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Social contracts and authoritarian projects in post-Soviet space: The use of administrative resource

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on evidence from Ukraine and other post-Soviet states, this article analyses the use of a tool of political coercion known in the post-communist world as *adminresurs*, or administrative resource. Administrative resource is characterized by the pre-election capture of bureaucratic hierarchies by an incumbent regime in order to secure electoral success at the margins. In contrast to other forms of political corruption, administrative resource fundamentally rewrites existing social contracts. It redefines access to settled entitlements—public infrastructure, social services, and labor compensation—as rewards for political support. It is thus explicitly negative for publics, who stand to lose access to existing entitlements if they do not support incumbents. The geography of its success in post-communist states suggests that this tool of authoritarian capacity building could be deployed anywhere two conditions are present: where there are economically vulnerable populations, and where economic and political spheres of life overlap.

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1. Introduction

Social science research often emphasizes the formal dimensions of state power, focusing on the development of and competition within established political institutions. Analyses of authoritarian development thus tend to cohere around explanations centering on three factors: coalition and party development, in which strong multipartism may lead to democratic breakdown (Linz, 1978; Sartori, 1976); constitutional design, in which presidentialism results in failure (Linz, 1994; Lijphart, 1994; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Stepan and Skach, 1993) and elite bargaining (Easter, 1997); and structural economic transformation, in which rapid growth or decline may lead to social conflict and regime change (Haggard and Kaufman, 1995; Huntington, 1968; Linz, 1978; Lipset, 1959; O'Donnell, 1973).

However, authoritarian control over society, as well as the development of instruments of coercion that disrupt democratic electoral processes (Schedler, 2002, 43), may reside in informal byways, where representatives of state institutions exert power that remains largely hidden. Informal mechanisms of control thus can become repositories of state capacity even in putatively weak states, and they can contribute to authoritarian consolidation—even as they allow the production of a democratic façade that confers legitimacy (Allina-Pisano, 2007, 2010; Way, 2005).

Recent work on informal politics in post-communist Europe and Eurasia (Allina-Pisano, 2004, 2008; Darden, 2001; Easter, 2000; Grzymala-Busse, 2004; Helmke and Levitsky, 2004; Ledeneva, 2006; Jones Luong and Grzymala-Busse, 2002; Way, 2002) suggests that in order to understand the functional characteristics of post-communist states and the ways in which they move away from, as well as toward democratic consolidation, we require a more systematic and nuanced understanding of subtler forms of coercion and repression.

Informal politics may operate out of view, but some of the changes they produce are widely observable: in addition to their direct consequences, eventually they also come to shape the operation of formal political institutions (Tsai, 2006). Thus, even

as formal political change may appear cosmetic, in the form of “mimic democracies,” (Jowitt, 1996) or confined to the conceptual realm as “virtual politics” (Wilson, 2001, 2005; Brown, 2005), hidden mechanisms of coercion may produce profound transformation. Change may take place beneath the surface of formal politics, leading established electoral procedures away from democratic practice and consolidating the power of autocratic leaders. While some such shifts may prove relatively short-lived, others may remain hidden long enough for regimes to create significant barriers to reversal: by the time informal mechanisms of coercion become widely visible, democratic institutions may have become so eroded that a return to free and competitive elections may not be possible.

2. Varieties of manipulation

The central empirical focus of this article is a tool of coercion known in the post-communist world as administrative resource. To varying degrees, administrative resource has been used to manipulate election results across a range of states: the phenomenon has been observed and discussed in a range of Russian regions since 1999–2000 (Anisimov, 2001; Artem'ev, 2001; Prokhanov, 2003; Semenov, 2003), in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, as well as in the states of Central Asia (Korrektirovka, 2008; OSCE, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; OSCE/ODIHR, 2004). The use of administrative resource does not appear to be linked to the design of formal institutions: it has appeared in unitary and federal states; under parliamentarism, presidentialism, and in mixed systems; and in states with varying degrees of bureaucratization and state capacity outside electoral politics. There is consistency, in other words, in informal political development even amidst variation in formal institutions.

Through tools such as administrative resource, elections themselves can provide opportunities for elites who might “defect” from democracy (Bermeo, 2003) to signal their intentions to voters and seize control of political institutions. In such cases, elections may function not only as a tool for establishing legitimacy, or as an “instrument of authoritarian control” (Schedler, 2002, 36), but also as a means by which elites demonstrate to electorates that voter preferences do not drive outcomes. When electoral fraud is routinized, publics come to expect elections to yield illegitimate results. Voters' participation in such elections is ritualized but emptied of agency and meaning, save for the knowledge that their voices will go unheard by state elites. Elections thus may come to be understood, as one popular formulation would have it, as an exercise in “mocking the public.”

Administrative resource here refers to political actors' use of bureaucratic hierarchies and the material resources of public institutions to win electoral contests. Some definitions of administrative resource also include the use of financial levers or media control, although those practices are not the focus of this analysis. Unlike delegative democracy and other forms of departure from consolidated democratic practices, there is no “anti-institutional bias” (O'Donnell, 1994, 66) associated with the use of administrative resource. Rather, regime capture and authoritarian development of this type build state capacity through the mobilization of political and social institutions on behalf of incumbents.

Administrative resource is distinguished from other informal forms of manipulation such as machine politics, patronage, and vote buying by its highly coercive quality and by its fundamental, tacit renegotiation of the social contract threatening loss of settled entitlements like public infrastructure, social services, and compensation for labor. In the past, underlying structural conditions such as rapid social change, poverty, and urbanization led to the emergence of a variety of machine politics in contexts as disparate as late 19th century American cities and post-colonial villages in Southeast Asia (Scott, 1969). Some of the same conditions now make the use of administrative resource likely to be successful in a broad variety of polities, but here the quality of the relationship between publics and political elites diverges in certain important respects.

In contrast to the use of administrative resource, forms of manipulation common in the literature on political corruption depend upon a *quid pro quo*. Despite the inherent hierarchies of patron–client relationships, they nonetheless imply responsiveness on the part of individuals with relatively greater political or economic power to those who have loyalty, votes, and legitimacy to offer—even as the consonance between loyalty and rewards may not always be complete (Johnston, 1979). Patron–client relationships are thus fundamentally additive, if ultimately inefficient or maldistributive, for clients. Typically, they result in access to employment, loans, land, or gifts; otherwise, clients have little incentive to participate in such relationships. Other forms of political corruption, such as vote buying (another technique used in the post-Soviet world), likewise result in concrete payments to voters. However, the use of administrative resource is primarily subtractive for publics, who stand not so much to gain through compliance as to lose through non-compliance. Even where positive incentives are used, they are accompanied by threats, are of such little value that they are of negligible use in ensuring compliance, or are offered as a replacement for goods that previously had been regarded as entitlements.

Administrative resource manipulates expression of electoral preferences through the renegotiation and reconceptualization of social contracts, as elites convert goods previously understood as entitlements or labor compensation into payments for compliance. It should be noted that this practice is distinct from what Paul Martin Sacks refers to as “imaginary patronage,” in which politicians take credit for goods publics would have received in any case (Sacks, 1976). In the case of administrative resource, the threat is to prevent access to such goods in the absence of desired political support (Afanas'yev, 2000). Here, goods that publics take for granted, such as salaries, use of public infrastructure, and access to public education and markets in consumer goods, become linked to political support for specific candidates. In states where large portions of the population receive low wages and depend on public services to conduct the daily business of living, the threat of redefinition carries particular weight and may be especially likely to produce compliance at the ballot box. In these cases, responsiveness to publics by state elites is not necessary because administrative resource offers little gain for publics but great threat of loss.

Administrative resource need not always work against the political preferences of electorates. A case from Ukraine illustrates this point. The final round of presidential elections in 2004 followed the mass demonstrations known as the “Orange revolution” (Beissinger, 2007; Bunce and Wolchik, 2006a, 2006b; D’Anieri, 2006; Hale, 2005). Despite some disagreement both within and outside of Ukraine regarding the decision to hold a third round of voting, balloting in this round was widely believed to have been fair. In eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, where administrative resource exercised on behalf of incumbent prime minister Viktor Yanukovich penetrated public institutions most completely, many voters continued to ballot for Yanukovich during the final round of elections. Likewise, Russian post-Yeltsin national elections post-Yeltsin have both included extensive use of administrative resource and drawn upon the genuine popularity of Vladimir Putin.

In these instances in Russia and in Ukraine, many people were prepared to vote for the incumbents in question in any case, independent of any manipulation. Candidates in both countries profited from the use of electoral manipulation, but they also enjoyed large bases of support based on aligned political interests or personal popularity. Administrative resource thus may be said to operate independently of the interests of electorates, rather than, necessarily, against or with those interests. For this reason, it is not always possible to ascertain the success of administrative resource in shaping electoral outcomes, or to deduce its presence from those outcomes. A central conceptual difficulty in quantifying the utility of administrative resource lies in finding the line—or vanishing point—between people’s expression of their political interests (“I believe that candidate x will be good for our country/region and improve the economy”) and their personal interests shaped by express manipulation (“I will vote for that candidate so as not to lose my job/health care/educational opportunities”). That having been said, direct observation of the use of administrative resource, combined with identification of the conditions under which it is likely to be effective, can provide some reasonable estimation of its likely effects.

It should be noted that the use of administrative resource is one among many informal mechanisms of social control which mobilize based on fear and which have been used to explain political outcomes in post-communist polities. In one influential analysis of the post-Soviet state, Darden emphasizes the use of blackmail as an instrument of state domination in Ukraine (Darden, 2001). Here, centralized control emanates from manipulation of information and the politics of reputation. As in the Soviet era, security service personnel collect or fabricate compromising material about individuals who work in the state apparatus. *Kompromat* files provide those individuals with a strong personal incentive to fulfill extra-constitutional requests of the executive. The use of blackmail in post-Soviet space is not a contested point. However, it explains the compliance only of political and economic mesoelites. It does not explain a lower link in the causal chain: how regimes are able to secure compliance from publics.

Practitioners of administrative resource secure this compliance by capturing autonomous institutions, allowing incipient authoritarian regimes to establish control over important potential loci of societal opposition. Moreover, an environment of coercion and generalized social pressure, as opposed to the particularized individual pressure that practices such as blackmail bring to bear, can make credible elites’ threats of penalty for disloyalty. Meanwhile, negative material incentives directed at low-level functionaries and social actors can impair the functioning of electoral institutions, such as those which had been established in many post-Soviet states during the first years following independence.

3. Mechanisms of control: administrative resource in the post-communist world

In the post-communist world, political elites use administrative resource primarily within the public sector: in state bureaucracies, social services provision, education, and state-owned, state-managed, or state-supported enterprises. Its use depends on the existence of institutional administrative hierarchies and on state budgetary allocations to those institutions. Administrative hierarchies provide the mechanism by which superiors transmit orders, and superiors ensure the compliance of their subordinates through a set of economic incentives. Financial links between state and social institutions lend credibility to the state’s threat of withdrawing support. Thus, the institutions most often subject to regime capture for the purpose of altering electoral outcomes are those that rely upon national or regional budgets.

Administrative resource can be an elusive, underreported phenomenon: those targeted for its use have strong incentives not to report, or in some cases, even to recognize its use as coercion or manipulation. As in the case of other informal practices in the post-communist world (Ledeneva, 1998, 2006), misrecognition is a frequent response to the use of administrative resource. The following analysis draws upon documented instances of this tool in Ukraine between 1999 and 2004. The discussion below does not constitute a comprehensive description of the use or extent of administrative resource in that country, nor does it capture the entire range of tools of electoral manipulation practiced in those particular elections (Wilson, 2002; Way, 2005). Rather, it illuminates processes of administrative resource widely acknowledged as having been used in Ukraine, while referencing analogous practices in the Russian Federation. The reason for the geographical focus and periodization of this analysis is precisely the semi-hidden, semi-coerced nature of the phenomenon: because the mass social mobilizations of late 2004 in Ukraine led to a democratic shift in electoral practices at the national level, this particular five-year period provides a useful window into the use of administrative resource—for a period after the fact, people were able to speak freely about what had happened.

By the time of the 1999 presidential election campaign in Ukraine, a variety of control mechanisms designed to produce electoral support for Kuchma and, later, presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich had been put in place (Myagkov and Ordeshook, 2005). A 1999 report noted a “systematic and coordinated” effort by public officials to support Kuchma, including a “sustained campaign to coerce state employees in medical and educational facilities to vote in favor of the

incumbent and for those employees to urge patients, parents, and students to do likewise.” Such campaigns were documented in eleven of Ukraine’s thirty administrative regions (Council of Europe, 1999). It should be noted that most observers identify the 1999–2000 electoral cycles as a turning point in the development of administrative resource in both the Russian Federation and Ukraine: previous elections in the post-Soviet period occurred without large-scale reported attempts at fraud and manipulation.

While it is difficult to say with certainty to what degree administrative resource shaped outcomes for these particular electoral cycles, or to disaggregate voter preferences from manipulation, recent analysis has shown that fraud was decisive in the elections in question (Myagkov et al., 2005). It was only by the 2004 presidential elections that the use of administrative resource had become so bold in some regions that it could not escape outside notice—even as representatives of the regime denied it at every turn (Zhdanov, 2001; ProUA, 2004). However, as noted above, the essential features of the system were in operation by the end of Kuchma’s first term.

It is worth observing that such a campaign required extensive coordination at a national as well as at a local level. The successful use of administrative resource depends both on orders from the top of administrative hierarchies and a degree of capacity on the part of mid- and low-level state bureaucracies. Despite critiques of the “weak” Ukrainian state under Kuchma (D’Anieri et al., 1999), an assessment that was largely made in the face of the state’s apparent inability to carry out reforms, the use of administrative resource in Ukraine suggests the presence of a powerful bureaucratic apparatus. Repeatedly, that apparatus has been effective in securing elections (Allina-Pisano, 2004; Darden, 2001; Matsuzato, 2001)—even if in 2004 it was not as strong as the forces that ultimately demanded its retreat.

Rather than operating on the basis of *kompromat*, or offering extensive positive incentives in return for votes, the mechanisms of administrative resource in Ukraine during this period relied primarily upon negative economic incentives to ensure societal compliance with the demands of the incumbent (See Table 1). Furthermore, even the positive incentives offered in exchange for electoral support mostly belong to a category of services that, until very recently, had been provided by the state.

Regime capture of autonomous institutions operated at the conceptual as well as the mechanical level. A truism of Kuchma-era Ukrainian politics was the dual political-administrative role of employees in state or state-funded institutions. When the deputy education director in Kherson region visited schools in the village of Nova Kakhovka to campaign for Yanukovich, “...his main argument was that since schools belong to the state, teachers are required to vote for the representatives of state power” (CVU, 2004a). In Kharkiv region, heads of district administrations summoned their subordinates to mandatory political meetings at least once weekly during the run-up to the national referendum in 2000 (Field notes, March 2000).

Limited positive incentives covered a range of services that formerly had been understood as social entitlements. These incentives targeted specific needs: in Velykyi Sambir and Spaske districts of Sumy region, villagers received cattle vaccinations in exchange for their signatures in support of Viktor Yanukovich (CVU, 2004b). In Poltava, the head of the utilities company Poltavahaz promised villagers gas meters and other goods (UNIAN, 2004). And in the run-up to the presidential elections in Kharkiv in 1999, some villages were promised restoration of public transportation service (Field notes, September 1999). In this and other cases, the “reward” was a good that previously had been regarded as an entitlement—or a service provided in exchange for paying taxes, whomever one happened to support in an election.

In addition to forming part of a renegotiation of the social contract, the environment in which political elites offered such incentives was one of coercion: rewards were accompanied by threats or negative incentives, and the line between the two was at times blurred. Compliance was secured through local hierarchies, in which lower-level state administrators faced job loss or demotion if they did not accede to the demands of their superiors to apply pressure to the population. Thus, villagers in Poltava region learned they would receive gas lines only if they voted “correctly” in 2004, and others in Konstantynivka

Table 1
Administrative Resource in Ukraine, 1999–2004.

Sphere of activity	Occasional positive incentives (Rewards for support)	Negative incentives (Threatened penalties for disloyalty)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Health care • State bureaucracy • State-owned industry • Private large-scale agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care • Veterinary services • Higher wages • Cultural events • Energy infrastructure • Vacation time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of employment or tuition • Loss of health care • Loss of salaries, bonuses, and pensions • Loss of student stipends • Loss of business registration • Loss of organization registration • Loss of energy infrastructure • Loss of bread supply

This table is based upon the author’s comprehensive review of reports by the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, a Ukrainian non-partisan watchdog organization, from 1999 to 2004, and on other published documentation of the use of administrative resource in Ukraine. The CVU fielded observers in all twenty-seven regions of Ukraine and published comprehensive local data on instances of electoral fraud and abuse. Also included in the tabulation are data from the author’s field notes, which are based on participant-observation research in the eastern region of Kharkiv in 1999–2000 and 2006, the western region of Zakarpattia in 2004, 2007, and 2008. Additional observations regarding the use of administrative resource, drawn from the author’s field notes in the Russian Federation in 2000, and 2008, provide context for interpretation of data from Ukraine.

village of Vinnytsia region were informed that local gas line construction would be halted if the village did not vote for Yanukovych (CVU, 2004a; Zhurzhenko, 2005). More subtly, implicit threats, or gestures that may be broadly perceived as such, may permeate everyday life. In 2008, parents in the Russian Federation received *bliny* at their children's schools during *maslenitsa*, the Russian equivalent of pre-Lenten carnival in the Catholic world, while being treated to injunctions to vote in the presidential elections—for First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. Those schools would, a week later, serve as polling stations, and some adults expressed reservations about speaking about the elections in front of their children, lest their speech be reported to teachers and state officials and they lose their jobs (Field notes, March 2008). The threat of withholding salaries, services, licenses, and even food from voters further communicates a distinct notion of state power: through the threat of collective punishment, state elites redefined provision of social services and compensation for labor as a *quid pro quo* for incumbents, not a social contract as it previously had been understood.

Negative incentives based on a renegotiation of the social contract, or penalties for disloyalty, are likely to be particularly effective for people of limited means or for captive audiences. Such penalties threaten to disrupt the *status quo* equilibrium of individual households, as people living at subsistence levels are likely to be conservative in their calculation of economic risk (Scott, 1977). Because of their power to impoverish already economically marginalized households, negative incentives serve as reminders of the power that the regime holds over private life. Similarly, clients of state-sponsored services such as health care and education, faced with a choice between compliance and loss of access to those services, are easy targets for the use of administrative resource. In the post-Soviet world, hospitals have served as favored sites of electoral manipulation and pressure—even as politicians and other elites take refuge in them to avoid taking public positions in times of acute crisis. In the 2008 Russian presidential elections, in which a common expression of opposition to the regime was abstention, even terminally ill patients reported that hospital staff “brought the [ballot] urn to the bedside,” leaving them no choice but to vote (Field notes, March 2008).

Contributing to a generalized environment of intimidation, negative incentives usually include the threat of job loss or, more often, demotion. Injunctions from supervisors requiring subordinates to provide signatures, campaign, or vote for regime candidates are accompanied by threats of withholding salaries or other compensation. In Kuchma's Ukraine, a variety of businesses and institutions engaged in such practices, from the Khmelnytsky regional art museum (CVU, 2004c) to the Kryvorizhstal steel plant in Dnipropetrovsk, where the factory director ran for parliament and compelled workers to campaign on his behalf (CVU, 2002). Often, teachers—who hold special authority and status within rural populations, a key constituency in the 2004 election—were deployed by their superiors as foot soldiers in political campaigns. In Chernivtsi region, teachers in Magala village were told they would be fired if they did not campaign for ProUA (2004). In 2002 in Volyn region, school directors in Horihiv district compelled teachers to staff polling stations on election day. The teachers were instructed “to tell voters that they should vote for ZaEDU” [the pro-presidential bloc “*Za Edynu Ukrainu*” or “For United Ukraine”] (CVU, 2002). Even people engaged in petty trade could find themselves co-opted by the regime. In 2004, the staff of the executive committee in the city of Krasnogvardeysk required market vendors to hang pro-Yanukovych posters in their stalls (CVU, 2004b), likely on pain of losing their commercial licenses.

Environments of intimidation can be linked to more serious, general threats: the head of state administration in Bila Tserkva district in Kyiv region, Ukraine declared at a meeting of village heads and the directors of state-owned businesses that anyone who did not help to ensure victory for Yanukovych “would never set foot in Bila Tserkva after [election day] October 31st” (CVU, 2004b). In Sumy region, the head of state administration in Bilopillia district called a meeting of electoral commission members. At the meeting, he asked, “Does everyone here understand who is going to win the election? Raise your hand if you do not” (CVU, 2002). Here was an illustration of the informal quality of coercion: the threat need not have been stated explicitly, so long as all present understood the expectations of their superiors.

Some uses of administrative resource involve voters in the collection of polling data, and such exercises serve to illustrate to voters the ubiquity of state administrative power. On the Kyiv-Donetsk train, for example, a passenger survey distributed by crew members in 2002 asked “If elections were held today, what party would you vote for?” (CVU, 2002). It was the particular context for the question that made the query intrusive. Because at the time passengers presented their internal passports to obtain train tickets, and because full names were printed on train tickets, passengers had every reason to believe that the information they provided would be linked to their personal identity. Once their political preferences were made known to authorities, the logic went, individuals might reasonably fear administrative retribution.

In contrast to political machines, which tend to offer incentives to individuals or families, bureaucrats using administrative resource usually direct their threats of withholding goods and services at collectivities or general populations, rather than specific individuals. While the lack of secrecy at polling stations (CVU, 2002) made it possible for superiors to survey the electoral choices of their subordinates, the threat of collective punishment served as an additional tool for securing societal compliance. For example, in 1999 meetings in student dormitories in Kharkiv, university officials told students that they would not receive their stipends and that the national university would be closed if Kuchma did not win the election (Field notes, November 1999). Students, like factory and agricultural workers, vote in the communities where they work and reside: precincts may be composed entirely of dormitories or factory housing.

Punishment followed where people resisted the use of these incentives. In Poltava region, voters in Novy Sanzhary district refused the demands of agricultural enterprise heads to sign a statement indicating their intention to vote for a particular candidate. After they refused, bread deliveries to the village, as well as all buses, were halted for three days (Druzhinina, 2004). In Kherson, members of the state land resources committee closed the regional private farmers' organization after the organization refused to contribute to the Yanukovych campaign (CVU, 2004a). Retribution for resistance was sufficiently

pervasive that when Kharkiv region lost electricity for several hours each day during the winter of 1999–2000, local farmers interpreted the blackouts as punishment for the region's low turnout for Kuchma in the first round of presidential elections that fall (Field notes, February 2000).

Finally, it may be important to note that gender can play an important role in the success of administrative resource as a tool of social control. Studies of gender politics in post-Soviet economic transitions have shown that women encountered systematic discrimination in emerging private-sector labor markets (Sperling, 1999). Women may therefore be more likely to be employed in state or social service sector jobs, where they are relatively protected from discriminatory hiring practices. In the case of Ukraine, as late as 2008, women comprised just over three-fourths of public sector employees (NRU, 2009). Such a phenomenon is similar to that observed in the United States, where African-Americans in the United States historically have been disproportionately affected by layoffs in the public sector because they are more likely to be employed in government jobs, which enjoy greater *de facto* protection from discriminatory hiring practices than private-sector jobs (Kim, 2000).

This is important because employees who have sought public sector employment for reasons of discrimination in the private sector may have fewer options open to them in the event of job loss. Discretionary leverage over such employees, and opportunities for the use of administrative resource, is therefore far greater than in a fully competitive labor market. Indeed, in the case of Ukraine, Oksamytna and Khmelko (2005), who attribute causality to religious affiliation rather than sectoral employment patterns, found a gender gap in electoral preferences in 2004 in urban areas of southern and eastern Ukraine. There, women voted in greater proportion for Yanukovych—an ex two-time felon whose involvement in a case of sexual assault was widely discussed in Ukraine

4. Explaining regime capture

How have some post-communist regimes been able to capture such a variety of social institutions for their own purposes, and under what conditions might we expect this to occur elsewhere? Levitsky and Way (2002) have emphasized the role of Soviet institutional legacies in generating a competitive authoritarian regime in Ukraine. Way (2004) attributes the widespread use of administrative resource to weak rule of law, a weak market economy, and weak civil society. Hale (2003), writing on the operation of machine politics in the Russian Federation, emphasizes variation in the skills of political entrepreneurs; links between ministries, party bosses, and enterprises, including the importance of governors' informal levers over tax, court, and administrative organs; and potential collective action problems facing citizens living in areas with multiple company towns.

Others have emphasized the use of blackmail levers to demand compliance from the heads of some enterprises—in particular, of former collective farms (Darden, 2001; Way, 2005). It should be noted that blackmail is a particularly weak tool of coercion in small communities, where gossip networks ensure compromising information is widely known, even without the intervention of security services. In such a context, *kompromat* may be of little value in compelling obedience by public figures. More significantly, blackmail may be a superfluous lever in some spheres amidst other levers of control. In Ukraine, the principles of administrative resource were mobilized against companies as well as against publics. While conducting research in rural Ukraine in 1999–2000, I repeatedly observed state mesoelites threatening heads of former collectives with loss of access to credit, subsidies, or inexpensive fuel if they did not deliver on electoral demands (Allina-Pisano, 2008). District and regional state administrations controlled so many economic levers in their relationship with heads of former collective farms (Allina-Pisano, 2004; Hale, 2003) that the compliance of farm directors was over-determined, even without the threat of blackmail. This type of threat, in which budgetary allocations may be withheld in the event of non-compliance, may be made to municipalities as well as enterprises, as in recent regional elections in the Russian Federation (Lukichev, 2008). Local administrators themselves faced economic incentives to comply with the organizational demands of higher-ranked state officials, as their positions or livelihoods also could be threatened in the event of non-compliance: in Sumy region in 2002, local officials were instructed to draft letters of resignation “to be used against them in the event they are not seen to be sufficiently supportive of ZaEdU and its candidates” (CVU, 2002).

Such factors are important for explaining features of authoritarian statecraft, or for illustrating how links between state and business mesoelites allow some incumbents to control electoral contests at the margins. However, stark geographical differences in the apparent effectiveness of administrative resource in post-communist states suggest other variables may be at work. In particular, the factors emphasized by Hale and others neither account for why certain citizens might be more responsive to those tactics than others, nor how and why responsiveness to tactics in the authoritarian toolbox might vary across time. The case of Ukraine under Kuchma can provide some traction on this question.

In Ukraine, two factors arguably helped create an institutional environment particularly conducive to the use of administrative resource by incumbents. These were the social geography inherited from the Soviet era, in which many spheres of economic and political life overlap; and deepening social inequality in the post-communist period (Meurs and Ranasinghe, 2003). Both of these features are characteristic of a number of former Soviet states where administrative resource has been observed, but both features may be found in a growing number of places elsewhere in the world. And both factors play important roles in conditioning publics to be responsive to the use of administrative resource.

Wilson (2001) has noted the importance of size in the production of “virtual politics” in Ukraine, where party formation and civil society were constrained by a relatively large national economy of scale, even as the center managed to gain control over media and regional extractive institutions such as tax and customs inspectorates. However, the elements of Ukraine's

social geography that most facilitated the use of administrative resource have less to do with the size of the country than with the organization of labor, education, and politics within it.

A key feature of Ukraine's social geography that facilitated the use of administrative resource was the overlapping character of social, political, and economic spheres in some areas of the country. The particular organization of space and people in southern and eastern Ukraine, where industry and large-scale agriculture is concentrated, and where cross-border temporary labor migration is relatively less common, simplified both the use of negative incentives and the surveillance of group voting behavior. In those densely populated, industrialized regions, the spatial arrangement of material infrastructure and human resources fostered the production of mechanisms of social control in greater measure than elsewhere in the country.

In such a context, political, economic, and social communities exist, in the language of Venn diagrams, as intersecting sets, where the boundaries of sets are coextensive. The much commented upon East-West divide in Ukraine, so often deployed as an explanatory variable in the literature on Ukrainian regionalism (Barrington, 1997; Birch, 1995, 2000; Clem and Craumer, 2005; Craumer and Clem, 1999; Hesli, 1995; Hinich et al., 2002; Hinich et al., 2002; Kubicek, 2000; O'Laughlin, 2001; Pirie, 1996) may thus be as much a product of variation in demographic concentration as in putatively ideological or cultural preferences.

For communities of voters in more heavily industrialized regions, spheres of activity overlap such that individuals who are decision-makers in one sphere often hold decision-making or executive capacity in another. Representatives of company management who serve as paymasters may also be present during elections as poll workers. On large-scale agricultural enterprises, those who control the disposition of and compensation for labor also control franchise: when national elections take place, the director of the enterprise—who is responsible for disbursing everything from wages to special favors—often oversees the electoral process. The ballot box frequently is placed in the director's office, and anonymity is not a feature of voting. In Kharkiv in 2000, one state official described the situation in the run-up to the national referendum that year: "The head [of the collective farm] sits at his desk and calls someone in: 'Ivanov, give me your ballot. Are you for the President? For [he marks the ballot]. Now drop it in the ballot box. Next!'" (Field notes, April 2000). For this and other reasons, local officials exercise a high level of control in many rural areas as well as in company towns (Hale, 2003).

While this particular type of control likewise has been observed in the Russian Federation (Berezkin et al., 2003; Berezkin and Ordeshook, 1999; Hale, 2003), such tactics are hardly particular to post-communism. Scott (1969, 1148) writes, "Like the English landed proprietor in the 18th century, the Filipino *hacendero* could, until recently, rely on his tenant laborers and peasants indebted to him to vote as he directed." There, a similarly overlapping configuration of political and economic power enabled the presence of coercion in electoral practices.

An analogous logic explains the facility with which social institutions may be mobilized to support incumbents. As already mentioned, students often reside where they study: like workers on former collective farms, they often receive their stipends or salaries and their ballots from the same hands. The institutional overlap that encompassed political as well as economic activity meant that administrators had ample opportunity to demand a *quid pro quo* that resulted in no added benefit to citizens. Such an arrangement readily satisfies multiple definitions of tyranny: control is exercised by a single set of individuals across what we might otherwise expect to be discrete spheres of everyday life (Walzer, 1983, 19–20). Amidst such an arrangement, when state employees in Kharkiv encountered near-ubiquitous posters announcing they had a full ten days in which to vote in the 2000 referendum (Field notes, April 2000), and that they would be brought in groups to the precinct from their workplaces, there could be little question of refusal.

Individuals whose livelihoods allow them to operate relatively independently of state institutions are able to engage in passive, if inconsequential, resistance—resistance that in the Ukrainian case did not effect formal institutional change until the mass demonstrations in Kyiv in late 2004. For example, in 2000, a prominent entrepreneur and head of an NGO in an eastern Ukrainian city described having been invited to speak on local television about her organization. Once on air, however, the interviewer asked only questions about the upcoming national referendum and the necessity of voting in it. Taken by surprise, she proffered a few words about participation as a "civic duty" but privately confided that she did not plan to vote in the referendum, which many described as "ridiculing the population" (Field notes, April 2000).

The social geography of eastern and southern industrialized Ukraine, where documented fraud was most common in 2004, provided multiple opportunities for elites to leverage their power locally. Beyond the formal mechanisms of control such individuals may exercise in a company town—whether that company is a mining operation or a former collective farm—high standing in the commercial sphere often translates into elite social status. Where economic or other pressures make high-status individuals available for use by a regime, that status readily may be converted into pressure in electoral politics. Economic inequality amidst this particular social geography led to increased compliance with the demands of elites, particularly when those demands were accompanied by economic incentives.

Arel (2005a), in asking why rural areas ultimately were not captured by Darden's (2001) blackmail state, suggests that in Ukraine, urban–rural as well as regional variation in political complexion may be linked to language. According to this view, the "Orange Revolution" succeeded in rural areas because the discourse of revolution occurred in Ukrainian, the nominal language of the countryside even in largely russified areas. A later paper by Arel (2005b) found that speakers of Surzhyk (here, a Russo-Ukrainian mixed language) voted for Yushchenko in 2004 in greater numbers than for Yanukovych; it is suggested that challenger Viktor Yushchenko and his message appealed to rural people because it was delivered in a vernacular they could easily understand and receive as "their own."

There is another possible explanation for this urban–rural divide. The success of administrative resource is largely contingent on the credibility of the state’s threat to withhold compensation for labor and public goods and services. In urban areas, people rely upon cash salaries and transportation infrastructure to conduct their everyday business. Rural people, on the other hand, often already living in a largely cashless economy and amidst deteriorated or absent infrastructure, may have less to lose materially by changing political affiliations. As Brown (2004) has noted with reference to the relative cultural and political liberty of poor villagers in Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s, in situations where people are relatively less dependent on such compensation, or where supply of public goods and services is already limited, states ultimately have less leverage on their publics. It is likely that some mesoelites in vulnerable economic positions supported Orange mobilization in Ukraine because they perceived a shift in political winds. Where that was the case, some villagers would have been freer to defy the wishes of local elites.

In rural areas of western and central Ukraine, a combination of relatively weakened formal rural institutions, an emphasis on smaller-scale private agricultural production, and easier access to Kyiv or western labor markets made people’s basic livelihoods less dependent on state institutions than those of their rural counterparts in eastern and southern Ukraine—or than those of industrial, educational, or health workers in urban areas. In eastern and southern Ukraine, where climate and soil is most appropriate for industrial crops like sugar beet and grain, large-scale agricultural enterprises persist, albeit in private form. In those regions, rural people were subject to a high degree of social control by managers representing local business interests, who were in turn strongly influenced by state mesoelites.

In Ukraine, as Kuchma’s second term wore on, the use of administrative resource became less effective in some rural areas. In December 1999, Kuchma issued an executive decree calling for the dissolution of former collective and state farms. The decree was not truly implemented everywhere, least of all in eastern regions (Allina-Pisano, 2004). Where large-scale agricultural enterprises persisted, so did opportunities for the use of administrative resource. Where those enterprises were disbanded entirely—primarily in the western regions—or allowed to fall into disrepair, opportunities for the successful use of administrative resource disappeared from the map of rural Ukraine. Here, the argument is not that a political economy in the east and south, relatively unchanged since the Soviet era, contributed to new varieties of electoral manipulation, as Hale (2003) has argued for the Russian case. Rather, a particular reconfiguration of capital endowments and climatic conditions in those regions contributed to the persistence of a social geography favorable to the emergence and use of administrative resource.

The timing of elections is important as well in explaining the sudden shift in rural electoral behavior (Arel, 2005b) as well as the apparent decline in the use of administrative resource. The repeated second round of Ukrainian presidential elections in 2004 took place in December, after the year’s harvest was in, and after workers on former collective farms had received their annual payments from the farms for leasing their land shares. Workers in agricultural enterprises in Ukraine often were not paid salaries on time or in cash in any case, so the threat of withholding salaries if villagers did not vote for the incumbent candidate was not available to state functionaries. The state could provide positive incentives such as livestock vaccinations in exchange for villagers’ cooperation, but officials did not possess as many levers for threatening rural people’s livelihoods as they would have, had elections been held just a few months earlier. Even as state officials held significant levers with which to secure the compliance of managers, and even while voting itself was relatively less free for rural people than for urban populations, the underlying social conditions supporting administrative resource use in the countryside prior to balloting broke down as the electoral season moved further into the fall of 2004.

5. Beyond a post-socialist phenomenon?

The existence of political actors willing to abandon democratic procedures and renegotiate social contracts is a necessary condition for the use of administrative resource, and such actors can, and do, emerge in a variety of political contexts. However, particular structural conditions may make it more or less likely that such actors will succeed in their efforts. In the post-communist world, social inequality and the geographical concentration of capital, labor, and administrative capacity in some areas facilitated regime capture of political and social institutions. Soviet cultural and institutional legacies played important roles in shaping both the demands of elites and some publics’ responses to those demands (Hanson, 1995; Kubik, 2003), but economic and political incentives generated in post-communism may have played a more central role in ensuring social compliance with nascent authoritarian projects. Post-Soviet politicians’ capture of public institutions represented a rupture in the social contract, in which after multiple cycles of democratic elections, publics faced new threats of lost access to basic services and infrastructure. Furthermore, post-Soviet publics’ experience of having already watched those services and infrastructure collapse once, in the early days of post-communism, likely lent credibility to functionaries’ threats.

Because neither poverty nor social geography is easily changed, there is no guarantee that administrative resource will not be used in the future; a change of leadership may be more likely than a change of regime (Wilson, 2001), and leaders of any political persuasion may deploy it as a tool of manipulation. In Ukraine, elections at the national level were scrubbed clean of administrative resource in the first five years following the “Orange revolution.” However, a leader willing to abide by democratic norms may not be more than a temporary fix without the institutionalization of democratic practice more broadly (Way, 2004). Furthermore, the experience of Ukraine shows that the development of informal mechanisms of social control is possible in electoral democracies: administrative resource became extensive enough to influence election results in that country after several rounds of free elections in the early to mid-1990s.

There are larger lessons in this experience. Techniques similar to administrative resource have been used in non-democratic regimes beyond the post-communist world, particularly in post-colonial polities. Where checks on executive power are not present, or where they deteriorate or are removed, communities with economically marginal populations and overlapping concentrations of political and economic power may see the rise of administrative resource and the erosion of electoral democracy. Further, as the experience of post-Soviet states shows, once informal mechanisms such as administrative resource have been broadly institutionalized, without massive social mobilization in protest they may inhibit not only democratic consolidation, but also procedural minimums for democracy. States in which settled social protections are subject to pre-election renegotiation by representatives of the state thus eventually may find themselves without free and fair elections as well.

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