

## CENTRE POLITICS IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Patronage, Power and Virtuality

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### ABSTRACT

In this article we examine the manner in which clientelistic and programmatic types of party competition structure centre politics in Russia and Ukraine. The main research focus is on variations in the size of parliamentary factions that claim to be centrist in their ideological orientation. Changes in the composition of centre factions, their voting behaviour and changes in membership size are compared with each other and with a similar analysis for left and right parties. Data from the 1994-8 and 1998-02 parliamentary terms in Ukraine and the 1993-5 and 1995-9 parliamentary terms in Russia are utilized in the research. Our findings indicate that patterns of rising and falling faction size are closely related to variations in the access of factions to state resources and the extent of voting conformity with executive initiatives, rather than electoral incentives and/or rules of parliamentary procedure.

KEY WORDS ■ clientelism ■ parliamentary faction ■ Russia ■ Ukraine ■ voting

Centre party politics remains a difficult phenomenon for post-Soviet scholars to analyse. While the political left and (to a lesser degree) right have been steadily moving toward crystallization of their organizational forms and ideological positions, in the political 'centre' both party structures and programmatic appeals remain highly elusive (Remington, 1999; White et al., 1997; Wilson and Birch, 1999). Political parties and parliamentary factions that identify themselves as 'centrist' rise and fall at a rapid rate, often without leaving enough time for either the electorate or for political scientists to understand their ideological position or political behaviour.

We argue that the dynamics of centrist politics – here measured by the rise and fall of party factions and deputy groups in parliament – can be explained by two key factors:<sup>1</sup> the nature and strength of clientelistic

networks under centre parties' control, and their degree of voting compliance with government initiatives. While the importance of institutional incentives generated by electoral and procedural norms is accepted, we argue that institutional arguments alone cannot account for the variation in the size and longevity of centre factions.

Instead of focusing on formal institutional factors or seeking to find genuine ideological differences among centre parties, we choose to examine differences in terms of access to state resources and political loyalty to the government to explain parties' organizational success and failures in parliament. By examining these issues, we also address the claim that the informal distribution of political power and economic resources, rather than constitutionally specified institutional structures, explain political behaviour in post-Soviet regimes (Linz, 1997; Tomenko, 1999). Rather than arguing that informal political structures substitute for formal institutions, we explore how informal and indeed virtual (see below) aspects of the political process supplement the exercise of power through formal institutional channels, and the effects these interactions have on political outcomes.

### Conceptualizing the Dependent Variable

High rates of party turnover and persistent party fragmentation at the centre of the political spectrum make the analysis of centre party politics in Russia and Ukraine an exercise in explaining political change. This type of change is argued to be only weakly influenced by shifts in electoral preferences. The existing literature on political stratification in Russia and Ukraine is already sceptical that centre parties are effective in articulating alternative centrist options and in aggregating interests on the basis of ideological appeal (Colton, 2000; White et al., 1997; Wilson and Birch, 1999). The party labels, slogans and manifestos of most post-communist 'centrists' are 'virtual' surrogates of genuine ideology used to disguise both resource manipulation and their support for a usually unpopular executive government.

Party dynamics are here assumed to be shaped primarily by inter-party competition for access to limited government resources and for the exclusive appropriation of political images that are likely to generate electoral support ('Social Democratic', 'Regional', 'Green', etc.). Weak institutionalization of the party system and the lack of strong party-society links generate a 'window of opportunity' for aspiring party entrepreneurs. The political fortunes of centre parties in the post-Soviet states are therefore expected to be more volatile than in more established party systems.

Parties' political performance will be measured in terms of their ability to sustain their organizational presence in parliament during the entire length of an individual parliamentary term – in other words, faction survival and longevity – and in terms of their success in attracting new members to their parliamentary factions – that is, faction membership size. Although

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our primary interest is in examining the dynamics of centrist parties, our analysis will cover all parliamentary factions to see whether similar patterns operate across the whole political spectrum and whether the same factors affect the direction of membership change for any parliamentary faction.

Factions' efforts to retain their current members and to recruit new ones have the properties of a zero-sum game. Since the total number of parliamentary deputies cannot normally be increased – it is set by the constitution or statutory documents – membership gains for one-faction represent potential losses for others. There are two types of deputies that factions compete for. First, they must fish in the same pool of unaffiliated deputies. Second, factions compete for 'potential defectors' – deputies with an existing faction affiliation – who seek or are forced by political realignment in parliament to find new homes.<sup>2</sup>

The weak institutionalization of the party system and certain provisions of electoral laws (preservation of single mandate constituencies, nomination procedures), which encourage individual rather than party-based electoral competition, contribute to the persistently large numbers of independent deputies in both the Russian and Ukrainian parliaments. The pool of unaffiliated deputies also includes deputies who are members of political parties that do not have factional representation in parliament. There were 142 and 141 unaffiliated members in the 450-member lower house of the Russian parliament at the beginning of the 1995–9 and the 1993–5 parliamentary terms, respectively. The same figure for the Ukrainian parliament (also 450 strong) at the beginning of the 1998–2002 term was 136.<sup>3</sup>

Frequent changes in factional affiliation and resulting faction membership instability are also widespread phenomena in both countries. One hundred Russian deputies managed to change faction before the 1995–9 Duma even assembled: White et al. (1997: 238). In the 3-year period 1998–2001, Ukraine's 450 deputies managed to change sides a staggering 562 times (calculations from *Parliament*, no. 5, 2001, 58–65). Factional instability is affected by the special institutional arrangements that exist in both countries' parliaments, in particular the procedural norms that allow individual deputies – both those who were elected on party lists and in majoritarian districts – to change their factional affiliation while in parliament. Relatively low membership thresholds for forming a faction is another factor (14 in Ukraine after 1998). Institutionalist literature focuses on these provisions as a source of factional volatility (D'Anieri, 2000). However, it cannot account for the direction and magnitude of such changes.

We assume that changes in factional composition are not random. Our hypothesis is that centrist factions with bigger clientelistic clout and greater loyalty to the government will be able to attract larger numbers of deputies over time. Although the extent of clientelistic ties and conformity with the government's political course vary across all the factions in parliament, we do not expect that these variables will have a substantial effect on the size

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of parliamentary factions on the left or the right, which tend to compete for new members primarily on the basis of ideological appeals.

We have chosen to use change in the faction size as a dependent variable, rather than more conventional indicators of parties' political success, such as voter support at elections or in public opinion polls. This conceptualization of the dependent variable gives several advantages for the study of post-Soviet centre politics. First, it allows us to follow parties' internal organizational evolution, which would be much more difficult to capture if one relied exclusively on parliamentary election results. Elections take place once every four years, while parliamentary factions' size and very existence fluctuate at a much higher rate. Second, focusing on parliamentary factions rather than on political parties in general provides a more meaningful unit of analysis in political systems where centrist political parties often lack any comprehensive national organization and often exist *only* in the form of parliamentary factions. Moreover, some of the major collective players in parliaments of both countries are non-party factions or deputy groups.<sup>4</sup> Third, analysis of party volatility in the former Soviet Union has not yet moved much beyond the analysis of institutional incentives for party proliferation and general statements about the underdeveloped character of social cleavages and/or civil society.

### Political Clientelism and Centre Party Politics

The classical works on party system development in Western democracies assumed the primacy of ideological structuration of party competition (Lijphart, 1984; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). However, some of the recent literature on post-communist politics already suggests that programmatic appeals are not the primary factors in the evolution of party systems in the former Soviet republics. Clientelistic rather than ideological appeals provide the basis for the formation of citizen-party linkages and inter-party competition in these new democratizing polities (Kitschelt, 1995). The primary transactions in clientelistically structured party systems are centred around the exchange of votes for some sort of club goods – specific material benefits – that parties promise to deliver to their supporters.

There is a long tradition of research on clientelism in the Soviet Union (Brown, 1989; Willerton, 1991). Patronage flourishes in many 'consolidated' democracies (Della Porta and Meny, 1997; Heywood, 1997). The transition to democracy has changed the structure of political competition but has not yet rendered obsolete the traditional concerns of this literature with occupational status, informal networks and upward mobility. However, while the prevalence of clientelistic linkages in post-Soviet party systems seems intuitively plausible to many scholars and analysts, there are very few actual attempts to conceptualize more precisely the nature of these linkages. Empirical attempts to determine what kind of resources are used

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in such clientelistic exchanges with voters, or in party recruiting efforts in parliaments, are equally rare. Neither the nature of clientelistic resources nor their availability to political parties has been sufficiently analysed.

Access to executive decision-making is here conceptualized to be the primary resource for clientelistic competition in the two former Soviet republics under study. Democratic 'transitions' in the region have been characterized by the concentration of power in the executive branch of government. Political regimes, especially in Russia after 1993, are often described in the literature as 'super-presidential', with their huge bureaucratic apparatus of executive power, rule by presidential decree, and formal and informal presidential control over other branches of government and public expenditures (Fish, 2000).

Executive authorities effectively control the various government resources that can be employed for building clientelistic ties with various constituencies or used for strengthening parties' organizational capabilities. The power to distribute patronage appointments, to allocate public spending and to modify various procedural and even statutory rules is largely concentrated in the hands of decision-makers inside the executive branch of government. The executive is, however, not equally accessible to all individual and even collective political actors.

Holding high government office or managing a large state enterprise is assumed here to provide preferential access to the executive. Office-holders and public sector managers are better positioned to exercise control over the allocation of government resources in virtue of the very fact of their institutional affiliation. Clientelistic political networks are thus assumed to form around individuals who belong to either of these two occupational categories. The strength of these types of political networks is magnified by the weakness of networks based in the private sector or in civil society. The lack of alternative resource bases makes the reliance on state capabilities critical for political entrepreneurs trying to succeed in centre party politics in Ukraine and Russia.

Party and non-party parliamentary factions that amass larger clientelistic muscles are expected to be more successful in attracting new members, and in weathering both endogenous and exogenous shocks that threaten the factions' health or even survival. In electoral competition, political parties with stronger clientelistic networks are also expected to perform better. The strength of clientelistic networks, in turn, is determined by the importance of the government office or public sector position that people who populate these networks hold. Other things being equal, the higher the number of highly positioned individuals in the parliamentary faction, the larger the amount of clientelistic resources the faction can be assumed to command.

In practice, every political party has to rely on a mixture of programmatic and clientelistic linkages. The salience of either type of linkage in the overall mix of a party's electoral appeals, however, differs across polities and across parties in the same polity. We expect that leftist parties in both countries

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will have less developed clientelistic networks than other political parties. This is because their permanent opposition status limits their ability to use patronage and other government resources for the purposes of generating organizational and electoral support, and of course makes ideological opposition more likely.

### Political Loyalty and Voting Compliance with Government Initiatives

Recruiting large numbers of high government officials into party ranks does not guarantee party leaders automatic access to government coffers or special treatment on the part of state. The party has to support the president and cabinet politically in order to capitalize on the politico-administrative network it controls through its strategically positioned members. Parliamentary votes are the crucial type of political support that party leaders can deliver.

In a consolidated democratic setting – where formal procedural norms and rules guide government policy formulation and implementation – it is essential for the executive to secure parliamentary support in order to be able to achieve its policy goals and fulfil its electoral promises. Even when democratic norms and procedures are weakly institutionalized and the executive branch of government has extra-constitutional means of influencing policy and electoral outcomes, legislative votes are crucial for the executive. Parliamentary support lowers the transaction costs that the executive branch of government incurs in the process of implementing its policy and electoral goals. In short, both in consolidated and unconsolidated democratic regimes the executive strives to secure support in parliament.

Some legislative and political issues that have to pass through the legislature are more important for the executive than are others. In the context of the transitional democracies of Ukraine and Russia the following issues are of critical importance to the executive government: major political resolutions, key economic bills, administrative reform bills, electoral legislation, votes of confidence in cabinet. These issues are at the heart of the complex transition that post-communist societies are currently undergoing. The government usually has a clearly identifiable partisan position when these issues are discussed in parliament.

While these issues are critical for the government, they are also of great importance to centre parties and the parliamentary factions they form. These collective political actors operate under several types of constraint. On the one hand, it is important for parties to preserve and enlarge their clientelistic base. As already argued, the size of the party's clientelistic base is likely to depend on the availability of government resources for the party's political needs. On the other, parties also aspire to develop a relatively coherent programmatic or PR image. Since each party tries to develop a mixture of clientelistic, ideological and PR linkages, no centre party is likely

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to behave entirely opportunistically and support all policy moves that government expediency dictates. These factors are likely to produce variation in how close the centrist parties' voting behaviour is to the government's ideal choice of voting outcomes.

Parties' voting behaviour signals to the government both parties' stand on the issues and the degree of parties' support for the government. We assume that the executive authorities carefully monitor the voting records of parliamentary factions on the issues that are critical to the executive government. Loyal parliamentary factions are rewarded and defectors punished by the executive's privileged powers: patronage appointments, government contracts, legal and tax harassment of politicians' businesses.

### Data and Variable Measurement

Data from the 1994–8 and 1998–2002 parliaments in Ukraine and from the 1993–5 and 1995–9 parliaments in Russia were used for testing the arguments about factions' behaviour in parliament. The analysis is organized around two data sets: a set of first terms (1994–8 in Ukraine and 1993–5 in Russia) and a set of second terms (1998–2002 in Ukraine and 1995–9 in Russia). Although neither the first nor the second set of parliamentary terms fully coincide temporarily, the stages of post-communist transition in general and the data on social and occupational status of deputies in particular are broadly comparable. Temporal differences become even less important if one takes into account the general tendency of political and socio-economic transformation in Ukraine to lag behind similar changes in Russia. The mixed electoral formula was used for both for the 1993 and 1995 Russian parliamentary elections – half the parliamentary deputies were chosen through party lists and half in single-member constituencies. A similar formula applied only to the 1998 parliamentary elections in Ukraine. The 1994 Ukrainian parliamentary elections were conducted according to the SMD (single-member district) formula.

### *Index of Clientelistic Access*

The index of clientelistic access was calculated as a percentage sum of faction seats controlled by politicians with immediate access to government resources at the moment of parliamentary elections. Two occupational categories of politicians were assumed to be preferential clients of the state: high governmental officials and public enterprise directors. It is important to note that this index indicates only a propensity or potential for engaging in clientelistic activity and not the actual level of faction engagement in clientelistic practices. One can plausibly expect that some individual politicians and parliamentary factions may choose not to use their government connections for extracting political benefits.

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The category of 'high governmental officials' was defined to include two subcategories. The first subcategory included important positions in the executive branch of government: ministers, heads of departments in ministries and presidential administration, heads of oblast', city and raion administrations. The second subcategory included regional governors, city mayors and high office-holders in the judicial system. Deputy heads of all these types of government official were also included in the category of 'high governmental officials'.<sup>5</sup>

The category of 'public enterprise directors' included heads and deputy heads of state-controlled enterprises and collective agricultural units. Coding cases for this category of state clients was methodologically more difficult, given that privatization processes in both countries have often blurred the distinction between public and private enterprise. A conservative approach, which has a bias towards underestimation, was chosen to identify public enterprise directors: only those cases were included where the public type of enterprise ownership was unequivocally established. The only exclusion from the conservative principle of case-coding was collective agricultural units. Heads of different forms of collective agricultural enterprises were all included within the category of 'public enterprise directors'.

*Data on State Clientelism*

Table 1 is a summary of the findings on occupational status of parliamentary deputies for the four parliamentary terms included in this study.<sup>6</sup> The table allows us to trace the dynamics of changes in the occupational status of deputies both across parliamentary terms and between the two countries.

The index of clientelistic access is plotted on the vertical axis of Table 1. It indicates the percentage of deputies that fall within the category of state clients (as defined above) in each parliamentary faction. The horizontal axis indicates the country and parliamentary term during which the factions existed.

The systematic difference in the number of state clients that centrist and leftist parties have in their ranks is one of the general conclusions that Table 1 conveys. Across all parliamentary terms, the value of the state clientelism index is consistently higher for the majority of centrist factions than for communist and socialist factions in Ukraine and communist factions in Russia. During the first post-communist decade the major leftist parties lost their state clientele. Due to both the material and ideological motivations discussed earlier in this article, both government office-holders and state enterprise directors have preferred to join the lists of parties or deputy groups in parliament that do not share traditional leftist ideology.

The only leftist factions with a high value of state clientelism index were the Village Party faction in the 1994–8 Ukrainian parliament and the Agrarian Party faction in the 1993–5 Russian parliament. The high value



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Table 1. Index of clientelistic access for parliamentary factions in the Ukraine and Russia

<i>Factions, Ukraine, 1994-98</i>	<i>Index of clientelistic access, Ukraine, 1998-2002</i>	<i>Factions, Ukraine, 1998-2002</i>	<i>Index of clientelistic access, Ukraine, 1998-2002</i>	<i>Factions, Russia, 1993-95</i>	<i>Index of clientelistic access, Russia, 1993-95</i>	<i>Factions, Russia, 1995-99</i>	<i>Index of clientelistic access, Russia, 1995-99</i>
Centre and Right-of-Centre Factions							
Agrarians for Reform	71%	NDP	23%	Russia's Choice	36%	OHR (Our Home is Russia)	35%
Unity	48%	Hromada	13%	Democratic Party	20%		
Centre	70%	SDPU (o)	28%	PRUA	37%		
Interregional deputy group	44%	Greens	5%	Women of Russia	23%		
Independent group	55%	Fatherland	7%	Yabloko	15%	Yabloko	7%
Statehood	25%	Revival of Regions	39%	New Regional Policy	43%	Russian Regions	26%
Rukh	21%	Labour Ukraine	33%				
Reforms	22%	Independent	21%				
		Rukh	22%				
		Reforms-Centre	19%				
		Rukh, 1st	18%				
		Rukh, 2nd	24%				
Political Left							
Communists	25%	Communists	8%	Communists	9%	Communists	5%
Socialists	26%	Socialists and Village	12%	Agrarian Party	55%	Agrarians	28%
		Socialists	4%			People's Power	13%
Village	75%	Village	14%	Populists		Populists	
		PSPU (Progressive Socialist Party)	0%	Liberal Democratic Party	4%	Liberal Democratic Party	0%
		Socialist Party	32%	Unaffiliated		Unaffiliated	17%
Unaffiliated	41%	Unaffiliated					

The factions underlined are those originally formed on the basis of party list representation. NDP – National Democratic Party of Ukraine; SDPU (o) – Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (united); PRUA – Party of Russian Unity and Accord.

Sources: Authors' calculations from *Khto ye Khto v Ukraini* (Kiev: KIS, 1995 and 1999); *Federal'noe Sobranie Rossii* (Moskva: Fond Foros, 1995); Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 'Deputies to the State Duma of the Russian Federal Assembly' (Research and Development Memorandum, N.3, 1994); Foreign Broadcast Information Service 'Central Eurasia: Key Parties' Registered Candidate Lists' (Daily Report Supplement, December 1995).

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of the index in these cases, 75 percent and 55 percent, respectively, is due to the specific nature of the coding procedures used to identify a specific subcategory of state clients: state enterprise directors. Conservative government officials from state agencies dealing with agriculture joined the heads of largely unreformed collective farms on these factions' lists.

The second general point is that in each parliament there is a substantial variation among centrist parties regarding the number of deputies who occupied high government offices prior to entering parliament. Not surprisingly, the factions that are usually described by country analysts as the principal 'government parties' consistently have highest scores on the state clientelism index. These principal pro-government factions are the Centre and National Democratic Party (NDP) factions for the 1994–8 and 1998–2002 parliaments in Ukraine, respectively, and the Russia's Choice (Gaidar) and Our Home is Russia (NDR) factions for the 1993–5 and 1995–9 parliaments in Russia, respectively. At the same time, there were other centrist factions during each parliamentary term that had a state clientelism score that was just as high as these major pro-government factions (see Figure 1).

The third general observation from Table 1 has to do with the cross-country and cross-time differences in the state clientelism index among centrist factions. As the table indicates, the centrist factions in the 1994–98 Ukrainian parliament had many more deputies with immediate links to the state than centrist factions in the 1993–5 Russian parliament. There are several reasons for this variation. First, the 1994–8 parliamentary term was the only one of four parliamentary terms discussed in this article where the exclusively single-member-district (SMD) formula was used for parliamentary elections. The mixed (half SMD and half PR) electoral formula used for first-term parliamentary elections in Russia allowed a larger proportion of politicians without immediate state links to gain seats in the State Duma. Party activists recruited from various academic and professional fields, such as universities, secondary education, the legal profession, etc., were included on the lists of political parties that crossed the 5 percent barrier in the 1993 parliamentary elections. As the table dealing with the 1993–5 Russian parliamentary term indicates, seven of eight political parties that crossed the barrier had a lower state clientelism score than the New Regional Policy faction which – as more often in Ukraine – was formed in the immediate post-election period from deputies who won in SMDs.

The SMD formula in the 1994 parliamentary elections in Ukraine favoured individual politicians who were government office-holders and were able to command significant material and organizational resources in order to win majority SMD districts. Reflecting the general weakness of the party system, only half of the elected deputies had a formal party affiliation. After entering parliament, politically unaffiliated deputies tended to join one of the new centre factions then in the process of formation.

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Table 1 allows us to draw some observations regarding temporal changes in parliamentary factions' clientelism scores in the two countries; although, given that only two parliamentary terms for each country are included in the analysis, inferences about longitudinal dynamics can have only a preliminary nature. As the table indicates, factions' scores on the index of clientelistic access dropped significantly from the first to the second parliamentary term in each country. This drop reflects the growing professionalization of the parliamentary body. The change in the index scores was especially significant in Ukraine, where the introduction of a mixed electoral formula (half SMD and half PR) for the 1998 elections improved the chances for politicians without immediate state links to enter parliament.

The class of professional politicians developed over time in both countries. After the 1994 Ukrainian elections, only 49 sitting deputies (11 percent of the parliamentary body) were able to gain seats in the new parliament. In Russia, the figure for the same category of deputies in the 1995–9 Duma was 158 (35 percent) (Remington, 1999). Sitting deputies who won parliamentary seats for the second or third time in a row were coded as non-clients unless they simultaneously held high positions in the government or public sector.

### Political Loyalty and Parliamentary Factions' Voting Record Data

The steady growth of the executive government's strength and influence over the political process both in Ukraine and Russia has not yet made the role of legislative institutions obsolete. To satisfy at least the formal criteria of a democratic political process, the president and the cabinet have to secure the support of a legislative majority for their major policy initiatives and for the cabinet's continued tenure of office.<sup>7</sup>

No-confidence votes, major political resolutions and votes on major economic and administrative reform bills served as a basis for this study's conformity index. Votes were included if they met our criteria and were also mentioned as important votes by the countries' parliamentary analysts.<sup>8</sup> The index was constructed by calculating the percentage of a given faction's deputies that voted according to the executive government's preferences on selected issues, and then finding the faction's pro-government vote average across this set of issues.

The votes that were selected were all critical indicators of parliamentary factions' stand vis-à-vis the executive government. Different interests can of course coexist within the executive. In practice, a semi-presidential constitutional framework has often produced powerful incentives for intra-executive competition between the president and prime minister in both countries (Protsyk, 2000). Therefore, when selecting the votes for calculating our

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conformity index we avoided issues on which the positions of the president and cabinet were clearly split.

Voting conformity scores in Table 2 indicate the extent of factions' political support for government. The scores vary quite substantially across the factions. As expected, the leftist factions in both Ukraine and Russia were least supportive of government initiatives. The scores for communist factions across the parliaments were consistently low; although the Russian communists' score was slightly higher (slightly more cooperative) than their Ukrainian equivalents. Similarly low scores on the conformity index characterized the voting patterns of the Ukrainian socialists during both the 1994–8 and 1998–2002 parliamentary terms. Two other parties of the fragmented Ukrainian left during 1998–2000, the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine (PSPU) and Village Party, were substantially more supportive of the government – possibly because both had hidden clientelistic ties.

While the conformity scores of factions that occupy the centre of political spectrum were significantly higher than among parties of the left, the variation in centrist factions' voting behaviour was also much more substantial. The scores varied between 88 percent (Agrarians for Reforms) and 60 percent (Unity), 93 percent (NDP) and 33 percent (Hromada), and 90 percent (NDR) and 40 percent (Agrarians) for the 1994–8, 1998–2002 Ukrainian parliaments and the 1995–9 Russian parliament, respectively. In two of three parliaments (Ukraine 1998–2002; Russia 1995–9) parties described by analysts as 'pro-government' – the National Democratic Party (NDP) in Ukraine and Our Home is Russia (NDR) – lived up to their reputation by displaying the highest conformity scores. No single centrist faction managed either to organizationally convert itself into a political party or secure the status of leading government supporter during the 1994–8 Ukrainian parliament, reflecting the low level of centre party maturation in Ukraine during this period.

Lower levels of support for government were demonstrated by those centre factions whose stand was conditioned by a number of policy and personality-centred concerns. Unity (based in Dnipropetrovs'k) and the Agrarians, which were the least supportive of government centrist factions in the 1994–8 Ukrainian and the 1995–9 Russian parliaments, respectively, tended to withdraw their voting support from the government primarily on ideological grounds. The voting behaviour of Hromada, the least supportive of government centrist factions in the 1998–2002 Ukrainian parliament, was primarily conditioned by the confrontational relationship between the faction's leader former prime minister Pavlo Lazarenko and the president. Political competition for power and control of the legislative process explains Hromada's extremely low level of support for government initiatives.

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Table 2. Voting conformity index for parliamentary factions in Ukraine and Russia

Factions, Ukraine, 1994-98	Conformity Index, Ukraine, 1994-98	Factions, Ukraine, 1998-2002	Conformity Index, Ukraine, 1998-2002	Factions, Russia, 1993-95	Conformity Index, Russia, 1993-95	Factions, Russia, 1995-99	Conformity Index, Russia, 1995-99
Centre and Right-of-Centre Factions							
Agrarians for Reform	88%	NDP (National Democratic Party)	93%	Russia's Choice	84%	OHR (Our Home is Russia)	90%
Unity	60%	SDPU (s) (Social Democratic Party)	86%	Democratic Party	32%		
Centre	65%	Greens	86%	PRUA	85%		
Interregional deputy group	61%	Labour Ukraine	93%	Women of Russia	80%		
Independent group	72%	Revival of Regions	91%	Yabloko	35%	Yabloko	49%
Statehood	83%	Solidarity	83%	New Regional Policy	48%	Russian Regions	60%
Rukh	89%	Hromada	33%				
Reforms	81%	Fatherland	60%				
		Rukh	72%				
		Rukh, 1st	90%				
		Rukh 2nd	81%				
		Reforms-Centre	75%				
Political Left							
Communists	11%	Communists	18%	Communists	14%	Communists	22%
Socialists	17%	Socialists	16%	Agrarian Party	22%	Agrarians	40%
Village	43%	Village	64%	Populists		Peoples' Power	29%
		PSPU	32%			Populists	
<u>Unaffiliated</u>	52%	<u>Unaffiliated</u>	73%	Liberal Democratic Party	27%	Liberal Democratic Party	67%
				<u>Unaffiliated</u>		<u>Unaffiliated</u>	58%

The factions underlined are those originally formed on the basis of party list representation.

### Dynamics of Change in Number and Size of Factions

Factional composition is shaped by institutional rules and procedures, particularly the electoral threshold for entering parliament, and by membership thresholds for creating a new deputy group or faction. In both Russian Dumas these rules were stable over time, but in Ukraine they changed from one parliamentary term to another.

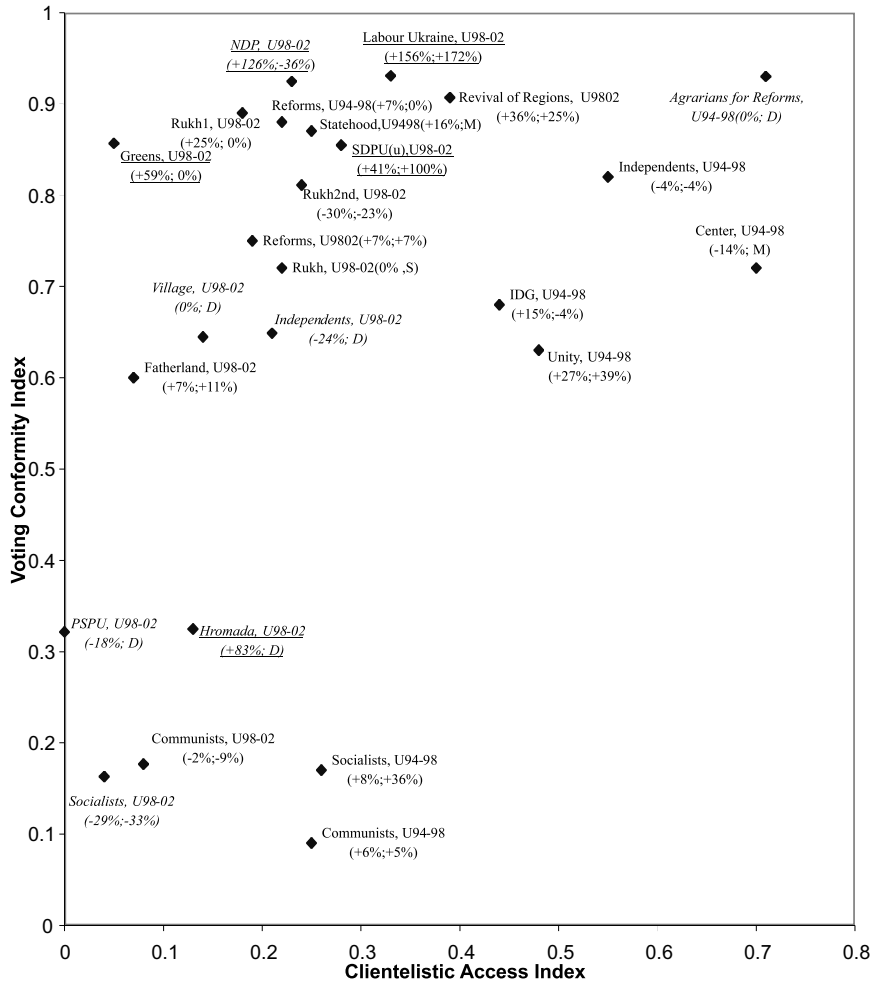
For both the 1993 and 1995 parliamentary elections in Russia the electoral threshold was 5 percent. Eight political parties managed to cross this threshold in 1993. The 1995 elections saw a partial consolidation of the party system, as only four parties were able to enter parliament. Procedural norms, which required the minimum of 35 deputies to create a new faction, were enacted during both parliamentary terms. While the practical advantages associated with group membership created incentives for unaffiliated deputies to organize themselves into factions, the relatively high membership threshold of 35 prevented the rapid proliferation of new factions. Only three non-party list factions were recognized in the 1993–5 Duma: New Regional Policy, Stability/Our Home is Russia and Russia/Rybkin's Block. The same number of new factions appeared in the 1995–9 Duma: the Agrarians, Russian Regions/Independents and People's Power.

As described above, PR lists were only introduced in Ukraine in 1998. After the 1994 elections, which were conducted according to the SMD formula, a faction recognition threshold of 25 was introduced. In autumn 1995, at the mid-point of the 1994–8 parliamentary term, 11 factions operated in the Ukrainian parliament. All but the communist faction had fewer than 35 deputies. Procedural norms provided no incentives for deputies to build larger factions. By the end of the term, however, there were two ideologically motivated mergers that led to the creation of bigger factions: the Socialist and Village Parties' Block on the left and Constitutional Centre faction in the centre.

The mixed electoral formula used in 1998 established a 4 percent electoral threshold for the party-list ballot. As with the first party-list elections conducted with a 5 percent barrier in Russia, 8 parties entered the parliament. Were it to be preserved for the next round of elections due in 2002, this 4 percent barrier is unlikely to provide any incentives for party system consolidation. The existing procedural rules for faction recognition, which require only 14 deputies to form a new faction, further diminish any incentives for creating larger factions in the Ukrainian parliament. In autumn 1999, almost at the midpoint of the 1998–2002 parliamentary term, there were already 15 factions in parliament. As in the previous term, none of the factions other than the communists would have crossed the imaginary membership barrier of 35.

In Figures 1 and 2, two major variables discussed in this study, the index of clientelistic access and voting conformity index, are plotted to examine whether they have any effect on the dynamics of change in faction size across parliamentary terms.

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**Figure 1.** Parliamentary factions' size change in the Ukraine, 1994–2002  
 PSPU – Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine; NDP – National-Democratic Party of Ukraine;  
 SDPU(u) – Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (United); IDG – Interregional Deputy Group.

Factions in the table are denoted by their name, country and parliamentary term. The names of factions that experienced more than 50 percent membership growth are underlined. Italics are used for factions that saw more than 30 percent membership decline. The sign and percentage of change in faction size are indicated in parentheses.<sup>9</sup> The first number refers to the percentage change in the faction's size one year after the faction was formed. We assume that it may take a parliamentary deputy up to a year after the faction was formed to make a decision to join. The second number refers to the percentage change in the faction's size between the time it was

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formed and one year prior to the end of the parliamentary term.<sup>10</sup> For example, the record with the lowest score on the voting conformity index refers to the communist faction in Ukraine during the 1994–8 parliamentary term. The faction's size grew by 6 percent by the end of the factions' first year in parliament and by 5 percent by the end of the third year of the term.

As the graph indicates, the following factions experienced more than 50 percent membership size growth at either of two points of recording: Labour Ukraine, NDP, SDPU (u), Hromada, Greens. All of the highest gainers were centrist factions. Excluding Hromada, this group of factions exhibited very high levels of voting conformity with presidential initiatives. There was slightly greater variation among these factions on the state clientelism index, but their scores, except for the Greens, belong to the higher end of the index for the 1998–2002 parliament.

The fortunes of two factions in this group – NDP and Hromada – were especially volatile. After experiencing a very high rise in faction membership during their first year in parliament – 126 percent and 83 percent, respectively – the NDP lost most of its members and Hromada was disbanded by the end of the third year. In both cases, the deteriorating relationship of the faction leadership with the executive branch of government led to the mass exodus of opportunistic deputies. The rapid drop in the membership of the NDP from early 1999, which followed its equally meteoric rise in 1998, was linked to conflicts within the party over resource distribution and over whether to support the incumbent president Kuchma in the 1999 presidential election.

Given that our primary interest is examining the relationship between faction size and clientelistic and voting conformity scores, we should also look for examples of membership decline to avoid selection on the dependent variable. Our overall argument would predict a positive correlation still to hold in such cases. As Figure 1 indicates, apart from the NDP there were no other centre factions that displayed high scores on the voting conformity and state clientelism indexes in the 1998–2002 parliament that also suffered high membership loss. The two ultimate losers in the centrist camp – Hromada and the 'Independents' group – scored substantially lower on both indexes compared to the centrist factions with highest membership gains.

All factions with the highest membership gains in Figure 1 belong to the 1998–2002 parliament. None of the centrist factions in the 1994–8 parliament experienced such dramatic growth. Centrist factions failed to achieve substantial membership gains irrespective of the strength of their clientelistic resources and their voting record. The fact that the centrist faction with the highest scores on both indexes – Agrarians for Reforms – was ultimately disbanded contradicts our hypothesis about the relationship between index scores and faction size. The inability of centre factions to attract large numbers of new members or, in some cases, to sustain the faction's initial size during the 1994–8 parliamentary term can be attributed to the weak



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institutionalization of centre party politics and the incompleteness of the transition toward a more structured system of interest groups.

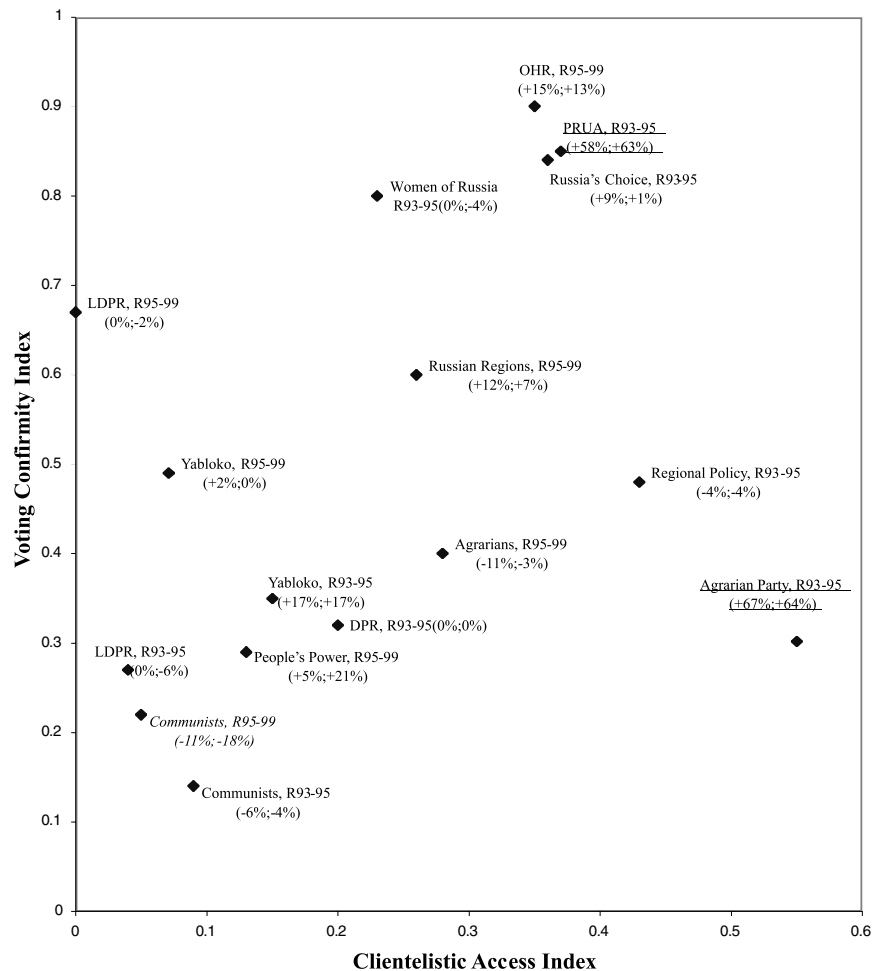
Figure 1 also illustrates another important finding: the ideological parties of the political left and right fail to attract unaffiliated deputies or defectors from other parliamentary factions. The bottom left box of the table contains data on the left parties that have traditionally been portrayed as the main political opponents of the executive government. The Ukrainian communists were able to increase their faction size only slightly during the 1994–8 parliamentary term and lost proportionally larger numbers of faction members during the 1998–2002 term. The losses were partly explained by the transfers of communist faction members to other left factions. The 36 percent growth of the Socialist Party faction during the 1994–8 parliamentary term, which was the only substantial membership gain in this camp, was due to the party's merger with Village Party in preparation for the 1998 parliamentary elections. Rukh, which is the major party of the political right, not only failed to gain any substantial number of new members during either of the two terms, but also had to face a dramatic split in 1999.

Figure 2 illustrates the dynamics of factional membership change for the Russian parliament. The data on the 1993–5 and 1995–9 parliamentary terms are analysed according to the same criteria used in Figure 1.

As Figure 2 demonstrates, the two factions with the biggest percentage gains during the 1993–5 parliamentary term – the Agrarian Party and the Party of Russian Unity and Accord (PRUA)<sup>11</sup> – were almost at the opposite poles on the voting conformity axis. The Agrarian Party's score indicates a clear opposition to the executive government. The PRUA appears to have been the most consistent supporter of government initiatives in the 1993–5 parliament. Both parties score high on the state clientelism index. While the PRUA's ability to attract a large number of unaffiliated deputies is consistent with our argument, explaining the Agrarian Party's success in membership recruitment requires a consideration of other factors. Unlike other parliamentary factions, the Agrarian Party was a sector-based faction with a specific policy agenda controlled by a powerful interest group. Given the strong position of the state-owned agricultural lobby in local constituencies, many representatives of this interest group won the elections in majoritarian districts and subsequently opted to join the Agrarian Party faction in parliament.

Since the Agrarian faction drew from a very specific pool of unaffiliated deputies in the Duma, this faction did not directly compete with the PRUA and other centrist factions for new members. The manner in which the differences in index scores affected the factions' ability to attract new members is better illustrated by comparing membership changes among the centrist factions that tried to appeal to the same general pool of unaffiliated deputies. The PRUA and the Democratic Party of Russia (DPR) are two examples of factions that were more comparable in terms of centrist

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**Figure 2.** Parliamentary faction's size change in Russia, 1993–99  
 LDPR – Liberal-Democratic Party of Ukraine; DPR – Democratic Party of Russia; HR – Our Home is Russia; PRUA – Party of Regional Unity and Accord.

ideology and electoral success. However, the factions differed very substantially in terms of clientelistic strength and voting compliance. The DPR, which had low scores on both indexes, failed to gain any new members during the 1993–5 parliamentary term.

Two parties, conventionally identified by the analysts as major pro-government parties during the 1993–5 and 1995–9 parliamentary terms, respectively – Russia's Choice and Our Home is Russia (OHR) – predictably rated highly on both indexes. Figure 2 shows that during the first year in parliament both factions made substantial membership gains. While OHR managed to hold on to most of its gains throughout the 1995–9 term, there

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was a steady decline in Russia's Choice's membership during the second half of the 1993–5 term. The latter development reflected the growing diversion between the leadership of Russia's Choice and government over policies on Chechnia and on the course of political and economic reforms. As with the major pro-government National Democratic Party (NDP) in Ukraine, the party leadership's withdrawal of unconditional support for government initiatives led to the faction's membership decline.

Membership changes across deputy groups or non-party factions were moderate in comparison to Ukraine. Figure 2 lists four deputy groups that existed throughout the majority of the parliamentary term: Regional Policy, Russian Regions, Agrarians and People's Power. Unlike in Ukraine, none of these deputy groups in Russia was highly compliant with government initiatives, as can be seen by their relatively low scores on the voting conformity index. They differed from their counterparts in Ukraine in two other important respects. First, the 35-member threshold for faction recognition, which was two and half times higher than the faction recognition threshold for the 1998–2002 Ukrainian parliament, led to a smaller number of deputy groups being formed in both Russian parliaments. There were no more than three centre groups existing at the same time during each parliamentary term. Second, the involvement of powerful business interests/oligarchic groups in the immediate management of centrist factions was less significant, in part because of the Russian Duma's weaker ability to affect the executive decision-making process.

The membership of the major leftist faction – the communists – declined during both Russian parliamentary terms. As in Ukraine, the bulk of these losses can be attributed to the practice of 'lending' deputies to other left factions that had difficulty either in crossing the faction recognition threshold or in maintaining the minimally required faction size. The People's Power faction, which assumed a less radical anti-government stand and relied on a more extensive clientelistic base, was more successful than the communists in attracting new members throughout the 1995–9 parliamentary term.

The Russian data in general proved to be more consistent with our hypothesis about the effects of voting conformity and clientelistic strength on faction membership size than the observations from the Ukrainian cases. Centrist factions located in the upper right corner (high voting conformity/high clientelistic strength) in Figure 2 were successful in attracting new members and were home to one of two factions with the record membership gain. Neither of these factions experienced substantial membership losses during the 1993–5 and 1995–9 parliaments. The bulk of membership losses were suffered by the factions situated in the lower left corner of Figure 2.

The figure, however, also shows that the relationship between the centrist factions' index scores and membership size is not perfectly linear, especially for centre factions with medium index scores, such as Yabloko, DPR, Agrarians, New Regional Policy and Russian Regions. This indicates that factors

other than voting conformity and clientelistic strength affect individual deputies' decisions as to whether to join a specific faction. More data on the dynamics of factional change in new democracies need to be available before statistical methods can be beneficially applied to the analysis of the complex relationship between characteristics of political environment and factional change.

### Conclusions

The dynamics of factional change in parliament constitute an important aspect of party politics in Ukraine and Russia. Parties' major recruitment and organizational efforts do not end with the conclusion of a presidential or parliamentary electoral campaign, they continue to act as a major influence on parliamentary politics. The professional composition and voting behaviour of centrist factions were the focus of this article. The relationship between these variables and the size of centre factions' membership was examined across four parliamentary terms.

The scores on the index of clientelistic access were found to be consistently higher for centrist factions than for the communist and socialist factions in Ukraine and communist factions in Russia. During the first post-communist decade it was the leftist parties that were steadily losing their state clientele. We also found a substantial variation among the centrist parties regarding the strength of their clientelistic ties. Centrist factions with the highest score on the state clientelism index tended to be most loyal politically to the executive. A significant decline over time in the number of politicians who have a direct clientelistic relationship with the state is another important research finding of the article. This drop reflects the growing professionalization of the parliamentary body in both states. The change in the clientelism index scores was especially significant in Ukraine, where the introduction of a mixed electoral formula (half SMD and half PR) instead of an SMD formula in 1998 made it easier for politicians without extensive clientelistic ties to the state to be elected to parliament.

Centrist factions as a group also tended to vote along a more pro-government line than their left counterparts. However, the variation in centrist factions' voting behaviour was much more substantial than the variation in voting conformity on the left. Although the voting conformity index helped to capture the general differences in the degree of centrist factions' support for government, experts' opinions about aspects of parties' behaviour other than voting had to be used to arrive at a more accurate picture of factions' stand vis-à-vis government. The low level of maturation in centre party politics in Ukraine during the first parliamentary period (1994–8) was also a notable feature. Voting conformity indexes for the major rightist factions, especially in Ukraine, matched those of some of the centre, due to ideologically motivated government support

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Mixed support was found for the hypothesis that better-connected and more pro-government factions will be able to attract a larger number of unaffiliated deputies to their ranks. Not every such faction experienced consistent and/or steady growth. Nevertheless, the centre as a *group* enjoyed the largest membership gains.

The ideological parties of the political left and right largely failed to recruit new members among the ranks of unaffiliated deputies or defectors from other parliamentary factions. The membership of centrist factions during all four parliamentary terms was more volatile than the membership of major factions of the left and right. None of the major pro-government centrist parties survived for longer than one parliamentary term. Further research on the impact that the specific combinations of clientelistic norms and electoral rules have on the motivations of centre party politicians can improve our understanding of centre party politics in post-communist regimes.

### Appendix

Legislative votes included in the composition of voting conformity index

**Ukrainian parliament, 1994–1998:**

Resolution ‘A halt to privatization’, 22 June 1994  
 Resolution ‘A halt to privatization II’, 29 July 1994  
 List of non-privatizable enterprises, 14 October 1994  
 Renewal of CPSU, 18 October 1994  
 Support of presidential address, 19 October 1994  
 Moratorium on ideology, 11 November 1994  
 Introducing Price mechanisms in economy, 18 November 1994  
 Law on State administration and local government, 1st reading, 22 December 1994  
 Law on State Administration and Local Government, 2nd reading, 18 May 1995  
 Constitutional Accord, 7 June 1995  
 Resolution on Lazarenko’s Candidacy for the Post of the Prime-Minister, 17 July 1996  
 Resolution on Pustovoitenko’s Candidacy for the Post of the Prime-Minister, 14 October 1997  
 Resolution on presidential veto on law ‘National television company and national radio company’, 4 November 1997

**Ukrainian parliament, 1998–2002:**

Appointment of State Property Fund Chairman, 10 September 1998  
 No-Confidence Vote in the Pustovoitenko government, 13 October 1998  
 Resolution ‘On giving consent on Lazarenko’s arrest’, 17 February 1999  
 Resolution ‘About the Presidential Proposals on Law About Local State Administrations’, 16 March 1999  
 Resolution on presidential veto of law ‘On changes to law on pension provision’, 5 May 1999

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Resolution 'On the Program of the Cabinet of Ministers', 5 April 2000  
 Resolution 'About the Creation of an Interim Commission for Excluding Falsifications during All-Ukrainian Referendum', 6 April 2000

**Russian parliament (lower chamber), 1995–1999:**

Program of Legislative Activity during 1997 Autumn Session, 3 September 1997  
 Program of Legislative Activity during 1997 Autumn Session II, 3 September 1997  
 Resolution on Establishing Parliamentary Commission on Cadres, 10 September 1997  
 Resolution on Government Corruption in St-Petersburg, 10 October 1997  
 Federal law on Changes to Tax Legislation, 13 November 1997  
 Law on Budget for 1998, 2nd reading, 25 December 1997  
 Law on Budget for 1998, 4th reading, 4 March 1998  
 Resolution on the Results of Parliamentary Inquiry into the Terms of Privatization of telecommunication, oil, and aluminum enterprises, 11 March 1998  
 Resolution on Violations in Budget Execution for 1997, 11 March 1998  
 Resolution on Kirienko's Candidacy for the Post of the Chairman of Council of Ministers, 17 April 1998  
 Resolution on the Presidential Decree 'Structure of executive bodies of regional governments', 14 May 1998  
 Law on Budget for 1999, 1st reading, 24 December 1998  
 Federal law 'Moratorium on Social Security Reform', 1st reading, 17 March 1999  
 Impeachment Vote on War in Chechnia, 15 May 1999  
 Resolution on Putin's Confirmation, 16 September 1999  
 Law on Budget for 2000, 4th reading, 3 December 1999

**Russian parliament (lower chamber), 1993–1995:**

Resolution on Government Policies (No-confidence vote), 28 October 1994  
 Law on Budget for 1995, 24 February 1995  
 Resolution on presidential veto on law 'On election of people's deputies', 11 May 1995  
 Law 'On election of people's deputies', 9 June 1995  
 No-confidence vote in Chernomyrdin government, 21 June 1995  
 No-confidence vote in Chernomyrdin government, 1 July 1995

**Notes**

1 The functioning of party factions and deputy groups in parliament is central for understanding the dynamics of party systems in post-Soviet countries where the activity of political parties has often been limited to party members' work in parliament. In electoral competition, as several authors suggest, major parties of the left and right tend to rely on programmatic appeals in their attempts to foster party-citizen linkages (Haran' et al., 2000; White et al., 1997; Wilson, 2001). It is our argument that political parties that fall by default into the centre category are characterized primarily by attempts to develop clientelistic ties.

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- 2 The movement of deputies among the factions should not be confused with the phenomena of 'lending' or 'renting' deputies, as when one faction helps the formation of a satellite or ally. In both Ukraine and Russia, for example, deputies originally elected as Communists have been 'loaned' to Agrarian factions. See Haran' et al. (2000) and White et al. (1997).
- 3 Our calculations are based on data from White et al. (1997), Golovlev and Nefedova (2000) and Haran' et al. (2000).
- 4 While non-party factions did not participate in the electoral process before they were formed, they share several important characteristics with party-based parliamentary factions. Both types of parliamentary faction aspire to articulate and aggregate political preferences, have the same organizational structure in parliament, and are treated equally in parliamentary terms of procedure. The parliamentary rules for forming non-party and party factions differ, however. These two types of faction may also differ in the specification of time horizons for engaging in political activity, in the willingness to participate in the electoral process, and in the role that ideological or situational factors play in their formation and activity.
- 5 Incumbent parliamentary deputies and heads of regional legislative councils are two important types of office-holder that were not included in the category of 'high governmental officials'. While both types of officials undoubtedly have various means of access to executive government resources, the origins and nature of their office justify the effort to differentiate them analytically.
- 6 A detailed breakdown of occupational data for each parliamentary term was not included in the article because of space limitations.
- 7 Both the 1993 Russian constitution and the 1996 Ukrainian constitution provide for the parliament's participation in the process of cabinet formation. As with many other semi-presidential constitutions, in both Russia and Ukraine presidential nominees for the position of prime minister have to be approved by parliament. Parliament in both countries also has the (restricted) right to raise the issue of confidence in cabinet.
- 8 For Ukraine, analysts' opinions were monitored in 'Ukraïnska Perspektyva' (Kiev: Demokratychni initsiatyvy, 1994–6) and 'Politychny Kalendar' (Kiev: Instytut polityky, 1998–2000). For Russia, we used the Informational and Analytical Bulletins of the State Duma ([www.duma.gov.ru](http://www.duma.gov.ru)). Neither source provides consistently systematic information on the importance of every major bill to the executive, so we had to rely on contextual knowledge when making final decisions about which bills to include in the analysis.
- 9 Annually based data on faction size across parliamentary terms is available upon request from the authors.
- 10 Immediate electoral concerns are more likely to affect factional membership closer to the end of a parliamentary term. As we are interested in examining factional dynamics prior to the time when electoral considerations become paramount, a one year threshold was used.

The PRUA failed to hold on to its membership gains and even lost some of its original members by the end of the 1993–5 term. This was more a product of the pre-electoral restructuring of pro-government forces than an indicator of the faction's parliamentary failure.

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