

# Ukrainian Regime Cycles and the Russian Invasion

*Bálint Madlovics and Bálint Magyar*

## **1. Western illusions and the war: the need for a more authentic analytical framework**

Since the collapse of the Soviet empire, **Western observers have repeatedly had their illusions shattered by reality in the post-communist region.** The first was the illusion of democratization: that the change of the political regimes in 1989–1991 would be followed by linear progress towards liberal democracy, and that any regime can be built on any kind of ruins of communist dictatorships.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Russia, Vladimir Putin was heralded as a consolidator of Russian democracy, described by Bill Clinton in 2000 as a leader “fully capable of building a prosperous, strong Russia, while preserving freedom and pluralism and the rule of law.”<sup>2</sup> Most recently, there was a widespread illusion in public discourse that war cannot happen: that the invasion of Ukraine, a European country, is unimaginable, especially as it is against the best interests of Putin’s Russia as well.<sup>3</sup>

What actually happened was that post-communist regimes which were seen as mere “transitional stations” between dictatorship and democracy turned out to be terminal ones. Putin did not consolidate democracy but eliminated existing pluralism in Russia, instituting a single-pyramid hierarchy of patron-client relations with himself as chief patron, ruling over politics, economy, and society alike. Finally, on February 24, 2022, **the full-scale invasion of Ukraine** was launched by the Russian Federation, starting war on a scale that had not been seen in Europe since World War II.

The constant emergence of new illusions about the post-communist region underlines that this is **not a case of occasional misunderstandings, but that the mainstream observers’ assumptions about the region are wrong.** Both post-communist institutions and the actors who operate them are different, and act in different dimensions of rationality and calculations of costs and benefits, from what Western observers implicitly assume based on their Western democratic experiences. Historical, civilizational, and cultural factors shape the trajectories of these countries, with the interplay of stubborn structures and reform attempts giving rise to various patterns of path dependence and path creation. Trying to understand

these processes from Western assumptions has resulted in a fundamental misunderstanding of the past and present of post-communist countries—and this questions the possibility of understanding their future as well.

This book, which is the first of two volumes of studies,<sup>4</sup> focuses on the future of the country currently under attack, Ukraine. While the present (at the moment of submitting the manuscript) is about the ongoing war, destruction, and heroic defense of the Ukrainian people, the country's leadership and those following the events as scholars or politicians abroad have to start thinking about what happens next. **What are the chances of Ukraine at a Western-type development?** Can any form of liberal democracy and market economy consolidate there? **How has Ukraine developed in the past, and what are the existing and forming structural conditions that will frame the efforts of rebuilding?** What should we look at, and what should be the focus of the decision makers? More generally: What are the appropriate concepts and language for interpreting actors, institutions, and dynamics in Ukraine?

Before the war, an attempt to answer the last question was made in two of our previous books, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes* (2020) and *A Concise Field Guide to Post-Communist Regimes* (2022).<sup>5</sup> The conceptual framework presented there was a challenge to the mainstream comparative paradigm, which has tried to apply the concepts of political science, sociology, and economics that were developed for the analysis of Western-type polities to post-communist countries. The “Procrustean bed of democracy theory”<sup>6</sup> meant that local political systems have been described by concepts such as “illiberal democracy” and “defective democracy,”<sup>7</sup> while there has been an attempt to shoehorn the economic systems into the “varieties of capitalism” paradigm.<sup>8</sup> On the quantitative side, databases compiled for competitiveness reports (World Economic Forum), corruption (Transparency International), and democratic functioning (Freedom House, Polity) assess whether post-communist countries create a favorable business environment for entrepreneurs, combat corruption effectively, and provide basic rights and liberties to their citizens, respectively. These data are readily available for scholars who wish to carry out comparative analyses of large groups of countries,<sup>9</sup> but they also constrain scholars whose focus is inevitably limited to that selection of economic and political factors that have been predetermined for the data collection. *Sui generis* structures or institutions that only exist locally but define the workings of post-communist political-economic systems are immediately excluded. Their effects, like low competitiveness and corruption, are noticed, but they appear only as deviances from the ideal state of affairs and not as system-defining characteristics stemming from deep sociological structures.

This chapter explains the basic concepts for understanding post-communist regimes, presented in a comparative way, and tries to draw the key typological dividing

lines between local phenomena and their Western counterparts. **Outlining the basic concepts of the framework**, the chapter also attempts to expand the framework developed before the war **for war conditions and the possibilities of the Ukrainian regime after the war**. The next sections develop systematically, building on each other towards a unified analytical construct: first, we dissolve three basic axioms that hold in Western-type (liberal) systems but not in post-communist (patronal) ones, leading to fundamental typological differences in actors and institutions; second, we use the thus identified elements to define the Ukrainian regime (patronal democracy), presented in a comparative manner with two “neighboring” regime types, liberal democracy (represented by Estonia) and patronal autocracy (represented by Russia). Next, we analyze patronal democracy more closely, particularly its cyclical character, which is a key feature of the dynamics of the pre-war Ukrainian system.

After the Euromaidan Revolution (2013) and the Russian occupation of Crimea (2014), Ukraine abandoned its habitual “two-vector policy” (towards the West and Russia) in favor of a fundamental shifting to the West. Beyond a geopolitical turn, this also involved a strong, people-driven<sup>10</sup> attempt to break free of patronalism and regime cycles—and this attempt deepened as the Russian aggression intensified. Just as Russia’s previous efforts at forced integration or coercive prevention of its former colonies to turn to the West were, to a large extent, counterproductive,<sup>11</sup> the 2022 full-scale invasion may constitute the final push for Ukraine from East to West. Current tendencies (as they can be observed now, one and a half years after the start of the invasion) point in the direction of anti-patronal transformation in post-war Ukraine. However, this process is far from obvious or short-term: it will take a series of reforms on the elite and the societal level, and domestic and international supporters of the Ukrainian regime will have an important role in incentivizing its transformation towards liberal democracy—a role they may fulfill only on the basis of proper understanding of the reality of post-communism, Ukrainian regime cycles, and the risks and opportunities the country will face after the war.

## 2. Outlines of a framework for analyzing patronal regimes: dissolving three axioms

In our previous works, we proposed a **systematic renewal of the language**, vocabulary, and grammar **of the analysis of post-communist regimes**, with a shift from the Western-centered perspectives to context-rich conceptualizations.<sup>12</sup> In practice, this starts by **dissolving three basic axioms** of the mainstream comparative paradigm:

1. the separation of spheres of social action (political, economic, and communal) is complete, and the connections between the spheres are formal, regulated, and transparent;

2. the *de jure* position of persons and institutions coincide with their *de facto* position;
3. the state is an actor pursuing the common good, and public policy mistakes or corruption cases are not system-constituting elements but simple deviances.

**These axioms are hidden:** they are implicit presumptions in the region's analyses, not unlike the wrongful assumptions on which the above-mentioned illusions were based. A renewal of language is needed because the categories used by mainstream democracy theory already contain these axioms; and as the axioms are rarely questioned or even realized, the applicability of the categories to post-communist regimes remains limited. When Western observers speak about "governments," "parties," "politicians," "checks and balances," or "entrepreneurs," they use concepts that were developed for the analysis of liberal democracies, where the three axioms hold. When Putin is called a politician, he is immediately put in the same group with the likes of Joe Biden and Emmanuel Macron. *De jure*, or by their position designated in their country's constitution (i.e., president), this may be legitimate; but the actual, *de facto* situation is that they are completely different kinds of actors who fulfill different positions in their regimes, and exercise different powers over a different scope of actors and institutions.

### ***2.1. Instead of the separation of spheres of social action—informal patronalism***

The indiscriminate use of the language of liberal democracies brings in the implicit axioms that need to be dissolved to create a new language. We may start with the first axiom concerning the separation of spheres of social action. German sociologist Claus Offe distinguishes **three spheres: political, economic, and communal**, each defined by its autonomous logic of operation with a distinctive set of goals. As Offe writes,

political action is embedded in a state structure and framed within features such as the acquisition and use of legitimate authority [and] rule-bound power for giving orders and extracting resources. Its intrinsic standard of goodness is *legality*. Market action is recognized by the contract-based pursuit of acquisitive interests [...]. Its standard of goodness is success or *profitability*. Finally, communal action is defined by a sense of reciprocal obligation among persons who share significant markers of identity and cultural belonging [...]. The standard of goodness of communal action is *shared values and shared notions of virtue*.<sup>13</sup> (emphasis in the original)

**The separation of spheres** means that the actors' informal understanding of their roles, actions, and motives are confined to certain spheres. For example, in a liberal

democracy, there exists a distinction between a politician's obligation to the state and obligation to the family.<sup>14</sup> This kind of separation is reinforced on the level of institutions with various control mechanisms: specific regulations and a series of guarantees excluding conflicts of interests regulate the manner in which the spheres interact and diverge. Similarly, if the separation of spheres is complete, economic logic is separate from the political, and it refers to the specific rationale of entrepreneurs, who may cooperate with politicians through regulated and normative channels. In other words, the separation of spheres does not mean that politicians and entrepreneurs are isolated from each other; on the contrary, the phenomenon of lobbying (or rent-seeking) is well-known in liberal democracies.<sup>15</sup> But in such a relation, the politician seeks political benefits (campaign contributions to win more votes etc.) and the entrepreneur seeks economic benefits (getting favorable regulations etc.). They want to strengthen their positions at the top of the hierarchy of their own sphere of social action: they have separate political and economic objectives, and the benefits they attain also serve to reinforce their formal positions in their own, separated sphere.<sup>16</sup> The politician does not become an entrepreneur, and the entrepreneur does not become a politician.<sup>17</sup>

When the mainstream democracy theory narrows its focus to political institutions (multi-party systems, elections, checks and balances, etc.), it implicitly presumes that the center of a regime is, as in Western societies, a political sphere with its own, autonomous logic. However, the separation of spheres of social action is **guaranteed only if the actors of the different spheres mutually respect each other's autonomy**. If the relations between the actors remain voluntary, then neither of them is made to serve the will of the other, and therefore they can follow their separate rationales. In the formalized lobbying relation, the politician and the entrepreneur enter into a "business deal" with each other on a voluntary basis, as autonomous parties. They come together and form a horizontal relation for mutual benefit (free entry), and each party can exit the relation freely if they see a more beneficial offer (free exit). In addition, the formal nature of the relations in a democratic regime also entails the separation of spheres, with the mechanisms of institutional control correcting deviations of political, economic, and communal actors so that they do not achieve a critical mass, i.e., do not pose a threat to the system.

The situation changes when **formal relations are replaced by informal ones**, and the people operating the institutions act by certain unwritten norms and interests rather than the expectations of the formal, constitutional order; and **horizontal relationships are replaced by vertical, patron-client relations**, and therefore one party (the client) loses, in part or completely, its autonomy to the other party (their patron). This is the typical situation in post-communist **patronal regimes**, which can be distinguished from Western-type non-patronal regimes by four analytical dimensions (Table 1).

Table 1. Contrasting relations in non-patronal and patronal regimes.

	NON-PATRONAL	PATRONAL
<b>Institutions</b>	formal	informal
<b>Regulations</b>	normative	discretional
<b>Authorization</b>	collective (authorization)	personal (authorization)
<b>Command</b>	bureaucratic / institutional chains	clientelist / personal chains

By saying above that the people operating formal institutions act by “certain” unwritten norms, we meant that, in the post-communist context, they act by the norms and interests of **an informal patronal network**. Such networks exist not by virtue of bureaucratic, legally defined dependence but by the *de facto* power a patron disposes over and can use to extort their client. This is made possible by the second feature listed in Table 1, namely **the discretionary nature of regulations**. While non-patronal relations involve normative rules and impersonally provided benefits or punishments to certain groups, patrons in informal patronal networks **select between actors on a personal and discretionary basis**. Rewards as well as punishments are meted out with the exclusive, personal authorization of the patron and by targeting the client, a person or an organization, directly.

Third, patronal systems place decision-making power into the hands of a single actor, the patron, and therefore **authorization held or given in these systems is personal**. This is in contrast to Western-type liberal democracies, which are characterized by collective authorization and decision-making (i.e., bodies decide instead of particular people) precisely to uphold impersonality and avoid arbitrary decision-making. Finally, in liberal democracies private or public organizations develop through bureaucratic, institutional chains with several levels of formally defined actors and corresponding procedures. In patronal regimes, the organizations characterized by informal patronal relations depend on **clientelist, personal chains**. Unlike the formal networks of horizontal, lobbying-type relations, an informal patronal network is **a pyramid-like, centralized hierarchy** of several layers of patrons and clients with clearly (though informally) defined competences and prerogatives.<sup>18</sup>

**Informal patronalism contradicts the separation of spheres of social action**, as it allows actors who are formally confined to one (e.g. the political) sphere to act beyond their formal competences, and exercise power in another (e.g. the economic) sphere where their clients are located. **This situation is prevalent in most of the post-communist region**, particularly the post-Soviet countries outside the gravitational pull of the EU and the West in general. While the communist power structure collapsed in 1991, **the regime change** was not followed in the European post-Soviet republics by the consistent development of liberal democratic institutions but rather

a presidential system that gave only limited rein to democratic institutions.<sup>19</sup> Even the development of such presidentialism was in some instances preempted—or accompanied during various crises—by the weakening of stateness and the appearance of a sort of oligarchic anarchy in the wake of massive privatization.<sup>20</sup> Rather than importing Western non-patronal values along with Western institutions, the reality was that local forces, conditioned by civilizational attachments and the communist past,<sup>21</sup> occupied and populated the newly created political institutions. The result was **systemic duality**: on the level of impersonal institutions, presidential republics with separated powers and competitive multi-party elections emerged (**democratic transformation**); while on the level of personal networks, informal patronalism prevailed as the main factor of political regime dynamics (**no anti-patronal transformation**).

Post-communist informal patronal networks are often called “clans” in the literature,<sup>22</sup> while they can also be called **adopted political families**. The clans of pre-modern society were, just like dynastic houses in feudal times, organized on the basis of bloodlines, but they also took in outsiders as they expanded on a personal, family basis. In adopted political families, kinship relations are supplemented by quasi-kinship relations as the network (or its core of founders) itself is continuously complemented by families not connected to other members by blood. The adopted political family is a largely informal phenomenon, meaning not only that its effective hierarchy is situated outside (or above) the formal institutions of the state, but also that the adopted political family has no legal form. It is a conglomerate of political actors (party leaders, members of parliament, governors, judges, general prosecutors, leaders of the tax office, etc.), economic actors (oligarchs with key firms, banks, media, private and corporate philanthropic organizations, etc.), and communal actors (church leaders etc.), all of which are tied together by an informal hierarchy based on unconditional personal loyalty to the head of the network, the **chief patron**.

The systemic duality of patronal regimes with multi-party systems means this: **what looks like party competition is indeed the competition of informal patronal networks**; instead of political organizations engaging in political action for political goals (the acquisition and retention of power), it is the adopted political families who compete, driven by the twin motives of power concentration and wealth accumulation at the expense of the state and society. The networks use the parties, particularly the major players in the arena, as transmission belts: their function is to channel the informal agenda of political-economic motives into the realm of formal, legitimate institutions of political governance.

## 2.2. *Instead of the coincidence of de jure and de facto positions—oligarchs and poligarchs*

The coincidence of *de jure* and *de facto* can be understood as **the coincidence of legal standing and sociological reality**. In a liberal democracy, the separation of spheres of social action also means that the role of the politician and the entrepreneur is separated, and this is expressed in the corresponding terms as well. The words “president” and “prime minister” used for political actors carry the implicit presumption that they can be described by their legal titles, or that the powers they have and the functions they fulfill in the regime are those assigned to their *de jure* formal positions in the constitution. Similarly, concepts such as “entrepreneur” or “capitalist” imply they can actually use their capital, or exercise their *de jure* property rights, defined and constrained by legal institutions, by their own volition.

In patronal regimes, **legal standing and sociological reality are detached** by informal patronalism. As a result, the key actors of the economic and the political sphere become the **oligarch** and the **poligarch**, respectively. We can define the two as mirror images of each other: the oligarch is an actor with formal economic power and informal political power; while the poligarch is an actor with formal political power complemented by informal economic power.

When political actors become patrons in informal patronal networks, their rationale is no longer separated political logic but the political-economic rationale of power concentration and personal-wealth accumulation. To paraphrase Max Weber, they handle their authority as economic opportunities they appropriated in their private interest.<sup>23</sup> Although their personal wealth is secured from their political position and decisions, **the poligarch’s** illegitimate financial advantages far overstep the limits of privileged allowances that could be related to their formal position and revenues from classical corruption. In a liberal democracy, a politician may be bribed and involved in various types of corrupt acts. Typically, such cases are initiated by private actors like (major) entrepreneurs in a bottom-up fashion, where the entrepreneur gets favorable treatment from the state and a bribe is given to the politician. The entrepreneur does not become a politician and the politician does not become an entrepreneur; they simply become corrupt.

In an informal patronal network, it is not the bribe that connects corrupt actors to each other. First, the poligarch **does not receive bribe money to carry out corrupt acts but extorts protection money from the subordinated clients**. They, in turn, may not receive any extra payment for carrying out the patron’s decisions but simply avoid discretionary punishments. Second, a powerful poligarch can engage in predation, taking over companies from disloyal or outsider actors and giving them to the loyal clients.<sup>24</sup> The benefit of the poligarch in the case of predation is the company itself, which becomes their *de facto* property in the sphere of market

action via the clients they dispose over. The poligarch receives money not as a bribe but as a dividend, a legalized rent obtained through the application of illegal means.

*De jure*, the poligarch appears as a high-ranking politician, confined to the political sphere; *de facto*, the poligarch enters the economic sphere and also establishes land leases, real estate possessions, pseudo-civil organizations or foundations sourced from public funds, and a **network of companies through economic front men** who legally stand for their illegally acquired property and authority.

Regarding **oligarchs**, the term itself is also used for major entrepreneurs who practice lobbying in liberal democracies, and parallels have been drawn between the oligarchs emerging in the oligarchic anarchy of the 1990s and the “robber barons” of the 19th century United States as well.<sup>25</sup> However, the ideal types of oligarchs and major entrepreneurs can be distinguished by **three analytical dimensions**:

- **the nature of political connections**, where a major entrepreneur has formal relations dominantly influencing his economic activity (lobbying) and the relationship is a voluntary deal (both parties retain their autonomy), whereas an oligarch has informal relations dominantly influencing his economic activity (embedded in the ruling elite) and has patron-client relations with a patronal network;
- **the nature of political favors**, where the major entrepreneur enjoys normative regulations and non-excludable favors (applicable to everyone in the industry), whereas an oligarch enjoys discretionary regulations and excludable favors (targeted to certain people or companies);
- **the nature of success**, where the major entrepreneur (1) becomes “major” through technical/organizational innovation, and (2) remaining “major” depends on continued market success (can remain profitable without political favors), whereas the oligarch (1) becomes an oligarch irrespective of market innovation (securing monopoly grants with state or patronal support), and (2) remaining an oligarch depends on continued patronal success (managing to have discretionary privileges maintained).

**The relations of oligarchs and poligarchs** to each other and the actors around them are generally determined by their power and by how much they can break the autonomy of the other (or, conversely, to resist attempts at domination). Accordingly, the basic type of action of the oligarch is **state capture**, where corruption vertically reaches the higher levels of the public sphere and permanently subordinates political actors (and through them, state powers) to the oligarchs; while the basic type of action of the poligarch is **oligarch capture**, when the poligarch (using the power of the state) breaks the relative autonomy of the oligarchs and aims to integrate them into his own chain of command. The former constitutes bottom-up

corruption, reaching from the economic to the political sphere, while the latter belongs to the category of top-down corruption, where the economic sphere is captured by the political one.

The question that has regime-differentiating significance is **who is “the boss”**: **who is dependent on whom**, who gives the orders and who executes them. Do the oligarchs capture certain segments of the state, or does the leading poligarch of the patronal network in power, the chief patron, have the power to discipline and domesticate the oligarchs? Of course, some oligarchs do not need to be captured because they are part of the adopted political family (inner-circle oligarchs); some others are captured by default because they have been created by the network and are therefore completely dependent on it (patron-bred oligarchs). What needs to be addressed is the situation of **autonomous oligarchs** who do not commit themselves permanently to any political force. Such oligarchs often had a significant wealth to begin with, and secured their capital from positions weaving through politics. Unlike crime bosses, they seek to secure illegal support for otherwise legal economic activities by the means of corruption.<sup>26</sup> They may become founders of their own networks after a while (and therefore become inner-circle oligarchs) but they generally engage in state capture, “buying up” elite-level political actors (decision-makers, parties) and non-elite level ones (bureaucrats) for the purposes of accumulating and protecting wealth.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, they maintain equally good relations with the major adopted political families: instead of patronal subordination to a chief patron, they try to keep their integrity and form horizontal, “client-client” relations with the competing networks.<sup>28</sup> This makes it possible for them to “keep equal distance,” or more precisely, to **maintain their option of free exit**. While the political actors captured by them are in patronal subordination to them (no free exit), the autonomous oligarchs themselves are not subordinated, and are able to change teams when elections or other political events shift the balance of power between the adopted political families.

The freedom of maneuver of autonomous oligarchs becomes sharply limited if a political venture manages to monopolize all the political power. In **the Ukrainian regime** characterized by a **multi-pyramid patronal network** no patronal network or poligarch has complete control over the state. As a result, the oligarchs have more options and means to exercise control over political actors. In contrast, **the Russian regime has a single-pyramid patronal network**. In that system, it is no longer an open question as to who the leader is: the chief patron, Putin, is evidently “the boss.” Instead of elite accountability from the side of the (subjugated) oligarchs, their power and position depends on their closeness to, and the whims of, the chief patron.<sup>29</sup> This is the situation of oligarch capture, where patronal relations also change the sociological character of political and economic actors: the *de jure* ownership

of the oligarchs' property is *de facto* exercised, at least partially, by the chief patron, who therefore enters the economic sphere and becomes a *de facto* property owner (even if he holds no property rights in the legal sense). On the other hand, **a multi-pyramid system is characterized by the numerous competing networks and autonomous oligarchs** who, through **partial state captures**, become *de facto* political decision-makers through their network of clients (even if they hold no state position in the legal sense).

### *2.3. Instead of the state pursuing the common good—corruption as a state function*

The third and final axiom holds that the state is an actor pursuing the common good. When mainstream democracy theory speaks about “right-wing” or “left-wing” actors, it implicitly presumes that they are ideology-driven, and aim at carrying out a social vision by the instruments of public authority. At the same time, **corruption is treated as a deviance**: defined as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain,”<sup>30</sup> it means the circumvention of state-created legal rules, and governments are presumed to fight it accordingly in pursuit of effective and more rational governmentality.<sup>31</sup> This understanding of corruption implicitly assumes the supremacy of the formal over the informal, that is, that public officials act and think primarily in accordance with their legal position, and illegal abuses of power may happen only secondarily. The state is understood by its formal identity: as dominantly an institution of the public good, with some subordinates who deviate from that purpose and abuse their position by requesting or accepting bribes and appointing “cronies” without a legitimate basis. Accordingly, private influence over the content of laws and rules (in our terms, state capture) and the influence over their implementation (in our terms, free-market corruption) are the two regarded forms of abuse.<sup>32</sup>

In order to understand post-communist regimes, we need to abandon this axiom of the state persecuting corruption, and consider **cases where the public interest is not incidentally but permanently subordinated to private goals**, determining political decisions fundamentally, in a systematic way. This case and the case when corruption is a pure deviance are the two endpoints of a scale of the relationship of the ruling elite and corruption. This scale can be used to develop a typology of states running, to different degrees and in different forms, on private rather than public interest (Table 2).

Table 2. A typology of states by the relationship of the ruling elite and corruption.

	<i>Interpretive layers of the category</i>	<i>Regulator's intention</i>	<i>Intention of the dominant institution (form)</i>	<i>Discretionary treatment resulting from corruption meets the intention of...</i>
<b>State</b>	Monopoly of taxation (tax, rent, etc.) for maintaining public functions	normative	normative (formal state laws)	neither the regulator, nor the dominant institution (non-structural deviation)
<b>Corrupt state</b>	1st feature + the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (occasional, non-patronal relations)	normative	normative (formal state laws)	neither the regulator, nor the dominant institution (non-structural deviation)
<b>Captured state</b>	1st + 2nd features + patronal relations with a permanent character	discretionary	normative (formal state laws)	the regulator, but not the dominant institution (structural deviation)
<b>Criminal state</b>	1st + 2nd + 3rd features + subordinated to and monopolized by a political enterprise (governance led as a criminal organization)	discretionary	discretionary (informal patronal decisions)	both the regulator and the dominant institution (norm / constitutive element)

In a **corrupt state**, there is a conflict of interest between the ruling elite and the state apparatus, where the latter attempts to enforce its private interests against the former. Corruption is endemic, rather than systemic: it is an informal norm of the bureaucracy to request and accept bribes, but there is no organizing and regulating action of a central will. This results in a large number of occasional transactions between various people. In a **captured state**, the actors' cooperation becomes more complex and permanent given the corrupting actors from the economic sphere are the oligarchs who establish informal patronal relations in certain segments of the state machinery. The similarity of the corrupt and captured state is in their **bottom-up nature**: corruption demand is situated in the economic sphere, while the corrupt service is supplied by state actors. On the other hand, in a corrupt state the frequent but still occasional cases of low-level corruption meet the intention of neither the regulator (the one who makes the to-be-corrupted laws) nor the dominant institution (which, in this case, is the formal, legal institution that provides the actual framework of political action). Thus, corruption is

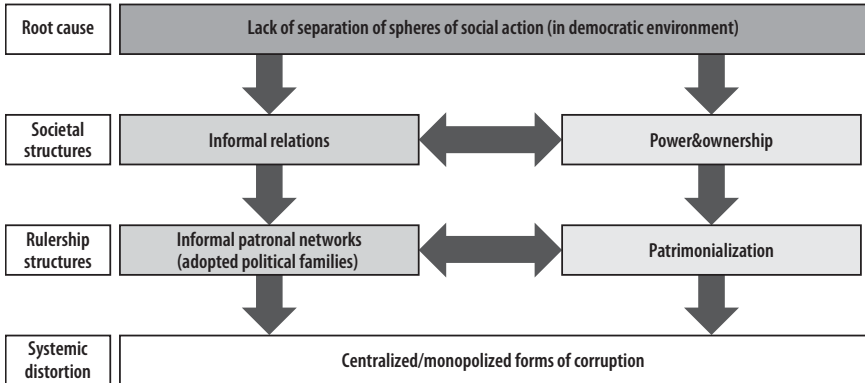
a **non-structural deviation**, as opposed to the captured state where it becomes **structural deviation**. The state as a whole does not run on private interest, but as a result of state capture, the intention of the regulator becomes to facilitate corruption.

A state exposed to bottom-up forms of corruption is necessarily a **weak state**. While the state apparatus gets orders from the ruling elite (i.e., laws are created which the apparatus should enforce) it does not comply with these orders. Rather, the members of the bureaucracy either make the enforcement of laws dependent on the payment of bribes, or they start using state power for the predation of private assets (see below). Under a weak state, which could be observed in Ukraine as well as Russia in the 1990s, it is typical for members of the public administration to become independent from central government, and to abuse their public positions for private gain. They do so in a disorganized, highly competitive manner, and they can do it either for themselves or for certain oligarchs who hire them.<sup>33</sup> This is a typical phenomenon of developing states during periods of oligarchic anarchy,<sup>34</sup> when the rulers are unable to exercise control either over the market for legitimate violence outside the state or over their own (corrupt) bureaucracy inside it.

A **strong state** appears in the post-communist region when state power is not shared between various competing patronal networks (top-down) and autonomous oligarchs (bottom-up). When power is exercised by a single-pyramid patronal network, aiming at the twin motives of power concentration and wealth accumulation, **corruption becomes a constitutive element of the regime** and governance is led as a criminal organization. Instead of being a deviance, corruption meets the intention of both the regulator and the dominant institution (which, in this case, is the informal patronal network), turning it into a **centralized and monopolized state function**. Corruption that is still persecuted in such a regime is the so-called unauthorized illegality, when a corrupt act is committed by someone who (a) is not a member of the patronal network or (b) is a member but “steals too much for their rank,” that is, beyond their authorization for corruption.<sup>35</sup>

To sum this section up, dissolving the three mainstream axioms—about spheres, positions, and the state—reveals the basic structure of post-communist patronal regimes (Figure 1). For after the regime change engrained social norms of the lack of separation of spheres were respected over the culturally rootless framework of liberal democracy, formal institutions were systemically circumvented, and occasionally transformed, in line with the informal social context. The supremacy of informal institutions manifested itself, on the level of ordinary people, in widespread corruption,<sup>36</sup> informal relations, and a lack of trust in formal institutions (which often could not even develop to a degree that people could have started to trust them);<sup>37</sup> and on the level of the elites, in the presence of **informal networks** and the fact that formal administrative (state or party) positions became secondary to informal positions in defining real power.<sup>38</sup>

Figure 1. Schematic depiction of the basic structure of patronal regimes. Dark grey represents the root cause, medium grey represents the consequences for personal relations, light grey represents institutional consequences, and the lightest grey represents the systemic distortion following the two lines of consequences.



At the same time, patronalism, which had been exercised through formally imposed relations, feudal and bureaucratic subjugation, could extend far beyond any single formal institution in the post-regime change democratic settings. Informal networks have not just taken over formal institutions, and used them as façades, but they have also been organized into pyramid-like, hierarchical chains of command, that is, **informal patronal networks (adopted political families)**.

As Hale explains, patronalism embodies “the personalized exchange of concrete rewards and punishments through chains of actual acquaintance,” as opposed to “abstract, impersonal principles such as ideological belief or categorization like economic class.”<sup>39</sup> Adopted political families typically cross class lines, and their norms, as Collins points out, “demand strong loyalty [and] can conflict with the identity of a modern bureaucratic state. Clans turn to the state as a source of patronage and resources [...]. Clan members with access to state institutions patronize their kin by doling out jobs on the basis of clan ties, not merit. Clan elites steal state assets and direct them to their network. [...] The politics of clans is insular, exclusionary, and nontransparent.”<sup>40</sup>

By directly merging authority over the circumstances of both political and economic activity, the adopted political families establish conditions in which political and economic power are heavily reliant on one another. There is no economic power without political power (or at least a stake in the political hinterland)<sup>41</sup> and political power cannot be without economic power.<sup>42</sup> Russian analysts use the expression **power&ownership** (*vlast&sobstvenost*) to describe this interwoven state of affairs as an independent category.<sup>43</sup>

The informal capture of formal institutions by the adopted political families and the oligarchs means that they increasingly treat public institutions as private

domain, a feature termed **patrimonialism** by Weber and his followers.<sup>44</sup> When a corollary of state capture by the oligarchs, patrimonialization is partial, and the state is not under the control of a single oligarch; if a poligarch has the monopoly of political power and controls the whole state, patrimonialization becomes complete, and **centralized and monopolized forms of corruption** emerge. As informal patronal networks dominate the political landscape, patronal regimes may see anti-corruption campaigns of one informal network against another (as had been typical in Ukraine before the war),<sup>45</sup> but no campaign that is indeed against corruption as a deviation from the norms of the system as such.

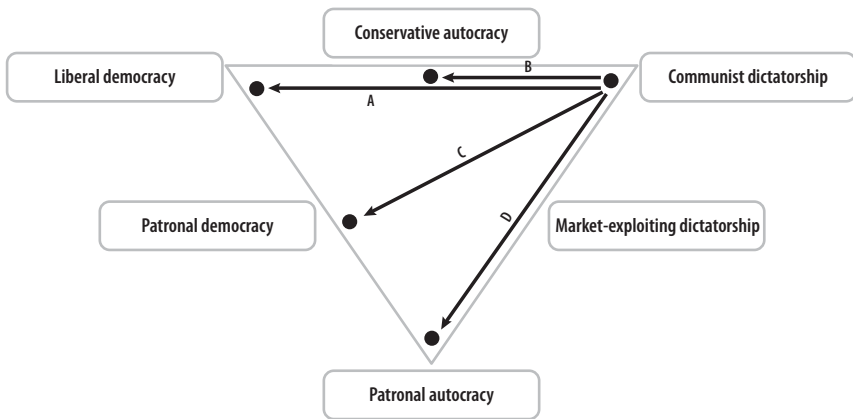
### 3. Patronal democracy: an intermediate type between liberal democracy and patronal autocracy

After the collapse of the Soviet empire, the independent countries all started from the same ‘Square One’—communist dictatorship. There were different models of communism before the regime change, including the more rigid, autarchic classical model with a low level of bureaucratic professionalism and no access to the West (USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, etc.) and the more flexible and open models adhering to a kind of formal-rational functioning (Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, etc.).<sup>46</sup> But each model shared two regime-constituting features: the one-party system and the monopoly of state ownership in the economy. In our terminology, this means that **communist dictatorship was a single-pyramid bureaucratic patronal regime**. Unlike informal patronal networks that have no legal organization, and are based on personal, clientelist ties and personal loyalty to the (chief) patron, the communist single-pyramid ruling elite, the nomenklatura, was a formalized entity based on bureaucratic ties and institutional loyalty to the party.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, it can still be described as a type of (bureaucratic) patronalism as it represented subordination in vertical relations and the allocation of resources accordingly.<sup>48</sup>

Starting from this position, post-communist countries followed different regime trajectories (Figure 2). Analytically, the characteristics of the original system could change in two ways: the single-pyramid system could be transformed into a multi-pyramid system or the single-pyramid system could be rebuilt over time; while bureaucratic patronalism could be replaced by non-patronal or informal patronal systems. Logically, therefore, the following four options were the possible regime destinations **from the single-pyramid bureaucratic patronal system**:

- A. **multi-pyramid** non-patronal system (**liberal democracy**);
- B. **single-pyramid** non-patronal system (**conservative autocracy**);
- C. **multi-pyramid** informal patronal system (**patronal democracy**);
- D. **single-pyramid** informal patronal system (**patronal autocracy**).

Figure 2: Ideal typical post-communist regime trajectories. A, B, C, and D correspond with the listing of possible regime destinations above.



In total, we speak in the post-communist context about two multi-pyramid systems with pluralism of power networks (democracies) and two single-pyramid systems with one dominant network that has subjugated, eliminated, or marginalized its competitors (autocracies).<sup>49</sup> However, this dimension of analysis—the presence or lack of pluralism—still does not reflect on the *sui generis* feature of post-communist regimes—the presence or lack of informal patronalism. Adding this dimension to our analysis, the four regime types in question appear as **two non-patronal regimes (liberal democracy and conservative autocracy)** and **two patronal regimes (patronal democracy and patronal autocracy)**.<sup>50</sup>

**No conservative autocracy has developed** in the region, although two notable cases approaching that regime type should be mentioned. These are Poland after 2015 (where Jarosław Kaczyński has conducted an autocratic attempt from liberal democracy, but created no informal network or patron-bred oligarchs)<sup>51</sup> and Georgia after 2003 (where Mikheil Saakashvili's efforts to eliminate informal patronalism were accompanied by autocratic tendencies and a disregard for the rule of law).<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, **there are numerous examples for the three other regime types** among post-communist countries. For example, Estonia became a liberal democracy after gaining independence in 1991; Russia went through a period of oligarchic anarchy in the 1990s, followed by Putin's rule which consolidated a patronal autocracy; and Ukraine before the war showed clear tendencies of patronal democracy. In the following, we use these three countries to illustrate the functioning of the three regime types, as well as to underline the differences between them in terms of their actors and institutions.

### 3.1. *Liberal democracy: the case of Estonia*

**Constitutionalism** provides the framework from which the institutions of liberal democracy can be derived. It starts from the notion of human dignity, and deduces (1) the universal protection of human rights and (2) the people's equal right to have a say in how their life is governed. From (1) it follows that **the scope of political power must be limited**; the state is, by definition, the monopolist of the legitimate use of violence,<sup>53</sup> but this power must not be used to carry out rights violations. On the contrary, the *raison d'être* of a constitutional state in a liberal democracy is to prevent rights violations, and although it can be democratically enabled to fulfill other (public policy) functions, even the people—typically the majority—are prohibited from initiating centrally-led infringements of the basic rights and liberties of others—typically the minority.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, from (2) it follows that **the people must have an effective influence on lawmaking**. Be this influence direct (like in the case of referenda) or indirect (like in the case of electing representatives as lawmakers) it is a fundamental right of every citizen to have some kind of control over the laws that will regulate them and their life in the polity.

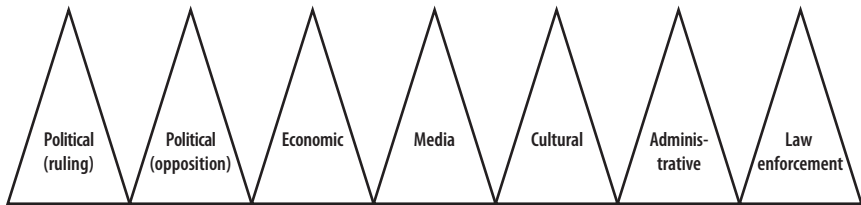
The sociological guarantee of these principles is **the plural and non-patronal nature of the ruling elite**. This means that **numerous factions and autonomous elite groups** exist by virtue of the separation of branches of power (inside the state) and the plurality of political and economic resources (outside the state, but also among the central and local governments). In other words, there is **open access** to political and economic resources, to use the expression of North and his colleagues from *Violence and Social Orders*. As they write, in regimes like liberal democracy,

political parties vie for control in competitive elections. The success of party competition in policing those in power depends on open access that fosters a competitive economy and the civil society, both providing a dense set of organizations that represent a range of interests and mobilize widely dispersed constituencies in the event that an incumbent [...] attempts to solidify its position through rent-creation, limiting access, or coercion.<sup>55</sup>

The elite structure of an ideal typical liberal democracy is presented in Figure 3. The leading political elite in this regime respects the autonomy of other elites, even within the public sphere, while the separation of social actions as well as the division of powers within the political sphere results in a society in which no elite is dominant. The political elite sets the legal framework and therefore defines the range of options for the actions of the other elites, but it does not interfere with the executive decisions of any members or groups of members. Political opposition is legal and can operate unhampered in the process of **public deliberation**: the people can evaluate the performance of the current government and the various

alternatives to it (discussing phase, with an open sphere of communication); have the alternatives to the government manifested in demonstrations and political parties (associating phase, with the free exercise of the right of association without state interference); choose an alternative in a race where the decisive factor is who they prefer, not who can illegally access campaign funds or manipulate the electoral system (electing phase, with fair elections); have the type of policy they voted for embodied in laws (lawmaking phase, with decision-maker legislature); and have the laws created by their representatives enforced, so their life is indeed governed in the way they have chosen (enforcing phase, with equality after the law).<sup>56</sup>

**Figure 3. Autonomous elites in the ideal typical liberal democracy.**



**Estonia** is probably the closest country in the post-communist region to the ideal type of liberal democracy. Regaining independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new constitution was approved in 1992, and suffrage was extended to people registered as citizens in a referendum.<sup>57</sup> In the early years, this also meant the exclusion of a major segment of the Russian minority from suffrage.<sup>58</sup> However, since 1996 the country has gained the highest country rating for political freedom in Freedom House reports,<sup>59</sup> and it has done similarly well by the Liberal Democracy Index of the V-Dem project.<sup>60</sup> According to Hale, Estonia is among the less patronalistic countries of the post-communist region, and even existing patronal tendencies have been limited by a parliamentarist (rather than presidentialist) constitution.<sup>61</sup>

The Estonian transition has been described as elitist and even “tutelary,” characterized by “the dominance of political elites in making decisions and steering society in a direction that the elites see as necessary for the development of society and the good of the people.”<sup>62</sup> Yet this has resulted neither in a dominant-party system<sup>63</sup> nor in systemic corruption and the prevalence of oligarchs and poligarchs devoted to power monopolization and personal-wealth accumulation.<sup>64</sup> According to a recent Freedom House report, Estonian media are legally protected and largely free of overt political influence, whereas media ownership is predominantly private and subordinated to business interests rather than political interests (FH notes “increased commercialization and undeclared advertising” as problems).<sup>65</sup> The

economy has been dominated by entrepreneurs, and not oligarchs, in competitive markets, and consecutive governments have adhered to a conservative-liberal economic program since the regime change.<sup>66</sup>

Naturally, separated spheres and the autonomy of the elites do not mean there is no connection between these elites. Lobbying is ideal typical in liberal democracies, and its reform has long been a topic in Estonian politics.<sup>67</sup> There have also been corruption scandals; the most serious ones being those of former Minister of the Environment Villu Reiljan who was convicted by Estonian courts for seeking a bribe of approx. €100,000, and favoring a long-time supporter of his party in a land swap case.<sup>68</sup> The magnitude of such cases, of course, pales in comparison to the stream of corrupt monies and assets in post-communist patronal regimes.<sup>69</sup>

Estonian politics has not annexed the economy, and there are no informal patronal networks either. Opposition parties have also been strong, law enforcement is normative, and due to the proportionate electoral system, Estonian governments have usually been coalitional, with numerous changes of government.<sup>70</sup> Adding to these features the internal dynamics stemming mainly from ethnic conflicts,<sup>71</sup> as well as the emergence of identity politics and right-wing populism,<sup>72</sup> we can say that Estonia is generally not unlike Western liberal democracies ridden with similar tendencies.<sup>73</sup>

### *3.2. Patronal autocracy: the case of Russia*

In post-communist countries, the process of sub-elites becoming relatively autonomous began during the early regime-change process. However, the alignment of individual autonomous elites into rival political-economic patronal networks followed soon after, despite conditions that would have been typical for liberal democracies. In those post-communist regimes where the rotation of rival political forces persisted over time, there was a better chance for autonomous economic, cultural, media, and other elites to take a hold of, or at least attach themselves to, competing patronal networks that were unable to secure power exclusively, finding subsistence under their wings. **In the regimes where a single-pyramid patronal network was established**, in contrast, parallel to the removal of the balance and autonomy of political institutions, the autonomy of economic organizations and social institutions was also eliminated.

**A patronal autocracy** is the polar opposite of a liberal democracy: instead of a multi-pyramid non-patronal system, it is a single-pyramid informal patronal system. In contrast to the fixed and formalized system of positions of the communist nomenklatura, the adopted political family is a formation composed of an aggregate of formal and informal positions ordered into a patronal network. Of course, the key positions of political power belong to it, meaning that the chief

patron (typically the head of executive power) forcibly subjugates the legislative and enforcement branches to its authority, and joins the formal positions of the political elite with positions in the economic elite and other legally undefined, informal positions through the appropriation of the state in the service of private interests.

However, in order to extend their informal network beyond the formal medium of state and party, the chief patron needs the monopoly of political power and a functioning state. The latter was a particularly important issue in countries like **Russia**, where the state became weak and even, in some respects, failed in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In a period of **oligarchic anarchy**, the Russian state lost its monopoly of the legitimate use of violence as competitors emerged, in large part from the organized underworld, who were treated as legitimate providers of information, security, enforcement, and dispute settlement by economic actors.<sup>74</sup> According to contemporary sources, even in 1998 twenty-five hundred banks and seventy-two thousand commercial organizations had their own security services in Russia.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, both the state and the newly formed private economy was surrounded and captured by a disorganized, multi-pyramid setting of regional and nationwide oligarchic networks.<sup>76</sup>

The first turning point of patronal politics in post-communist Russia occurred in 1996. As Hale explains, it was then when President Boris Yeltsin

deployed his arsenal of sticks and opened his cornucopia of carrots to mobilize regional political machines and major financial-industrial groups into a nationwide pyramid of patronal networks capable of defeating a major political opponent in the presidential race of that year. [...] The 1996 contest proved to all that Yeltsin's presidential pyramid was superior.<sup>77</sup>

Yeltsin becoming a nation-level chief patron was a clear step from oligarchic anarchy towards patronal autocracy. But he still lacked the monopoly of political power and the strong state. Accordingly, Yeltsin's period saw more state capture than oligarch capture. In other words, he ruled in the shadow of oligarchs like Vladimir Gusinsky and Boris Berezovsky, who owned substantial media empires, and Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who was the country's richest man and controlled much of Russia's natural resources as CEO of oil company Yukos.<sup>78</sup>

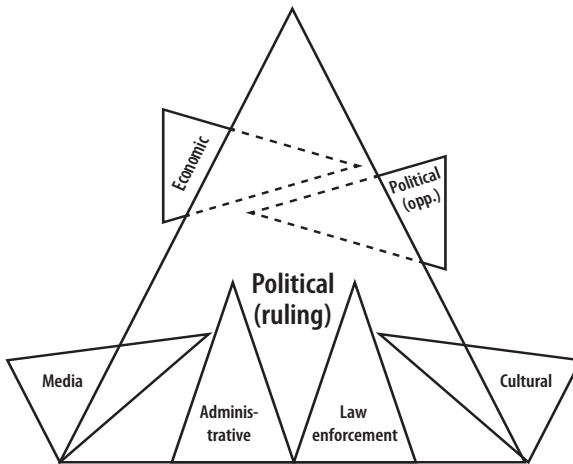
**Putin**, who was named by Yeltsin as his successor in 1999, reformed the state so it regained its strength,<sup>79</sup> and consolidated his power in the sphere of political action with a landslide victory of his United Russia party in 2003.<sup>80</sup> This victory enabled him to perform what journalist Ben Judah describes as "the great turn." As he writes, it "closed the era where he ruled like Yeltsin's heir. It was the moment when Russia lurched decisively into an authoritarian regime."<sup>81</sup> Reportedly, Putin

gathered 21 oligarchs for a meeting, informing them that they would be loyal to him and not interfere in politics on their own.<sup>82</sup> He also demonstrated what disobedience would mean: Gusinsky and Berezovksy were forced into exile, giving up their media empires to Putin's patronal network, whereas Khodorkovsky was jailed and his companies were taken over.<sup>83</sup> Khodorkovsky's fate had a significant chilling effect on the remaining oligarchs, who reportedly had to give a significant portion of their property to Putin's *de facto* ownership.<sup>84</sup>

Sociologically, what the 2003 meeting with the oligarchs meant was a **reversal of patron-client roles**. While earlier the patrons had been the oligarchs, and political actors, their clients, Putin turned that upside down, replacing state capture with oligarch capture. The resultant elite structure, existing to this day in spite of numerous crises,<sup>85</sup> is a **single pyramid with patronalized elites, which are not all *de jure* incorporated but *de facto* subjugated**. More precisely, three types of elite position can be distinguished in a patronal autocracy (Figure 4):

- **annexed**, which means that the patrons of the single-pyramid network are the primary decision-makers, and the annexed elite has no autonomy in exercising its *de jure* powers (in Russia, this is the case with the state-based elites, both administrative and law enforcement,<sup>86</sup> as well as the top members of the economic elite, the oligarchs, whose property has a *de facto* conditional character);<sup>87</sup>
- **merged**, which means that (1) the leading political elite is also part of the leading economic elite, meaning the chief patron and his immediate and regional sub-patrons are both political and economic actors (i.e., poligarchs, such as the local governors in Russia's federal subjects),<sup>88</sup> and (2) the ruling and the opposition political elites are merged, with the real opposition being marginalized or liquidated and the allowed opposition being domesticated or fake ("created") parties that serve the interests of the regime;<sup>89</sup>
- **constrained autonomy**, which means that some segments of certain elites at lower levels (certainly in no position to shape the regime) may remain outside the chain of command of the single-pyramid system, either because they manage to hide and escape the network (some experts estimate that the so-called shadow economy accounts for at least half of the gross national product of Russia)<sup>90</sup> or they can offer such low benefits or mean so little political risk if left alone that the adopted political family regards them as irrelevant (such as critical cultural or media actors who are "ghettoized," limited in outreach, and trapped in small circles where those who are already staunch opponents of the Russian regime merely converse amongst themselves).<sup>91</sup>

Figure 4. Patronalized elites in the ideal typical patronal autocracy.



**Legend:** Every triangle represents an elite group and the tops of the triangles, the tops of each elite group. Overlap represents annexation and dashed lines, merger.

### 3.3. Patronal democracy: the case of Ukraine

**Patronal democracy is an intermediate system** between liberal democracy and patronal autocracy. On the one hand, it is a multi-pyramid system, like liberal democracy, since there are multiple potent power networks competing for power and there is no one dominant network to upset the balance of power between the actors. On the other hand, informal patronalism prevails, and party competition is essentially the façade appearance of the competition of adopted political families. There may be democratic parties on the fringes, but the main field of competition is populated by **patron's parties**, where the chief patron of each network is typically either the party leader or its top candidate. While in liberal democracies it is common for party leaderships to resign after an electoral defeat, this rarely happens in a patronal democracy with patron's parties. In cases of such parties, it is the head of the party, the chief patron, who actually defines the party, and not the other way around.

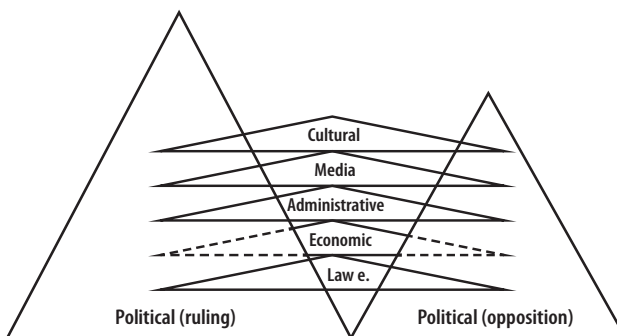
In liberal democracies, autocratic tendencies or the emergence of a patronal challenger is an anomaly (like Donald Trump in the US).<sup>92</sup> In patronal democracies, patronal challenge is the norm. Each network aims at breaking down the democratic system and establishing a single-pyramid patronal network. The key to survival of patronal democracies is **the dynamic equilibrium of competing patronal networks**. This may be understood as the patronal version of the maxim of American Founding Father James Madison: "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition."<sup>93</sup> In other words, there are always attempts by patronal networks to

break down the system (“dynamic”) but the competing networks are too strong, and no patronal network has enough political and economic resources to achieve a dominant, monopolistic position (“equilibrium”). This balance also depends on the formal institutional setting. In a purely presidentialist system, the presidency centralizes executive power in the hands of a single actor, and there are no similarly strong positions in the regime in terms of political power. In contrast, in divided-executive systems, where the president and the prime minister both have executive powers and they are elected in different elections, cohabitation is possible: the two executive positions can be filled by patrons from different patronal networks.<sup>94</sup>

As an ideal type, each **partially patronalized elite** of a patronal democracy is divided into three parts: one part patronalized by the patronal network in power; one, by the patronal network(s) in opposition; and an autonomous part, the members of which maintain equal distance from the networks, steering clear of the patronal domination of any side (Figure 5). In other words, the pluralism of power (or rather the lack of monopoly of power in the hands of a single pyramid) allows the system to retain some democratic features:

- **there is still a separation of branches of power**, as the ruling patronal network does not have the monopoly of political power to eliminate it (i.e., to carry out an autocratic breakthrough);
- **there is still public deliberation**, as the competing patronal networks use parties and the more-or-less balanced media in campaigns and competitive elections, trying to convince the people to vote for their rule;
- **civil society still has some autonomy**, meaning the autonomy of four civil groups with resources (entrepreneurs, media, NGOs, and the citizens, which comprise the sociological basis of an effective opposition) is not eliminated or neutralized but still exists, allowing these civil groups the ability to shape the dynamics of the regime.

Figure 5. Partially patronalized elites in an ideal typical patronal democracy.



**Legend:** Every triangle represents an elite group and the tops of the triangles, the tops of each elite group. Overlap represents annexation and dashed lines, merger. The opposition pyramid is ideal typically smaller than the ruling one. (Note: in actual cases, there may be more than one opposition pyramid.)

Patronal democracies are numerous in the post-communist region, including countries like Bulgaria, Romania, North Macedonia, and Moldova. These countries are among those that carried the most patronalistic legacies of the communist rule,<sup>95</sup> but institutional factors (divided executives and/or proportionate electoral systems), socio-political cleavages (ethnic, identity, etc.), and the general dispersion of political and economic resources among the informal patronal networks prevented the breakdown of the pluralism of the forming multi-party systems by any one dominant network.<sup>96</sup> It is in this group that we find the key country of this volume, **Ukraine**, which became one of the most prominent cases of patronal democracy after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Already before the regime change, Ukraine showed elements of patronal politics within the state party. According to Minakov, three regional groups—from Kharkiv, Stalino/Donetsk, and Dnepropetrovsk—represented the three largest party units and industrial clusters, providing factional competition and alternately occupying the position of First Secretary of Central Committee of Ukrainian Communist Party and Chairperson of the Council of Ministers.<sup>97</sup> The multi-pyramid system of competing patronal networks grew out of these roots after the country became independent in 1991. Minakov lists the positions that have been controlled by the Ukrainian informal patronal networks, in particular the Dnipropetrovsk and the Donetsk regional groups, both of which cover large portfolios of the elite groups showed in Figure 5:

- In the Dnipropetrovsk group, the informal patronal network of **the Privat Group** has controlled separate members of parliament (MPs), parliamentary parties and factions (from 1998), deputy heads of the National Bank, and managers and board members of state-owned gas and oil companies; while **the Kuchma-Pinchuk clan** has been a low-profile clan since 2005, with control over separate MPs, deputy-ministers, and vice-general prosecutors.
- The Donetsk regional group is comprised of “**old**” **clans** that have controlled **the Party of Regions**, vice prime ministers, governors, MPs, separate ministers and deputy ministers, the Tax Administration, etc.; “**new**” **clans** that have controlled governors and mayors of Donetsk (1996–2014), positions in the Party of Regions, the Opposition Bloc, separate MPs, parliamentary factions (from 1998), general prosecutors, separate ministers, etc.; and some smaller and newer clans that have controlled judiciary/separate courts, the Central Electoral Commission, separate ministers, and state-owned companies.<sup>98</sup>

Amidst intense patronal competition, **Ukrainian oligarchs** before the war had considerably more autonomy than Russian ones, and the empowered oligarch-controlled parliament guaranteed that poligarchs could be kept in check.<sup>99</sup> According to the Ukrainian Society Survey of 2015, oligarchs were considered

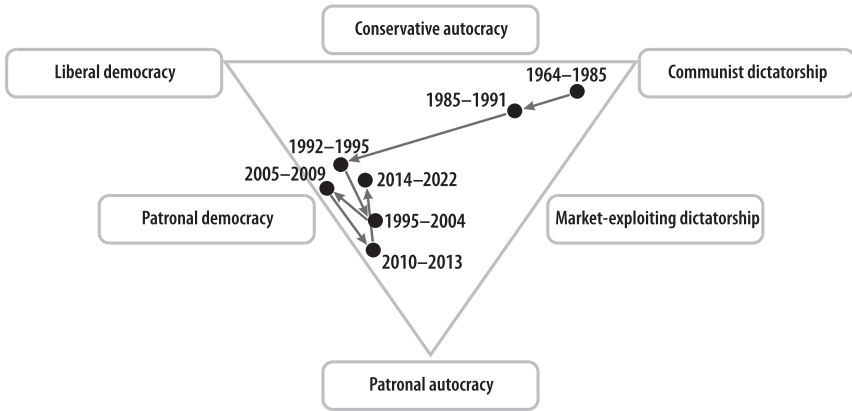
the most influential actors in Ukraine, with 44.6% of respondents choosing them, while state officials were chosen by only 21.8%.<sup>100</sup>

There were several attempts to break down this competition and establish a single-pyramid network in Ukraine. First, **Leonid Kuchma** in his first presidential term managed to essentially coerce the parliament into changing the constitution into a fully presidential one, and formed a pact with the emerging oligarchs that allowed him to concentrate economic power as well as media control.<sup>101</sup> While this autocratic attempt proved successful in ensuring re-election in 1999, Kuchma's model change towards patronal autocracy was reversed by **the Orange Revolution of 2004**, leading the country back to a democratic setting.<sup>102</sup> A new divided-executive constitution was approved after the revolution, which provided the institutional underpinning of the return of the regime's competitive nature.<sup>103</sup> But the period of 2005-2010 under President Viktor Yushchenko was still patronal with strong presidential power. As Dubrovskiy and his colleagues point out, Yushchenko "kept control over the secret service (endowed with the authority of investigating economic crimes and corruption) and law enforcement represented by the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO), which was empowered to perform all investigations of officials [...]. On top of this, a President had enormous control over judges. With these tools in his hands, he or she could potentially blackmail any elite member, so full (informal) control was only a matter of his/her willingness, skills, and impunity."<sup>104</sup>

After Yushchenko was replaced, **Viktor Yanukovich** changed the constitution unilaterally back to the initial, even stronger presidential arrangement, and made a strong attempt at creating a single-pyramid patronal network.<sup>105</sup> However, civil society in Ukraine was even stronger: the presence of deeply embedded patronal networks on the one hand, and important socioeconomic changes that had given rise to a so-called "creative middle class" on the other,<sup>106</sup> resulted in a resistance that culminated in the **Euromaidan Revolution of 2014**. This "Revolution of Dignity" brought about not only the removal of Yanukovich, but later also an election that was probably the fairest one the country had seen.<sup>107</sup> While anti-patronal elements (as discussed by several authors in this volume) were stronger after the Revolution of Dignity, the presidency of **Petro Poroshenko** still marked a return of the balance of power of patronal networks, rather than the emergence of a liberal democratic order.<sup>108</sup> (The anti-patronal attempt of the next and current president, Volodymyr Zelensky, will be discussed in the next section.)

The pre-war trajectory of the Ukrainian regime clearly exhibits the kind of dynamic equilibrium that is typical of patronal democracies. Figure 6 shows the trajectory, modeled in the six-regime triangle shown above. Each point in the trajectory represents the Ukrainian regime in one time period, and its position is defined by eleven dimensions such as plurality of power networks, formality of institutions, patronalism, and the limited nature of rule.<sup>109</sup>

Figure 6. Modelled trajectory of the Ukrainian regime before the war (1964–2022).



The case of Ukraine also **highlights the differences between a patronal democracy, a liberal democracy (like Estonia), and a patronal autocracy (like Russia)**. These differences are summarized in Table 3, containing the basic characteristics of all three systems comparatively. First, the general difference in the elite structure of these regimes lies **in pluralism and patronalism**. In a liberal democracy, the party system is composed of non-patronal entities in horizontal and formal lobbying relations with the economic sphere; in a patronal democracy, a number of patron’s parties, with informal networks of relatively equal size, compete; finally, in a patronal autocracy, the party system features a dominant patron party with opposition parties being either fake or confined to a competitive fringe.

Table 3. Comparative summary of the ideal-type liberal democracy, patronal democracy, and patronal autocracy.

	Liberal democracy	Patronal democracy	Patronal autocracy
RULING ELITE	multi-pyramid non-patronal system	multi-pyramid informal patronal system	single-pyramid informal patronal system
	politicians autonomous MPs	politicians/poligarchs partially patronalized MPs	poligarchs patronalized MPs
	autonomous major entrepreneurs	autonomous oligarchs	dependent oligarchs
	autonomous elites democratic political elite	partially patronalized elites competing patronal political elites	patronalized elites monopolistic patronal political elite

	Liberal democracy	Patronal democracy	Patronal autocracy
STATE-BUSINESS RELATIONS	lobbying	state capture	oligarch capture
	corruption as non-structural deviation	corruption as structural deviation	corruption as system-constituting element
	free-market capitalism	patronal capitalism	mafia capitalism
SOCIAL DYNAMICS	free civil society	free civil society	subjugated civil society
	legitimacy challenger is an anomaly	legitimacy challenger is a norm	accomplished legitimacy challenge
	stable equilibrium of competing political parties (democratic consolidation)	dynamic equilibrium of competing patronal networks (regime cycles)	stable equilibrium of a single-pyramid patronal network (autocratic consolidation)

**The level of autonomy** of political actors is the highest in a liberal democracy, where MPs are not simple executors of the will of their (formal) party leaders or any (informal) patrons like oligarchs but can shape, or at least have an effect on, policy decisions. In patronal democracies, MPs are partially patronalized by adopted political families (top-down) and autonomous oligarchs (bottom-up), but there is no total control over the legislature and executive power by one party. On the contrary, there is more of a “free market” of corruption: as a report claims, parliamentary seats in pre-war Ukraine could be bought at around USD 3 million, which was shared between party financing and the party leaders.<sup>110</sup> Such “anarchic” corruption is eliminated in a patronal autocracy, where governing MPs are predominantly political front men of the chief patron and his close circles of decision-makers (the patron’s court), and the legislature is only required to “keep the books” on decisions taken elsewhere, in the realm of informal institutions. What matters is the extent of the majority of the adopted political family’s parliamentary faction. The main difference between patronal democracies and autocracies stems from this fact: the ruling adopted political family in a patronal democracy does not have supermajority, or the power to change constitutional rules one-sidedly.

Finally, the interplay of internal components in each regime produces a **self-sustaining equilibrium: the essence of each system is protected by effective defensive mechanisms**. In a liberal democracy, this essence of the regime is the universal protection of human rights and the people’s equal right to have a say in how their life is governed. These are embodied in limited political power and public deliberation, respectively. In a patronal democracy, the essence of the regime is the

competition of patronal networks: the plurality of informal power pyramids existing in a dynamic equilibrium, with each network always trying to become dominant but unable to do so. Finally, defensive mechanisms in a patronal autocracy do not maintain pluralism but prevent it, protecting the unconstrained, monopolistic rule of the chief patron. This is achieved mainly by neutralizing the four autonomies of civil society (the autonomy of entrepreneurs, media, NGOs, and the citizens) that guarantee the possibility of changes of government in democratic settings.

## 4. Regime cycles: color revolutions and the Ukrainian pendulum

### 4.1. *The role of color revolutions in patronal democracies*

As an ideal type, **patronal democracy is characterized by inherent disharmony** between the institutional system and the character of major political actors. A liberal democracy is harmonic because its non-patronal institutions are matched with non-patronal political actors. Disharmony is introduced when an autocratic challenger shows up. A patronal autocracy is also harmonic but in an inverse way: patronal institutions are matched by patronal political actors who have successfully built, as part of a single pyramid, autocratic rule in their regime. In a patronal democracy, **patronal political actors operate in a non-patronal institutional system.** There is a lack of separation of the spheres of social action, not in a monopolistic way but in the form of competing informal patronal networks, whereas the institutional system is formally democratic and it nominally presumes the democratic nature of political actors. We could also express the disharmony as follows: the limitations on the leaders' power and public deliberation have already been eliminated *within* the competing patron's parties, but on a national level both of these mechanisms still exist. This means a constant gravitation toward eliminating the nation-level defensive mechanisms as well, to be able to elevate the network's elite interest on the level of national policy. Indeed, the aim of informal patronal networks is none other than harmony—not toward liberal democracy but toward patronal autocracy.

**In Ukraine,** autocratic attempts have been thwarted by the so-called **color revolutions.** These were unlike the classical revolutions that took place in the 18th and 19th centuries in Western countries. There, the revolutions were against feudal systems, where monarchs relied on numinous legitimacy (“by God”) and the revolutions set out to change this pattern of legitimation to another one, the pattern of civil legitimacy (“by the people”).<sup>111</sup> The “lawful revolutions”<sup>112</sup> of the regime changes in Central Europe in 1989 achieved, peacefully, the replacement of the substantive-rational legitimacy of the party state with the legal-rational legitimacy of a democratic system.

In contrast, color revolutions do not aim at switching from one coherent legitimacy pattern to another but try to defend the initial, coherent legitimacy pattern of democracy by overthrowing a corrupt autocrat. **In 2004, the Orange Revolution** in Ukraine saw over 1.5 million people demonstrating at Maidan Square in the center of Kyiv, protesting the close but apparently fraudulent victory of Yanukovich, who was Kuchma's presidential candidate. The peaceful revolution succeeded when the Supreme Court ruled that new elections would be held, which were won by Yushchenko, who was inaugurated in early 2005.<sup>113</sup> **The Euromaidan Revolution of 2014** was different, as it did not follow electoral fraud but another kind of attempt to solidify the chief patron's rule. Four years after Yanukovich had become president (in 2010) and moved Ukraine closer to patronal autocracy than ever, legitimacy-questioning protests were triggered by his refusal to sign an Association Agreement with the EU, which meant an open rejection of the EU's sphere of influence for that of Russia—that is, the rejection of democratization requirements for a larger room to maneuver for stabilizing patronal autocracy. At the turn of 2013-14, large and eventually violent demonstrations broke out on Maidan Square; the police killed over a hundred people and more than a thousand were injured. Deadly political violence led to the defection of key supporters of Yanukovich, who fled the country for Russia. Key political figures of the revolution occupied leading state positions: Vitaliy Klichko became mayor of Kyiv and Petro Poroshenko was elected president.<sup>114</sup>

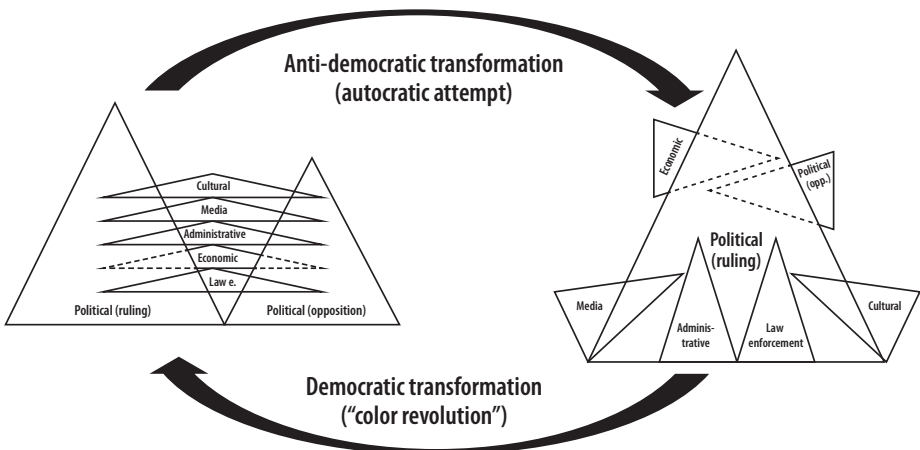
The color revolutions raised considerable optimism in Western circles. Placing events on a democracy-dictatorship axis, a popular revolt replacing a repressive system meant for them a step towards the democratic pole, i.e., Western-type liberal democracy. However, color revolutions would rarely bring the expected results; rather, they usually meant a fall back to the ordinary affairs of patronal democracy.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, **color revolutions are a defensive mechanism:** a non-institutionalized “last line of defense” to break autocratic attempts and push the regime back to the dynamic equilibrium of competing patronal networks. While the Revolution of Dignity was followed by stronger anti-patronal elements than the Orange Revolution, including reform attempts and anti-corruption efforts of civil society (both discussed in more detail in other chapters of this volume),<sup>116</sup> we can say with respect to the regime that the revolutions **did not bring anti-patronal transformation.** Although revolutionary movements march under the slogans of democracy, transparency, and anti-corruption, behind the democratic endeavor of the masses one can find the discontent of the to-be-suppressed patronal networks as well. It is true that, without popular discontent stemming from a breakdown of public deliberation, patronal networks are less able to counter autocratic tendencies. But the opposite is also true: without the resources of the competing patronal networks, popular discontent has little chance to stop the ruling autocrat from breaking “fair,” democratic (patronal) competition.

#### 4.2. *The cyclical character of patronal democracy*

Ukraine's pendulum-like movement between patronal democracy and autocracy leads us to the concept of **regime cycles**, a term coined by Hale.<sup>117</sup> These cycles typically involve back-and-forth changes on the level of impersonal institutions (i.e., an anti-democratic transformation followed by a democratic one) while the level of personal networks does not fundamentally change (i.e., there is no anti-patronal transformation). Because of the structural factors mentioned above, **autocratic attempts are numerous but none can achieve an autocratic breakthrough**; at the same time, **the reversal of patronal monopolization attempts do not remove the patronal networks**, nor the stubborn structures of the lack of separation of spheres of social action that gave rise to them in the first place.<sup>118</sup>

**The cyclical character** of patronal democracies manifests itself, most generally, in the changing structure of elites (Figure 7). The multi-pyramid and single-pyramid patterns, presented in the previous section, represent the endpoints of a scale of elite pluralism in patronal regimes. In patronal democracies, **neither pattern can consolidate**: the multi-pyramid is inherently in a dynamic equilibrium, whereas the single-pyramid is never fully established. In other words, both structures are challenged: the democratic one, by an autocratic challenger (the patronal network in power, bringing about anti-democratic transformation and typically the extension of presidential power at the expense of the parliament) and the autocratic one, by democratic challengers (the people and the informal networks and oligarchs who find themselves on the losing end of the autocratic change, bringing about democratic transformation and typically the extension of parliamentary power at the expense of the president).


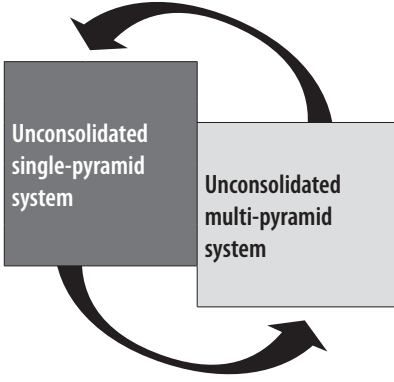
Figure 7. The cycles of elite structures in patronal democracy.



The ebb and flow of autocratic change and democratic backlash can be tracked by political institutional indicators that show symptoms on the level of impersonal institutions, such as the erosion of the rule of law, the independence of the branches of power, and media autonomy.<sup>119</sup> In the dimension of personal networks, one effect of the regime cycles that can be detected is the **predation trajectory** of the regime in the economic space. In a liberal democracy, property rights are not privileges: they are upheld impersonally, and actors do not need to participate in politics to ensure their survival from expropriation.<sup>120</sup> In post-communist patronal regimes, the phenomenon of predation, that is, the illegal and coercive takeover of productive assets (like firms and companies) for private gain is so common that it has its Russian name: “reiderstvo,” derived from the English “raiding.”<sup>121</sup> The estimated number of successful reiderstvo attacks in 2005-2011 proceeded at a yearly pace of more than 10,000 firms in Russia, and 1,300 firms in Ukraine.<sup>122</sup>

During regime cycles, the sociological character of **reiderstvo changes parallel to the change of power concentration by the ruling network**. To put it in terms of a typology of reiderstvo (Table 4), “black raiding” is not typical in patronal democracies. Indeed, it involves the direct threat or use of physical violence, initiated by members of the organized underworld, and it is more typical of the transitory period of oligarchic anarchy. The typical forms during regime cycles are **grey raiding**—when the executors of predation are no longer criminal groups but members of the lower, local levels of organs of public authority—and **white raiding**—where instead of the legal environment being misused, it is adapted and tailored to individuals and single companies in a targeted manner. The main difference between these two types is the required **amplitude of arbitrariness**: The amplitude of arbitrariness is defined by the range of state institutions controlled by the predator(s), which determines their ability to command actors from formally independent and autonomous branches of power (prosecution, police, parliament, competition office, tax office, etc.). Simply put, the amplitude of arbitrariness is the size of the “arsenal” of raiding “weapons,” and the ability to make state institutions work in unison as cogs in a predatory machinery of discretionary targeting and takeover of private companies.<sup>123</sup>

Table 4. The cycles of predation in patrimonial democracy.

Strength of the state	"Legitimacy" of raiding	The initiator or client of the corporate raiding			
		Organized upperworld (chief patron)	Low or middle level public authority	Rival entrepreneurs or oligarchs	Organized underworld (criminal groups)
Strong state  Weak state	White raiding	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Anti-democratic transformation (autocratic attempt)</p>  <p>Unconsolidated single-pyramid system</p> <p>Unconsolidated multi-pyramid system</p> <p>Democratic transformation ("color revolution")</p> </div>			
	Grey raiding				
	Black raiding				
<i>Institutional environment and features of the raiding action</i>		Criminal state	Corrupt/Captured state	Failed state	
		Single-pyramid	Multi-pyramid		
		Monopolized	Oligarchic	Competitive	
		Oligarch capture	State capture	n.a.	

The more power is concentrated in the hands of a poligarch, the wider their amplitude of arbitrariness is; and the wider their amplitude is, the more instruments of public authority they can mobilize, and thus shift from lower to higher “evolutionary forms” of reiderstvo. **In the multi-pyramid phase of the regime cycle, disorganized state threats to ownership rights** are prevalent: a large number of occasional, uncoordinated predatory acts of independent actors, mainly oligarchs and informal networks, using various corrupted/captured segments of the state.<sup>124</sup> **In the single-pyramid phase, centrally-led corporate raiding** becomes the dominant form of reiderstvo, initiated by the head of executive authority, the chief patron, who can combine white and grey raiding techniques against the prey owners.

In Ukraine, these phases were observed most clearly before, during, and after the Yanukovich period. As a tax official put it, ministries under Yanukovich became “weapons of the Presidential Administration against any business,”<sup>125</sup> routinely taking over companies and moving them to the ownership orbit of Yanukovich’s adopted political family (also termed the “Family” by Ukrainians, composed of people with kinship relations—like Yanukovich’s son, Oleksandr—and quasi-kinship relations—adopted and close associates). With the democratic transformation brought about by the Revolution of Dignity, the level of power concentration decreased, and predation also regressed in the regime to the previous dominance of grey raiding by local and lower-level actors.<sup>126</sup>

The cyclical nature of the political and economic dimensions, the relations between the actors involved, and the solidity of autonomous positions can be summarized in **the changing patterns of political capitalism**. A Weberian term also prominently used by Randall G. Holcombe,<sup>127</sup> political capitalism is an umbrella term for capitalist economic systems which are characterized by collusive corruption of governmental actors and major economic actors to a degree high enough to influence the workings of the national economy (Table 5).

Table 5. The cycles of political capitalism and the relations of political and economic actors in patronal democracy.

<i>Type of political capitalism</i>	<i>Initiating actors</i>	<i>Types of capture(s)</i>	<i>Type of state</i>	<i>Corruption market</i>
<b>Crony capitalism</b>	Cronies	Market capture	Rent-seeking state	Free competition (free entry / free exit)
	Oligarchs + poligarchs (multi-pyramid network)	Market + state capture	Kleptocratic state	
	Chief patron (single-pyramid network)	Market + state + oligarch capture	Predatory state	

First, the type of political capitalism observable in patronal regimes needs to be distinguished from “crony capitalism”—a catchword for corrupt systems like the post-communist ones.<sup>128</sup> The term “crony” or friend can express the informal and personal nature of the relationships, but it also assumes, in the context of corrupt transactions, parties or partners of equal rank (even if acting in different roles) and implies voluntary transactions that can be terminated or continued by either party at their convenience. The actors retain their autonomy, and cooperate to capture markets: they close open markets by creating artificial monopolies to reap rents, i.e., profit stemming from the lack of competition.<sup>129</sup>

On the one hand, the difference between cronyism and patronalism is the vertical nature of relations. There is no free entry to the patronal network, only adoption, being given access, or forced surrender; and no free exit either, only exclusion. On the other hand, patronalism has variants based on the dimension of pluralism. **The key question of regime cycles is this: whether mafia culture can rise to the rank of central politics** and break autonomous positions in the state (branches of power), the economy (oligarchs), and society (civil society); or whether the capture of markets—as described above—will be accompanied by only partial state captures by oligarchs and multiple patronal pyramids, which may be able to tap illegally into current revenues of the state (kleptocratic state) but cannot carry out centrally-led corporate raiding (no predatory state). In the former case, we speak about **mafia capitalism**, the attempts at which could be observed in the Kuchma and Yanukovych periods; in the latter case, we speak about **patronal capitalism**, which is the more competitive landscape that is restored in the regime cycles by democratic transformations. However, even in the anti-democratic, mafiotic phase of the cycle, the single pyramid cannot fully consolidate: oligarch capture, which is the element of full-fledged mafia capitalisms in patronal autocracies (like Russia and Hungary),<sup>130</sup> is never achieved, and the power of the autonomy of the to-be-subjugated economic and social groups repels domination attempts—only to start the cycle over again.

## 5. The war and its effects: the possibility to break out of the regime cycle

### 5.1. *Systemic consequences of the war in Russia and Ukraine*

On February 24, 2022, a **patronal autocracy launched a full-scale attack against a patronal democracy**. On the military front, this already indicates differences in the social patterns of the Russian and Ukrainian armed forces, reflecting the characteristics of their respective regimes, as discussed in a chapter in the next volume.<sup>131</sup> However, the war also brought systemic consequences regarding informal

patronalism in both regimes. Over a year after the start of the war, what we can see is that **the war has unleashed forces that have pushed both regimes out of their previous equilibria.**

**In Russia,** Putin already achieved an autocratic breakthrough in 2003, and put an end to the anarchic pluralism of the 1990s. In the following years, the regime started the long process of autocratic consolidation, which meant the elimination of autonomous positions in the society in order to prevent the emergence of an effective opposition.<sup>132</sup> The Russian regime, despite the dominance of informality, relies heavily on the expansion of state power and open state ownership, through which a significant proportion of the adopted political family has been placed in state positions with exceptionally high remuneration (several times higher than Western salaries).<sup>133</sup> This meant not only that in the decade before the war there had been an effort to eliminate “private banditry” at the middle and lower levels by pushing the object of competition among informal actors (strictly at levels below the chief patron) from corruption opportunities to better positions in the bureaucracy,<sup>134</sup> but also that the leadership was confident in its own unaccountability: it did not feel the need to keep its wealth and influence in (private) positions that would not change hands in the case of a change in government. The Putin regime’s confidence in itself was also underpinned by its ability to deploy a wide range of repression, including outright violence, in the face of challenges to its consolidated state (such as the 2012 series of protests<sup>135</sup> and the fate of major opposition leaders like Boris Nemtsov and Alexei Navalny).<sup>136</sup>

As Russia’s imperial expansionist instinct awakened with a perceived weakening of the West,<sup>137</sup> the invasion of Ukraine moved Russia **from autocracy closer to dictatorship.** The war has brought formal organizations and chains of command (e.g. military, secret services, and state bureaucracy) to the fore, parallel to increased political repression<sup>138</sup> and the devaluation and increasing vulnerability of oligarchic elements. Just a few hours after the invasion started, Putin repeated his 2003 meeting with the oligarchs when he summoned 37 of them to the Kremlin.<sup>139</sup> Only this time the meeting was not about the reversal of patron-client roles but delivering a threat in a war situation to curb possible critical instincts. Just as in 2003, Putin’s words were accompanied by deeds: retribution against critical oligarchs like Oleg Tinkov (forced to sell his bank at 3 percent of its value)<sup>140</sup> and disciplinary measures within the patronal network (e.g., a new decree allowing the confiscation of the savings of officials exceeding their income for three years)<sup>141</sup> indicate the elimination of even the limited bargaining capacity of informal power-holders.

**The Ukrainian regime** has also moved out of its equilibrium, although in the opposite direction. The drive to break the logic of patronal democracy has been a policy-shaping force since the Revolution of Dignity, but in 2019 it has risen to the level of political leadership with the landslide victory of **Volodymyr Zelensky.**

The new president came to power not only as someone who was not a chief patron and had no patronal network of his own, but also as someone with a **distinctly anti-patronal agenda**. This includes measures such as the anti-oligarch law of 2021, the register of oligarchs it created, and a number of related reform efforts (the prohibition on the financing of political parties and the purchase of large-scale privatization objects, e-declarations, increased taxes, etc.), which have also led to episodes of conflicts with the oligarchs.<sup>142</sup>

**The 2022 invasion**, beyond the terrible human and material damage, has shaken the Ukrainian political-economic system to its foundations. Particularly, it has pushed the four key players of the regime all in the direction of anti-patronal transformation:

- **the oligarchs**, who have suffered heavy losses in the war, losing not simply a significant part of their wealth and assets but also their markets (as later studies in this volume will show);<sup>143</sup>
- **the state**, because (1) the power of the leadership and its legitimacy in the eyes of society have both heavily increased during the war (compared to 2021, the positive image of the state has grown from 5% to 53%; the perceived effectiveness of the state has grown from 45% to 93%; and trust in the President has grown from 2.1% to 53.1%),<sup>144</sup> (2) Zelensky is trying to exploit the situation for his anti-patronal purposes, and even to take on oligarchs like Igor Kolomoisky, who supported him in the presidential race,<sup>145</sup> and (3) the Ukrainian state at war cannot afford corruption, which causes large losses to the budget<sup>146</sup> and generally undermines the effectiveness of the bureaucratic war machinery,<sup>147</sup> whereas maximizing the resources that can be involved in war (in the context of an unequal fight with Russia) is possible precisely through unleashing the power of volunteerism and autonomy, and through civil society being active and “taking ownership” of the issue—i.e., the very opposite of patronalism;
- **the Ukrainian society**, which is increasingly shedding its post-Soviet identity in favor of a national-civic identity (as detailed in another chapter in this volume),<sup>148</sup> and which is clearly committed in its geopolitical orientation to the Western alliance system (positive attitudes towards Ukraine joining the EU have grown from 48.5% in 2021 to 86% in 2022, while the same numbers for NATO accession were 41.5% and 76%, respectively);<sup>149</sup>
- **Western external actors**, as Ukraine seeks to join their system of alliance based on and composed of liberal democratic regimes, and whose conditionality criteria require reforms in the rule of law and anti-corruption.<sup>150</sup>

The nexus between these actors further strengthens the chances of anti-patronal transformation. **The issue of trust** is particularly important here. According to

a poll conducted in January 2023, 96% of the Ukrainian people trusted or fully trusted the Armed Forces of Ukraine; 86%, President Zelensky; and 70%, the National Security and Defense Council.<sup>151</sup> This is a necessity: a patriotic war can only be built on the trust that the state must maintain towards civil society and the population, as well as towards foreign donors. All these actors must be ensured that their efforts will not ultimately serve corrupt, oligarchic ends. Without social trust, there is no sacrifice, voluntarism, and creativity; and without the support of Western public opinion, Western governments cannot support Ukraine, and credibility would be undermined if it were revealed that funds were being dissipated through corrupt channels. This is yet another sense in which the Ukrainian regime cannot afford corruption, and this also explains (alongside Zelensky's initial anti-patronal ambitions) the regime's anti-corruption moves such as the dismissal of Kyrilo Tymoshenko, Deputy Head of the President's Office, after a corruption scandal in January 2023;<sup>152</sup> the February 10, 2023 search by the State Investigation Bureau and the SBU of the premises used by the State Customs Service in Kyiv, Lviv, Ternopil, Chernivtsi and Odessa; and the dismissal the following day of Ruslan Dziuba, deputy commander of the National Guard in charge of the logistics division.<sup>153</sup>

The fate of the Ukrainian regime cannot be predicted at this point, as it depends largely on the outcome of the war. But **the observable trends point to an unprecedented anti-patronal transformation.** Assuming that Ukraine can maintain its independence, **reconstruction can begin on these anti-patronal foundations,** and thus there is a significant change for the regime to permanently break the dynamic equilibrium of competing patronal networks.

### *5.2. Possibilities and dangers: the threat of autocracy and the long road to anti-patronal norms in the society*

The possibility of anti-patronal transformation should not be mistaken for direct movement toward liberal democracy. The development of a Western-type, “free and fair” regime of political competition with separated spheres of social action is but one possibility that can emerge in the wake of de-oligarchization. Another possibility is development toward **conservative autocracy: a non-patronal but also non-democratic regime.** In other words, while the regime cycles showed that democratic transformation is not necessarily accompanied by anti-patronal transformation, the opposite is also true: anti-patronal transformation may not be accompanied by democratic transformation, or the return to pluralistic competition, after the war.

We may call this “**the Saakashvili scenario,**” referring to the former president of Georgia who rose to power as a result of the 2003 Rose Revolution. Like Zelensky, Saakashvili (as a victor of the revolution) had immense popular legitimacy, which

was embodied in winning a striking 97% of the votes in the 2004 presidential election at 88% turnout.<sup>154</sup> The Saakashvili government also had clear anti-patronal ambitions (although from an ideology-driven, libertarian drive),<sup>155</sup> and a genuine reduction of patronalism in Georgia could be observed in the following years. By shrinking the scope and extent of the state,<sup>156</sup> Saakashvili's program reduced the system of power&ownership by significantly weakening the power component: state capture was reduced by leaving little for informal networks to capture. In addition, the authorities followed a *de facto* zero-tolerance policy with crime and corruption, with harsh sentences and a growth of the prison population.<sup>157</sup> The chilling effect of these changes contributed to the reduction of grand as well as petty corruption, particularly in dealings with state bureaucracy, the education system, healthcare, law enforcement, and the judiciary.<sup>158</sup>

On the other hand, the crackdown on patronalism was made possible by disregarding critical components of the rule of law, such as the separation of executive and judicial power. In the initial phase, Saakashvili's judicial reforms resulted in such centralization that the President personally presided over the council of judges;<sup>159</sup> and what started as a response to the local reality of massive organized crime ultimately became the source of an abuse of power. As Mizsei reminds us:

Media pluralism suffered after the 2007 Imedi case, where the police used force to disperse a demonstration, then the government ordered the closure of the Imedi television stations and police damaged equipment in their central studio. The media situation suffered a further blow after the war with Russia in the summer of 2008. The government did not tolerate dissent and became increasingly paranoid, seeing the hand of Russia everywhere. [...]

At the beginning of the Saakashvili period, businesspeople associated with the previous regime were often put in jail and released after a pledge to pay. At that point, it was purely informal and could even be justified by the urgent financial needs of the new, revolutionary state. This arbitrariness, however, never really ended. At first, it was an understandable deviation from the rule-of-law which was considered to be temporary; later, the Saakashvili team thought they could take shortcuts to reforming the state.<sup>160</sup>

**The Ukrainian case also carries the risk of such a scenario.** Already after Zelensky's victory in 2019, concerns about the erosion of the rule of law were raised.<sup>161</sup> In the pre-war years, the Zelensky administration passed hundreds of laws, and sought to increase presidential power at the expense of parliamentary power. A paradoxical situation arose: reforms such as higher party control over the MPs or decreasing their immunity are understandable from the point of view of preventing state capture by oligarchs and introducing real accountability. However, they also implied a significant concentration of power, meaning in practice increased

control over central posts of the executive, legislature, and security organizations by Zelensky and his circle.<sup>162</sup>

The war almost inevitably accelerated this process, as **the centralization of power goes hand in hand with the state's transition to war mode**. In the wake of the full-scale invasion, elections were suspended, protests were banned, and martial law was introduced. The latter allowed for anti-patronal measures such as the nationalization of five large oligarch-owned industrial companies in November 2022.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, **the government was also empowered to violate various autonomies of civil society**, citing the war and the prevention of Russia's hybrid influence. In the media field, a law was adopted on December 29, 2022 under which the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council (NRADA, the members of which are appointed by parliament and the president) is able to temporarily ban the work of online mass media without a court hearing, issue binding orders to editorial offices, regulate the work of cable and online television operators, and cancel the registration of print media.<sup>164</sup> For similar, war-related reasons, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), which is seen by many as a Russian agent, has become an essentially persecuted church, with its activities banned in a number of cities, several of its priests stripped of their citizenship, and a presidential decree restricting its religious activities adopted in December 2022.<sup>165</sup>

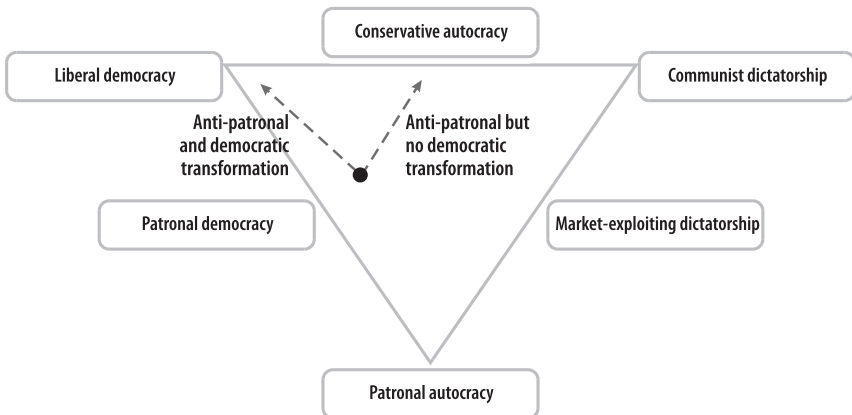
In addition to such cases, it is worth noting some **parallels between Zelensky's centrally led anti-patronal practices and the logic of an autocratic chief patron's governance** of a patronal regime. First, a chief patron aims at creating a single-pyramid patronal network. Zelensky himself is building his own pyramid of power, which is not an informal patronal network (as it is not based on wealth-accumulation and the discretionary distribution of rewards and punishments) but has strong elements of personalism and personal loyalty to the leader.<sup>166</sup> Second, the chief patron, as part of the oligarch capture, gives autonomous oligarchs a choice: either they can enter the single-pyramid network (adopted/surrendered oligarch), they can become its adversaries (rival/liquidated oligarch), or they can try to remain neutral, and not to impede the chief patron's interests (fellow-traveler oligarch). The Ukrainian adopted political families under Zelensky were presented a similar choice, and they could choose between political loyalty (e.g. Privat Group), animosity (e.g. the Poroshenko, Akhmetov, and Medvedchuk clans), and neutrality (e.g. the Boyko and Grigorishin clans, and the remaining parts of the Industrial Union of Donbas).<sup>167</sup>

Finally, and paradoxically, a similarity can also be observed with regard to Zelensky's anti-oligarch law. A chief patron, while eliminating the separation of powers at the national level, takes care to separate resources of power within the adopted political family. This means that in the hands of a client (e.g. a subordinate oligarch or poligarch), there can be no combination of "branches of power"

that would enable the formation of an alternative center of patronal influence. Such “branches” include executive power, party power (party background), and economic and media power at the national level.<sup>168</sup> When the Ukrainian anti-oligarch law defines oligarchs as having three of four characteristics (participation in political life, significant influence on the media, owner of a monopoly, owner of assets worth more than 1 million times the Ukrainian living wage), it is in fact following the same logic: it is trying to prevent the concentration of political and economic resources outside the state that could be used by an alternative power center for patronal influence.

Of course, it can be argued that in a patronal autocracy these characteristics protect autocratic power, while in the regime of a democratic leader they are intended to prevent and remedy the patronal degeneration of democracy. Also, martial law-related measures are introduced as temporary measures, which represent a provisional suspension of the logic of democratic competition in times of war. However, in Georgia in the Saakashvili era it could be seen that temporary measures can indeed become permanent; and there are many historical examples in Western democracies as well of measures introduced in response to emergencies not being phased out once the danger has passed, but becoming part of the “new normal.”<sup>169</sup> **The danger of not letting go of power, even if not for corrupt or self-interested reasons, raises the possibility that instead of liberal democracy, the Ukrainian regime will eventually move towards conservative autocracy** (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Possible trajectories of the Ukrainian regime after the war.



However, **three factors point against this scenario.** The first is that with the revision of the electoral code coming into effect in January 2020, the mixed-member majoritarian electoral system of Ukraine was replaced by an open-list type of proportional representation.<sup>170</sup> This goes against the typical practice of

post-communist autocracies, where changes to the electoral law (as in the Russian, Hungarian, or Moldovan cases) have always been made in the direction of a majoritarian system, i.e., to make it easier for the incumbent chief patron to retain a constitutional majority. Second, autocratic rule is not what the society demands. On the contrary: in January 2023, a national average of 94% of Ukrainians said that it was important for them that Ukraine becomes a fully functioning democracy (as opposed to 76% in December 2021), and by this the three most important things they meant were freedom of speech, equal justice for all, and free and fair elections.<sup>171</sup> Third, Ukraine is urgently seeking to join the EU and NATO, which again prevents the regime from choosing an autocratic path of progress.

The democratizing effect of Western alliances is well documented in the literature, especially in the pre-membership period, when countries are actively trying to meet the criteria for entry.<sup>172</sup> Demanding such criteria from Ukraine (instead of a fast-track procedure) should have a similar effect in helping avoid the Saakashvili scenario. At the same time, it is worth drawing attention to a problem, which concerns not the level of impersonal institutions (as the risk of autocratization does), but the level of personal networks. That is, **anti-patronal transformation is not a one-step or short-term process: “de-oligarchization” on the level of the elites** does not mean the end of the stubborn norms of patronalism **on the level of society**, which can only be the result of long-term reforms. The exportability of liberal democracy, notions of its “Drang nach Osten” (“Drive to the East”), proved to be illusory, too, around the 1989-1991 regime changes in the post-communist region. It was presumed that after the collapse of communist power, the political institutional system of liberal democracy could be raised over its ruins, and irrespective of the prevalent value structures, such an undertaking would be merely a question of a propitious historical moment and political will. However, the autonomously shifting “tectonic plates” of historically predetermined value structures do not support just any odd political construction one might want to establish.

In the case of the post-war Ukrainian regime, it is also inadvisable to demand imposing the Western (i.e., EU) institutional and regulatory system on the country as soon as possible. Regimes are operated by their actors—and institutions can function only as far as they are respected by the actors who need to operate them. If the informal norms of the actors predominantly reflect the same separation of spheres of social action as the formal institutions of the regime, the regime is sustainable. Otherwise, actors will operate the institutions according to their own informal understandings, as has been the case in the post-communist patronal regimes.

Patronalism, selective punishment, and the acceptance of bribes in exchange for immunity from punishment are traditions that are widespread in all post-communist countries. Such norms are particularly strong in Ukraine, which spent, unlike most

of the other previously occupied countries, not decades but three centuries under the Russian Empire. Despite its democratic traditions and weaker historical roots of patronalism than Russia itself,<sup>173</sup> Ukrainian society, officials, and bureaucrats cherish informal norms that are at odds with Western-type bureaucracy and its practice of impersonal enforcement of written laws. In other words, the extensive regulatory powers that are treated as normal in European welfare states would offer many possibilities of abuses if they were adopted without taking into account the respective social context.<sup>174</sup> Just as understanding post-communist regimes requires a specific language and the abandonment of the axioms of the descriptive categories developed for Western political-economic systems, reforming a post-communist country such as Ukraine also requires a careful, necessarily multi-step plan based on an authentic understanding of local conditions.

## 6. Conclusion: civilization shifting and the Russia-Ukraine war

The history of post-Maidan Ukraine is the history of an attempt at **civilization shifting**. Although our notion rests on a modern, pluralist interpretation of civilization,<sup>175</sup> a useful starting point for analysis is provided by Huntington and the three conditions he lists for successful redefinition of civilizational identity:

First, the political and economic elite of the country has to be generally supportive of and enthusiastic about this move. Second, the public has to be at least willing to acquiesce in the redefinition of identity. Third, the dominant elements in the host civilization, in most cases the West, have to be willing to embrace the convert.<sup>176</sup>

Among the “three historical regions” of the former Soviet empire, Ukraine has historically belonged to the historical region of **Eastern Orthodoxy**.<sup>177</sup> In contrasting patronal regimes with non-patronal orders, we have contrasted the predominant political-economic pattern in the countries of that civilization (and in Islamic Central Asia) with the liberal democratic order predominant in Western countries. While there is observable variation between countries in both groups, a fundamental dividing line between them is the separation of spheres of social action and the two other axioms we dissolved at the beginning of this chapter for the post-communist region. **The fight against patronalism, together with Ukraine’s reorientation towards the West**, is thus not only about a rapprochement with the Western system of alliances, but also **an expression of the demand to belong to the Western civilization**.

The three Huntingtonian conditions for civilization shifting are essentially being met in Ukraine. Since the Revolution of Dignity and the election of Zelensky as president, the leading part of the political elite has been interested in anti-patronal

transformation (even if some parts of the judicial elite and some economic actors do not support it);<sup>178</sup> there is clear support in society, especially since the start of the full-scale invasion, for Western orientation; and Ukraine is enthusiastically welcomed by Western countries, as indicated by its newly received EU candidate status (together with Moldova), in addition to continued verbal, material, and arms support. However, there is a fourth factor that Huntington did not take into account: the fact that the core country of the respective civilization may not be in favor of the secession, and may even use military force to try to preserve the unity of its civilization. **For Russia, attacking Ukraine is not only a question of imperialism, but also of maintaining its weight as a civilizational core state.**

At the same time, Putin is taking a huge risk with the invasion. Rather than expanding his country's imperial role, the aggression may even shake its former indirect imperial influence in the West. As a civilizational core state, its role vis-à-vis other civilizations can be devalued as well: the unipolar world order is becoming not a tripolar but a bipolar one, with the US and China, and without Russia.<sup>179</sup> In terms of domestic regime stability, the accumulation and eruption of civil discontent is, at the moment, blocked by repression and the lack of the autonomies of civil society. But as mass legitimacy-questioning and internal frustration of clients toward the chief patron appear, they may turn Putin into a "lame duck," and undermine even an otherwise consolidated patronal autocracy.<sup>180</sup>

**The full-scale Russian invasion puts Ukraine's independence and chances at a Western type of development at risk.** However, the heroic stance of the Ukrainian people, together with anti-patronal changes and a solidifying civic-national identity, makes domestic foundations for a Western turn stronger than ever. **Rebuilding the country involves the chance of breaking free of the three-decade trap of regime cycles,** particularly if it is done by laying strong foundations of democracy where the liberal components of the rule of law, civil rights, and strong institutional controls against corruption and informal practices are present. Beyond mitigating immediate problems, reforms of anti-patronal transformation are needed on the level of elites and the society in order to free Ukraine from its post-communist legacy and to create the basis of a more stable democratic development as part of the West.

## Notes

- 1 As summed up in the decade's catchphrase, "the end of history," indeed simplifying what Fukuyama meant by that phrase. See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and The Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
- 2 Cited by Gideon Rachman, "Understanding Vladimir Putin, the Man Who Fooled the World," *The Guardian*, April 9, 2022, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/09/understanding-vladimir-putin-the-man-who-fooled-the-world>.
- 3 See, e.g., Harlan Ullman, "Why Putin Won't Invade Ukraine," Atlantic Council, February 16, 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/why-putin-wont-invade-ukraine/>; Harun Yilmaz, "No, Russia Will Not Invade Ukraine," *Al Jazeera*, February 9, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/2/9/no-russia-will-not-invade-ukraine>; "Will There Be a War Over Ukraine? 13 Putin Watchers Weigh In," *POLITICO*, January 26, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/01/26/russia-ukraine-putin-experts-00000019>.
- 4 The second volume, which focuses on Russia and the geopolitical consequences of the war, was published together with this volume by the CEU Press. See Bálint Madlovics and Bálint Magyar, eds., *Russia's Imperial Endeavor and Its Geopolitical Consequences: The Russia-Ukraine War, Volume Two* (Budapest–Vienna–New York: CEU Press, 2023).
- 5 Bálint Magyar and Bálint Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020); Bálint Magyar and Bálint Madlovics, *A Concise Field Guide to Post-Communist Regimes: Actors, Institutions, and Dynamics* (Budapest–Vienna–New York: CEU Press, 2022).
- 6 Henry E. Hale, "Freeing Post-Soviet Regimes from the Procrustean Bed of Democracy Theory," in *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, ed. Bálint Magyar (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019), 5–20.
- 7 David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 430–51; András Bozóki and Dániel Hegedűs, "Democracy, Dictatorship and Hybrid Regimes: Concepts and Approaches," in *Illiberal and Authoritarian Tendencies in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe*, ed. Magdalena Solska, Florian Bieber, and Dane Taleski (Bern: Peter Lang, 2018), 21–49.
- 8 Iván Szelényi and Péter Mihályi, *Varieties of Post-Communist Capitalism: A Comparative Analysis of Russia, Eastern Europe and China*, Studies in Critical Social Sciences (Boston: Brill Academic Pub, 2019); Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).
- 9 Matthijs Bogaards, "Where to Draw the Line? From Degree to Dichotomy in Measures of Democracy," *Democratization* 19, no. 4 (2012): 690–712.
- 10 See, in particular, Oksana Huss' chapter in this volume.
- 11 See Kálmán Mizsei's chapter "In the Gravitational Tensions of East and West: The Systemic and Geopolitical Integration Patterns of Ukraine and Moldova," Madlovics and Magyar, eds., *Russia's Imperial Endeavor and Its Geopolitical Consequences*.
- 12 Alena Ledeneva, "Preface," in *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*, by Bálint Magyar and Bálint Madlovics (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020), xxi–xxv.
- 13 Claus Offe, "Political Corruption: Conceptual and Practical Issues," in *Building a Trustworthy State in Post-Socialist Transition*, ed. János Kornai and Susan Rose-Ackerman, Political Evolution and Institutional Change (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 78. For other authors using the same or a similar distinction, see Robert E. Goodin, "Democratic Accountability: The Third Sector and All," Working Paper (Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, June 1, 2003); Mark Philp, "Defining Political Corruption," *Political Studies* 45, no. 3 (1997): 436–62.
- 14 Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).

- <sup>15</sup> James M. Buchanan, Robert D. Tollison, and Gordon Tullock, eds., *Toward a Theory of the Rent-Seeking Society* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 1980).
- <sup>16</sup> Randall G. Holcombe, *Political Capitalism: How Economic and Political Power Is Made and Maintained* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- <sup>17</sup> Scholars have called attention to the phenomenon of “revolving doors,” meaning the movement from government service into the lobbying industry where former political actors can utilize their political connections in the interest representation of big business. However, that politicians may enter the economic sphere only after they have left the political sphere means precisely that the spheres of social action remain separated. See Jordi Blanes i Vidal, Mirko Draca, and Christian Fons-Rosen, “Revolving Door Lobbyists,” *American Economic Review* 102, no. 7 (December 2012): 3731–48.
- <sup>18</sup> Claudia Baez-Camargo and Alena V. Ledeneva, “Where Does Informality Stop and Corruption Begin? Informal Governance and the Public/Private Crossover in Mexico, Russia and Tanzania,” *Slavonic & East European Review* 95, no. 1 (2017): 49–75.
- <sup>19</sup> Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- <sup>20</sup> Vadim Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
- <sup>21</sup> Magyar and Madlovics, *A Concise Field Guide*, 10–13.
- <sup>22</sup> Mikhail Minakov, “Republic of Clans: The Evolution of the Ukrainian Political System,” in *Stubborn Structures*, ed. Bálint Magyar, 217–45; Kathleen Collins, *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- <sup>23</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
- <sup>24</sup> On the concept of predation in the post-communist context, see Bálint Madlovics and Bálint Magyar, “Post-Communist Predation: Modeling Reiderstvo Practices in Contemporary Predatory States,” *Public Choice* 187 (2021): 247–73.
- <sup>25</sup> Anders Åslund, “Comparative Oligarchy: Russia, Ukraine and the United States,” SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 2005).
- <sup>26</sup> András Sajó, “Clientelism and Extortion: Corruption in Transition,” in *Political Corruption in Transition: A Sceptic’s Handbook*, ed. Stephen Korkin and András Sajó (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2002), 16.
- <sup>27</sup> Stanislav Markus and Volha Charnysh, “The Flexible Few: Oligarchs and Wealth Defense in Developing Democracies,” *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 12 (2017): 1632–65.
- <sup>28</sup> Michal Klíma, *Informal Politics in Post-Communist Europe: Political Parties, Clientelism and State Capture* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- <sup>29</sup> Stanislav Markus, “The Atlas That Has Not Shrugged: Why Russia’s Oligarchs Are an Unlikely Force for Change,” *Dædalus – Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* 146, no. 2 (2017): 101–12.
- <sup>30</sup> Transparency International (TI), “Corruption Perceptions Index 2011 – FAQ,” 2012, [https://www.transparency.org/cpi2011/in\\_detail](https://www.transparency.org/cpi2011/in_detail).
- <sup>31</sup> Hannes Baumann, “A Failure of Governmentality: Why Transparency International Underestimated Corruption in Ben Ali’s Tunisia,” *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2017): 467–82; Tore Fougner, “Neoliberal Governance of States: The Role of Competitiveness Indexing and Country Benchmarking,” *Millennium* 37, no. 2 (2008): 303–26.
- <sup>32</sup> Stephen Knack, “Measuring Corruption: A Critique of Indicators in Eastern Europe and Central Asia,” *Journal of Public Policy* 27, no. 3 (December 2007): 255–91. For our detailed typology of corruption, see Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 371–401.
- <sup>33</sup> Stanislav Markus, *Property, Predation, and Protection: Piranha Capitalism in Russia and Ukraine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

- <sup>34</sup> Stanislav Markus, "Secure Property as a Bottom-Up Process: Firms, Stakeholders, and Predators in Weak States," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, September 8, 2012), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2143322>.
- <sup>35</sup> Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 402–6.
- <sup>36</sup> Rasma Karklins, *The System Made Me Do It: Corruption in Post-Communist Societies* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005).
- <sup>37</sup> János Kornai, Bo Rothstein, and Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Creating Social Trust in Post-Socialist Transition*, Political Evolution and Institutional Change (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- <sup>38</sup> Vladimir Gel'man, "Post-Soviet Transitions and Democratization: Towards Theory-Building," *Democratization* 10, no. 2 (2003): 87–104.
- <sup>39</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 9.
- <sup>40</sup> Collins, *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia*, 52–53.
- <sup>41</sup> Mara Faccio found that politically connected firms represent 7.7% of the world's stock market capitalization, while in Russia the corresponding number is 86.7%. Mara Faccio, "Politically Connected Firms," *American Economic Review* 96, no. 1 (2006): 369–86.
- <sup>42</sup> On the cases of Ukraine and Russia, see Anders Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It* (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015); Anders Åslund, *Russia's Crony Capitalism: The Path from Market Economy to Kleptocracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).
- <sup>43</sup> Andrey Ryabov, "The Institution of Power&Ownership in the Former U.S.S.R.: Origin, Diversity of Forms, and Influence on Transformation Processes," in *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, ed. Bálint Magyar (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019), 415–35.
- <sup>44</sup> Oleksandr Fisun, "Neopatrimonialism in Post-Soviet Eurasia," in *Stubborn Structures*, ed. Bálint Magyar, 75–96.
- <sup>45</sup> Oksana Huss, *How Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies Sustain Hybrid Regimes: Strategies of Political Domination under Ukraine's Presidents in 1994–2014* (Stuttgart: ibidem Press, 2020).
- <sup>46</sup> Herbert Kitschelt et al., *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- <sup>47</sup> Nikolay Petrov, "Putin's Neo-Nomenklatura System and Its Evolution," in *Stubborn Structures*, ed. Bálint Magyar, 179–215.
- <sup>48</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 59.
- <sup>49</sup> We use the definitions of democracy and autocracy of János Kornai, "The System Paradigm Revisited: Clarification and Additions in the Light of Experiences in the Post-Communist Region," in *Stubborn Structures*, ed. Bálint Magyar, 21–74.
- <sup>50</sup> At this point, we do not discuss transformation into market-exploiting dictatorship. On that regime type and its paradigmatic case, China, see Magyar and Madlovics, *A Concise Field Guide*, 131–40.
- <sup>51</sup> Bálint Magyar, "Parallel System Narratives: Polish and Hungarian Regime Formations Compared," in *Stubborn Structures*, ed. Bálint Magyar, 611–55.
- <sup>52</sup> Kálmán Mizsei, "The New East European Patronal States and the Rule-of-Law," in *Stubborn Structures*, ed. Bálint Magyar, 531–610.
- <sup>53</sup> Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Max Weber, Hans Gerth, and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1991), 77–128.
- <sup>54</sup> András Sajó, *Limiting Government: An Introduction to Constitutionalism* (Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 1999).
- <sup>55</sup> Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, and Barry R. Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 111.
- <sup>56</sup> For a detailed description of the process of public deliberation in various regimes, see Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 243–317.

- 57 David Smith, *Estonia: Independence and European Integration* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 65.
- 58 Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 14.
- 59 “Freedom in the World: Country and Territory Ratings and Statuses, 1973-2019 (Excel)” (Freedom House, 2019), [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Country\\_and\\_Territory\\_Ratings\\_and\\_Statuses\\_FIW1973-2019.xls](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Country_and_Territory_Ratings_and_Statuses_FIW1973-2019.xls).
- 60 Michael Coppedge et al., “V-Dem Country-Year Dataset 2019” (Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project, 2019).
- 61 Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 459–60.
- 62 Vello Pettai, “Understanding Politics in Estonia: The Limits of Tutelary Transition,” in *Pathways: A Study of Six Post-Communist Countries*, ed. Karin Hilmer Pedersen and Lars Johannsen (ISD LLC, 2009), 69–87.
- 63 Evald Mikkel, “Patterns of Party Formation in Estonia: Consolidation Unaccomplished,” in *Post-Communist EU Member States: Parties and Party Systems*, ed. Susanne Jungerstam-Mulders (Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2006), 23–49.
- 64 Rein Taagepera, “Baltic Values and Corruption in Comparative Context,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 33, no. 3 (2002): 243–58.
- 65 Vello Pettai and Pille Ivask, “Estonia,” Nations in Transit 2018 (Freedom House, 2018), [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2018\\_Estonia.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2018_Estonia.pdf).
- 66 Bohle and Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe’s Periphery*, 96–137.
- 67 Ott Lumi, “Comparative Insight into the Status of the Lobbying Regulation Debate in Estonia,” *Journal of Public Affairs* 15, no. 3 (2015): 300–310.
- 68 Lumi, “Comparative Insight into the Status of the Lobbying Regulation Debate in Estonia.”
- 69 Cf. Karen Dawisha, *Putin’s Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).
- 70 Mikkel, “Patterns of Party Formation in Estonia.”
- 71 Martin Ehala, “The Bronze Soldier: Identity Threat and Maintenance in Estonia,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 40, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 139–58.
- 72 Vassilis Petsinis, “Identity Politics and Right-Wing Populism in Estonia: The Case of EKRE,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 25, no. 2 (2019): 211–30.
- 73 Cf. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
- 74 Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs*, 18–26.
- 75 Cited by Alena V. Ledeneva, *How Russia Really Works: The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 178.
- 76 Ilja Viktorov, “Russia’s Network State and Reiderstvo Practices: The Roots to Weak Property Rights Protection after the Post-Communist Transition,” in *Stubborn Structures*, ed. Bálint Magyar, 437–59.
- 77 Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 135.
- 78 David E. Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia, Revised and Updated* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011).
- 79 Gerald M. Easter, “Revenue Imperatives: State over Market in Postcommunist Russia,” in *The Political Economy of Russia*, ed. Neil Robinson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 51–68.
- 80 Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 270–74.
- 81 Ben Judah, *Fragile Empire: How Russia Fell In and Out of Love with Vladimir Putin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 55.
- 82 Judah, *Fragile Empire*, 43.
- 83 Richard Sakwa, “Putin and the Oligarchs,” *New Political Economy* 13, no. 2 (June 2008): 185–91.
- 84 Bill Browder, *Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man’s Fight for Justice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 157–63.

- <sup>85</sup> For example, Putin was forced to step down as president in 2008 when he faced a two-term limit for presidency. By that time, his grip over the regime was strong enough that this did not result in what Hale describes as a “lame-duck syndrome”: Putin made his political front man Dmitry Medvedev president, and returned to power in 2012. Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 276–91.
- <sup>86</sup> Maria Popova, “Putin-Style ‘Rule of Law’ & the Prospects for Change,” *Dædalus – Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* 146, no. 2 (2017): 64–75; Yelina Kvrut, “Selective Prosecution in Russia: Myth or Reality?” *Cardozo Journal of International and Comparative Law* 15 (2007): 127–68.
- <sup>87</sup> Timothy Frye, *Property Rights and Property Wrongs: How Power, Institutions, and Norms Shape Economic Conflict in Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- <sup>88</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh and Joshau Woods, *Contemporary Russia as a Feudal Society: A New Perspective on the Post-Soviet Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 127–30.
- <sup>89</sup> Zoltán Sz. Biró, “The Russian Party System,” in *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, ed. Bálint Magyar (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019), 319–52.
- <sup>90</sup> Grigory Yavlinsky, *Realekonomik: The Hidden Cause of the Great Recession (and How to Avert the Next One)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 109; Ledeneva, *How Russia Really Works*, 142–63. Naturally, we do not exclude the possibility that some actors of the shadow economy are involved with the adopted political family. For more details, see GI-TOC’s chapter in this volume.
- <sup>91</sup> Elena Vartanova, “The Russian Media Model in the Context of Post-Soviet Dynamics,” in *Comparing Media Systems beyond the Western World*, ed. Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 119–43.
- <sup>92</sup> Bálint Madlovics and Bálint Magyar, “Populism as a Challenge to Legal-Rational Legitimacy: The Cases of Orbán and Trump,” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 88, no. 4 (2021): 827–55.
- <sup>93</sup> James Madison, “Federalist No. 51: The Structure of the Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances between the Different Departments,” in *The Federalist Papers*, by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, ed. Clinton Rossiter and Charles R. Kessler (New York: Signet, 2003), 319.
- <sup>94</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 76–80.
- <sup>95</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 60.
- <sup>96</sup> Lucan Way, *Pluralism by Default: Weak Autocrats and the Rise of Competitive Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016).
- <sup>97</sup> Minakov, “Republic of Clans,” 220–28.
- <sup>98</sup> Minakov, “Republic of Clans,” 234–37.
- <sup>99</sup> Markus, “The Atlas That Has Not Shrugged,” 103.
- <sup>100</sup> Cited by Dubrovskiy et al., “Six Years of the Revolution of Dignity,” 20.
- <sup>101</sup> Mizsei, “The New East European Patronal States and the Rule-of-Law,” 537.
- <sup>102</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 182–90.
- <sup>103</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 325–31.
- <sup>104</sup> Vladimir Dubrovskiy et al., “Six Years of the Revolution of Dignity: What Has Changed?” (Kyiv: CASE Ukraine, June 2020), 23, [https://case-ukraine.com.ua/content/uploads/2020/06/6-years-of-the-Revolution-of-Dignity\\_ENG.pdf](https://case-ukraine.com.ua/content/uploads/2020/06/6-years-of-the-Revolution-of-Dignity_ENG.pdf).
- <sup>105</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 342–50.
- <sup>106</sup> Dubrovskiy et al., “Six Years of the Revolution of Dignity,” 61–81.
- <sup>107</sup> “Despite Violence and Threats in East, Ukraine Election Characterized by High Turnout and Resolve to Guarantee Fundamental Freedoms, International Observers Say,” OSCE, May 26, 2014, <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/119081>.
- <sup>108</sup> Cf. Wojciech Konończuk, “Oligarchs after the Maidan: The Old System in a ‘New’ Ukraine,” Policy Paper, OSW Commentary, 2015; Mizsei, “The New East European Patronal States and the Rule-of-Law,” 584.
- <sup>109</sup> Modelled regime trajectories are shown on our website in an interactive 3D model (<https://www.postcommunistregimes.com/3d-trajectories/>). On the methodology of the triangle, see Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 627–37.

- <sup>110</sup> Balázs Jarábik, “Belarusz és Ukrajna: Kormányzás vagy demokrácia” [Belarus and Ukraine: Governance or Democracy], in *Magyar Polip – a posztkommunista maffiaállam 3.* [Hungarian Octopus – The Post-Communist Mafia State 3.], ed. Bálint Magyar and Júlia Vásárhelyi (Budapest: Noran Libro, 2015), 518.
- <sup>111</sup> Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 229–30.
- <sup>112</sup> Béla K. Király and András Bozóki, eds., *Lawful Revolution in Hungary, 1989-94* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1995).
- <sup>113</sup> Julia Gerlach, *Color Revolutions in Eurasia* (London: Springer, 2014), 9–12.
- <sup>114</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 234–38.
- <sup>115</sup> Grigore Pop-Eleches and Graeme Robertson, “After the Revolution,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 61, no. 4 (2014): 3–22.
- <sup>116</sup> See Vladimir Dubrovskiy’s chapter on the chances of anti-patronal transformation and Oksana Huss’s chapter on anti-corruption policies.
- <sup>117</sup> Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 87–88.
- <sup>118</sup> Bálint Magyar, ed., *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019).
- <sup>119</sup> Eleanor Knott, “Perpetually ‘Partly Free’: Lessons from Post-Soviet Hybrid Regimes on Backsliding in Central and Eastern Europe,” *East European Politics* 34, no. 3 (2018): 355–76.
- <sup>120</sup> North, Wallis, and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders*, 112.
- <sup>121</sup> Richard Sakwa, “Systemic Stalemate: Reiderstvo and the Dual State,” in *The Political Economy of Russia*, ed. Neil Robinson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 69–96.
- <sup>122</sup> Markus, *Property, Predation, and Protection*, 57.
- <sup>123</sup> On the amplitude of arbitrariness, see Magyar and Madlovics, *A Concise Field Guide*, 40–41.
- <sup>124</sup> Markus, *Property, Predation, and Protection*, 27–46.
- <sup>125</sup> Matthew A. Rojansky, “Corporate Raiding in Ukraine: Causes, Methods and Consequences,” *Demokratizatsiya; Washington* 22, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 427.
- <sup>126</sup> Rojansky, “Corporate Raiding in Ukraine.” See also Inna Melnykovska’s chapter on reiderstvo and property rights in this volume.
- <sup>127</sup> Holcombe, *Political Capitalism*.
- <sup>128</sup> E.g. Åslund, *Russia’s Crony Capitalism*.
- <sup>129</sup> Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 426–36.
- <sup>130</sup> Bálint Magyar, *Post-Communist Mafia State: The Case of Hungary* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2016).
- <sup>131</sup> See András Rác’s “Socially Inclusive and Exclusive Warfighting: Comparing Ukraine and Russia’s Ways of War” in Madlovics and Magyar, eds., *Russia’s Imperial Endeavor and Its Geopolitical Consequences*.
- <sup>132</sup> Grigory Yavlinsky, *The Putin System: An Opposing View* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 66–80.
- <sup>133</sup> Hence, Fisun talks about “bureaucratic neopatrimonialism” (as opposed to the “oligarchic” version) in Russia, characterized by “state-bureaucratic monopolies and semi-coercive centralization of neopatrimonial domination under super-presidentialism.” Fisun, “Neopatrimonialism in Post-Soviet Eurasia,” 91–92.
- <sup>134</sup> Cf. Vladimir Dubrovskiy, “Why Is the Russian Bureaucracy Failing in the Face of War?” *Review of Democracy*, February 24, 2023, <https://revdem.ceu.edu/2023/02/24/why-is-the-russian-bureaucracy-failing-in-the-face-of-war/>.
- <sup>135</sup> Gerlach, *Color Revolutions in Eurasia*, 22–24.
- <sup>136</sup> “Russia: Mass Detentions after Putin Critic Navalny Jailed,” *BBC News*, February 3, 2021, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55913614>.
- <sup>137</sup> Françoise Thom, “What Does the Russian Ultimatum to the West Mean?” *Desk Russie* (blog), December 30, 2021, <https://en.desk-russie.eu/2021/12/30/what-does-the-russian-ultimatum.html>. See also Zoltán Sz. Bíró, “The Falsification of History: War and Russian Memory Politics,” in Madlovics and Magyar, eds., *Russia’s Imperial Endeavor and Its Geopolitical Consequences*.

- <sup>138</sup> Anton Troianovski, “Russia Takes Censorship to New Extremes, Stifling War Coverage,” *The New York Times*, March 4, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/04/world/europe/russia-censorship-media-crackdown.html>.
- <sup>139</sup> Catherine Belton and Greg Miller, “Cracks Emerge in Russian Elite as Tycoons Start to Bemoan Invasion,” *Washington Post*, April 29, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/29/russia-oligarchs-ukraine-invasion-dissent/>.
- <sup>140</sup> Anton Troianovski and Ivan Nechepurenko, “Russian Tycoon Criticized Putin’s War. Retribution Was Swift,” *The New York Times*, May 1, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/01/world/europe/oligarch-putin-oleg-tinkov.html>.
- <sup>141</sup> “Путин подписал указ о конфискации незаконных средств чиновников [Putin signed a decree on the confiscation of illegal funds of officials],” Lenta.RU, March 6, 2022, <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/03/06/chinovniki/>.
- <sup>142</sup> Inna Melnykova, “Nexus between Big Business and Politics in Ukraine” (Lecture at the course “Modes of state capture: oligarchy and mafia state,” CEU Invisible University, November 1, 2022).
- <sup>143</sup> See, in particular, the chapter of Igor Burakovsky and Stanislav Yukhymenko in this volume.
- <sup>144</sup> Based on the results of “Ukrainian society: the dynamics of change,” the longitudinal survey by the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The results of the survey are detailed in the chapter of Evgenii Golovakha and his colleagues in this volume.
- <sup>145</sup> Nataliya Vasilyeva, “Mansion of ‘Warlord Oligarch’ Who ‘Helped Zelensky Get Elected’ Raided by Security Agency,” *The Telegraph*, February 1, 2023, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/02/01/mansion-warlord-oligarch-who-helped-zelensky-get-elected-raided/>.
- <sup>146</sup> “According to preliminary data, the extent of the corruption itself was causing losses of 10 billion hryvnias (about \$280 million) a month to the state budget.” Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski, “Fighting in the Donbas Intensifies. Day 354 of the War,” OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, February 13, 2023, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2023-02-13/fighting-donbas-intensifies-day-354-war>.
- <sup>147</sup> Christopher Miller, “Anatomy of a Scandal: Why Zelenskyy Launched a Corruption Crackdown in Ukraine,” *Financial Times*, January 27, 2023.
- <sup>148</sup> See the chapter of Evgenii Golovakha and his colleagues in this volume.
- <sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>150</sup> See Vladimir Dubrovskiy’s second chapter in this volume, and Kálmán Mizsei’s chapter on the geopolitical situation of post-invasion Ukraine in Madlovics and Magyar, eds., *Russia’s Imperial Endeavor*.
- <sup>151</sup> “Opportunities and Challenges Facing Ukraine’s Democratic Transition,” Nationwide Telephone Survey, January 4 – 16, 2023 (National Democratic Institute, February 22, 2023), <https://www.ndi.org/publications/ndi-january-2023-poll-opportunities-and-challenges-facing-ukraines-democratic>.
- <sup>152</sup> Miller, “Anatomy of a Scandal.”
- <sup>153</sup> Wilk and Żochowski, “Fighting in the Donbas Intensifies.”
- <sup>154</sup> Gerlach, *Color Revolutions in Eurasia*, 6–9.
- <sup>155</sup> Mizsei, “The New East European Patronal States and the Rule-of-Law,” 547.
- <sup>156</sup> Mikheil Saakashvili and Kakha Bendukidze, “Georgia: The Most Radical Catch-Up Reforms,” in *The Great Rebirth: Lessons from the Victory of Capitalism over Communism*, ed. Anders Åslund and Simeon Djankov (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2014), 149–63.
- <sup>157</sup> Mizsei, “The New East European Patronal States and the Rule-of-Law,” 548.
- <sup>158</sup> Huseyn Aliyev, “The Effects of the Saakashvili Era Reforms on Informal Practices in the Republic of Georgia,” *Studies of Transition States and Societies* 6, no. 1 (2014): 19–33.
- <sup>159</sup> Dubrovskiy et al., “Six Years of the Revolution of Dignity,” 33.
- <sup>160</sup> Mizsei, “The New East European Patronal States and the Rule-of-Law,” 548, 555.
- <sup>161</sup> Dubrovskiy et al., “Six Years of the Revolution of Dignity,” 52.

- <sup>162</sup> See Mikhail Minakov's chapter on the Zelensky period in this volume.
- <sup>163</sup> Roman Olearchyk, "Ukraine Seizes Control of Five 'Strategic' Companies from Oligarchs," *Financial Times*, November 7, 2022.
- <sup>164</sup> "Ukraine: IFJ Calls on the Government to Revise New Media Law," International Federation of Journalists, January 12, 2023, <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-ifj-calls-on-the-government-to-revise-new-media-law.html>.
- <sup>165</sup> See the chapter of Tetiana Kalynychenko and Denis Brylov in this volume.
- <sup>166</sup> See Mikhail Minakov's chapter on the Zelensky period in this volume.
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>168</sup> Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 347–51.
- <sup>169</sup> Robert Higgs, *Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- <sup>170</sup> Nazar Boyko, "Understanding Electoral Reform in Ukraine: How to Open Party Lists While Keeping Them Closed?" PONARS Eurasia, January 13, 2020, <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/understanding-electoral-reform-in-ukraine-how-to-open-party-lists-while-keeping-them-closed/>.
- <sup>171</sup> "Opportunities and Challenges Facing Ukraine's Democratic Transition."
- <sup>172</sup> Cf. Venelin I. Ganev, "Post-Accession Hooliganism: Democratic Governance in Bulgaria and Romania after 2007," *East European Politics and Societies* 27, no. 1 (2013): 26–44.
- <sup>173</sup> See Zoltán Sz. Bíró's chapter in the next volume. Madlovics and Magyar, eds., *Russia's Imperial Endeavor and Its Geopolitical Consequences*.
- <sup>174</sup> See Kálmán Mizsei's chapter in the next volume. Madlovics and Magyar, eds., *Russia's Imperial Endeavor and Its Geopolitical Consequences*.
- <sup>175</sup> See Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
- <sup>176</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 139.
- <sup>177</sup> Magyar and Madlovics, *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 34–44.
- <sup>178</sup> See Vladimir Dubrovskiy's second chapter in this volume.
- <sup>179</sup> See Gyula Krajczár's chapter on China "The Russia-Ukraine War and China: Neutrality with Imperial Characteristics" in the next volume. Madlovics and Magyar, eds., *Russia's Imperial Endeavor and Its Geopolitical Consequences*.
- <sup>180</sup> On the concept of lame duck in patronal politics, see Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 84–85.

