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EVALUATING UKRAINIAN POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT: A Case Study of Ukrainian Elections 1994–2002

Clifford Blair

ABSTRACT

Perhaps the key problem observed in the development of Ukrainian democracy, as it relates to the party system, is the fractionalization and nonconsolidation of political parties. This research will fill an existing need by generating more complete evidence of the weakness of institutional approaches to this problem in Eastern Europe. It will also provide substantiation for future broad consideration of elite-motivator explanations in other post-socialist countries. Traditionally, the favored approach in studies of party systems has been heavily biased towards institutional explanations. Recent studies, however, have shown this paradigm to be unsatisfactory when applied to post-socialist states in Eastern Europe and particularly to the former U.S.S.R., but thus far with a very limited number of cases. These studies have also tended to rely on cultural explanations in the absence of institutional theories, but without good discussion of what culture can and cannot explain. In contrast, the role of elites has received almost no consideration. Scholars that have discussed relevant elite behavior have not made a case linking these elite actions to the party system's failure to consolidate. This essay attempts to augment criticisms of the institutional approach by demonstrating the inadequacy of this approach in Ukraine, using added data about two Ukrainian parliamentary elections under different institutional arrangements. It then makes an argument that an elite-motivator paradigm provides a better explanation of the failure of Ukrainian parties to consolidate. This is based on the behavior of political elites in three of the most recent elections: the 1999 presidential election and the 1998 and 2002 parliamentary elections. The research shows that institutional changes in the Ukrainian parliamentary election procedure failed to improve the system and also finds evidence that the political elite rationally perpetuate many of the problems to their own advantage.

In 1996 Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, wrote about what he considered the “three major geopolitical events of the
twentieth century." They were, first, the fall of European empires after World War I; second, the development of the Iron Curtain—predicted by Winston Churchill—after World War II; and third, the emergence of an independent Ukrainian state after the Cold War (1996, 3–8). The next year Brzezinski offered further explanation for this surprising statement. He described Ukraine as one of five "pivots" that geographically define the balance of power in Eurasia—"the chessboard on which the struggle for global primacy continues to be played" (1997, 31–47). Just this year in high-level meetings, Ukrainian and European leaders broached the idea of Ukraine joining the European Union in the next ten to twenty years. With its possible membership in the European Union and acceptance by the global community of nations at stake, the international significance of democratic consolidation in Ukraine should not be underestimated. This is particularly true in light of the fact that it is uncertain whether the former Soviet republic will complete its evolution to democracy in the way that Western nations envisioned twelve years ago when the Soviet Union collapsed. Ukraine is an important case study not only for these reasons, but also because it offers the opportunity to develop hypotheses about democratic consolidation that can be applied in other post-socialist countries.

THE ROLE OF PARTIES IN DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Although the role of mature parties is neither a necessary nor sufficient cause for democratic consolidation, without "well-organized and programmatically coherent political parties . . . it may prove more difficult to form an effective government" (Schmitter and Karl 1991, 84). More specifically, a significant aspect of the development of a party system requires that all of the major parties agree to work within the constitutional framework established by a developing democracy (Linz and Stepan 1996b, 15–16). This includes a general agreement among parties about the general policy direction of the country so that changes in the governing party do not equate to radical transformation of basic policies key to continued democratic consolidation.

Since economic reform often occurs simultaneously with political reform, especially in post-socialist countries like the European eastern bloc, political reform includes a general consensus on economic restructuring. Diamond writes, "The consolidation of democracy—so intimately linked to structural economic reform—requires the negotiation of some kind of agreement or 'pact' among competing political parties and social forces on: (1) the broad direction and principles of structural economic reform, which all parties support, no matter which one(s) come to power" (1990, 113). As Andrew Wilson, perhaps the preeminent scholar of independent Ukraine, and Arthur Bilous wrote in their very early study of Ukrainian political parties:

Ukraine appears to have an anarchic and ineffective party system. A large number of small, ill organised and fractious political parties seemingly promote instability rather than stability, and hinder rather than help the tasks of building a stable civil society and market economy. . . . The fear must be that if such parties cannot exercise much influence on the development of society, they are helping to create a political vacuum that may well be filled by some kind of revived authoritarianism. (1993, 693)
In this essay the definition of "party nonconsolidation" takes in many of the negative characteristics described above, while "party consolidation" denotes the presence of their positive alternatives. For example, longevity is an important attribute of parties in a consolidated party system: these parties are generally affected only in a limited way by changes in leadership and are able to endure changes in government and society. Parties in a consolidated system develop coherent party programs or platforms that are usually practical and devote effort to enacting these programs. Such parties regularly compete in elections with the goal of controlling government in order to be able to do so.

Linz and Stepan have further written about the role of political parties in civil society. "A consolidated democracy requires that a range of political parties not only represent interests but seek by coherent programs and organizational activities to aggregate interests" (1996a, 274). This is particularly true of post-socialist countries—like Ukraine—that in most cases were totalitarian states. Because of the lack of civil society and a legacy of totalitarianism, the development of parties to buttress nascent civil society makes party systems in such states an even more important question than in states that do not suffer from the heritage of totalitarianism.

While this is not to suggest that development of the party system is the only factor affecting democratic consolidation, nor the most important, this research is particularly significant because it will help us to better understand the chances for continued democratic consolidation in post-socialist countries and also give greater insight into the party aspect of political restructuring that must occur during democratic transitions. In conjunction with other case studies from Eastern Europe, this study of Ukraine will lead to increased understanding of the situation in that region in both practical and theoretical terms.

**The Weak System: A Brief Look at the Problems with Ukrainian Political Parties**

A brief background about the situation of the party system in Ukraine will provide a clearer understanding of some of the significant challenges that are faced in the democratic consolidation process. Throughout Europe in the early 1990s, center and center-left parties enjoyed electoral success throughout Europe, exemplified by Tony Blair and his "third way." In Ukraine, centrist parties have also been politically successful in the decade since independence; however, Andrew Wilson described the Ukrainian political center as a "black hole" and a "quagmire" (2002b, 172). These comments are typical of analyses of the situation by other scholars cited in this essay, which include the following quotations of Ukrainian observers and politicians:

The various centrist factions . . . "can only be distinguished by their amorphousness and an absence of direction in terms of their political and economic orientation. For this reason, this agglomerate of forces can sooner be described as a gray void than as a political center. . . .." Rukh chairman Viacheslav Chornovil described these centrist factions as a "parliamentary sludge." "Sometimes they side with the leftists and sometimes with the rightists. They represent what might be called a situational majority, which, unfortunately, does not want to be constructive, and which, in the event of any
weakening, disappears...” Within the amorphous center (often termed the “bolota,” or “swamp”) certain interest groups exist (clan, regional, economic, and so on). These centrists, or “pragmatists,” as they prefer to be described, “often act not only independently of, but also contrary to decisions by, the individual factions to which these deputies formally belong...”: This amorphousness weakened party and factional unity in Ukraine and increased the opportunity for splinter groups to form. (D’Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio 1999, 160)

The illegitimacy of the left and the natural limitations of the right have produced an ersatz center that is synthetically strong, but in reality fractionalized and not consolidated. The illegitimacy of the left is perpetuated both by the more apolitical center and by the obstructionism of the left itself. The natural limits of the right are exacerbated by abuse of political power, also by the apolitical center, to ensure their continued nonviability as major political players (see Table 1). As Wilson writes, this “opaque centrist ‘non-party’ nature of Ukrainian government has produced a similar recipe [to the one party rule in Italy or Japan] for stagnation, corruption and the growing abuse of the power of the state” (2002a, 173).

Table 1: The Spectrum of Ukrainian Political Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Spectrum</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Parties</strong></td>
<td>Communist Party (CPU) (Symonenko); Socialist Party (Moroz)</td>
<td>Our Ukraine (Yuschenko); United Ukraine (Kuchma); SDP(U) Medvedchuk</td>
<td>Rukh factions now part of Our Ukraine and United Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems/Weaknesses</strong></td>
<td>Unreformed; seen as illegitimate, not potential partners in government</td>
<td>Incoherent, lack of party platforms; personality-based</td>
<td>Nationalist agenda with limited regional appeal; old platform essentially fully implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2002 Parliamentary Election Results</strong> (PR seats/SMD seats)</td>
<td>79/9</td>
<td>146/120</td>
<td>In.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in Russia, political parties in Ukraine have not yet reached developmental maturity—they are temporary phenomena, often founded solely on the popularity of their leader and thus severely limited in their longevity, if not also in their platform and appeal. This is especially true of the political center, whereas the right-of-center parties are the best organized and the left-of-center parties the strongest electorally in Ukraine. Thus far, the centrist parties have not been forced to develop a coherent platform (other than to be nominally “reformist”) nor engage in serious competition in order to retain control of the government.

The observation that the leftist parties are “illegitimate” can be explained as follows: Although parties of the left poll up to 40 percent of voters, unlike French Socialists, British
Labourites of old, or reformed Communists in Poland, Ukrainian Socialists and Communists are "not regarded as safe custodian[s] of state power" (172–73). This has meant that no left-of-center party is an actual competitor for government. That even the leftists recognize their ineffectiveness is demonstrated by what Wilson describes as the genuine surprise of Communist leader Petro Symonenko when President Leonid Kuchma suggested appointing a leftist prime minister (2002b, 193).

Part of the reason for the left's continued illegitimacy is its own obstructionism. As Wilson notes, "Nonconstructive opposition to the government in Kiev is actually a position of considerable psychological comfort to the Communists" (2002b, 193). He observes, "The Ukrainian Communists are even more unreformed than their Russian counterparts . . . [and the party] also remains one of the most left-wing parties in the post-Soviet world" (189–90). One of their most destructive influences has been opposition to economic reforms. The parliament elected in 1998, with a Communist plurality but not majority, was particularly obstructive. In January of 1999 a bid to abolish the presidency failed by only two votes. "This was a distinctly anti-presidential and anti-governmental Parliament . . . [and] it continued to be a distinctly ornery Parliament" (Harasymiw 2002, 291). Changing this situation will require more than just systemic reform or the effect of time on democratic consolidation it will also require internal transformation by the parties themselves.

Whereas a Communist electoral victory was certainly not a complete impossibility in 1999 or earlier, the right is naturally limited in its electoral appeal by its nationalist program. "The permanent government of the corporate centre is paradoxically the result both of the [electoral] weakness of the right and the [electoral] strength of the left" (Harasymiw 2002, 173). The political event that has perhaps most shaped independent Ukraine was the so-called "Grand Bargain" between the Rukh nationalists and the National Communist defectors under former president Kravchuk. The Grand Bargain came about namely because of the weakness of the nationalists. "The Ukrainian nationalists, uncomfortably aware of their own minority status, have supported non-party, supposedly 'centrist' corporate government from the outside (with a few key ministries for themselves), so long as it has been sufficiently 'Ukrainian'" (Harasymiw 2002, 173).

Two major problems with the right's nationalist platform limit the electoral strength of the right-wing parties. First, their Ukrainian nationalist program is highly regionalized: "voters in Galicia and parts of central Ukraine will back it come what may . . . [but] this guaranteed support represents a maximum of only 20–25% of the electorate" (172). In addition, the nationalist movements are not just unpopular east of central Ukraine, but the southeastern oblasts might very likely refuse even to accept any nationalist government. "The very stability of the state would be threatened if the national question were to be reopened" (206). Just as Wilson predicts that "Ukraine would split and one half would fight" (2002b, 316) if reintegration with Russia was attempted, the same would occur if the more extreme elements among the nationalists came to power.

The second problem is that the nationalist platform has essentially run out its logical course. The first two presidents of independent Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma and Leonid Kravchuk, enacted most of the official projects that the nationalists set out to undertake in the area of nation building. The right "has begun to lose momentum, as its political agenda
has seemingly been implemented by centrist proxy” (174). The only remaining nationalist agenda is necessarily extreme and would most likely lead to severe crises like those previously discussed. As Wilson wrote early on, “The right was never able to build any momentum. Despite the hope constantly expressed that it could expand in the key target area of central Ukraine and build on pockets of support in the east and south, the results of parliamentary elections in 1994 and 1998 showed that it could not, with support for the national democrats . . . even falling in some places” (179). Without new and innovative platforms, the right will continue to decline in electoral strength and will be more and more subject to the whims of the messy center. In other words, at present the prospects for rapid party consolidation are not promising.

PARTY THEORY IN THE POST-SOCIALIST WORLD: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In analyzing the development of party systems in Ukraine and elsewhere, traditionally, an institutional approach has held sway in the field of comparative politics. Recent research, however, has shown that such an approach has only limited applicability to the problems of party consolidation and institutionalization in newly democratizing countries of Southern and Eastern Europe. The nonconsolidation of the party system in the face of institutional reforms, however, makes these arguments unconvincing explanations for why parties in Ukraine have not coalesced. In place of these institutional explanations, however, most comparative political scientists have relied on cultural explanations while ignoring the elite-motivator approach. While there is certainly a place for cultural factors in studies of party consolidation and institutionalization, and evidence to support such explanations, these approaches have generally succumbed to some of the problems typical of cultural methodologies (Ross 1997, 60–67). Particularly noticeable is the lack of consideration of elite-motivator factors. This research will support recent conclusions about the institutional approach, specifically in relation to Ukraine and then, in its place, provide arguments in favor of an elite-motivator method of explaining party consolidation (or the lack thereof) in Ukraine.

One of the earliest and still most respected works on party systems is Maurice Duverger’s Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State (1963). Other significant works that have continued the institutional program include William Riker’s chapter on Duverger’s law in Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences (Grofman and Lijphard 1986) and Giovanni Sartori’s work, including Parties and Party Systems (1976). These authors focus on institutional constraints on party activity. They assign particular importance to electoral law and the institutions of representation in legislative systems. Applications of the institutional paradigm to post-Socialist cases in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union have shown it to be an ineffective explanation for the unsuccessful development of strong party systems in those countries. For example, in the context of the former Soviet Union, the general expectation is that the introduction of a proportional representation system will lead to a reduction in the number of parties, rather than an increase.
Several studies have applied the institutional approach specifically in research on Ukrainian politics. These include D'Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio's *Politics and Society in Ukraine* (1999), in which the authors provide cultural as well as institutional explanations for the weakness of the party system in Ukraine (150). They also note the effect of regionalism (153), which Douglas Rae studied generally in an institutional context in *Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (1971). D'Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio's conclusions, however, focus exclusively on institutional elements; and thus their study misses important implications of elite actions, which will be shown below (1999, 163). Sarah Birch—a specialist on Ukrainian elections, takes a similar approach in her study of changes in electoral law in Ukraine, under the assumption that such laws are the primary explanatory variable of party system operation (Birch et al. 2002). In a chapter in *Contemporary Ukraine* (Kuzio 1998), Birch attempts to discount rationality as an independent variable by showing that voter choice is extremely limited largely because of problems with regionalism (142). She concludes, based on an institutional approach, that Ukraine can be described as a "proto-party system" that "is not conducive to further party-system development" (150). Again, nonconsolidation of the party system in the face of institutional reforms makes these arguments unconvincing explanations as to why parties in Ukraine have not coalesced as they have in the Baltic states or in Poland. Because the rejection of rationality-based explanations has focused heavily on voter rationality, the problems resulting from overlooking elite-motivator explanations become even more obvious when evidence of the impact of elite actions is taken into consideration.

In the earlier literature, Matthew S. Shugart is alone in proposing a multifaceted approach to party system evaluation. His chapter in *Liberalization and Leninist Legacies*, edited by Beverly Crawford and Arend Lijphart (1997), describes how rational politicians acting within transitional structures and institutions create the long-term institutions that affect party systems (73–74). Shugart does not rule out culture as an important explanatory variable (74); however, he provides no in-depth discussion of such factors. Without a discussion of what a cultural approach can and cannot explain, an automatic reversion to cultural explanations does not increase understanding of the democratic consolidation process.

A radical shift away from the dominance of institutional approaches, which even called into question the inviolability of Duverger's law, was effected by Gary W. Cox in his 1997 book *Making Votes Count.* Cox makes an observation about Duverger's law that is particularly applicable to Ukraine. He cites a "powerful national executive" as a key factor for institutionalizing political parties (182–93). In Ukraine, however, neither Leonid Kravchuk nor Leonid Kuchma have found it necessary to formally affiliate with a political party, thus presenting one possible explanation for Ukraine's weak party system. Krzysztof Jasiewicz continued Sartori's and Cox's work in a 1992 article, "From Solidarity to Fragmentation." Jasiewicz studied party fragmentation in Poland that did not accord with the expectations of an institutional approach.

Others who showed that perhaps an institutional methodology cannot "travel" to Southern and Eastern Europe include Marko Bojcun (1995), who studied the 1994
Ukrainian parliamentary elections, and Robert Moser, whose "The Impact of Parliamentary Electoral Systems in Russia" (1997) looked at the discrepancy between what might be expected under an institutional model and what was observed in the behavior of Russian political parties.

The first to make a study of political party systems specific to Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union was Andrew Wilson (1993). He considered three theoretical approaches to understanding the weakness of the party system: structural "bottom-up," structural "top-down," and political culture approaches. Due to the fact that this study was made ten years ago (before the Communist Party had recovered from its ban) and that Wilson draws no conclusion as to the relative value of these three approaches, another look at the Ukrainian political system is merited.

Robert Moser's more recent article "Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties in Postcommunist States" (1999) provides the best evidence for questioning an institutional approach to studying party systems in the new democracies of Eastern Europe. He hypothesizes that the applicability of Duverger's law and other institutional paradigms "will be mitigated by the [degree] of institutionalization of the party system" (360). Moser makes his case using a quantitative analysis comparing party results in the two-tiered parliaments of Russia, Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary. (Each of these country's parliaments includes members elected using a proportional-representation system—the PR tier—and members elected from single-member districts—the SMD tier.) Moser includes Ukraine in the study, but only the 1994 parliamentary election before a proportional representation system was introduced. Perhaps this is intended as a control variable; however, Moser offers no such explanation; and hence Ukraine figures only marginally into his comparison of tiers (see Moser's Table 3). In light of Ukraine's importance among former Soviet republics, it seems that this oversight could potentially cast doubt on Moser's conclusions, particularly as this leaves only Russia representing non-Baltic former Soviet states.

While Moser provides sufficient theory and evidence to show that traditional institutional explanations cannot be applied to consolidating democracies of the post-socialist world, he offers no in-depth explanation of his new independent variable—party institutionalization. Instead he discusses causal factors affecting party institutionalization, all of which are basically cultural in nature. Essentially Moser has rejected the established institutional explanations and left nothing in their place except for a few sentences about cultural elements of post-Soviet societies (373). This oversight is exacerbated by Moser's rejection of any elite-motivator explanations for mass or elite party behavior. Rationality in voting habits has never been in favor, due to the major limitations on voter choice mentioned previously in Birch's studies. The only reason to reject rationality in elite or party behavior—except as a consequence of the impossibility of voter rationality—is Moser's quantitative evidence about party fractionalization. In the case of Ukraine, it seems that Moser's conclusions are based on an insufficient understanding of the data used in his study. This work will attempt to evaluate whether Moser's conclusions about institutional explanations are appropriate.

The work of Andrew Wilson, which has covered all of the parliamentary and presidential elections since Ukraine's independence (2002b), provides ample reason to conclude that
Moser's inferences about the rationality of political actors ought to be questioned. His study of the most recent presidential election (2002a) particularly shows that there is reason to believe that elite-motivator factors are the most pertinent explanatory variables at the elite level. This research aims to fill the gaps in Moser's data and analysis to add Ukraine to the list of countries that do not follow the expectations outlined by an institutional approach to party systems and also to support an explanation of the weak party system in Ukraine based on elite-motivator explanations.

**Methodology**

The research is designed as a case study of four Ukrainian elections (three parliamentary and one presidential), looking at various approaches of explaining the development of the Ukrainian parliamentary system. The first part of the study evaluates changes in indicators of party fractionalization and consolidation during two parliamentary elections (1994 and 1998), held under different institutional arrangements. These two elections were chosen because they represent two different institutional arrangements, thus allowing the opportunity for analyzing institutional factors with variance in the independent variable. Statistical results and analysis have been provided in an attempt to bolster the quantitative research previously done in the field. The measures of party fractionalization I will use include an effective number of electoral and parliamentary parties (calculated, respectively, by comparing the proportion of the vote and proportion of parliamentary seats received by each party) and the least-squares index of disproportionality (calculated according to the difference between the previous two measures).

The second half of the study is a qualitative analysis of three elections (the parliamentary elections of 1998 and 2002 and the presidential election of 1999) with the purpose of testing to what degree the rational actions of political elites (to further their own ends) perpetuate the party fractionalization and nonconsolidation represented in the first half of the study. The purpose of this part of the study is to show that the elite-motivator approach—considered independently, or as a more specific subset of cultural explanations—can be used as an alternative to the institutional descriptions that have proven insufficient in explaining the development of political parties. These three elections were selected because they are most recent and thus provide the most accurate picture of the current state of party politics in Ukraine.

Several limitations will affect the conclusions presented by the research and will be addressed. As a case study, the research is subject to the recurrent problems connected with case studies and small-n size in general, along with problems of case selection. This includes the possibility of lurking variables, as well as the fact that analysis over time is difficult due to the short history of independence of Ukraine (twelve years). One significant advantage of the choice of Ukrainian cases, however, is the benefits of comparing multiple elections in a single country and the future possibilities of combining this case study with others as part of a larger project with multiple case studies.

Although an attempt has been made to include statistical indicators, such data from two parliamentary elections does not pretend to make this study quantitative. The research relies
heavily on qualitative data and analysis—concrete conclusions from the research will have limited explanatory value outside the area of focus. Without a larger sample size, including cases from a variety of world regions, it is unclear the degree to which the conclusions developed from this research should be applied to all post-socialist states, the Eastern European region, or generally. Without comparing cases with more significant variations in the status of elite actors, more general conclusions cannot be drawn about the causal relationship of elite-motivator explanations and party fragmentation. Additionally, it is impossible to determine to what degree the status of elite actors in Ukraine is tied to cultural factors and thus to what degree elite-motivator explanations ought to be distinguished from more general cultural explanations. While a single case study is only a beginning, an in-depth study can contribute with other studies to develop a more complete theoretical understanding of the region.


In his 1994 study of electoral systems, Arend Lijphart wrote that when a country undergoes a change in its electoral arrangements "many potentially important explanatory variables can be controlled in the sense that they can be assumed not to differ or to differ only marginally: the same country, the same political parties, the same voters, and so on" (78). This potential is reduced in Ukraine, as it might be in any newly democratizing country, in that the political system has been less stable than in an established democracy. This is particularly true in regards to political parties, which have come and gone with regularity. Nevertheless, the comparison of two Ukrainian parliamentary elections, under different institutional arrangements (see Table 2), presents a unique opportunity to evaluate the explanatory power of an institutional approach to understanding the Ukrainian party system.

Table 2: Electoral Arrangements in Three Parliamentary Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>System Type</th>
<th>Single-Member Districts</th>
<th>Proportional Representation Seat Allocation</th>
<th>PR Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Two-round single-member districts</td>
<td>450; two rounds, absolute majority required in second round</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998–present</td>
<td>Mixed SMD/PR</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>225; party lists (distributed by Hare quota)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


One of the primary failures of the institutional approach in Eastern Europe is its prediction that single-member district systems have fewer parties than proportional representation systems. In former Soviet republics, single-member district seats have traditionally been associated with electoral unaccountability and a proliferation of parties.
Therefore, "proportional representation [is] seen . . . as the system most likely to generate accountable majority government. . . . Though this may seem strange to comparative students of electoral systems, it made sense in the post-Soviet context, where party-list voting combined with a relatively high threshold of representation worked as an engine of party consolidation" (Birch 2002, 153). In Ukraine, as the electoral system moved away from single-member districts towards a proportional representation scheme, the expectation would be that the number of political parties would decrease; that is, parties would become less fractionalized, and the parties would become more consolidated, because of the large number of unaffiliated deputies elected from single-member districts. As this comparison will show, however, institutional explanations are disappointingly ineffectual.

THE 1994 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The first set of institutional arrangements under which Ukrainian elections were held (the 1994 election) were developed by a national legislature that was elected before Ukraine declared independence, "literally in a different country," as Birch put it (2002, 147). In the years since independence, over three dozen political parties had developed; however "most were little more than coteries of elites, with severely underdeveloped grassroots support bases and little ideological distinctiveness" (147). Several factors played a role in the development of the electoral reform that would regulate the next set of parliamentary elections. Although elections were not scheduled to be held until 1995, parliament's legitimacy was undercut by the fact that it was elected under the Soviet system. Additionally, the state of the economy had continually worsened since the collapse of the U.S.S.R., leading to further frustration with post-independence governance. Another factor that Birch notes as significant was the reconstitution of the Communist Party (banned after the August Coup) and the Russian parliamentary crisis of the previous year, which featured Yeltsin shelling a confrontational, left-dominated parliament into submission and calling for new elections under a mixed PR-SMD system (146-47). All of these factors were important in the process leading to electoral reform.

The primary debate in the Verkhovna Rada about the proposal for electoral reform centered around whether or not to introduce some element of a proportional representation system, and if so, to what degree. In this dispute, the leftists—Socialists and newly enfranchised Communists—unaffiliated deputies, and pro-presidential forces generally opposed the establishment of a proportional representation element. They argued that the country was not ready for this type of reform because Ukrainian parties were weak. Those in favor of a mixed or entirely proportional system were the right and center-right parties. Their argument was that a proportional representation system would help to strengthen the parties and encourage the Rada to organize itself around parties.

A key element of the debate was the nominating procedures for candidates. This was a question of the old local patronage systems versus the new, national or regional parties. "The distinction between PR and the majoritarians was also viewed in terms of the corruptibility of the latter. The right saw the single-member system as a means for the old nomenklatura—the so-called 'party of power'—to maintain control of politics through
their patronage networks. . . . A law which downplayed party affiliation had the added advantage of allowing the 'party of power' to win seats without having to resort overtly to a label designating a discredited ideology” (149). In the Soviet Union, nominations for candidates had generally been made by workplace-based groups. If parties were to be effective players in the legislature, they would have to be given at least the opportunity to nominate candidates, if not complete control of the process.

In Shugart's study of party strength, he writes: “The concept of a strong party implies a party that is capable of presenting a coherent face to the voters so that they can assess its collective fitness for government. . . . Electoral laws affect . . . how much authority is placed in the hands of party leaders to determine the rank and file's electoral prospects.” One of his four indicators of party strength is whether or not the party controls who may run as a member of the party and in what order they are elected (1997, 44–45). In the end, the left-wing forces saw allowing parties to nominate candidates (as well as continuing the traditional methods) and indicating the party affiliation of single-member district candidates' on the ballot as sufficient steps to promote party consolidation (Birch 2002, 149). As discussed previously, in the process of democratic consolidation, the role of party consolidation has been shown to be important, especially in countries without a tradition of strong civil society.

Four plans were put to a vote in the Rada: a pure single-member district version, a 350 SMD/100 PR version, a 50–50 mixed version, and a pure proportional representation version. Although Communist and Socialist leaders had demonstrated willingness to compromise, even to the point of allowing the 50–50 version, the pure single-member district version received a majority of votes, with the 50–50 and pure proportional-representation versions receiving less than a third as many votes. With the scheduled elections just over four months away, the subsequent drafting was rushed and, as a result, some unintentional elements wound up in the final draft. First, an absolute majority, not just a plurality, was required for victory in the second round of voting. Second, the incredibly difficult process for candidate nominations by parties is most probably explained by the fact that those requirements were originally intended to apply to party lists in a mixed or proportional representation system (Birch 2002, 150–51). Whereas any ten voters could constitute a group to nominate a candidate, and there were no requirements for workers' collectives to nominate a candidate, party regional conferences (the only forum in which parties could nominate candidates) had to be attended by 50 delegates or two-thirds of local party members (Birch 2000, 82).

The results of these apparent mistakes were disastrous. Out of the 450 districts, only 49 were able to meet the strict majority requirements, and the successive election the next month produced only 289 more, meaning that by the opening of the parliament, only about three-quarters of the seats had been filled. Elections to fill the remaining seats continued well into 1996 (nearly two years later), until a moratorium on elections was passed to give a weary electorate a respite. The effects of the overly burdensome requirements for candidates to be nominated by parties meant that only about ten percent of candidates were nominated by parties, compared with over sixty percent by citizen groups and about
a quarter by workers’ collectives (Birch 2000, 82). Over half of the deputies elected were unaffiliated, although all but twenty joined various parties once the session began (Harasymiw 2002, 258–59). “The most striking difference between the candidate corpuses of 1990 and 1994 was the overall decline in political identification. . . . Candidates . . . were far less likely to be party-affiliated” (Birch 2000, 89).

The effect on party consolidation—so important in democratic consolidation—was apparent (see Table 3). “The Soviet-era majoritarian system was left largely unchanged, and those alterations that were made proved detrimental to the development of organized multi-party competition” (82). The legislation “undeniably hindered the development of cohesive political parties” (Birch 2002, 151). These effects continued to be observed long after the convocation of parliament began. By 1996, the nine party groups that existed in 1994 had become twelve and the number of unaffiliated deputies had almost doubled. The Agrarian Party, Interregional bloc, and the Unity Party all suffered splits. At the end of the parliamentary convocation in 1998, there were once again nine party blocs—different, however, from the original nine—and the caucus of the unaffiliated had doubled yet again (Harasymiw 2002, 268).

Table 3: Measures of Party Fractionalization, 1994 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PR Tier</th>
<th>SMD Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Effective Number of Electoral Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1998 Parliamentary Elections

The badly needed changes to the 1994 electoral law were delayed until just two months before the subsequent parliamentary elections in 1998—four years later. Parliament in the interim had been preoccupied with passing the country’s first constitution in the era of independence. “The new constitution effectively entrenched the institutional status quo, but its adoption ended years of jockeying for power and wrangling over the design of the state” and allowed parliament to redirect its attention to electoral reform (Birch 2000, 102, 104). During this period, the same problems that had plagued the previous convocation continued: parliamentary factions appeared and disappeared, but the quagmire of the center remained muddled. “Factions formed, dissolved, and reformed to such an extent that by 1998 the political structure of the assembly bore only a vague resemblance to the party affiliations of the deputies elected four years earlier . . . . The region between [the Communist
and Rukh strongholds] was one of continued flux as aspirant leaders strove to attract followings from among the weakly-aligned centrist mass of the parliament” (102).

Birch outlines several factors that led to broad support for reform. Some parties, such as the Socialist and Rural parties had both failed to meet expectations in the 1994 election; other parties, such as the Communists, taking their cue from the 1993 Russian elections, saw the potential windfall that the introduction of a proportional-representation element might bring. The left-wing parties also realized that, as institutions, they had more in common with the institutionalized parties of the right than the unaffiliated deputies (2002, 153).

Furthermore, there was general recognition that the large number of parties and unaffiliated deputies made parliament ineffective. The situation was exacerbated by Kuchma’s hostility towards parliament, which added a sense of urgency for parliament to become a decisive body. Kuchma’s relationship with parliament is characterized at its extreme by the parliament’s attempt early in 1999 to abolish the presidency and by Kuchma’s second inauguration in 1999, which he decided to hold in a concert hall rather than in parliament. As a result, nearly 160 deputies did not attend, as a sign of protest (Harasymiw 2002, 291, 294).

In addition to the obvious changes to the electoral system that nearly all agreed needed to be made after the interminable by-elections that resulted from the previous electoral system in 1994, there was also a feeling action should be taken to strengthen the party system so that parliament would operate in a more effective manner. The general consensus was in favor of a mixed system such as had been used in Russia in 1993 and 1995. The primary points of disputation were whether some lesser type of turnout requirement should be retained, what percentage of the seats should be elected by proportional representation, and how high the threshold for parties should be in a proportional-representation system.

Early on in the process, five proposals were considered by parliament. There were three bills similar to the draft presented by a working committee of the Legal Policy and Judicial Reform Committee, which proposed that half of the seats be elected from a national proportional-representation list with a three percent threshold. The other proposal was for a pure proportional-representation system, also with a three percent threshold. Proponents of proportional representation maintained that single-member district seats were too easily bought, while their opponents claimed it would not be any more difficult to buy an entire national list. One of the alternate versions of the working group’s proposal received the most votes, and a compromise with broad support was worked out with only one major revision: a four percent threshold. This bill passed with little opposition in March of 1997 (Birch 2002, 155–56).

Backing for the proposal, however, quickly disappeared as presidential supporters instigated active opposition. Kuchma was “wary of increased party organization by either his left-wing or his right-wing rivals. He therefore opposed a proportional law, especially one with a threshold that would exclude his centrist allies and magnify the seat share of the large parties” (154). The better organized parties also threatened to withdraw support, as they naturally favored a higher threshold level. Some members of smaller parties, centrists, and unaffiliated deputies continued to favor a purely single-member district arrangement.
These members' position intensified when they realized that a proportional-representation system with a low threshold would not pass.

This led to the bill's failure in nine successive votes, the introduction of two alternate proposals by presidential supporters, and finally by a presidential veto with a proposal for fifteen amendments when the bill finally did pass. After parliament accepted twelve of the president's proposed amendments, Kuchma finally acquiesced and signed the bill on October 22. This was not the end of obstacles to electoral reform, though. In February of 1998, with the parliamentary campaign already well underway, the Constitutional Court "delivered a scathing ruling, declaring the law was unconstitutional on more than forty counts." The Court ruled, however, that because it was so late in the process, the elections could proceed under the law (156–57).

In Birch's analysis of the new law, she notes several important advantages. "The law provided an incentive for political entrepreneurs to form parties, rather than relying on the local fiefdoms to gain seats. . . . At the same time it recognized the geographical heterogeneity of Ukrainian politics by allowing political organizations with concentrated regional support the opportunity to win seats locally without having to demonstrate national strength." Birch also notes, however, that the introduction of a proportional representation element with a relatively low threshold encouraged a number of new parties to form. Seventeen new parties formed between the 1994 and 1998 elections, and ten formed just in the year preceding the 1998 election (2000, 104).

In hindsight, the adoption of a four percent threshold rather than the five-percent level more standard in proportional-representation systems may have been fortuitous. Of the eight parties that cleared the four-percent threshold, four received less than five percent of the proportional representation vote. Three of these four were centrist parties, meaning that a five-percent threshold would have left two parties on the left (CPU and Socialists), one on the right (National Democrats), and only one centrist party (Social Democrats) to represent the political spectrum. As Wilson and Birch write, "the elections came within a whisker of producing an artificially polarized assembly" (1999, 1041). D'Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio, however, disagree. They cite the four-percent threshold as one of the new electoral law's weaknesses that undermine the consolidation of parties because of a low incentive for parties to combine in order to pass the threshold requirement (1999, 156).

The effect of introducing a proportional-representation element into the electoral system appears to be small. In qualitative terms, parties were no more consolidated than under the previous arrangements. In parliament, "factions formed, dissolved, and reformed to such an extent that by 1998 the political structure of the assembly bore only a vague resemblance to the party affiliations of the deputies elected four years earlier" (Birch 2000, 102). The failure of right-wing parties to consolidate is evidenced by their poor showing in the proportional-representation list. After the deputies were seated, the lack of consolidation was manifest by the fact that it took nineteen rounds to elect a speaker (105, 107). In quantitative terms as well, the lack of change is clear (see Table 4). The effective number of electoral parties was essentially unchanged, while the single-member districts tier experienced an increase in electoral parties, contrary to expectations. Least-squares measures of
disproportionality, difficult to calculate due to the large number of independents, also showed little difference.

The results of institutional change in electoral arrangements, specifically the introduction of a proportional-representation element, demonstrate the weakness of the institutional approach to studying Ukrainian political party development. Traditional expectations that proportional-representation would increase the number of parties do not hold—as we would predict based on other post-socialist countries. The alternate expectation (under an institutional paradigm) that such electoral reform would produce party consolidation also does not hold. Having demonstrated the inability of institutional explanations to describe these developments in the Ukrainian parliamentary system, we now turn to an elite-motivator paradigm for further explanation.

Table 4: Measures of Party Fractionalization, 1998 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PR Tier</th>
<th>SMD Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Effective Number of Electoral Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 N/A N/A N/A</td>
<td>2.1681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 10.7473 4.9549 0.2907</td>
<td>2.9896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The problems with the Ukrainian system of political parties can be described in two general categories: first, a lack of party consolidation important in the process of democratic consolidation and, second, continued party fractionalization. The data previously introduced provides ample evidence for fractionalization, while much has been written qualitatively about the nonconsolidated nature of Ukrainian political parties. It is sufficient here to mention the problems outlined in the brief overview of political parties presented earlier: the illegitimacy of the left, the electoral weakness of the right, and the resulting incoherence in the center. Due to the illegitimate left and the weak right, the center parties are essentially guaranteed the leading role in government. "The Ukrainian centre 'parties' have therefore governed by default and their long free ride has not been good for Ukraine" (Wilson 2002b, 206).

Stagnation, corruption, and abuse of power are three major problems engendered by such a situation. Examples of these three woes include the stagnation of political and economic reforms by oligarchs seeking to preserve a status quo beneficial to themselves; corruption in the political process by centrist party members who are not forced to court the public in the fair and open forum of a democratic market of ideas; abuse of power by
incumbents to preserve the illegitimacy of the left and the electoral weakness of the right. So long as this situation continues it will be difficult for true reformist-liberals or centrist parties—those that will promote the democratic consolidation of Ukraine—to be successful in Ukrainian politics.

While others have concluded that voters and elites alike suffer from a lack of rational behavior—based on evidence that institutional factors cannot adequately explain these observed problems—a closer look at the machinations of the political elite will show that the status quo is intentionally, and rationally, preserved for the benefit of those incumbents in power. Three elections will illustrate these points: the 1999 presidential election provides an example of elite behavior that promotes nonconsolidation, while the 1998 and 2002 parliamentary elections offer evidence that elite actors deliberately promote party factionalization to achieve their own ends. Both of these results, in turn, negatively impact the course of Ukrainian democratic consolidation.

Those in the center and on the right have prolonged the unreformed state of the left because they find it beneficial as a campaign issue. They have perpetuated the distrust of leftists as legitimate partners in government, and this is one of the major obstacles to the consolidation of a party system in Ukraine. This is especially true in comparison with other post-socialist countries where the former Communist Party has transformed itself into a viable political movement. Centrists and rightists know that as long as they can continue the present situation they are guaranteed at least one issue on which they can run. "The centre has even come to prefer the maintenance of a left-wing bogey to keep the range of governing options narrow and disguise their own lack of will for real reform" (Wilson 2002b, 206).

THE 1999 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The "red-scare" tactic was especially obvious in Kuchma's 1999 re-election campaign. "Kuchma obviously preferred to face a real ogre on the left. . . . Both Vitrenko [of the ultra-leftist Progressive Socialist Party] and Symonenko, leader of the Communists, were discretely supported as alternatives to the potentially more [electable and thus] threatening 'Ukrainian Kwasniewski,' Oleksandr Moroz. . . . The left had to be kept in its ghetto. Any potential breakout to the center had to be headed off" (200). It was even reported that the Kuchma campaign was responsible for a grenade attack against Vitrenko and the subsequent blame for the attack heaped on Moroz's supporters. "The media [controlled by the President and his supporters] seemed to favor Vitrenko over Moroz [and] observers, both journalistic and official . . . were of one opinion about the campaign—it was dirty" (Harasymiw 2002, 323). As Bohdan Harasymiw wrote, "Whom or what did Kuchma represent? In short, as the campaign revealed, it was power, and the political parties fragmentation worked in his favour" (323).

The sinister nature of these tactics was exacerbated by incumbent spending power and absolute control of the mass media. "During the campaign the government-controlled mass media were grossly one-sided in favour of Kuchma. The taxation authorities and other police harassed the independent media outlets" (323). The anti-party tactics were
apparent as early as the 1994 presidential campaign (see note 11) and were again evident in the 2002 parliamentary elections. In 2002, Vitrenko was resurrected "after her cameo performance in the presidential election . . . [and] was once again omnipresent—this time with only few of her own advertisements but with plenty of talking-head time on official television" (Wilson 2002a, 96). This final example shows that the tactics of preserving the nonconsolidation of the left spilled over from the 1999 elections to the 2002 elections. From a consideration of presidential campaigns, we now turn to a discussion of parliamentary elections. If the 1999 presidential elections are a perfect example of elite behavior maintaining party nonconsolidation, the 2002 parliamentary elections show how the same actors used the same tactics to extend party fractionalization, once again intentionally and rationally, in order to achieve their own ends.

**THE 1998 AND 2002 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

Like the promotion of nonconsolidation, maneuvers to prolong party fractionalization, although perfected in the 2002 elections, actually began earlier. Such tactics had first been employed four years earlier in the 1998 parliamentary elections. In 1998, however, only "clones" had been used ("clones," Wilson's term, were parties designed to steal votes that would reduce opponents' shares of parliamentary seats; Wilson and Birch at that time referred to them as "spoiler" parties)—not "satellites" (parties designed to capture seats that could then be added to the presidential coalition), and they had been employed only against the left (see Table 5). The Agrarian Party was created to challenge the Village Party in rural areas; two different parties, one labor-based and one with a nostalgic appeal, were set up to take on the Communist Party; and, a division was engineered in the Socialist Party to create the Progressive Socialist Party, which was rumored to be receiving direct aid from pro-presidential forces, in spite of the fact that its members continued caucusing with the left. Indeed, the success of the "spoilers" in 1998 may have been even greater than that of the "clones" four years later (Wilson and Birch 1999, 1041, 1043).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spoiler Party</th>
<th>&quot;Spoiling&quot; from</th>
<th>% of PR vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agrarian Party</td>
<td>Village Party</td>
<td>3.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Ukraine</td>
<td>Communist Party of Ukraine (trade unions)</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of Defenders of the Fatherland</td>
<td>Communist Party of Ukraine (veterans)</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Socialist Party</td>
<td>Socialist Party</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 2002, while maintaining nonconsolidation was the presidential team's preferred tactic for dealing with the left, engineering fractionalization was their modus operandi for opponents on the right. Rukh (Ukrainian for "movement"), the main opposition group
during the Soviet era, was subject to crippling disunity early on in the period of independ­
ence. At their third congress, the first after Ukrainian independence, the movement broke
into three factions and has remained more or less divided ever since.18 Additionally, a num­
ber of ultra-nationalist (right-wing) parties sprang up in western Ukraine, further weakening
Rukh (Wilson 2002b, 178–79). Just as they had during the presidential election of 1994,
the right quickly sold their support to the incumbent based on his record of Ukrainian
state-building (their primary concern), but just to be safe Kuchma’s reelection campaign
organized one more split of Rukh to ensure that the president would have no competition
on his right (200).

The party-splitting practiced in the 1999 presidential elections gave way to even more
advanced techniques of promoting party fractionalization in the 2002 parliamentary elections.
Wilson’s analysis of the president’s campaign outlines a three-pronged plan to bolster
Kuchma’s influence in parliament. The first part of the plan proposed creating a Ukrainian
version of the Russian Yedinstvo Party that had enjoyed parliamentary success in the Russian
Duma elections earlier that year. The second part of the plan, however, was the creation of
a number of “satellite” and “clone” parties. They were designed to mimic other parties and
steal votes from them; in the case of the “satellites,” in order to capture seats that could
then be added to the presidential coalition modeled on Yedinstvo; in the case of “clones,”
votes that would reduce opponents’ shares of parliamentary seats.

In the 2002 election “at least a dozen of the 33 parties and party blocs running in the
elections were artificial projects with opaque sponsorship and nefarious purposes…. All
such parties, however, were virtual in the sense of being nothing more than brands or fronts
and vehicles for [other] issues” (Wilson 2002a, 94). (See tables 6 and 7). By merely increas­
ing the number of parties in the campaign artificially, the actions of the president’s inter­
est increased party fractionalization. Wilson gives two types of evidence of the “front”
nature of these parties. First, by analyzing the party lists, supporters of the president and
their business associates appear in parties incongruous to the individuals’ identities—such
as men in the Women for the Future Party, the aged in the youth-oriented New Generation
Party, and executives from highly polluting industrial sectors in the Green Party. Second,
all the “satellite” parties spent vast amounts on television campaigns (some even more than
the president’s own coalition and the chief opposition party, “Our Ukraine”) that were
developed by expensive Russian public relations firms. These parties were also given
inordinate exposure in the state-controlled media and by television stations owned by
presidential supporters (94–95).

Table 6: 2002 Parliamentary Election Satellite Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satellite Parties</th>
<th>% of PR vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women for the Future</td>
<td>2.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Crop</td>
<td>2.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Party</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: 2002 Parliamentary Election Clone Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clone Parties</th>
<th>“Cloned” from</th>
<th>% of PR vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vitrenko Bloc</td>
<td>Ultra-left</td>
<td>3.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Workers and Peasants</td>
<td>Communist Party of Ukraine (left faction)</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Ukraine (renewed)</td>
<td>Communist Party of Ukraine (right faction)</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloc of the People’s Movement of Ukraine</td>
<td>Our Ukraine</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yabloko</td>
<td>Center/Reformists</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Generation</td>
<td>Center/Reformists</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the end, however, only half of this part of the plan was successful. The “clone” parties succeeded in drawing votes from Our Ukraine, the Socialists, the Communists, and others, but the “satellites” failed simply because there were too many of them, and they crowded each other out of the field. Unlike the Progressive Socialist Party that met the threshold requirement in 1998, none of the “satellite” parties in 2002 broke the four-percent requirement to win seats in the Verkhovna Rada.

Reviewing elite actions in these three elections demonstrates the great adverse impact that Ukrainian elites have had on party system development and party consolidation. That these actions were undertaken for personal political gain should be clear, and eliminate questions about the rationality of elite actors. Considering the effect of these actors, political scientists studying Ukraine or other post-socialist cases ought not to ignore rational choice factors, particularly elite-motivator factors, any longer in analyses of party systems.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Ukraine, as one of the most important former Soviet republics, one of the most Western-oriented, and one of the most strategically important to the West, is an important beginning point for studies of democratization in the post-socialist world. Party consolidation, an important factor in any course of democratic transition, is even more salient in former Soviet states that lack a historical tradition of civil society. In these countries political parties are practically the only method for mass expression of political preference. Developing a theoretical understanding of how political party systems consolidate, or fail to do so, is clearly important to understanding democratization in Eastern Europe.

This study has shown that Ukraine, like other post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe, fails to meet the expectations of an institutional approach to studies of party systems. Considering the importance of Ukraine as a post-socialist case, and the fact that previous studies had failed to adequately consider Ukraine, this should be seen as a significant finding. In the place of an institutional paradigm, evidence presented here has demonstrated the salience of elite-motivator explanations for party system development. Elite actors intentional behave in such a way that prolongs party fractionalization and prevents
party consolidation. This is not symptomatic of a lack of rationality on the part of political actors, as has been suggested, but is done for political self-benefit and thus is likely to continue so long as other factors allow it to. This ought to provide justification for scholars to give greater consideration to elite-motivator paradigms when attempting to identify the causes of party development in post-socialist countries. Further study of such cases is necessary to determine with more precision the degree to which elite actors truly affect party development, and also to determine to what extent this is or is not a function of culture.

This has significant implications for outlooks on the process of democratic consolidation in Ukraine and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Because of the historical lack of civil society in former socialist states, a lack of party development should be considered an important requirement for the continuation of this process. Institutional changes appear unlikely to generate considerable improvement in the current situation. This means that until the circumstances that permit political elites to unduly influence party fractionalization are eliminated or at least curtailed, further democratic consolidation in Ukraine appears tenuous at best.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1. Russian-language news outlets in Russia reacted with great surprise, almost outrage, to such discussions.

2. Harasymiw noted in a study of party discipline that centrist deputies were even more undisciplined (27.1) than the officially unaffiliated (22.1), who, he notes, “had absolutely no reason to show caucus solidarity.” Interestingly, three other factions were also less disciplined than the unaffiliated (2002, 269, 271).

3. Officially, the president is not affiliated with any party, although United Ukraine is explicitly a pro-presidential party.

4. Although the “Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc” received 7.3 percent of the PR vote (equating to 22 seats), it is unclear whether this group, more personality-based than most, ought to be considered a “main” party.

5. “PR” refers to the proportional-representation system introduced after legislative reform. “SMD” refers to single-member district seats, of which the original parliament was fully comprised and which was retained in part after the reforms; 85 seats in SMD’s went to independents, members of parties receiving less than 1 percent of the PR vote or that had results that were disputed. An additional 11 seats were unaccounted for by the Central Election Commission. Source: Ukrainian Central Election Commission. 2002 regular election results. At <http://195.230.157.53/pls/vd2002/webproc0v>. 10 Nov. 2003.

6. The parties of the right with enough support to win parliamentary seats all joined centrist party blocs for the 2002 election.

7. Harasymiw makes the following observations: “Parliament even issued an appeal to the Ukrainian people in October [1999], urging them not to vote during the presidential election for the incumbent Leonid Kuchma in order to ensure democracy. The president, for his part, was not above showing his disdain for Parliament by deciding, most importantly, to conduct his second inauguration on 30 November in a concert hall rather than in the Parliament building. In protest, about 160 deputies—Communists and other leftists—refused to attend.” After a short-lived pro-presidential majority, “several weeks of turmoil followed. Both Deputy Speaker Martyniuk and Speaker Tkachenko were ousted, but Tkachenko refused to step down. The majority then adjourned to another place and on 1 February it elected Ivan Plushch as speaker and Stepan Havrysh as deputy speaker. For about a week the two groups held parallel sittings, with the leftist minority physically occupying the parliamentary hall proper” (2002, 291, 294).

8. For example, some major parties do not compete in certain regions, particularly western Ukraine, which is a stronghold of the right. This limits voter choice and creates implications for the rationality of voters.

9. Earlier, Giovanni Sartori, in Grofman and Lijphart’s Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences (1986), laid background for such doubt about the explanatory power of institutionalism.

10. Although Wilson’s article was written ten years ago, his description of the overall party system is still accurate—it was provided earlier at the end of the section on the important role of parties in democratic consolidation.
11. Wilson states, for example, that only Rukh movements had established offices in Kiev and respectable publishing arms. The author, however, has visited the substantial Communist Party headquarters in Kiev and is personally familiar with the many offerings from their presses.

12. Moser states in a footnote (46) that data was not available from the 1998 election, the second election case studied in this research. Sufficient data to calculate all of Moser’s statistics, with the exception of effective number of candidates, is now available for both the 1998 and 2002 parliamentary elections.

13. Following Moser’s methodology: “The effective number of parties index is calculated by squaring the proportion of the vote or seat shares of each party, adding these together, then dividing 1 by this total: $N_{v} = 1/\sum(v_{[\text{sub 1}]})$ or $N_{v} = 1/\sum(s_{[\text{sub i}]})$” (Moser 1999, fn. 32).

14. Again, Moser’s methodology: “The least-squared index of disproportionality is calculated by squaring the vote-seat share differences and adding them together; this total is divided by 2; and then the square root of this value is taken: $LSq = \sqrt{\sum(v_{[\text{sub i}]})}$” (Moser 1999, fn. 33).

15. The requirement that a candidate receive an absolute majority in order to be elected was exacerbated by the habit of some Ukrainians to vote against all candidates as a protest. In a close race, even a few such voters could prevent either candidate from receiving fifty percent of the vote (Birch 2000, 82–83).

16. An article in *Foreign Policy* in 1995 claimed that these problems were premeditated actions by President Leonid Kravchuk against the development of political parties. According to Anders Aslund, Kravchuk “tried to cancel the elections, and for a long time it was unclear whether they would take place. . . . Finally, Kravchuk settled for a very complicated electoral system with no role for political parties and low campaign-spending ceilings. . . . His declared hope was that less than 50 percent of Ukrainian voters would participate in the parliamentary elections, thus rendering them invalid and leaving Ukraine with an elected president but no parliament” (130). This provides a precursor of the anti-party actions of the elites that will be discussed.

17. One of the most destructive influences of the unreformed left has been opposition to economic reforms, which others—including the President—have used for their own ends. By using the leftist vote, business interests aligned with the president were able to hold up reforms in the Verkhovna Rada that were not beneficial to their own interests. Kuchma’s allies also relied upon Communist votes to remove Yushchenko in a vote of no confidence in order to subdue a possible opponent of the president (Wilson 2002b, 329). D’Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio wrote: “[The amorphous center] also works to strengthen the executive at the Rada’s expense, as the president can often tailor draft legislation presented to the Rada for approval in such a way as to win the support of the center (his natural supporters) in alliance usually with the right or, occasionally, with the left” (1999, 160).

18. In 2001–2002, former Prime Minister Victor Yushchenko’s managed to unite at least some of the rival Rukh factions in his “Our Ukraine” bloc of parties.
WORKS CITED


