democracies.

ing elections of 1993, and partly because 'centrist' caucuses were built successively throughout 1994–1995 on resources stemming from the government and the presidential apparatus.

A second option is to see the establishment of new electoral systems as the most consistent change in the post-Communist political systems arising in 1990–91, and as an institution that 'institutionalizes uncertainty' (McFaul, 2005). Post-Communist elections are uncertain in terms of outcomes, this argument goes, yet the fundamental change in institutions may alter the norms and behaviour of elites, so transitional countries may consequently develop hybrid regimes – or electoral democracies. This implies that the institution of competing for votes becomes the norm, not the exception. Hence, transitional studies claim that the electoral institution itself is a way of ensuring a 'definiteness of rules, and the indefiniteness of outcomes' (Sakwa, 2005: 16).

While the introduction of competitive elections is beyond doubt the major institutional change that distinguishes the Soviet system from a post-Communist one, studies of the effect of electoral systems on elite behaviour may be rendered difficult by frequent changes in the electoral system itself. Ukraine is a case in point: it has passed from a two-round single-mandate system in the 1990 elections to a mixed single-mandate and proportional system adopted by the Rada in October 1997 and put into practice in the 1998 and 2002 elections, and finally a proportional system in 2006. (Arel, 1994: 128; Ragozin, 2005). Thus, the institution of regular elections may have produced differing incentives for parties and political forces throughout the period, hampering the formation of consistent political blocs and parties. Rather than institutionalizing uncertainty, the institution itself may have been a source of increased uncertainty and increased elite competition. Moreover, a feature of transitional countries may be that the electoral fabric itself can be used to create definite outcomes through the very indefiniteness of rules. The art of 'electoral engineering' subsequently becomes not only an art of choosing a system for elections, but also of employing the system as a tool for elite struggles. When elites based on certain opposing political values clash, the electoral system itself is the loser.[6]

Here we take as our point of departure the fact that Ukraine's 1998 parliamentary elections were conducted according to a mixed SMD and PR system where 225 deputies from parties and blocs were elected on the basis of a proportional system in a federal electoral region and 225 were elected in SMDs. In effect, the SMD system allowed politicians to self-nominate, given a sufficient number of signatures and substantial regional funding.

A distinct structural trait of the Ukrainian mixed system may have given an advantage to the populous regions in the East. The population of Ukraine is not uniformly distributed, so the number of SMDs varied from region to region. In Donetsk, there were 23 SMDs, meaning that this region could bring 23 deputies to the Rada. In the West, however, Chernovitsky oblast had only four SMDs. The seven Western oblasts of Volhynsk, Zakarpatya, Ivano-Frankovsk, L'vov, Rovensk, Ternopol and Chernovitsky had a total of 42 SMDs, whereas Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts had 35 SMDs. When we

[6] This is evidenced in a recent study of 'fingerprints' in the Ukrainian and Russian elections of 2000 and 2004 (Myagkov et al. 2005).

include Kharkov oblast, the total is 49 SMDs, and with Dnipropetrovsk – 66. Thus, the Western regions had altogether 18.67% of 225 deputies elected in SMDs, while three of the Eastern regions had together 21.78% of the SMDs. Of the eight regions with more than ten SMDs, six were in the East and the South. *(See Table 1.)*

Table 1: Number of SMDs in Regions

Oblast	Number of SMDs
Donetsk	23
Dnepropetrovsk	17
Kharkov	14
Lugansk	12
Lvov	12
Kiev City	12
Odessa	11
ARC (Crimea)	10
Zaporozhya	9
Vinnitsa	8
Kiev	8
Poltava	8
Khmelnitsky	7
Cherkassk	7
Zhitomyr	6
Ivano-Frankovsk	6
Mykolaev	6
Sumy	6
Kherson	6
Chernigovsk	6
Volhynsk	5
Zakarpatya	5
Kirovograd	5
Rovensk	5
Ternopol	5
Chernovitsky	4
Sevastopol City	2
Total	**225**

This could be expected to have a significant impact on the formation of political values and preferences in the Rada, and imply that the political spectrum in the SMD part of the Rada was more likely to be defined by Donbass than Bukovina. Eastern regional values such as language, religious confession and relations to other cultures (Russia and the Western influence) would consequently matter.[7] Thus, given the fact that there were more SMDs in the

[7] This divide is analysed elsewhere. In brief: contemporary cultural values in Galitsiya, especially around L'vov, have reflected the influence of Poland. The cultural values of Bukovina have been shaped by the influence of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Monarchy, of which it was a part. Here influences from Hungarian and Romanian cultures are evident. In the Zakarpatya, the influence of Hungary has traditionally been strong. Subsequently, the values of the highly industrialized regions Eastern parts of Ukraine, espe-

Eastern regions than in the West of Ukraine, one could hypothesize that the culture of the industrialized East would have a greater impact on the formation of political values in the Ukrainian state.

While differences in values could be thoroughly evidenced only through a roll-call analysis evaluating the impact of linguistic issues on voting in the Rada,[8] a breakdown of faction alignment stemming from the mixed SMD and PR elections to the 1998 Rada suggests several things *(see Table 2*). On the face of things, the 1998 elections meant a triumph for traditional left-wing parties, upheld by their regional base in the Eastern parts of Ukraine. *The Communist Party of Ukraine* was the undoubted leader, having received 124 mandates in parliament, 27.6% of the total mandates of the Rada (445) and overall 46.42% of the vote in the proportional elections.[9]

Table 2: 1998 Election Results and Seats in the Rada

Blocs and parties	Percentage in PR Elections	Seats from PR Elections	SMD Seats	Total Seats in Rada (March 1998)
CPU	24.65	84	40	124
Peoples' Movement of Ukraine (Rukh)	9.4	32	14	46
SPU and PPU Bloc	8.55	29	5	34
Green Party of Ukraine	5.43	19	–	19
Peoples' Democratic Party	5.01	17	6	23
Hromada	4.67	16	4	20
PSPU	4.04	14	1	15
SDPU(u)	4.01	14	3	17
Party of Regions	–	–	1	1
Others			22	22
Independents (self-nomination)			129	129
Total		**225**	**225**	**450**

The Communists had a strong election in the Eastern parts of the country, thus reflecting the 'birth marks' of this political force after its renaissance in 1993.[10] After the banning of the *Communist Party of Ukraine* in 1991, the revived party held its founding congress in Donetsk on 19 June 1993. The imprint of this region was kept, and in 1998 it blossomed in a virtual euphoria for the return of the left. As one leader of the CPU, also a member of the central committee, claimed a few months after the 1998 elections: 'We have won back the power in these elections, and we will never give it to anyone

cially Donbass (Donetsk, Lugansk oblast') have traditionally been closer to the Russian culture.

8 Data for such a roll-call analysis may be available, however, and should serve as a backbone for analyzing the linguistic factor as an independent variable in the formation of political identities in the Rada.

9 http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vd2002/webproc0v?kodvib=1&rejim=0

10 Angelo Panebianco (1988: 50) holds that the circumstances that give birth to a political organization are likely to leave an imprint on the party for years to come. This argument is basically about the fact that each party has its own 'genetic model' relating to the balance between centre control (penetration) and regional germination (diffusion). In that sense, then, the CPU definitely has a 'regional' imprint in Ukrainian politics that may indicate a strong case of diffusion, had it not been for the fact that it was certainly a party that emanated from the centre.

again'.[11] The Communists were the leading party in 19 oblasts, including the city oblasts of Sevastopol and Kiev *(Table 3)*. In Sevastopol alone the CPU received 45.99% of the vote. In Lugansk, they received 45.97% and in the Autonomous Region of Crimea (ARC) 39.34%. If we exclude the Western regions, the CPU came in second in only three oblasts – Dnepropetrovsk, Khmelnitsky and Cherkassk. Although number one in Kiev, they garnered a mere 14.14% of the vote here. In the West, the CPU had a poor showing. In Volhynsk, Rovensk and Zakarpatiya, the CPU came in third, with 9.21%, 7.55% and 6.54% respectively. In Galitsiya, CPU returns were relatively meagre. In L'vov the CPU had 4.09% of the vote (7th place); in Ivano-Frankovsk, 2.99% (8th) and in Ternopol, 2.9% and (8th).[12]

Table 3: Regional breakdown of CPU Results in 1998 Rada Elections (proportional)[13]

Region in Ukraine	Valid votes cast (N)	Votes for CPU (N)	Percentage	Regional rating
Sevastopol City Oblast	153 773	70 724	45.99	1
Lugansk	1 355 712	623 297	45.97	1
Autonomous Region of Crimea (ARC)	977 768	384 666	39.34	1
Nikolayevsk	663 341	257 893	38.87	1
Kharkov	1 537 506	545 665	35.49	1
Donetsk	2 414 935	856 323	35.45	1
Kherson	623 042	213 980	34.34	1
Zaporozhya	1 043 761	334 197	32.01	1
Chernigovsk	795 378	240 976	30.29	1
Kirovograd	671 614	195 756	29.14	1
Odessa	1 242 212	350 744	28.23	1
Dnepropetrovsk	1 917 089	491 172	25.62	2
Sumy	772 314	196 413	25.43	1
Vinnitsa	1 064 300	265 159	24.91	1
Poltava	1 007 836	239 349	23.74	1
Zhitomyr	852 270	198 515	23.29	1
Khmelnitsky	901 450	191 272	21.21	2
Kiev oblast	1024747	211 245	20.61	1
Chernovitsky	499038	100 718	20.18	1
Chekassk	837 656	158 665	18.94	2
Kiev City Oblast	1 163 633	164 608	14.14	1
Volhynsk	610 205	56 205	9.21	3
Rovensk	673 119	50 881	7.55	3
Zakarpatiya	607 852	40 378	6.64	3
L'vov	1 593 269	65 283	4.09	7
Ivano-Frankovsk	830 968	24 906	2.99	8
Ternopol	736 485	21 363	2.90	8
Ukraine	**26 571 273**	**6 550 353**	**24.65**	**1**

[11] Personal communication to Sergiy Kisselyov.
[12] http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vd2002/webproc0v?kodvib=1&rejim=0
[13] The table is sorted on percentage support in the various regions of Ukraine.

The CPU had less success in the SMD elections, but results here repeated the picture of an East–West division. The CPU returned 2 mandates of 10 in ARC, 1 of 8 in Vinnitsa, 3 of 17 in Dnepropetrovsk, 7 of 23 in Donetsk, 1 of 6 in Zhitomyr, 3 of 9 in Zaporozh'e, 8 of 12 in Lugansk, 2 of 11 in Odessa, 3 of 8 in Poltava 1 of 6 in Sumy, 2 of 12 in Kharkov, 1 of 6 in Kherson, 1 of 7 in Khmelnitsky, 2 of 7 in Cherkask and 1 of 2 in Sevastopol *(Table 2*).[14]

The Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU) entered the 1998 parliamentary elections with the support of the Peasant Party of Ukraine (PPU). The bloc *For truth, the people and Ukraine* received 29 mandates in proportional elections, and 5 in SMDs. Further, the SPU received one SMD as a party, giving them a total of 35 deputies in the Rada.[15] The bloc came in first in two oblasts, Cherkassk and Khmelnitsky, with 25.95% and 21.26%, respectively, of the vote. In seven oblasts it came in second: Poltava (21.3%), Vinnitsa (19.7%), Chernigovsk (18.83%), Kirovograd (17.27%), Kiev (16.16%), Zhitomyr (15.19%) and Kherson (11.23%) (*Table 4*). As with the CPU, the bloc had less support in the Western regions, in 9th place in Zakarpatiya, 11th in Ternopol, 9th in Ivano-Frankovsk and 11th in L'vov. The most marked differences in patterns were found in Donetsk, where the SPU bloc came in 13th place and in ARC and Sevastopol, where the bloc came in 9th place. Of the 34 deputies in the Rada, the SPU had 15, the PPU 14, adding to this 2 mandates in the SMDs and 3 mandates in the SMDs from the SPU (Kiev – Aleksandr Moroz, Kherson – Stanislav Nikolaenko, and Khmelnitsky – Ivan Chizh).

14 http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vd2002/webproc0v?kodvib=1&rejim=0
15 http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vd2002/webproc0v?kodvib=1&rejim=0

Table 4: Regional breakdown of SPU Results in 1998 Rada Elections (proportional)[16]

Region in Ukraine	Valid votes cast (N)	Votes for the SPU (N)	Percentage	Regional rating
Cherkassk	837 656	217 453	25.95	1
Poltava	1 007 836	214 721	21.30	2
Khmelnitsky	901 450	191 690	21.26	1
Vinnitsa	1 064 300	209 676	19.70	2
Chernigovsk	795 378	150 625	18.93	2
Kirovograd	671 614	116 040	17.27	2
Kiev oblast	1 024 747	165 691	16.16	2
Zhitomyr	852 270	129 464	15.19	2
Sumy	772 314	100 783	13.04	3
Kherson	623 042	70 024	11.23	2
Odessa	1 242 212	91 838	7.39	3
Chernovitsky	499 038	33 185	6.64	4
Rovensk	673 119	43 991	6.53	4
Volhynsk	610 205	36 475	5.97	5
Kharkov	1 537 506	90 979	5.91	4
Nikolayevsk	663 341	37 133	5.59	5
Zaporozhya	1 043 761	54 473	5.21	6
Lugansk	1 355 712	70 619	5.20	3
Kiev City Oblast	1 163 633	54 123	4.65	7
Dnepropetrovsk	1 917 089	60 868	3.17	5
Zakarpatiya	607 852	14 515	2.38	9
Ternopol	736 485	15 319	2.08	11
Ivano-Frankovsk	830 968	16 676	2.00	9
Donetsk	2 414 935	43 116	1.78	13
L'vov	1 593 269	25 988	1.63	11
Autonomous Region of Crimea (ARC)	977 768	15 926	1.62	9
Sevastopol City Oblast	153 773	2 397	1.55	9
Ukraine	**26 571 273**	**2 273 788**	**8.55**	**3**

The left-wing parties thus experienced a renaissance in the 1998 elections, based partly on electoral support in regions with a traditional set of regional values, but they failed to create a common left-wing bloc. Since 1998, the CPU and SPU have accused each other of being 'opportunist', 'revisionists' and what-not, in the competition for the same socialist votes.

This was especially evident in the 1999 presidential elections. The competitors for the presidential post did not receive a sufficient number of votes in the first round, as the vote returned Kuchma as the leader, with Pyotr Simonenko (CPU) at second, and Oleksandr Moroz (SPU) at third. Hypothetically, the CPU and SPU could have cut a deal on the basis of the fact that the CPU had received the maximum of what it could expect, and thus leave the second round to Moroz. However, the left-wing parties were unable to 'di-

[16] The table is sorted on percentage support in the various regions of Ukraine.

vide the cake' in this way. And so, Symonenko entered into the second round and lost to Kuchma, starting the long decline of the left wing in Ukraine.

No less interesting is the fact that after the 1998 elections, 129 SMD deputies were without any clear factional alignment, leaving the Eastern regional dimension unaccounted for in terms of party affiliation. Since *Rukh* had few representatives from SMDs, the Western value system was not represented among independents. Hence, at a time when the regional elites had not yet consolidated, the electoral system and the East/West distribution of SMDs tilted in favour of the values of the East, but without uniting these in a single political bloc.

Thus, the significant result of the left-wing parties also marked the impending crisis in left-wing ideas. Together, the CPU and SPU could have created the basis for a 'ruling class', with the subsequent diffusion of leftist ideas and values into society. As this did not happen, the field was left open for other contenders from the Eastern regions.[17] This was evidenced in the 2002 elections.

Elite competition: The Beginning of the End for the Left, 1998–2002

Elite competition can be expected to increase in electoral campaigns and during the formation of a parliament and a government. In transition theories, this competition is linked to norm internalization – i.e. that democracy becomes a true incentive for elites to the degree that these abide by the formal rules and avoid backstage deals. If they do, norms change, and this may again lead to changes in deeply embedded political cultures.[18]

Traditional elite perspectives have been more prone to see electoral competition as reflecting competing elites and regional cultures, which again are mobilized in electoral races. In this view, the electoral struggle is a function of elite mobilization – the struggle to form a ruling class of elites and the subsequent transformation of elite interests into state interests. In this case, competition does not end with the formation of a ruling class. In the opposition between centre and periphery, the ruling elite will not only make use of the advantage of being in power, but also strive to elevate regional values, including cultural ones, to the level of state values.

Edward Shils has observed that the division between centre and periphery is especially strong in causing elite mobilization, which articulates itself in a struggle over the values of the centre, and also the vales of the institutions:

---

[17] True, the development of the right-centrist forces showed a similar trajectory. In 1998, they were unable to unite around common values. Thus the 2002 parliamentary elections mark two important tidal changes in Ukrainian politics. The first is the decline of the left wing, first and foremost the Communists. Second, the right-centrist forces that had success in the elections were merely a preliminary stage in the formation of new elites in Ukraine. To this we should add that the successful use of administrative resources in the 2002 elections in the SMD districts led this technology being embodied in the presidential elections in 2004. The fact that this technology was made an aim in itself does not mean that it was a success or that it could be used without restrictions. Indeed, it created the Orange Revolution, which to some extent prolonged the life of those elites that had gained the upper hand in the 2002 elections, but were unable to build a coalition.

[18] See for instance Diamond (1999: 166), who holds that the adherence to 'proceduralism' is mandatory in understanding the degree of democracy in democratizing states.

'The central value system is constituted by the values which are pursued and affirmed by the elites of the constituent subsystems and of the organizations which are comprised in the subsystems' (1975: 48). Shils holds that the three components defining the politics of the centre are values and beliefs, institutions, and finally elites. The elites are normally characterized by passivity with regard to the centre, unless the centre offers possibilities for determining the values of society and the state. Should the centre be incapable of defining these values, other regional elites will seek to form a ruling class.

Shils' theory has been criticized for not relating to transitional countries, but it still sufficiently explains processes that have been and are at work in Ukraine since from 2000 (see Migdal, 2005). Towards the 2002 elections, two distinct regional elite groups were gradually built up, around former Minister of Finance, Viktor Yushchenko, and various president-initiated state-saving projects leaning on support from the Eastern elite. The new cycle of elite struggles for control over the centre decimated support for the left-wing parties and introduced a new democratization agenda at the expense of traditional patronage values. Thus, in the 2002 election results, we observe a clear decline in the popularity of left wing values. True, the CPU came in second place, tailing the powerful bloc of Victor Yushchenko, *Our Ukraine*. In the proportional elections the CPU gained 19.98% of the vote, and received 59 seats in the Rada *(Table 5)*.[19] But in the proportional elections alone, the CPU lost 25 mandates. In the SMDs the CPU continued to lose ground as well, with only one mandate from the ACR (10), one in Dnepropetrovsk (16), one in Donetsk (23), one in Zaporozhya (9), and one in Sumy (6). In addition, the CPU had one deputy – Sergey Sinchenko –in the 109th electoral district in Lugansk, although he was elected as 'non-partisan'. All in all, the CPU received only 15.38% of the mandates the party had gained in SMDs in the 1998 elections.

19 http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vd2002/webproc0v

Table 5: 2002 Election Results and Seats in the Rada

Blocs and parties	**Percentage PR elections**	**Seats from PR elections**	**SMD seats**	**Total Seats March 2002**	**Total seats January 2004**
Our Ukraine	23.57	70	42	112	102
CPU	19.98	59	6	65	59
Tymoshenko Bloc	7.26	22	–	22	19
SPU	6.87	20	2	22	20
For a United Ukraine	11.77	35	86	121	Split after elections
Regions of Ukraine					67
Labour Ukraine					42
Democratic Initiatives					18
Peoples' Power					22
Agrarian Party					14
Peoples' Democratic Party					16
Peoples' Choice					14
SDPU(u)	6.27	19	8	27	36
Subtotal				148	229
Independents			80	80	20
Total in Rada				**449**	**449**

Source: Karatnycky (2006): 35

The geographical dimension did not change substantially. The only thing that should have been of concern to the CPU, but that did not concern them, was the fact that in Donetsk they tailed the pro-presidential bloc *For a United Ukrain*e, gaining 29.78% there. At any rate, the CPU came in first in Lugansk (39.68%), ARC (33.91%), and Zaporozhya (33.4%). Although the CPU came first in Sevastopol, there was a significant decline in support – from 45.99% in 1998 to 32.73% in 2002 (*Table 6*). An interesting change was seen in Dnepropetrovsk, where the CPU rose from second to first place and received 31.86% of the vote, due to an internal crisis in the *Hromada* party of Pavel Lazarenko. In Kherson, Kharkov, Nikolayev, Odessa and Kirovograd, the CPU also came in first place with 31.59%, 30.69%, 29.29%, 26.2% and 22.24%, respectively, of the vote *(Table 6)*.[20]

The CPU fared substantially worse in the Western regions: in Ternopol (1.55%), Ivano-Frankovsk (1.94%), L'vov (2.63%), Volhynsk (5.32%), Rovensk (5.34%) and Zakarpatiya (5.96%). For Kiev and Vinnitsa, the results were 9.04% and 11.72%. In all these oblasts, the CPU came in fourth place. As there were only five parties and blocs that managed to cross the threshold, the result tells a story of decline.

---

20 http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vd2002/WEBPROC16V?kodvib=400&kodpart=140

Table 6: Regional breakdown of CPU Results in 2002 Rada Elections (proportional)

Region in Ukraine	Valid votes cast (N)	Votes for CPU (N)	Percentage	Regional rating
Lugansk	1 282 274	508 862	39.68	1
Autonomous Region of Crimea (ARC)	962 493	326 451	33.91	1
Zaporozhya	1 004 699	335 616	33.40	1
Sevastopol City Oblast	177 043	57 951	32.73	1
Dnepropetrovsk	1 843 289	587 386	31.86	1
Kherson	600 052	189 575	31.59	1
Kharkov	1 492 514	458 139	30.69	1
Donetsk	2 482 577	739 471	29.78	2
Nikolayevsk	633 121	185 498	29.29	1
Odessa	1 132 260	296 758	26.20	1
Kirovograd	635 228	141 286	22.24	1
Zhitomyr	797 864	150 399	18.85	2
Poltava	964 626	170 654	17.69	3
Chernigovsk	750 836	124 886	16.63	2
Sumy	760 297	125 420	16.49	3
Khmelnitsky	854 274	115 062	13.46	2
Cherkassk	794 351	105 665	13.30	3
Vinnitsa	1 042 566	122 236	11.72	4
Kiev oblast	1 022 781	110 577	10.81	3
Kiev City Oblast	1 269 618	114 809	9.04	4
Chernovitsky	470 755	38 479	8.17	3
Zakarpatiya	606 977	36 233	5.96	4
Rovensk	685 367	36 662	5.34	4
Volhynsk	635 575	33 841	5.32	4
L'vov	1 505 150	39 664	2.63	4
Ivano-Frankovsk	797 263	15 496	1.94	4
Ternopol	705 557	10 998	1.55	4
Ukraine	**25 909 407**	**5 178 074**	**19.98**	**2**

As for the SPU, the bloc received 22 mandates in the 2002 elections, 20 in the proportional elections, and two mandates in SMD elections in Poltava and Kherson. As in 1998, the deputy elected from Kherson was Stanislav Nikolaenko. Overall, the SPU came out as the winner of the proportional elections only in one oblast – Poltava, with 22.05% of the vote. The SPU came in second place in the four oblasts of Vinnitsa (21.26%), Cherkassk (18.9%), Kirovograd (15.15%) and Kiev (11.93%). In the North-East of Chernigovsk and Sumy, where the SPU ranked third and fourth, it received 15.13% and 15.08% of the vote. This is more than in Kiev, and more than in Kherson, where the SPU ranked as third with 8.21% of the vote. A similar situation was seen in Zhitomyr, where the SPU ranked fourth, but gained 11.13% of the vote.[21] This means that, although the SPU clearly lost votes

[21] http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vd2002/webproc0v

compared to the 1998 elections, its electoral geography did not change substantially. Concerning the number of mandates gained in the 1998 elections, however, the SPU received only 62.86% of these in 2002.

Table 7: Regional breakdown of SPU Results in 2002 Rada Elections (proportional)

Region in Ukraine	Valid votes cast (N)	Votes for SPU (N)	Percentage	Regional rating
Poltava	964 626	212 709	22.05	1
Vinnitsa	1 042 566	221 662	21.26	2
Cherkassk	794 351	150 504	18.94	2
Kirovograd	635 228	96 248	15.15	2
Chernigovsk	750 836	113 615	15.13	3
Sumy	760 297	114 673	15.08	4
Kiev oblast	1 022 781	122 088	11.93	2
Zhitomyr	797 864	88 864	11.13	4
Khmelnitsky	854 274	74 473	8.71	4
Kherson	600 052	49 317	8.21	3
Odessa	1 132 260	85 096	7.51	4
Nikolayevsk	633 121	34 052	5.37	5
Kharkov	1 492 514	68 497	4.58	7
Dnepropetrovsk	1 843 289	81 583	4.42	7
Kiev City Oblast	1 269 618	54 282	4.27	6
Rovensk	685 367	22 846	3.33	5
Zaporozhya	1 004 699	33 012	3.28	8
Lugansk	1 282 274	40 495	3.15	6
Chernovitsky	470 755	12 581	2.67	6
Donetsk	2 482 577	45 285	1.82	6
Volhynsk	635 575	10 115	1.59	6
Sevastopol City Oblast	177 043	2 534	1.43	14
Zakarpatiya	606 977	8 428	1.38	9
Ivano-Frankovsk	797 263	8 556	1.07	6
L'vov	1 505 150	15 291	1.01	6
Ternopol	705 557	6 540	0.92	6
Autonomous Region of Crimea (ARC)	962 493	7 296	0.75	16
Ukraine	**25 909 407**	**1 780 642**	**6.87**	**5**

The 'left-wing' blocs were still a considerable political force. Since 1999, however, they have proved unable to utilize their coalition potential and join hands. Shils' suggestion that elites should consolidate on a set of values in order to form a government did not find favour with the Communists from 1998 and onwards. There might be several reasons for this. Firstly, the country's economic growth from 2000 and onwards was led by reform specialists in the Kuchma government in the circles around Yushchenko, and these

forces transformed their economic victories into a bloc that challenged the Kuchma presidency on the basis of West Ukrainian regional values. Apart from the obvious fact that Communists were not at the helm of this economic programme, the reform programme also mobilized a new industrialized elite in the East to modernize and adopt a new reform agenda that was to be coupled with traditional East Ukrainian values.

Second, as new Ukrainian elites emerged in the Western regions, the need for transformed elites appeared also in the East. Representing traditional left-wing values, the Communists were unable to rise to this challenge, being too heavily associated with socialism, and also unable to manage the leap toward a new 'national' brand of Communism. Consequently, the declining left opened the door to a regional alternative – also from Donetsk.

The 1998–2002 Elections: The Eastern Regional Elite Regroups

The rise of a regional alternative is linked to the crisis of the Kuchma presidency from 2000 and onwards. The crisis of 'Kuchmagate', and the challenge from new elites with support in the Western regions, effectively undermined presidential authority and made clear the stark need to bring new elites into the equation. Symptomatically, the presidential structures staked their bets on the SMD system and created factions in the Rada on this basis *(Table 5)* (Karatnycky, 2006). The Kuchma administration, seeing the challenge of new elites led by reformers in government as one that would divide the country into two parts, subsequently launched the *For a United Ukraine Bloc* to foster a pro-presidential alternative in the Rada, as well as to frame the contenders as the instigators of a divisive national policy.

As elite divisions intensified, we cannot argue that the number of political blocs had anything to do with the electoral system itself. In fact, the polarization between pro-presidential forces in the SMDs and the opposition in the proportional elections reflected both a struggle for a new electoral system that would reflect the growing influence of political parties in the West Ukrainian regions and a struggle over the presidency as such. It also reflected a trait more common in presidential elections – the polarization between two political alternatives and blocs capable of promoting their presidential candidate in a winner-takes-all presidential election. Regional values, hitherto associated with SMD elections and the Communist revival, were in decline, as opposition parties came out with a more pro-Western and democracy-oriented alternative. The crisis of the left was no doubt a supporting factor in the search for new regional alternatives.

A regional alternative had been in the making from 1997. In assessing the electoral success of the *Party of Regions* from the moment of its creation – the founding congress on 26 October 1997, when the *Party for Regional Revival* was formed – we note the following: The founding congress took place in Kiev, although the party from the very beginning was conceived as an East Ukrainian political force, or rather a Donetsk party, since its first chairman was Vladimir Rybak, mayor of Donetsk. The 'regionals' insisted that the major difference between the PRR was 'that it first and foremost has defined as its ultimate goal to defend the interests of all regions'.[22] Still, the

[22] http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/meet/history

PPR made a poor showing in the 1998 elections: it ranked 19 of a total of 30 parties, failed to cross the 4% threshold in the PR elections, and received only one seat in the Rada, with Vladimir Rybak passing in the 45th single mandate district in Donetsk.

The ambition to be seen as the defender of regional values was not reflected in wide national support. Strange as it may seem, the *Party of Regions* had its highest support in one Western region in the proportional elections – Chernovitsky oblast. Here the *Party of Regions* received about 4.57% of the vote and rated number 9. Donetsk came in second in the proportional elections. The party ranked number 9 here also, with 2.54% of the vote. All in all, the *Party of Regions* fared poorly in the proportional elections and SMD elections in 1998, yet the formation of new regional elites was underway. The subsequent dilemma of the 1999 presidential elections may have paved the way for considering this alternative. The rivalries between the CPU and SPU in the 1999 elections, and the failed attempt to get CPU to withdraw its candidate in favour of the more 'electable' rival Oleksandr Moroz seems to have discredited the left wing in the elite, paving the way for the possibility of a new constellation of regional elites (Wilson, 2006: 239).

In 2002, opposition forces with an electoral base in Western Ukraine effectively challenged the left-wing parties *both* in the proportional elections and the SMDs.[23] Victor Yushchenko's bloc *Our Ukraine* received 23.57% of the vote in the proportional elections, and only 11 mandates more than the Communists. In the SMDs the ratio was different. Here *Our Ukraine* surpassed the Communists with a ratio of 42:6, giving the bloc 112 mandates in the Rada, against 65 from the CPU. This may seem an anomaly, since the mixed system actually favoured the Eastern region. The *For a United Ukraine* bloc received half of the mandates of *Our Ukraine* in the proportional elections (35 mandates), and caught up in the SMDs, where it took 86 mandates, becoming the largest bloc after the 2002 elections (*Table 5*). But the fingerprints of the presidential administration in this bloc were more than evident, as was the futility of having the bloc run in proportional elections. As Andrew Wilson puts it, the local machines of the *For a United Ukraine* were a 'necessary part of the authorities' "administrative" effort in the constituencies, but they made it much harder to reinvent the bloc for the list vote' (Wilson, 2006: 105). Moreover, its ideological message was 'too Soviet, too paternalistic, too "yesterday"' (ibid.).

While the *Party of the Regions* did not run in the elections, it regrouped in the Rada on the basis of deputies from *For a United Ukraine*, which split immediately after the 2002 elections *(Table 5).* Notably, the return of the regions was sculpted as a return of a credible presidential candidate when the president nominated Viktor Yanukovich as prime minister on 21 November 2002. The nomination brought the Eastern economic elite back into government and politics, this time not on the basis of old left-wing ideals. Indeed,

---

[23] *Our Ukraine* was basically lifted to victory by the Western regions, which in general do not shape the political climate in the country. Thus, in Ivano-Frankovsk oblast, *Our Ukraine* emerged with a proportion of the vote comparable only to Soviet times – 74.61%. This is a somewhat special record of this time. The changes in the Supreme Rada were possible only due to the intense diversity of votes cast in the Southern and Eastern regions, where – in addition to the powerful electoral bloc of Yuliya Timoshenko. The *YyTB* gained 22 mandates in the federal electoral district, and none in the SMDs.

the decline of the left wing was evident. After the 2002 elections a new pro-presidential bloc took the helm. However, this bloc basically managed to hold itself up thanks to the increasingly authoritarian presidential power that none could oppose effectively. Projects like the *Ukraine without Kuchma* proved to be little else than ephemeral soap bubbles, incapable of promoting any significant changes for society at large. In the end, the revival of regionalism came to be associated with reliance on administrative methods and 'managed democracy', which further exacerbated tensions within the electorate.

Polarization: The 2004 – 2006 Cycle

Electing a president is the opposite of electing a parliament – or so the books say. This was certainly the case with the heated 2004 elections in Ukraine. The rise of opposition parties in the parliamentary elections in 2002 – basically in the proportional elections – and the subsequent consolidation of a new Eastern regional bloc prepared the ground for a presidential election between two distinct alternatives. While the structure of parliamentary elections is such that diffusion of votes between several alternatives is likely to happen, presidential elections are all about a stand-off of two distinct alternatives. (See Moser, 1998.) As with the presidential elections of 1999, Ukraine faced a two-round election if none of the alternatives managed to gain an absolute majority in the first round. The results of these elections are analysed elsewhere. Suffice it to say note that the gradual build-up of the East–West campaign, with Eastern governors blocking campaigning from the West in the Eastern parts and the Western-based parties rallying for comprehensive democratization, created grounds for a rift in the elite that again spurred decisive collective action in-between the rounds. In essence, the 'Orange revolution' was all about elite conflict and subsequent societal mobilization. Western Ukraine defended 'Orange' values, while the East defended traditional administrative power, paternalism and ties with Russia.

While the issues were old, the contenders were new. Yushchenko and Yanukovich appeared first and foremost as presidential candidates and leaders of blocs that were capable of supporting the bid for presidential power. The increasing significance of the presidency structured political competition in the vein of a 'winner-takes all' contest (Moser, 1998), where political alternatives sculpted themselves either as a coalition of political parties aiming to increase accountability toward the electorate and address questions of civil society, or as a more traditional 'party of power', aiming to lift East Ukrainian issues to the level of state power.

While the number of civil society organizations engaged in collective action and the spirit of the 'Orange revolution' was a convincing one, the three-round elections in 2004 did not imply a 'seismic shift Westward in the geopolitics of the region' (Karatnycky, 2005: 35). Subsequent squabbles about federal reforms, constitutional reforms and economic policies created tensions within the 'Orange' government, and led finally to its downfall in September 2005. While there might have been many reasons for this, including the influence of Russia, the interim period from 2004–2006 confirmed the difficulties experienced by all transitions in trying to make several reforms simultaneously, without a clear-cut agenda or enough elite consensus

about the scope and pace of the transition. President Yushchenko found himself caught between the 'devil and the deep blue sea' – seeking to preserve continuity in government, independence from outspoken political positions, the role as a major broker of a divided country, all the while adhering to the scheme of electoral reforms. The fatal 2004 elections and subsequent international condemnations of them may have locked the presidency on abiding by the electoral reforms and holding free and fair elections on time. The tool for this has been to pact elite differences. The Rada elections have in this sense served as a primary incentive for contenders, but also the sole constraint that the presidency has been able to exercise on elite competition.

The fact that the presidency vested authority in defending constitutional changes may have set a benchmark for a deeper transformation, making regular elections in accordance with a fixed scheme the rule, not the exception. Two facts may testify to this. Firstly, the ambiguity of Rada deputies concerning the formation of an anti-crisis government in August 2006 suggests that political parties have a vested interest in institutions. Secondly, the left-wing parties that lost the 2006 parliamentary election play a role as assistants to this new system, both *de facto* and *de jure*. Hence, a new political system may be about to emerge in Ukraine, putting the country on a post-Communist track. Notably, the March 2006 elections have confirmed the decline of the left-wing parties *(Table 8)*. These parties could have been expected to do well in a proportional election, given their traditional focus on partisanship and ideology. They did not, instead losing votes to the radical overnight transformation of the *Party of Regions* as a party for majoritarian SMD elections, to a party for proportional elections. The results testify to the return of regional values on a proportional scheme, putting the *Party of Regions* at the top with 186 mandates, the *BYuT* with 122 mandates, *Our Ukraine* with 81, the SPU with 33, and the CPU with 21 *(Table 8)*. In the new Rada, the left-wing parties have a total of only 54 mandates – as against 158 in 1998.

Table 8: 2006 Election Results and Seats in the Rada

Parties and blocs	Percentage PR elections	Seats from PR Elections	SMD seats[24]
Party of Regions	32.12	186	n.a.
Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc	22.27	122	n.a
Our Ukraine	13.94	81	n.a.
SPU	5.67	33	n.a.
CPU	3.66	21	n.a.
Peoples' Opposition (Vitrenko)	2.93	–	n.a.
Lytvyn Bloc	2.43	–	n.a.
Ukrainian Peoples' Bloc	1.87	–	n.a.
Viche	1.74	–	n.a.
Pora	1.47	–	n.a.
Others		–	n.a.
Total		**443**	

The fact that the left-wing parties serve as supporters of a government emanating from the *Party of Regions* is not surprising, given the regional factor. Moreover, it seems that the 'Orange camp' was fatally incapable of maintaining negotiations with the SPU leader Oleksandr Moroz, who initially supported the Orange coalition exclusively on mutually beneficial conditions.[25] In other words, the political force that flexed its muscles in 1998 proved capable of playing a crucial role in 2006, despite the losses in electoral support.

On the other hand, the fusion of CPU defence of the working class and the *Party of Regions* position as defenders of managerial capitalism hints at the logic of post-Communist manipulations. Both parties were formed in one single region, Donbass and Donetsk oblast. If we compare the election results of 1998 and 2006, it is evident that the CPU votes did not go to another leftist party, but to the *Party of Regions*. This suggests that the former CPU and leftist elites have failed in forming a ruling class, but not that the Eastern elites have shed their ambition of appropriating for themselves the political centre. Since September 2006, the Yanukovich government has attempted to remove ministers appointed by president Yushchenko from government, launched the sensitive issue of making Russian a second state language for Ukraine, intruded into the presidential realm of foreign and security policies and in general revealed maximalist attitudes in co-opting state functions in the Rada and the government. This has in turn prompted Yushchenko to reconsider the constitutional amendment from 2004, paving the way for the proportional electoral system. The most populous region of Ukraine, and in many ways also the most influential one, has produced a new political force: this may testify to the fact that leftist ideas and values have failed altogether

24 This does not apply, since the elections were fully proportional.
25 As chairman of the Rada in 1998–2002, Moroz had a vested interest in the reforms of 2004 toward a parliamentary system, and naturally also a professional interest in the chairmanship. The decision to enter into coalition with the *Party of the Regions* and the CPU may have jeopardized party unity however, as several SPU members have started to talk about changing the SPU leadership.

and that Ukraine has entered a period of 'de-ideologization'. If so, then ideologies may rise again on a completely different foundation than in the 1990s.

Conclusion

According to Jürgen Habermas, an identity based on common sense is first and foremost one that supports the constitution, civic rights and the accountability of politics versus society (See Flikke & Kisselyov, 2006). The applicability of this to the countries in transition is a topic for discussion. In these countries, the political system is indeed in rapid change, likewise the parts of the national constitutions regulating power relations among institutions of government, and also the electoral system. Ukraine has undergone a rapid and considerable change of electoral rules accompanied by a subsequent sharp rise in elite competition. The major contenders in politics have been sculpting their strategies while the system itself has not been settled. This has impacted on the possibilities for identifying with a specific political system, and in the absence of a fixed system, other markers may enter into force – such as cultural ones.

The focus of transition studies on norm internalization is difficult to measure, given the quickly changing electoral framework of the period from 1998 to 2006, let alone the falsifications of the 2004 elections. Moreover, the fact that the 2006 elections have produced several attempts to form a government of 'Orange' and Westernized elites, with subsequent debates bout the coalition, its values and its constituents, and finally a return of the Eastern-based elites to government in August 2006, indicates that elections do not settle the score in a final way. What we see is a continuous struggle between the elites for establishing a final set of values in Ukrainian political life, a struggle that does not end with the proclamation of winners and losers in the elections.

The CPU and the *Party of Regions* express political sentiments and values that emanate from the Eastern regions of Ukraine. These values are linked to paternalism, a cultural orientation further eastwards towards Russia, and less focus on civic liberties.[26] Then again, the maturity of society with regard to new democratic values is an open question. Research on values in Ukraine conducted in 2003 revealed that, on the whole, few respondents seem highly concerned with civic freedoms: 7.3% agree that a 'high level of individual freedom' should be granted, 23.8% that it should be 'above average', 47.2% that it should be 'average', 14.5% 'less than average', and 7.2% 'low' (Zhaden et al., 2004: 33). Hence, if the *Party of Regions* wants electoral support, it will need to adjust to a new set of values, or follow the path of *For a United Ukraine*. This will mean adjusting to a pragmatic and less 'bossy' style of politics. This is also confirmed by the decline of the left-wing parties, which have traditionally paid greater heed to ideological questions. Left-wing parties, which depend on ideology and forge their organizations on collective incentives, would appear to have few

[26] The *Party of Regions* often claims that the inclination toward Russia is basically due to strong economic ties with Russia, but this is not the only factor.

chances of developing further in Ukraine. Whether the *Party of Regions* has this possibility will remain an issue for future elections.

References

Arel, Dominque (1994), 'Voting Behaviour in the Ukrainian Parliament', pp. 125–58 in Thomas F. Remington (ed.), *Parliaments in Transition.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

D'Anieri, Paul and Taras Kuzio (eds) (2002), *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building in Ukraine*. Westport, London: Praeger.

Diamond, Larry (1999), *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Flikke, Geir & Sergey Kisselyov (2006), *Beyond Recognition: Ukraine and Europe after the Orange Revolution*. Oslo: NUPI.

Flikke, Geir (1999), 'Patriotic Left-Centrism: The Zigzags of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation', *Europe-Asia Studies,* 51 (2): 275–98.

Karatnycky, Adrian (2006), 'The Fall and Rise of Ukraine's Political Opposition: From Kuchmagate to the Orange Revolution', pp. 29–44 in Anders Åslund & Michael McFaul (eds), *Revolution in Orange.* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Karatnycky, Adrian (2005), 'Ukraine's Orange Revolution', *Foreign Affairs*, 84 (2): 35–52.

Kuzio, Taraz (2006) 'The Ugly Truths of Ukraine's Election Results, 2004 and 2006', *The Ukrainian Observer*, 7 September 2006.

Levitsky, Steven & Lucan A. Way (2002), 'The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (2): 51–65.

Lijphart, Arend (1994), *Electoral Systems and Party Systems.* New York: Oxford University Press.

March, Luke (2001), 'For Victory? The Crisis and Dilemmas of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53 (2): 263–90.

McFaul, Michael (2005), 'The Electoral System', pp. 61–79 in Stephen White, Zvi Gitel'man & Richard Sakwa (eds), *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

McFaul, Michael (1993), 'Russian Centrism and Revolutionary Transitions', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 9 (3): 196–222.

Migdal, J.S. (2005), 'A Model of State – Society relations', pp. 288–302 in H.J. Wiarda (ed.): *Comparative Politics. Critical Concepts in Political Science.* New York: Routledge.

Moser, Robert (1998) 'The Electoral Effect of Presidentialism in Post-Soviet Russia', in pp. 54–75 in John Löwenhardt (ed.), *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia*. London: Frank Cass.

Moser, Robert G. (1997), 'The Impact of Parliamentary Electoral Systems in Russia', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 13 (3): 284–302.

Myagkov, Mikhail; Peter C. Ordeshook & Dimitry Shakin (2005), 'Fraud or Fairytales: Russia and Ukraine's Electoral Experience', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21 (2): 91–131.

Panebianco, Angelo (1988) *Political Parties: Organization and Power.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ragozin, Nikolay (2006), *Ukraina: Partii i partiynaya sistema*, Donetsk: Nord-Press.
Remington, Thomas F. (2004), *Politics in Russia*, 3rd edition. New York: Pearson–Longman.
Sakwa, Richard (2005) 'Politics in Russia', in Stephen White, Zvi Gitel'man & Richard Sakwa (eds), *Developments in Russian Politics 6.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Sakwa, Richard (1998), 'Left or Right? The CPRF and the Problem of Democratic Consolidation in Russia', pp. 128–58 in John Löwenhardt (ed.), *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia.* London: Frank Cass.
Schedler, Andreas (2002), 'The Menu of Manipulation', *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (2): 36–50.
Shevtsova, Lilia (2006), *Imitation Russia*. Moscow Carnegie Centre.
Shils, Edward (1975) *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology. Selected Papers of Edward Shils, Vol. 2.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Wilson, Andrew (2006), *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Zhadan, Irina; Sergey Kisselyov, Oksana Kisselyova & Sergey Ryabov (2004), *Political Culture and the Problem of Civil Society in Ukraine.* Kiev: Mohyla Academy