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MIXED ELECTORAL RULES AND PARTY STRATEGIES

Responses to Incentives by Ukraine's Rukh and Russia's Yabloko

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ABSTRACT

Research on mixed electoral systems indicates that contamination effects between proportional representation and single-member district components should encourage political parties to maximize the number of placements in single-member districts under non-compensatory mixed rules. However, many parties in Russia and Ukraine fielded candidates in relatively few district races, while some nominated candidates in most districts in recent parliamentary elections. The article proposes possible solutions to this puzzle, identifying incentives and disincentives to maximizing candidate nominations in the districts and illustrating them with case analyses of strategies pursued by Ukraine's Rukh and Russia's Yabloko parties.

KEY WORDS ■ campaign strategies ■ mixed systems ■ political parties ■ Russia ■ Ukraine

The advent of competitive elections in post-communist states has provided scholars with substantial opportunities to investigate the behavior and attitudes of citizens and political elites. The growing literature has addressed many important questions, including how citizen preferences for political parties emerge (Brader and Tucker, 2001; Miller and Klobucar, 2000; White et al., 1997a, b); how political actors make decisions about aligning with parties (Smyth, 1997); how parties recruit candidates (Ishiyama, 2000); how closely elites represent constituents (Kitschelt et al., 1999); how consistently legislators vote with their parties (Ishiyama, 2000; Smith and Remington, 2001) and how electoral rules affect party systems (Moraski and Loewenberg, 1999; Moser, 1999a). Despite the growing literature on

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post-communist party systems, little work has addressed how the campaign strategies of political parties respond to the unique incentives of mixed electoral systems.

Mixed electoral systems present a complex environment to parties by generating an electoral incentive for candidate nomination in single-member district (SMD) races that is not present in 'pure' SMD. Placing candidates in the SMD portion of a mixed system generally exerts a measurable, positive impact on local proportional representation (PR) results (Herron and Nishikawa, 2001). This unique feature of mixed systems – interactive effects of one ballot that benefit the party on the other ballot – provides a strong incentive for parties to place many candidates in district races, and contradicts expectations derived from Duverger's Law (see Duverger, 1954).

However, few parties in Russia and Ukraine seem to have adopted strategies to take direct advantage of the interactive features of mixed electoral rules. This article analyzes the strategies of two political parties, Russia's Yabloko and Ukraine's Rukh, to propose potential solutions to the puzzle. These political parties are critical test cases because of the involvement of their members in the design of the election rules; it is likely that their leaderships understood the system's incentives as well as or better than other political parties. In addition, Rukh and Yabloko chose different strategies despite similar roles in institutional design and virtually identical election rules.

In this article, I assess party responses to institutional incentives in three parts. First, I define the electoral rules used in Russia and Ukraine. Second, I address the incentives and disincentives to nominate candidates in SMD. Although there is an electoral bonus for placing candidates, different interpretations of the bonus, limited resources and inter-party cooperation potentially discourage parties from running candidates in many SMD races. Third, I discuss the strategic responses of Ukraine's Rukh Party and Russia's Yabloko Party to the system's incentives. Confronted with similar rules, but different electoral environments, political actors chose different strategies to maximize their benefits.

Mixed Electoral Systems in Russia and Ukraine

In Russia, parliamentary electoral rules were initially established by decree in 1993, after which they were developed by pro-reform allies of President Boris Yeltsin. The mixed system was subsequently adopted as a law and amended over time (see 'On the Election of Deputies to the Russia State Duma', 1999). Russia's mixed system is non-compensatory and the number of seats is evenly divided between PR and SMD.[1] The 225 PR seats are allocated in a single national district by the LR-Hare formula among parties that pass the 5 percent electoral threshold. Russia's 225 SMD seats are allocated by plurality rules. Candidates may run in both PR and SMD races and voters use separate ballots to cast votes.

In Ukraine, the initial post-Soviet election rules were replaced in 1997 after parliament approved a new electoral system (see 'On the Election of People's Deputies of Ukraine', 1999). Ukraine's electoral rules are similar to Russia's. Ukraine employs non-compensatory seat allocation and divides seats evenly between PR and SMD. Its 225 PR seats are allocated in a single national district by the LR-Hare formula among parties that pass the 4 percent electoral threshold. The 225 SMD seats are allocated by plurality rules. As in Russia, voters use separate ballots to cast votes in PR and SMD. Dual candidacy was challenged, but permitted, in 1998.

The Empirical Puzzle

Mixed electoral rules present political parties with a complex decision-making environment. Parties must simultaneously construct a list of candidates for the PR component and sponsor individual candidates in SMD races. The electoral consequences of candidate nomination can be substantial.

Herron and Nishikawa's (2001) analysis of mixed electoral systems in Russia and Japan demonstrates that candidate nomination in SMD positively affects local level PR outcomes, even when controls are added for incumbency and party popularity. They argue that an SMD candidate's campaign raises awareness of the party locally, benefiting the party in the party list component. Herron and Nishikawa speculate that the positive effect of SMD placement on parties' PR performance should further encourage parties to maximize the placement of candidates in SMD to take advantage of this effect.

However, many parties in Russia and Ukraine contest seats in only a small number of SMD races. Table 1 indicates that the majority of Russian and Ukrainian parties participated in fewer than 20 percent of the districts in

Table 1. Distribution of political parties by SMD placement

	No. of parties with candidates nominated in:					
	0–45 SMD	*46–90 SMD*	*91–135 SMD*	*136–180 SMD*	*181–225 SMD*	*Total no. of parties*
Russian parties (1999)	16	5	5	0	0	26
Ukrainian parties (1998)	16	5	5	2	2	30
Total no. of parties	32	10	10	2	2	56

Note: Each cell entry denotes the number of parties that fielded the specified range of SMD candidates in Russia (1999) and Ukraine (1998). For example, two Ukrainian parties nominated candidates in the range 181 to 225 districts.
SMD = Single-member districts.

the most recent elections. What explains variation in candidate nomination in SMD? Are parties that limit candidate placement unaware of the potential benefits, or do other factors influence placement decisions?

Potential Disincentives for Maximizing Candidate Placement

Positive and Negative Effects

Herron and Nishikawa's analysis of electoral effects shows a tendency for candidate placement to exert a positive effect on local PR vote outcomes. A local candidate's ability to attract additional attention to the party and its platform may not always attract voters, however. Ambiguity sometimes serves candidates and parties better than clarity (Franklin, 1991). Parties may perceive that placing candidates in certain districts could hurt the party in PR, despite the evidence of a PR bonus for SMD placement.

Negative effects are more likely to affect certain kinds of political parties. Parties with controversial platforms may be hindered by the presence of a local candidate. As voters become more aware of the party's views through local campaigning and advertising, they may be influenced by the party's positions rather than the general image projected by the party or its national leadership. In some areas, this could cause the party to lose local support.

Other parties may benefit from lack of local information when the party's image diverges from its actual positions. Ukraine's Green Party was founded by environmental activists, but has become a party associated with business interests.[2] Increased participation in SMD could have limited its success in PR because voters might have become more aware of how the Green Party's name did not accurately reflect the party's underlying membership.

While Herron and Nishikawa's evidence shows that the net effect of placing candidates in SMD races is positive, the possibility of negative effects in some circumstances may generate disincentives for placing candidates in all districts.

Limits of Organizational Capacity

Placing candidates in districts and conducting campaigns requires financial, personnel and technical resources. To register a candidate in a local district in Russia, parties must collect signatures from 1 percent of local voters or pay a deposit.[3] In Ukraine, a candidate must either have been nominated by a party and present proof of nomination or collect 900 signatures and obtain self-nominated status.[4] While candidates from registered parties are provided some free access to the local media, other costs of the campaign must be paid by the party or candidate. With limited financial resources, parties may not be able to support candidates in all or many SMD races.

Finances alone do not explain the number of candidates nominated in SMD, however. Official financial data from Russia's 1999 elections indicate that some poorly financed parties fielded many SMD candidates, while some well-financed parties nominated few. Dukhovnoye Naslediye had 107 affiliated candidates in SMD, but had one of the smallest electoral funds (Central Electoral Commission, 2000: 104–5). By contrast, Russia's Unity Party (Medved) had access to substantial financial and organizational resources, but nominated candidates in only 42[5] of the 224 electoral districts.[6] While one must treat officially reported financial data with caution, financial resources alone do not explain district nomination patterns.[7]

A party must also have personnel resources to place candidates in district races. Parties that are based around the electoral concerns of an individual or small group of politicians may be unable to field many candidates. Newly organized parties may also be unable to nominate many candidates, even if they are well financed. Without a critical mass of committed politicians, parties cannot place candidates in all districts.

Limited local capacity also restricts a party's ability to participate in district races. Strong local party organizations could facilitate signature gathering, grassroots campaigning and might provide the party with a well-known regional figure to serve as an attractive candidate (Golosov, 1998). But, many parties in post-communist states do not have a strong presence in regions across the country. In short, limited resources might impede parties that wish to participate widely in SMD.

Strategic Arrangements

Intra-party and inter-party strategic arrangements can also affect party strategies in district races. Candidates may be placed in a local constituency because of their ability to provide economic benefits to the region (Ames, 1995). In Russia, many non-partisan candidates promoted their ability to provide economic benefits as a reason for their candidacy; the relationship was implied for some partisan candidates.[8] Parties may be interested in placing certain candidates in regions where the individuals are well known or are perceived to provide the district with additional resources. While intra-party strategies may affect who contests certain district seats, it should not affect how many candidates run in SMD.

Inter-party strategic arrangements may, however, reduce the overall number of candidates in district races. Many political parties in Russia and Ukraine were aware of the potential benefits from running SMD candidates.[9] International organizations urged like-minded parties to coalesce so that resources could be pooled and parties could participate in as many SMD races as possible.[10] By fielding a single candidate in SMD races, political movements with similar policy interests could avoid competing with one another, splitting the vote in a district and losing the seat to a party with less sympathetic policy aims.[11] Some parties may have assessed the

potential benefits in PR from placing many SMD candidates as negligible when compared with the possibility of winning additional SMD seats. These parties would coordinate nominations in at least some districts, sacrificing PR votes for the possibility of gaining SMD seats.

Party Responses to the System's Incentives

The parties under analysis responded differently to the electoral bonus that can accrue through candidate placement. Ukraine's Rukh Party nominated candidates in most districts. Russia's Yabloko, by contrast, struck bargains to limit SMD competition.

Ukraine's Rukh

Rukh emerged in Ukrainian politics in 1989 and was instrumental in Ukraine's movement to independence. While generally classified as a nationalist party, Rukh has promoted 'inclusionary nationalism' (Motyl, 1993: 74–5). More radical nationalist parties have emerged in Ukrainian politics, but Rukh has remained close to the political center.[12]

Two years before the 1998 elections in Ukraine, Vyacheslav Chornovil, the late leader of Rukh, indicated that his party would join forces with other parties in the upcoming elections (Tishchenko and Pikhovshek, 1998). Rukh's most likely partners would have been national democratic parties in the center of Ukraine's political spectrum.[13] However, these parties were relatively weak compared to Rukh. While Rukh competed with other strong centrist parties (such as the People's Democratic Party) for the vote, these parties are not associated as strongly with Ukrainian nationalism.[14] Thus, the potential benefits to Rukh for cooperation with like-minded parties were limited. Further, the promise of cooperation was uttered before the mixed electoral rules were in place and the incentive structure of the new system was clear.

A member of Rukh authored the electoral rules that established a mixed system in Ukraine and designed the rules with interactive effects in mind.[15] Rather than forming pre-electoral coalitions with similar parties, Rukh's central leadership decided to compete directly in as many SMD races as possible. The party reneged on its earlier verbal agreement and mandated that local organizations place candidates regardless of the competition found in those districts (Tishchenko and Pikhovshek, 1998).[16] Rukh sponsored more candidates in SMD races than any other party, nominating individuals in 186 of the 225 SMD races.

Local Rukh organizations seem to have been more interested in coalition-building than the national organization. Rukh's organization in Cherkaska Oblast dutifully ran candidates in most electoral districts as the national office required, although this policy created some

Table 2. Rukh regional nomination patterns (1998)

Region	*Nominated*	*Members*	*No. of total districts*	*No. of seats won*
Cherkaska	6	6	7	0
Chernighiv	4	5	6	0
Chernivets	4	4	4	1
Crimea	10	7	10	0
Dnipropetrovsk	16	17	17	0
Donetsk	10	10	23	0
Ivano-Frankivsk	5	5	6	0
Kharkiv	14	13	14	0
Kherson	6	6	6	0
Khmelnitsk	5	7	7	0
Kirovograd	4	4	5	0
Kyiv	11	14	12	1
Kyiv Oblast	8	8	8	1
Lugansk	10	10	12	0
Lviv	9	9	12	4
Mikolaivsk	5	5	6	0
Odesa	10	7	11	0
Poltava	8	7	8	1
Rivnensk	5	4	5	3
Sevastopol	2	2	2	0
Sumska	3	2	6	0
Ternopil	5	5	5	3
Vinnitsa	7	5	8	0
Volinsk	5	5	5	0
Zakarpatiya	2	3	5	0
Zaporizka	7	8	9	0
Zhitomir	5	5	6	0
Total	186	183	225	14

Source: Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine, 1998.
Note: Number of seats won is based on party sponsorship, not membership.

difficulties in its relationships with other democratic-minded parties and potentially damaged long-term cooperative arrangements.[17] There is also evidence that similar events occurred in Lviv Oblast (Tishchenko and Pikhovshek, 1998).

Table 2 gives the distribution of Rukh candidates across Ukraine's 27 regions. The second column displays the number of candidates nominated by Rukh in the districts. The third column indicates the number of candidates in the districts who were members of Rukh, but may not have been officially sponsored by the party. In 1998, Ukrainian ballots printed

information about party membership, but not party sponsorship. The fourth column identifies the total number of seats contested in the region. The fifth column gives the number of Rukh candidates who won seats in SMD. Although support for Ukrainian nationalist parties tends to be weak in the east (Craumer and Clem, 1999), Rukh nominated many candidates in districts where its candidates were unlikely to win. Rather than nominating candidates solely in regions where Rukh could win, the party placed candidates across Ukraine.

The proportion of Rukh-affiliated deputies elected to the Rada increased from the previous election. While 4.8 percent of the deputies elected in 1994 were affiliated with Rukh, 9.6 percent of the deputies elected in 1998 were members of the party (Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine, 1998: 626).[18] We cannot know whether adopting another strategy would have further improved Rukh's seat allocation. Nevertheless, Rukh's strategy under the new mixed system improved its seat acquisition compared with the previous election under SMD.

Nominating candidates in as many districts as possible allowed Rukh to take advantage of the electoral bonus in PR resulting from the interaction between elements of the mixed system. Its primary competitors for SMD seats, centrist parties with nationalist overtones, were unlikely to undermine seat acquisition for Rukh. While competition with social democratic or liberal parties in the political center could have split the vote in some districts, Rukh chose to 'go-it-alone' and take advantage of the interactive effects of mixed electoral rules.

Russia's Yabloko

Yabloko emerged in 1993 as a pro-reform bloc led by three well-known politicians – Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, Yuriy Boldyrev and Vladimir Lukin. The party participated in the 1993 elections and was seated in the Duma. Although its top leadership has not remained intact, Yabloko has sponsored candidates in regional and national elections throughout the post-Soviet period. In 1993 and 1995, 69 Yabloko candidates contested seats in SMD. In the 1999 elections, Yabloko initially nominated 138 candidates in 67 of the 89 regions. After candidate withdrawal, however, Yabloko fielded 116 candidates in the districts (Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation, 2000, and online).

In Russia's 1999 Duma elections, at least some members of Yabloko's leadership were aware of the potential benefits of SMD candidate placement on PR performance. However, the party chose to limit SMD placement for various reasons. All of the disincentives noted above seem to have influenced Yabloko's decisions, including the potential negative effects of candidate placement, weak local structures in some regions and limited financial resources. The party concentrated on running candidates in districts where it had a realistic chance of winning the seat or having a substantial impact

Table 3. Nomination patterns and results for Yabloko and SPS candidates in the 1999 Duma elections (Moscow and St. Petersburg districts)

District	*Yabloko*	*SPS*
191	–	2
192	–	2
193	–*	3
194	3	–
195	4	–
196	3	4
197	4	–
198	2	–
199	3	6
200	–*	3
201	1	3
202	–	3
203	–	–
204	–	2
205	–	3
206	3	1
207	4	1
208	3	4
209	1	–
210	1	4
211	–	–*
212	1	–*
213	2	–*

Source: *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 6 January 2000 and [Online] http://www.rg.ru.
Note: Cell entries denote how candidates performed in the SMD races. Districts 191–205 are in Moscow, 206–213 are in St. Petersburg. Election results were invalidated in District 210.
– = No candidate competed.
* = District where the candidate was withdrawn from competition after registering.
SPS = Union of Right Forces. SMD = Single-member districts.

on the PR vote. In addition, Yabloko chose to make local level strategic alliances with another political party.[19]

Yabloko was likely to share voters with the Union of Right Forces (SPS) in most of the districts in which they competed. By placing candidates in all districts, financial and personnel resources would be stretched to their limits and Yabloko and SPS candidates would probably split the pro-reform vote. Consequently, Yabloko and SPS cooperated by strategically placing candidates so that the two parties would not directly compete (Kuzmin and Ovchinnikov, 1999; Polit.ru, 1999).[20]

Specifically, Yabloko and SPS agreed to cooperate in Moscow and St. Petersburg.[21] Table 3 gives the distribution of Yabloko and SPS candidates

in SMD races in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1999. While Yabloko and SPS candidates directly competed in 7 districts, they did not oppose each other in 15 races. In some of the districts in which they competed, one of the two parties fielded a candidate who was confident of electoral victory; competition did not undermine the likelihood of winning the district. In another case, cooperation could have yielded a victory, but the parties did not cooperate (District 208). In four cases, candidates were withdrawn after the candidate registration deadline had passed, freeing the district for the other party. Yabloko withdrew two candidates from Moscow; SPS pulled two from St. Petersburg.[22]

Both SPS and Yabloko passed the 5 percent threshold in the PR component and received 24 and 16 deputies, respectively. In addition, five SPS candidates and four Yabloko candidates won SMD races. Cooperation with SPS seems to have provided Yabloko with benefits; it won two seats in St. Petersburg where its candidate did not directly compete with an SPS candidate. While Yabloko's seat total decreased from 1995 to 1999 (from 45 to 20), the total number of seats allocated to pro-reform forces increased in the Duma.

Would Yabloko have been better served by maximizing candidate placement as Rukh did in Ukraine? Yabloko may have been able to increase its PR seat acquisition, but it could have potentially damaged its relationship with the like-minded SPS. The two parties have entertained the idea of combining PR lists and SMD placement in the 2003 Duma elections.[23] Cooperative efforts may have been hindered if Yabloko had chosen to 'go it alone' in the 1999 elections.

Pro-reform parties also had experience with the negative effects of interparty competition from previous elections under mixed rules; Ukrainian parties did not share this experience. Competition between pro-reform groups likely impeded seat acquisition in earlier elections (Smith and Remington, 2001). Faced with a competitor that was likely to be strong, Yabloko chose to cooperate in some district races. The party limited SMD nomination in response to local organizational capacity, resource limitations and particularly due to strategic arrangements.[24]

Conclusions

This article addressed candidate nomination in the SMD portion of mixed electoral systems, evaluating the causes of variation in nomination patterns. After outlining potential incentives and disincentives for maximizing candidate nomination, evidence was presented in the form of two case studies. The studies suggested that Rukh maximized SMD placement in response to the system's incentives and the competitive environment. By contrast, Yabloko limited SMD placement because of possible disincentives to candidate placement, including its strategic arrangement with the Union

of Right Forces. By identifying the complex environment facing parties in mixed systems, outlining possible solutions to the puzzle, and illustrating the solutions with evidence from post-communist states, the article points to areas of future research. Expanding the study of mixed systems to incorporate more political parties, different forms of mixed electoral rules and longitudinal data could further contribute to our understanding of how mixed systems influence the behavior of political parties.

Notes

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1 In a non-compensatory system, seat allocation in the PR and SMD tiers is separate. In a compensatory system, such as Germany, allocation is linked. See Massicotte and Blais (1999) and Shugart and Wattenberg (2001) for detailed classifications of mixed electoral systems.
2 For example, the number two candidate on the Green Party list was the commercial director of the Ukrainian telecommunications monopoly, Ukrtelecom.
3 'On the Election of Deputies to the Russia State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation', Article 43.
4 'On the Election of People's Deputies of Ukraine', Article 25, as amended.
5 Only 30 of the candidates participated in the elections on 19 December 1999.
6 Russia had only 224 districts in 1999 because elections were not held in Chechnya.
7 Candidates for the Duma in Russia's 1999 elections (who requested anonymity) indicated that official financial guidelines were widely violated.
8 Boris Berezovskiy and Roman Abramovich, two 'oligarchs' who successfully competed for seats in 1999, promoted the economic benefits that could accrue to their districts. Victor Chernomyrdin's (a candidate from Our Home is Russia) ability to promote local economic interests was certainly implied by his relationship with Gazprom, the main industry of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Region.
9 Conversations with international advisors and local political observers support the assertion that parties were aware of potential benefits. Further, the likelihood of interaction was discussed with Viktor Sheynis (a member of Yabloko who was an author of Russia's election rules) on 30 November 1999 and Olexander Lavrynovych (a member of Rukh who authored Ukraine's election rules) on 11 October 1999.
10 Personal conversations with Fred Bradley of the Parliamentary Development Project on 22 September 1999. This was also addressed in a conversation with

Thomas Garrett, Director of the International Republican Institute in Ukraine, and Oksana Hasiuk on 27 September 1999.

11 The introduction of a mixed system in Italy also prompted pre-electoral coalition building. These coalitions were more formal than the strategic arrangements identified in this article, however. For a full discussion, see D'Alimonte (2001).

12 Rukh's parliamentary faction did not remain united, however.

13 See D'Anieri, Kravchuk and Kuzio (1999: 164–5) for a classification of Ukraine's political movements. Kubicek (2000: 294, n. 27) classifies Rukh and its potential partners in the same manner.

14 Research on Ukrainian parties reinforces the assertion that Rukh may be classified as centrist, but its primary appeal emanates from voters with nationalist tendencies (Hinich et al., 1999; Wilson and Birch, 1999).

15 Personal conversation with Olexander Lavrynovych, 11 October 1999.

16 Rukh's decision to run candidates in as many districts as possible was also addressed in a personal conversation with Thomas Garrett and Oksana Hasiuk, 27 September 1999.

17 Personal conversation with Thomas Garrett and Oksana Hasiuk, 27 September 1999.

18 The percentage is slightly higher if nomination is used.

19 All of the issues in the paragraph were addressed in a personal conversation with Viktor Sheynis, 30 November 1999.

20 This was also confirmed in a personal conversation with Viktor Sheynis.

21 Some cooperative arrangements were made in other areas (Kuzmin and Ovchinnikov, 1999).

22 SPS withdrew a third candidate from St. Petersburg, but Yabloko did not have a registered candidate in that district.

23 The proposed merger has been reported in numerous sources, including Lenta.ru (http: //lenta.ru/vybory/2000/06/11/yabloko/).

24 A separate report indicated that OVR and the KPRF also planned to strategically withdraw candidates that they had in competition in order to improve their chances of winning district seats (Vandenko, 1999). While it is possible that OVR and the KPRF coordinated some district races, I do not know the degree to which they actually cooperated. Moreover, some perceived this report as an attempt to discredit OVR by linking it with the KPRF in the eyes of voters. Whether or not the KPRF cooperated with OVR, it struck bargains with other leftist parties (Chernyakhovsky, 1999).

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