

Where red dictators coexist with promising democrats: the conceptualisation of politicians in post-communist Ukraine

Pavlo D. Frolov, Olha V. Petrunko and Dmitriy V. Poznyak

Overview

The collapse of the USSR revamped the political landscape of post-Soviet countries. The instant spread of new ideologies and development of multi-party systems caused the number of political leaders to skyrocket and the explosion of alternative media outlets challenged local electorates, with no prior experience, to choose between ideologies, parties and candidates. The superficial nature of voting in Soviet Union with a ‘one candidate, one ideology’ principle did not require complex decision making and had kept citizens detached from politics. Far from being a race, elections provided no agenda for the Soviet media or public scrutiny. As early as 1990–1 during the first democratic parliament and presidential elections, Ukrainian citizens had to choose between multiple candidates representing different ideologies and party affiliations. The choice voters had to make was not at all easy as a brand new political, social and media context required a completely different cognitive approach. What one could call ‘communist’ cognitive structures were ill-suited to the new realities and were to undergo substantial changes. The specific sociopolitical context in the USSR impacted on the political cognition of Soviet voters and began the development of specific political schemas. In this chapter it is argued that this process led to an overlap in old and new schemas over a period of time and here the cognitive structures of post-Soviet voters are assessed with an emphasis on the coexistence of schemas of both ‘communist’ and ‘democratic’ leaders.

Introduction

Since the inception of systematic voting research in the 1940s, scientists have

attempted to describe voting behavior in terms of social factors. Lazarsfeld canvassed the field with the so-called sociological or Columbia model (1944) stressing the importance of social factors in voters' decision making. Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) went beyond and put psychological factors, like early-learned social identifications with the party, at the core of their 'funnel of causality' model, also known as the social-psychological or Michigan model of voting. The rational choice approach, sometimes referred to as the Chicago model, was brought to political science by Downs (1957), describing voting as value-maximising 'rational calculus', where voters weigh the pros and cons of each candidate based on their self-interest.

Although each of these approaches established its own paradigm in voting behaviour research, long before the cognitive revolution in psychology in the late 1970s/early 1980s, they did not include one of the key variables in decision making, i.e., the processing of political information. As Herstein (1981, p. 844) concludes, these traditional political science models of voting are cognitively impractical as they fail to account for 'mental processes that accompany a vote'. With the cognitive revolution, the direction of voting behaviour research changed as well. From the early 1980s the primary focus shifted to the schematic perception of political leaders (see Kinder, Peters, Abelson and Fiske, 1980; Fiske and Linville, 1980; Lodge and Wahlke, 1982; Conover and Feldman, 1984; Lau and Sears, 1986; Miller, Wattenburg and Malanchuk, 1986; Kuklinski, Luskin and Bolland, 1991; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006).

The advantage of schema theory for political psychology was that it picked up research right where past models of voting behaviour had failed. Particularly, it seemed to have answered a lasting question posed by Converse in 1964 – how do people make quite logical decisions if they only have limited knowledge of, and interest in, political events? According to Rosch (1975) exposure to an overload of information leads people to rely on cognitive structures which serve as mental shorthand, minimising cognitive burden by organising, storing and processing information more effectively. These structures called cognitive schemas develop over

time through people's repeated experience with others, objects, situations events and organise the way they perceive the environment (Shaw, 1990). Schema theory established an original view of people as 'cognitive misers' sparing the efforts they need to process, interpret and understand complex social information (Augoustinos and Walker, 1996).

Borrowing an elaborate definition from Lau and Sears (1986, p. 349), 'a schema is a hierarchical organization of knowledge in a particular domain'. For example politics contains a category label (politicians), its general description (typically elected middle-aged or older males), higher- and lower-order categories (broad categories at the top vs. particular instances at the bottom), and inter-correlations between them (Barrack Obama is liberal – liberals are for social welfare policies and universal healthcare).

One way to illustrate how a schema simplifies perception is to use the analogy of a postal code. A worker at the sorting station does not need to read all the information to sort the letters properly, as s/he only has to read a code containing the necessary information in a fairly straightforward way (Shaw, 1990). However there is a shortcoming – a postal code only refers to a respective geographic unit, but it does not contain the name and exact address of the receiver. In a similar fashion, cognitive schemas only give a 'ballpark estimate' of a person or object although this is usually enough to successfully make decisions without digesting excessive amounts of information. After all, as 'cognitive misers', or 'motivated tacticians', we do not need a precise reconstruction of social objects at the cost of extensive and impractical cognitive efforts. Instead, the purpose of schemas is to minimize our cognitive efforts by providing hypotheses about incoming stimuli, which include plans for interpreting and gathering further information (Taylor and Crocker, 1981). In the context of political psychology, simple examples of leader-related schemas can include such broad dimensions as charisma, competence and physical attractiveness, or more narrow ones like communist or democrat.

Cognitive schemas also contain sets of prototypes that summarise the most typical characteristics of an object. Thus we may consider the prototype an average default

setting of the schema. Considering the schema of a general politician, a prototypical political leader will perhaps be a respectable mid-aged male, wearing a suit and driven in a limousine. Depending on people's experience, a prototype may then include other more abstract properties like attractive and charismatic, or dishonest and corrupt. As schemas and prototypes develop based on past experience, a prototypical political leader for US voters could be a member of the Democratic or Republican Party, while for Chinese and Cuban voters s/he will perhaps be a communist.

In reality, people do not deal just with the average properties of social objects. Hence schema develop from the experience of dealing with particular exemplars (Stillings et al, 1995). While a prototype is the average representation of a schema, an exemplar is its specific example. The schema of a 'charismatic politician' may contain such vivid exemplars as Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill or Charles de Gaulle, while a 'communist leader' schema may have exemplars of Vladimir Lenin, Mao Zedong or Fidel Castro. For a 'democrat' schema, American voters may hold an exemplar of John Kennedy or Barack Obama, whereas for the post-Soviet electorate, most Western leaders and not necessarily those belonging to a left or centre party would fulfil this role. Likewise, Western Europeans and Americans might consider Mikhail Gorbachev an outstanding democratic leader (Harris Interactive/Financial Times, 2006) while post-Soviet citizens would regard him as failed pro-reform communist (Public Opinion Fund, 2006).

Before a schema can be applied to any person, inclusive of political leaders, they first need to be categorised. Categorisation is a fundamental characteristic of human perception and occurs whenever people identify or label a given individual, whether a political leader or a taxi driver (Augoustinos et al., 2006). The categorisation process is closely linked to the prototypes and schemas people store in memory.¹ In fact a prototype contains features or categories used to define an object (Anderson, 1995). Therefore, objects are categorised around prototypes, or with prototypical features in mind, in order to confirm whether a new instance fits the 'schema average'. Let us suppose that the prototype of the 'charismatic politician' schema will be an

attractive leader with outstanding speaking abilities and a talent to inspire and lead people. Supposedly, the most salient features or attributes voters will use to categorise leaders as charismatic will be attractiveness, communication skills and the abilities to persuade and lead. Then, if a certain leader matches a prototype stored in memory, s/he will be categorised as a charismatic politician. If a leader exhibits traits and behaviours that do not fit any existing schema, this will possibly lead to schema assimilation or adaptation.

As one can see, schema theory provides a convenient framework to study voting behaviour. However, this approach in political psychology receives less attention due to the need for a level of research complexity. Unfortunately, public opinion polls with closed-ended questions, which serve as bread and butter for behavioural researchers, do not allow for the modelling of cognitive processes. Schema studies usually require multi-stage handcrafted designs, typically with open-ended questions, quasi-experiments and a mixed-method approach incorporating qualitative techniques such as focus groups and cognitive interviews, alongside survey research. To a certain extent Miller et al.'s observation made back in the 1980s regarding the state of schema research still seems relevant: 'candidate evaluations are one of the most important but least understood facets of American voting behavior' (Miller et al., 1986, p. 521).

Miller's statement highlights one more important idea: most schema research has a distinct American flavour and thus findings cannot be generalised to other societies with different political systems and cultures. At the same time, the state of corresponding studies in Europe is limited, but 1 When describing categorisation processes here we refer to theories of 'categorisation by prototype' or 'categorisation by schema' (Lane and Nadel, 2002). not due to lack of interest, studies or data. Schema research in the United States is simply more feasible because of the bi-party model as well as the stability and succession of a political system deeply rooted in social life.

Yet, as we move into the post-communist world, studying the voters' cognitive system becomes even more complicated. With passive and atomised political culture

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(Chudovsky and Kuzio, 2003), citizens' political apathy, the predominance of survivalist and materialist cultural values (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005), a mix of ideologies, social cross-pressures and the perpetual change of political and electoral systems over two decades, the cognitive system of post-Soviet voters must substantially differ from that inferred by research in traditional democracies. As an illustration, throughout the 1990s voters in post-communist Ukraine were typically choosing from over thirty parties and dozens of candidates. Taking into account a classic thesis that voters are not fools (Key, 1966) then a primary question of interest for political psychologists is what their choices are based upon. This chapter will attempt to answer this by examining the cognitive system of post-Soviet voters in the mid-to-late 1990s. Cognitive schemas and conceptualisation of politicians in a post-Soviet context

Due to insufficient previous research on the political cognition of post-Soviet voters, an inductive approach appeared more feasible for the construction of relevant theory. Firstly, several research questions concerning voters' conceptualisation of politics arising from socio-political changes in the former USSR in the early 1990s are highlighted. Next, plausible answers are sought by blending together research findings from American, European and post-Soviet studies.

Acknowledging the role of the unique social-political environment in which post-Soviet voters found themselves in the 1990s, the first question is how this new context impacted on their conceptualisation of politics and politicians. A second question naturally arises from the fact that the political experience of post-Soviet voters was characterised by two distinct periods either side of the fall of the USSR. Referring to schema change theories, the key problem here is how pre-existing schemas of leaders were affected during voters' resocialisation in the late 1980s–1990s. Thirdly taking into consideration a chaotic mix of communist and post-communist ideologies after the collapse of the USSR, it is very likely that schemas of existing leaders adjusted to fit the new types of emerging politicians. Additionally it is not known on which basis – ideological, party identification, professional or personal characteristics – these types were developing.

From the standpoint of many paradigms in social cognition, whether taking Heider's attribution-based 'consistency seeker' as one of the oldest (Heider, 1958), or Fiske and Taylor's information-processing 'motivated tactician' as one of the most recent (Fiske and Taylor, 1991), the problem of voters' choice is viewed similarly, as prior to decision making, images of candidates must be identified and interpreted by the voters. The peculiarities of this decision-making process are subject to varying views within different paradigms, but research from the last few decades converges on the idea that it involves two key phases: 'categorisation', i.e. reconstruction of a candidate's image using salient or primed classification criteria, and 'comparison' of retrieved images with pre-existing information already stored in the memory. In modern cognitive social and political psychology this pre-existing information is generally known as schemas (Piaget, 1926; Axelrod, 1973; Anderson, 1981).²

Following Fiske and Taylor's cognitive miser paradigm, the number of voters' schemas should be quite limited: a finding which has been repeatedly confirmed in empirical studies (Kinder et al., 1980; Miller et al 1986). The reason is that the level of schema development and abstraction depends on the political sophistication of the voters (Lau and Sears, 1986). However, as much as voters are cognitive misers they are also 'not fools' as Key previously suggested. This should mean that the number of voters' schemas must be sufficient to effectively process political information and eventually make a choice. Along with Caprara, Barbaranelli and Zimbardo (2002) we believe that schematic perception can be interpreted in terms of parsimony. Parsimony in this context implies that 'voters reduce complex political environments and develop uniquely simplified perceptions of political candidates during campaigns' (Caprara et al., p. 72). If we describe schematic perception as the reduction of 'N' actual political characters to 'n' broad universal types already existing in voters' memories, then it begins to resemble a sampling procedure which, based on a limited number of representative observations called schemas, voters can generalise their predictions to the entire target population of political leaders.

The idea of parsimony in schematic perception has found numerous empirical

verifications. In the study by Kinder et al. (1980), leader schemas tended to be clustered around two broader dimensions: candidate's

2 For an alternative view of the schema as the reworking of an attitude model, see the excellent critique by Kuklinski, Luskin and Bolland (1991).

Where red dictators coexist with promising democrats character and performance. Miller et al. (1986) identified five factorschemas that activate during candidates' evaluation: competence, integrity, reliability, charisma and personal attributes, which may be similarly grouped in character and performance clusters. Alongside these, Lau (1986) pinpointed issues, group relations, candidate personality and party identification schemas. As described, the range of identified leader schemas can be reduced to a limited number of dimensions.

Extrapolating the idea of schematic parsimony to post-Soviet realities, we argue that several factors make the perception of political leaders in newly emerged democracies such as Ukraine quite distinct. This is due to a number of factors. Firstly, because of the diverse political landscape in times of transition post-Soviet voters probably developed a number of leader prototypes to account for newly emerging types of politicians. Secondly, since the cognitive system of post-Soviet voters represents a mix of abstract democratic and authoritarian concepts (Diligenski, 1994) it is also expected that leader schemas encompass both communist and post-communist elements. Modern cognitive psychology describes several modes of schema transformation. Schemas can alter gradually with the receipt of new discordant information, change completely when incongruent information exceeds a certain threshold or develop hierarchies by accommodating new subtypes. To find an appropriate fitting post-Soviet realities, further consideration of schema transformation is required.

Theories of political schema change and their applicability to the post-Soviet context

It is generally assumed that once developed and validated, schemas function as fairly stable and static cognitive structures (Fiske and Taylor, 2008 p. 81). How does this correlate with the political (re)socialisation of a typical adult voter in the former

USSR, first during communism and then in the course of democratisation following the collapse of the USSR?

Modern research shows that schemas are indeed very stable if there are no motivations for their change (Fiske and Taylor, 2008) – that is if voters face a fairly constant and predictable political environment. If, however, such an environment undergoes substantial changes, such as the transformation of a social and political system, pre-existing schemas will cease to perform their main function and will either disappear or transform (e.g., Conover and Feldman, 1984). A vivid example often employed in sci-fi literature is the failure of astronauts' Earth-based schemas to successfully recognise objects on a newly 'inhabited' planet. Similarly we may rely on old schemas even in unusual circumstances, for example, when searching for a dining place in an exotic country. One possible option may be lunch at a well-known international chain restaurant where we already know what to expect. However, we may need to go beyond what our schemas can envisage, by exploring local cuisine. In this case, our schemas will have to adapt to the new environment. It is an accepted view that schemas can change (Fiske and Taylor, 2008), although the mechanisms and magnitude of this change is subject to discussion.

The 'Book-keeping' or 'Fine-tune' model assumes that people gradually adjust existing schemas with each piece of information they receive. The scale of such changes may vary depending on the level of inconsistency between existing schema and new data, but it is assumed that change will occur incrementally with the accumulation of knowledge that contradicts existing schema (Rumelhart and Norman, 1978). We believe that this model does not fit post-Soviet realities as it implies a rather slow and stepwise change over a lengthy time period, while the nature of socio-political changes would dictate a different pace of change. Additionally, taking into account political transformations in the former USSR, it is reasonable to expect the development of new subcategories within existing schemas rather than their modification.

The 'Conversion model' implies that while minor inconsistencies between schema and incoming data are tolerated, changes occur when this inconsistency

exceeds a threshold of subjective tolerance, or simply when inconsistency is large enough (Rothbart, 1981). While major transformations occurring in the former USSR in 1990s may indirectly support this model we believe that dramatic ‘all-or-none’ conversion would mean the disappearance of old schemas where instead the development of new subcategories to fit new types of politicians would be expected. Additionally, it was shown that this model predicts more change in the presence of a single contradictory effect rather than consecutive partially- contradictory instances (Weber and Crocker, 1983), which was more characteristic of the Perestroika period.³

The ‘Subtyping model’ focuses on the hierarchical structure of schemas, with superordinate categories on top and subordinate ones at the bottom. While subordinate schemas accommodate exceptions in respect of any discrepancy between schema and data, superordinate schemas remain intact (Weber and Crocker, 1983). Contrasting with the previous model, the Subtyping model does predict more schema change when disconfirming information is spread rather than concentrated in a few cases. Furthermore, there is empirical evidence that this model provides a

3 The Perestroika period refers to the post-1986 era of restructuring which heralded the introduction of contested elections.

Where red dictators coexist with promising democrats better overall picture of the process of schema change (Webber and Crocker, 1983). If we assume that the Subtyping model provides the best explanation of changes in the cognitive system of post-Soviet voters then we should expect schemas to respond to political changes by relegating disconfirming instances (e.g., new political types) to new subcategories (Augoustinos and Walker, 1996). This would indicate the development of a hierarchical structure of leader-related schemas with virtually intact superordinate schemas on top and more specific subcategories below – most likely referring to types of politicians.

The basis for the development of leader schema subtypes

If one subscribes to the Subtyping model of schema change then it should be accepted that due to changes in political system after the collapse of the USSR, the

voters' cognitive systems must have accommodated a number of new leader schema subtypes. Therefore during the transition period of the 1990s these included a mixture of fading communist and emerging post-communist types of political leaders. This coexistence of subtypes represents a peculiar political-psychological phenomenon yet to be studied and described.

As studies show, the development of political schemas typically positively correlates with political sophistication. Thus experts in any field will have more elaborate, structured and easily activated schemas than novices (Luskin, 1987; Lau and Sears, 1986). However, this does not mean that a broader range of leader subtypes indicates high political sophistication among post-Soviet voters. Instead, we argue that most post-Soviet voters are in fact what Lau and Sears (1986) call political novices and their development of new subtypes is rather based on stereotypical features of politicians than on available rational information. Although this hypothesis has yet to be empirically tested, lines of thought are presented here which suggest low levels of political sophistication among post-Soviet voters.

Firstly, as the transition from communism to democracy in 1990s was only in its embryonic stage, it is reasonably hard to expect political expertise from voters with no prior experience of democracy in any of its manifestations. Returning to a previous metaphor, it would be equally naive to expect high sophistication from astronauts dealing with an alien planet's environment.

Secondly, Adorno's 'Authoritarian personality' studies repeatedly demonstrated the psychological rigidity, conformity and dogmatism of the communist outlook (Eysenck and Coulter 1972). An analysis of European Value Studies (EVS) shows that post-Soviet nations possess among the lowest tolerance scores along with some of the highest levels of protest activity (Bishop and Poznyak, 2008). Although one may argue that these characteristics refer rather to personality than cognition, ideological content has repeatedly been found to positively correlate with political sophistication. For instance, Tetlock's (1986) Value Pluralism theory assumes that unsophisticated or monistic ideologies, including communism, are indicators of low political sophistication.

Thirdly, Fiske, Lau and Smith's (1990) scale of political sophistication is based on general political knowledge, political activity, media usage (electronic and printed) and politically-related schema (e.g., ideology, general interest and perceived importance of politics). According to these criteria and data obtained from Ukrainian studies, the majority of the post-Soviet electorate when faced with fragmented political knowledge, unrefined political activity and quite low media usage, would be placed in the category of low-sophisticates (Frolov, 1998; 1999; 2002). Finally, patterns of answering political questions by post-Soviet samples demonstrate only a limited understanding of relevant issues (Bishop and Poznyak, 2008; Frolov, 2002). This, as Carnaghan (2007) argues, can also be used as a direct measure of political sophistication.

In order to provide a more tangible benchmark of 'low political sophistication' it is helpful to refer to another model of schema elaboration developed by Taylor and Winkler (1980). This model includes four stages of schema sophistication, i.e., novice, stereotypical, relative expertise and true expertise. Our past research suggests that the schema development of post-Soviet voters would best fit the stereotypical phase characterised by the development of generalised attributes which define a candidate (Frolov, 1998, 1999, 2002). In this case schema accommodation and the development of new subtypes can occur through a number of often subtle contextual variables that emphasise the link between a schema and a new category (Rothbart, 1996). The question is what these contextual variables could be.

Studies demonstrate that sophisticated voters have a more coherent and abstract network of schemas while less politically sophisticated individuals are typically aschematic (Hamill and Lodge, 1986). Naturally the latter does not mean that voters will have no schemas at all, rather it implies that their schemas will be simpler and will rely on more accessible cognitive cues, such as party affiliation and the personal and professional characteristics of a candidate (Pierce, 1993). Lau and Redlawsk (2001) showed that voters compensate for a lack of knowledge of politics by using the most accessible information shortcuts known as heuristics. In terms of the American bi-party political system such shortcuts may be obvious party and

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ideological heuristics (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). However, given low political sophistication, the chaotic mix of multiple ideologies and the large number of parties and leaders, we expect that such schemas would rely not on political criteria per se, i.e., ideology, party, issue position, etc., but on more accessible and less abstract criteria primarily associated with the personality and performance of political leaders, such as attractiveness, charisma, competence and trust. These criteria are not necessarily linked to more complex political schemas and as such are less challenging for the voters (Pierce, 1993). This assumption also aligns with our schema change model, since in terms of social and political instability, people would rather rely on more robust criteria like personal and professional characteristics than on context-dependent and political-ideological factors which are prone to change.

Measuring political schemas

A common problem in political cognition research is how to introduce schematic concepts into empirical analysis. There have been three dominant approaches to this in schema research. The first one stands on the grounds of experimental cognitive psychology and studies schematic processing in laboratory conditions using indicators like reaction time, i.e., true and false recognitions of schema-consistent information. One example of this approach is Hamill and Lodge's (1986) experiment on schema effects.

The second route deals with direct measurement of cognitive structures that presumably underlie political schemas (Conover and Feldman, 1984; 1989). Followers of this approach typically refer to Q-sort and similar or complementary techniques like thinking-aloud to study the organisational properties of schemas (Lau, 1986). Q-methodology is particularly advantageous for schema research by virtue of correlating respondents rather than variables and reducing individual viewpoints to a few dimensions which represent shared perceptions that in turn indicate underlying political schemas.

The third approach utilises data available from mass surveys. It functions by highlighting indicators of political schemas available from public opinion polls, such as the National Election Study (NES) or General Social Survey (GSS) in the US.

The problem associated with this approach is that direct measurements of schemas are often too timeconsuming to be used in large-scale surveys (Lau and Sears, 1986), hence researchers have to abandon closed-ended questions and deal with a handful of open-ended questions (Lau, 1986; Miller et al., 1986).

The advantage, however, is the ability to generalise findings to the entire target population.

In the studies described in this chapter, secondary data could not be used due to the absence of a comparable NES or GSS in the Ukraine, therefore the mass survey approach was not a viable option. This necessitated an approach to measuring cognitive schemas which followed either the first or second routes described above. Instead of a laboratory experiment that would certainly have narrowed the external validity of research into social cognition, we chose the Q-sort and thinking-aloud methods to study the cognitive system employed by Ukrainian voters.

Studying the cognitive systems of Ukrainian voters

A long-term project was carried in Ukraine between 1995 and 1998, consisting of four consecutive cross-sectional studies (Petrun'ko, 2000). The first study (1995) was based on a nationally representative sample (n = 2005). A set of closed and open-ended questions were designed to elicit a political thesaurus from the Ukrainian electorate containing both an active and a passive vocabulary considered and/or used by voters to describe political leaders. The logic of this study was somewhat similar to the NES open-ended like-dislike questions for parties and candidates that underlie many studies on political schemas in the US. Another objective was to obtain a list of political leaders most familiar to Ukrainian voters at that time. Data were processed by content and frequencies analyses.

The next three studies shared both research goals and designs. They all drew from the political thesaurus and the list of political leaders obtained in the first study and each relied on similar research methods such as semantic differentials (Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum, 1957), Q-methodology or Q-sorting technique (Brown, 1980; Conover and Feldman, 1984; McKeown and Thomas, 1988) as well as elements of cognitive interviewing such as thinking-aloud (Willis, 2004).

These studies were conducted on relatively small non-probability quota samples, which, although arguably limiting the external validity of any findings, combined quantitative and qualitative methods which would not have been possible in a mass survey. Q-methodology, however, does not require large samples, focusing instead on the number of variables (Brown, 1980). Obviously, quota sampling shares drawbacks with all non-representative designs, including an inability to estimate how well it represents the population; however, studying psychological concepts like cognitive schemas does not necessarily require the precision and data-fit of representative samples. Also, the choice of a non-probability design served the additional purpose in three somewhat similar studies of

Table 10.1. Research design and methodology used with Ukrainian voters

Study	Sample size	Year	Objective	Method	Data analysis
1	2005	2001	Voters' political thesaurus and stimulus objects	Open-ended questions	Content and frequency analyses
2	2014	2011	Dimensions of leader categorisation	Modified semantic differential	Exploratory factor analysis
3	2016	2015	Leader schemas and prototypes	Q-sort and thinking-aloud	Cluster analyses
4	2010	2004			

All three studies shared the research objective of modelling how Ukrainian voters conceptualise political leaders. In the second study (1996; n = 114) we employed modified semantic differentials (Osgood et al., 1957) and analysed data with exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Our main objective here was to reveal the major dimensions of political leader categorisation. In the third (1996; n = 56) and fourth studies (1998; n = 40) we combined Q-sort with thinking-aloud technique and analysed data with EFA and hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA). These two studies differed in the list of stimuli objects (political leaders) offered to respondents as well as in sampling. In the fourth study, the list was expanded by including notable politicians from the past and a sample of voters with a particular interest in politics was recruited. An additional goal for these studies, aside from eliciting Ukrainian voters' leader schemas and prototypes, was to compare the conceptualisation of political leaders by 'political novices' and 'relative experts'. Table 10.1 provides a summary of the overall research design:

A political thesaurus of Ukrainian voters

While many studies on political cognition have used open-ended questions about parties' and candidates' characteristics from mass surveys, there was no comparable NES or GSS in the Ukraine in the mid- 1990s. Thus a bespoke method somewhat similar to NES openended questioning was devised with the purpose of reconstructing a 'political thesaurus' of Ukrainian voters' language when describing political leaders.

For this purpose, we designed a relatively short and simple questionnaire containing two groups of similarly worded open-ended questions.

The first group of questions was as follows:

1. Which modern Ukrainian politicians do you know?
2. Who do you consider the best Ukrainian politician? Why?
3. What should an ideal political leader be?
4. What should an ideal political leader not be?
5. Into which groups could you subdivide all the political leaders you know?

Answers to the first and second questions were used to obtain a list of political leaders to act as stimuli for the ensuing studies.⁴ Answers to the third and fourth questions were content analysed and frequency sorted in order to highlight the most identified characteristics Ukrainian voters use when describing political leaders. Answers to the fifth question facilitated our understanding of how Ukrainian voters explicitly classify known political leaders and upon which criteria these classifications rely.

Arguably, the most interesting finding of this study is the political vocabulary of Ukrainian voters. It contains more than 600 words among which the following were used most frequently to describe political leaders.

Characteristics of an ideal political leader ('An ideal political leader should be'):

1 – Honest; 2 – Smart; 3 – Decent; 4 – Competent; 5 – Even-handed; 6 – Determined; 7 – Brave; 8 – Insistent; 9 – Assured; 10 – Purposeful; 11 – Selfcontrolled; 12 – Independent; 13 – Optimistic; 14 – Educated; 15 – Intelligent; 16 – Energetic; 17 – Industrious; 18 – Good speaker; 19 – Reputable; 20 – Rich; 21 – Sincere; 22 – Sympathetic; 23 – Promising; 24 – Principled; 25 – Attractive; 26 – Kind; 27 – Inspiring; 28 – Strong; 29 – Able to lead; 30 – Has political vision.

Characteristics of a non-ideal political leader ('An ideal political leader should not be'):

1 – Promise-breaker; 2 – Law-breaker; 3 – Dishonest; 4 – Dodgy; 5 – Bribe-taker; 6 – Weak; 7 – Feckless; 8 – Indeterminate; 9 – Unprincipled; 10 – Businessman; 11 – Careerist; 12 – Incompetent; 13 – Concerned With Own Wallet; 14 – Pessimist; 15 – Populist; 16 – Unpatriotic; 17 – Irresponsible; 18 – Deceiver; 19 – Mercenary; 20 – Churlish loner; 21 – Drinker; 22 – Manipulated; 23 – Unjust; 24 – Unsure; 25 – Lightweight; 26 – Lacking own thought; 27 – Poor economist; 28 – Ill-behaved; 29 – Purposeless; 30 – Short-tempered.

4 As the list contains leaders mostly unknown to the audience outside of Ukraine their names are omitted, but can be supplied the authors upon request.

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Frequency analysis showed that respondents most commonly refer to the personal characteristics of political leaders with an approximate ratio of 3:1 personal to political and ideological characteristics. This is consistent with other studies indicating that person-related characteristics dominate voters' knowledge of candidates, a phenomenon which Sears (1969) defined as the 'personalization of politics'. Based on this list we selected twenty-six of the most frequently used characteristics which arguably provide the most rounded description of a political leader.

Based on the analysis of respondents' subjective classifications of political leaders (fifth question) we identified fifty-six political types highlighted by respondents:

1– Patriot; 2 – Charismatic leader; 3 – Dissident; 4 – Demagogue; 5 – Dilettante; 6 – Marionette; 7 – Symbol of the past; 8 – Dictator; 9 – Fanatic; 10 – Psychopath; 11 – Unsympathetic; 12 – Adventurer; 13 – Politically bankrupt; 14 – Separatist; 15 – Fascist; 16 – Careerist; 17 – Red leader; 18 – Professional; 19 – People's favourite; 20 – Smart Guy; 21 – Time-server; 22 – Reliable; 23 – Populist; 24 – Reformer; 25 – 'One of us'; 26 – Idealist; 27 – Dark Horse; 28 – Liberal; 29 – Right-wing; 30 – Hard worker; 31 – Radical; 32 – Leftist; 33 – Member of Parliament; 34 – State clerk; 35 – Practitioner; 36 – Manager; 37 – Cabinet minister; 38 – Communist; 39 – Socialist; 40 – Party leader; 41 – 'Power-man' (coming from one of the armed forces: militia; army; intelligence services, etc); 42 – Federalist; 43 – Pro-Western; 44 – Democrat; 45 – Centrist; 46 – Presidential supporter; 47 – Power-hungry; 48 – Neo-imperialist; 49 – Workhorse; 50 – Inactive; 51 – Nationalist; 52 – Theorist; 53 – Intellectual; 54 – Oddball; 55 – Economist; 56 – Fighter.

Dimensions of political leader categorisation

The objective of the second study (n = 114) was to reveal the most typical way respondents think about political leaders. Here we attempted to find what are called 'dimensions of political leader categorisation'.

These dimensions represent chunks of categories revealing particular aspects of

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 political leaders' personalities, for example, competence, charisma and personal attractiveness (Miller et al., 1986).

Respondents were asked to evaluate thirteen prominent Ukrainian politicians according to the twenty-six adjectives which appeared most frequently in the first study. With the focus on the meaning respondents assign to stimulus objects (political leaders), semantic differential scales were used. These featured a seven-point scale which permitted a neutral opinion (middle point), provided robust and meaningful data and yet was not too tedious to complete.

The data was processed by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with maximum likelihood extraction and orthogonal Varimax rotation providing uncorrelated factor solution.⁵ EFA, also known as R-methodology (Brown, 1980) reduces the variables to meaningful factors and provides a summary of classification criteria respondents use to categorise political leaders. In line with Miller et al. (1986) these are termed criteria dimensions of political leader categorisation. Although these dimensions are related to cognitive schemas, as far as categorisation

Table 10.2. Dimensions of political leader categorisation in the Ukraine (Study 2)

Dimensions of political leader categorisation	Proportion of variance explained	Hypothesised leader prototype ⁶
1. Political aptitude (competence, efficacy and charisma) competent (.879), educated (.864), smart (.840), self-assured (.815), industrious (.774), good speaker (.772), purposive (.737), principled (.718), discreet (.712), inspiring (.699); able to lead (.683), has political vision (.615)	47.8%	Competent or expert; efficient; charismatic (well-educated, smart, hard-working, inspirational, able to lead, having political vision)
2. Reliability brave (.831), determined (.817), persistent (.771), active (.737), independent (.670)	7.8%	Reliable leader (strong, determined, and hard-working)
3. Integrity understanding (.751), intelligent (.749), sincere (.740), honest (.705), just (.699), decent (.661)	5.9%	Moral leader (empathic with the people, sincere, honest and just)
4. Affluence rich (.865), resourceful (.863)	3.3%	Business leader (taking advantage of politics to profiteer)
5. Image / Personal characteristics optimistic (.696), pleasant (.655), kind (.627), attractive (.605)	3.2%	Popular leader (crowd-puller, 'charged', attracting people)

Note: The numbers in brackets (factor loadings) are Pearson correlation coefficients of a variable with the dimension.

5 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures of sampling adequacy and Bartlett sphericity coefficients were well above the thresholds of acceptability. The number of factors was selected based on Kaiser-Gutman stopping criterion ('scree-plot') with eigenvalues? 1. Descriptors (variables) correlating with factors at less than .3 were excluded from further analysis. 6 Although the authors have no empirical evidence of schemas and prototypes underlying these categorisation dimensions, the most suitable prototypes have been hypothesised.

Where red dictators coexist with promising democrats activates a schema in memory, we are reluctant to simply derive corresponding schemas based on the meaning of achieved dimensions, since the semantic differential technique used here is not suitable for this purpose.

The first and most important dimension of political leader categorisation has been termed political aptitude. This dimension accounts for roughly half of the total variation and has a rather complex meaning. Visual inspection of this factor indicates that political aptitude encompasses competence, efficacy and the leadership abilities of politicians. Indeed, second-level factor analysis performed on this factor shows that political aptitude further splits into competence (competent, self-assured, educated and smart), efficacy (industrious, purposive and principled) and charisma (discreet, good speaker, inspirational, able to lead and possesses political vision).

The second dimension has been defined as reliability. If competence deals mainly with leadership potential, reliability has applied relevance to a leader's determination and capacity for work. Reliability also implies the trust people put in political leaders based on their capability, decisiveness and bravery. The reliability factor consists of two major sub-categories: activity (brave, active, and independent) and strength of mind (determined and persistent).

The integrity dimension reflects the idea of trustworthiness, represented by such categories as empathy, sincerity, honesty and decency. Similar to the reliability dimension, integrity also deals with the confidence one puts in political leaders whilst implying a quite different aspect of trust. By specifying a different factor solution and extracting a different number of factors, the single factor which can

be defined as trust straddles both reliability and integrity dimensions. As Miller et al. (1986) put it, reliability is trust in a political leader in terms of their capabilities rather than honesty, while integrity is based on the truthfulness of a leader. Therefore it may be argued that reliability may refer to whether a leader can be trusted from a professional perspective while integrity rather implies interpersonal trust.

If the previous dimensions are commonly found in similar studies using different samples (Miller et al., 1986), the fourth dimension, affluence, arguably represents a post-Soviet artefact. It appears to reflect the method of entry to politics from business or using politics as a source for self-enrichment. Following the collapse of the USSR, getting into politics was almost an end in itself for a number of newly wealthy Ukrainians as it provided a convenient way to sustain and boost their own businesses whilst holding legal inviolability as elected deputies. Finally, the fifth dimension is a leader's image or personal characteristics. This factor resembles the likeability dimension found in other studies and reflects respondents' personal likes and dislikes in politicians (Rosenberg, 1977; Miller et al., 1986).

This analysis confirms our assumption that post-Soviet voters mainly refer to personality characteristics rather than political-ideological criteria when considering images of political leaders.

The conceptualisation of political leaders by Ukrainian voters

In the previous study the semantic differential technique was combined with EFA to obtain dimensions of categorisation referred to by respondents when processing information about political leaders. However, alternative methodology is required to move from categorisation to political leader schemas and prototypes. A combination of Q-methodology and qualitative techniques, such as the thinking-aloud technique, provides an insight, albeit based on explicit comments, into how political leaders are linked in respondents' memories, while cluster analysis helps to confirm the underlying structure. An alternative view to this approach is to consider what can possibly 'glue' certain politicians together in the respondent's memory. By processing the aggregate Q-sort matrix it is possible to discover how political leaders are linked together, which leads to consideration of what links them together. We

argue that the reason for these links is that they fit the same cognitive schema which already exist in respondents' memories. To this end schemas referring to both quantitative (multivariate statistical analysis) and qualitative (thinking-aloud characteristics) criteria are defined.

In the third study respondents were invited to sort cards carrying the topical names of domestic and foreign leaders into an arbitrary number of groups whilst commenting on the logic applied in the sorting task as well as defining and describing the respective groups. Hierarchical cluster analysis was used to process the data. This combination of Q-sort and cluster analysis aimed at grouping objects based on their semantic proximity enabled us to define a taxonomy of political leaders, where each cluster is presumably underpinned by cognitive schema.

The analysis of data collected from this sample of 'typical voters' yielded a four-cluster solution. The first cluster groups leaders characterised as unknown, unremarkable and average as well as those opposite to them in nature – i.e., successful and mature leaders holding political office. We believe that the cognitive schema underlying this cluster is political potential and it includes the criteria of leadership abilities, charisma and political viability. Due to the nature of cluster analysis, the political aptitude dimension elicited in the previous study could not be correlated with the schema of political potential, but further analysis based on thinking-aloud comments indicates their relatedness. However, the political potential schema has a somewhat narrower connotation with the focus on the political abilities and viability of a politician, rather than on his or her competence and efficacy. In voters' memories potential is represented by two subtypes of politicians – mediocre politicians (average and unpromising domestic politicians) and successful politicians (mature, successful, already realising their potential in politics and serving in office).

The second cluster groups Western leaders (Bill Clinton, Francois Mitterrand and John Major) whom Ukrainian respondents defined as real professionals. Although this cluster has a somewhat complex meaning, i.e. foreign leader, competent and successful, the accompanying thinking-aloud characteristics enable the conclusion to be drawn that the underlying cognitive schema may be defined

as competence, with the respective leader prototype described as professional or expert. Arguably, this is a characteristic respondents struggled to find among domestic leaders during the 1990s, recalling the saying that no man is a prophet in his own country, especially during crises. However, this characteristic was attributed to prominent foreign politicians, who benefited from association with the prosperity of their respective countries. It is illustrative that respondents' thinking-aloud responses implied that 'their' (foreign) political leaders are much better, more professional, discreet, moral and patriotic than 'ours' (domestic).

The third cluster contains active Ukrainian politicians who did not enjoy public confidence and whose names were disgraced. According to thinking-aloud responses they define Ukrainian politics and possess real power, but at the same time are characterised as untrustworthy and anxious about advancing their own careers and making a profit. Such a combination of characteristics makes this cluster rather hard to define. This represents what Anderson (1996) calls a 'tangled network' of concepts linked together in a system without a predetermined hierarchy. Apparently recognition of politicians here is based on a formal status criterion which in turn is linked to the criteria of reliability (dependability) and trustworthiness (integrity or morality). In a sample of typical voters, (considered here as political novices) this combination of formal status and trustworthiness schemas yields three political types: symbol of the past – an orthodox communist exemplified by 'old school' Soviet politicians who do not want to adjust to the new social and political realities; dilettante – lacking professionalism and competence; careerist – abusing politics as a tool with which to serve their own interests.

The fourth and final cluster represents modern, progressive, experienced and up-and-coming politicians. Here the cognitive schema is defined as political perspective (past vs. future) and the underlying leader prototype as an economist-reformer, adhering to the most common characteristics attributed by respondents. Considering the economic situation in the Ukraine following the collapse of the USSR and widespread credence given to cure-all reformers, the identification of this political type should not seem strange. Assuming that political-ideological cues in

terms of socio-political transformation were too abstract for the majority of Ukrainian voters, we believe that political orientation schema may serve as a proxy for ideology and party affiliation as well as helping voters develop a hypothesis of what to expect from a politician and forecast their political strategies.

Table 10.3. Voters' conceptualisation of Ukrainian political leaders (Study 3)

	Cognitive schema	Implied leader prototype	Thinking aloud characteristics
	Political potential (leadership abilities, charisma and political viability)	Mediocre politician. Successful politician	Average, mediocre, inexperienced, unpromising. Plays leading roles in politics, successful, has real status, holds office
	Competence (professionalism and expertise)	Expert	Ideal leader, political heavyweight, leader you can rely on
	Formal status and trustworthiness (reliability and integrity)	Symbol of the past Dilettante Careerist	'Old guard', out of date leader, untrustworthy, unreliable, has no understanding of the people Shoddy leader, breaks everything he tries, unprofessional, unreliable, Cunning, tricky, puppets, servers, easy to fail people's interests, immoral
	Political perspective (Orientation on future vs. past)	Economist-reformer	Smart, forward-looking, reformer, expert in economics

In the fourth study forty respondents, who were identified as politically engaged opinion leaders were recruited. The criteria for respondents' selection were self-reported frequency of exposure to political information, an interest in politics and willingness to share their opinion with others; most respondents had completed a degree. To the expanded list of modern domestic and foreign leaders were added a number of historically prominent politicians, and respondents were instructed to divide them into an arbitrary number of groups and give characteristics to respective groups, explaining the reasons for inclusion of certain leaders in each group. Similar to the previous study the data were cluster analysed.

Analogous with the third study, the first cluster combines political leaders according to their political potential. Likewise, this schema also includes the criteria of leadership ability, charisma and the political viability of a politician. However,

relative political experts have a more developed conceptualisation of leaders, as this cluster further splits into four distinct sub-clusters, each representing a specific type of leader. The first sub-cluster almost entirely overlaps with the mediocre politician type defined in the previous study and includes politicians whom respondents define as average and unpromising. The second sub-cluster groups politicians similarly characterised as mediocre with little or no political experience, but who are nevertheless considered quite competent in their field, mostly economics. This subtype was defined as skilled professional but poor leader. Ironically the subsequent Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko and then a chief of a national bank fell into this sub-cluster. The third subcluster brings together well-known leaders like Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, Saddam Hussein, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. Taking into account thinking-aloud characteristics, this subtype was defined as power-hungry or dictator. As far as Gorbachev and Yeltsin seem to deviate from the conception of what one could call true dictators, it is appropriate to re-emphasise the sample selection in this study. Some respondents would have characterised Gorbachev or Yeltsin as democrats or reformers, while it is quite possible that for more politically sophisticated respondents they were 'dictators in disguise' or, in other words, authoritarian leaders with a democratic image. Finally, the last sub-cluster combines Ukrainian and Russian politicians whom respondents considered quite successful but played only secondary roles in politics. We believe that this classification is represented in respondents' memories as weak politicians.

The second overall cluster represents a group of mostly, but not exclusively Western political leaders such as Margaret Thatcher, Bill Clinton, Helmut Kohl, John Major, Jacques Chirac and Yitzhak Rabin and the first president of the Ukraine in 1918, Mykhailo Gryshchewskyi. They were characterised as competent professionals, pragmatists, smart, well-educated, and successful politicians. Similar to the previous study, we defined the cognitive schema underlying this cluster as competence, with the respective prototype of expert. Apparently the categorisation criteria respondents might use here are also similar to those described in the previous study, i.e., professionalism, expertise and competence. The competence cluster contains two

sub-clusters defined as expert-pragmatist and expert-intellectual. Similar to political novices, the sample of more politically experienced voters yields a third cluster containing the phenomenon of a tangled schema network. As before a formal status schema acts in conjunction with reliability and trustworthiness. Quite possibly this tangled network may encompass other more abstract schemas, such as personal characteristics, competence, populism and orientation to the past or future. This complex cluster contains six sub-clusters representing particular types of political leaders. These types were defined as modern professional and dilettante (based on the competence criterion), careerist and businessman (integrity criterion), and demagogue and political bankrupt (reliability criterion). The modern professional type is characterised as signifying the 'new school', smart and up to date, a leader in contrast to the incompetent dilettante who plays supporting roles in politics. Careerist and businessman types are both regarded as unsympathetic to people and pursuing their own interests. The difference between them is that while one struggles at first to advance his/her own political status, politics is later used as a source for self-enrichment. Demagogue and political bankrupt are both defined as inefficient and unreliable types where the first one, as respondents put it, 'talks a lot but does nothing', and the latter is disgraced through wrongdoing in the past. A good illustration of respondents' attitudes to Ukrainian politicians is that five out of these six types are characterised negatively.

The fourth cluster represents a new generation of Ukrainian and Russian leaders whom respondents define as promising and forward-looking but who have not yet achieved substantial successes and realised themselves in politics. Paraphrasing Taylor and Crocker (1981), this may be a type of leader for whom respondents have not yet fully developed hypotheses for further interpretation. Consequently, such leaders are defined as modern and promising but at the same time as unfamiliar to respondents. The underlying leader schema here was interpreted as having a political perspective (with an orientation to the future). This cluster consists of three sub-clusters representing leader prototypes: dark horse – political leaders whom voters characterise as promising but almost completely unknown to them;

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economist-reformer – believed to be competent in the market economy but yet to achieve visible success; and modest professional, whom voters regard as experts in their own field (like banking or industry) but who have not yet become sufficiently well known to set out a political agenda.

Finally, the fifth cluster groups politicians bearing characteristics of old school Soviet-style leaders. Based on the analogy of the fourth cluster, we interpreted the respective schema as political perspective (with an orientation to the past). This cluster has two sub-clusters that represent corresponding.

Where red dictators coexist with promising democrats prototypes defined as a symbol of the past and apparatchik or state clerk. The first is characterised as an obsolete and unchanged bureaucrat with a Soviet mindset, while the second is viewed as a ‘chameleon’ who has successfully adjusted to the new political reality. As can be seen here, a more general political perspective cluster found in a sample of typical voters’ splits into two more narrow clusters indicating politicians’ orientations to the past versus the future. As one would expect, political sophisticates have also developed a more detailed classification of types of leader.

Our studies shed some light on the problem of voters’ perceptions of politicians following the collapse and disappearance of communist rule in the Ukraine. Unfortunately, due to the absence of corresponding research prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain, the opportunity to reconstruct how people organised their beliefs about politics and politicians during communist rule is not feasible. As our research only captures subsequent changes in citizens’ cognitive systems without referring to their previous state, these conclusions will in one way or another bear this limitation.

It is nevertheless clear that the cognitive system of post-Soviet voters indeed underwent significant changes following the collapse and split of the Soviet Union. The best evidence for this is the development of brand new political prototypes that certainly reflect the post-communist zeitgeist. An alternative way to understand changes in citizens’ conceptualisation of politicians is through the political perspective schema. It is likely this schema developed alongside political transformations following Perestroika and captured the orientation of politicians

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drifting from communism to radical reforms. In terms of rapidly changing ideologies and development of a multi-party system in the Ukraine, the political perspective schema appeared to be both a simpler and more reliable substitute for ideology and party affiliation schemas relevant to voters in stable political systems like the US, but not yet developed by Ukrainian voters.

Table 10.4. Conceptualisation of leaders by respondents with political

	Cognitive schema	Implied leader prototype(s)	Thinking-aloud characteristics
	Political potential (leadership abilities, charisma and political viability)	Mediocre politician Skilled professional but poor leader Power-hungry or dictator Weak	Average, mediocre, inexperienced, unpromising Average politician but good specialist Large-scale, global ambitions, unconquerable will Small-scale, playing secondary roles
	Competence (professionalism and expertise)	Expert Expert- pragmatist Expert- intellectual	Professional, competent, pragmatist, intelligent, smart, successful, patriot Professional, democratic, educated, pragmatic, successful in practice Professional, intelligent, educated, good theorist but not successful in practice
	Formal status and trustworthiness (reliability and integrity)	Modern professional Dilettante Careerist Businessman Demagogue (populist) Political bankrupt	Professional, smart, modern Semi-professional, average, playing secondary roles in politics Pursuing own career interest, not caring about people, selfish, aspiring to advance own status, carpetbagger, crook Smart and far-sighted Professes too much; all talk no action, unreliable, never keeps promises, chatterbox Disgraced, compromised, unreliable, cannot be trusted, futureless
	Political perspective (Orientation to the future)	Dark horse Economist- reformer Modest professional	Dark horse, promising, stranger, as yet unrealised Smart, professional, businesslike; as yet unrealised Competent, honest, decent, lacking leadership skills, as yet unrealised
	Political perspective (Orientation to the past)	Symbol of the past Apparatchik or state clerk	'Old guard', obsolete, double-minded, unreliable, populist Time-server, chameleon, average leader, untrustworthy

Conclusions

The studies described here confirm that post-Soviet voters do think about politics in terms of a limited number of categories but the way they organise their knowledge is reminiscent of other findings, closely resembling those from studies on non-Ukrainian samples. At least three dimensions of categorisation were repeatedly elicited from studies which used similar methodology, e.g., Miller et al., 1986: reliability, integrity and personal attributes. In fact, taking into account the broad political aptitude dimension consisting of competence, efficacy and charisma, the model derived from our studies almost entirely overlaps with the competence, charisma, integrity, reliability and personal dimensions found by Miller et al. (1986). This gives rise to the possibility of a fairly stable set of cross-cultural cognitive criteria relatively unaffected by nuances of political systems. Put simply, these criteria constitute a universal standard for the ideal political leader and provide a benchmark for further evaluation of political candidates.

Although post-Soviet voters may in many ways have similar standards for judging political leaders, they cannot avoid certain important distinctions. A remarkable example is an affluence dimension in the categorisation system of Ukrainian voters, which carries a unique post-Soviet connotation. This criterion may serve to explain the latent motivation of candidates, such as a focus on personal profit or gain, as well as describing the route into politics which is often from business. Survey research suggests that in Ukrainian public consciousness the affluence of politicians is often viewed in two conflicting ways. The first one bears a somewhat utopian assumption that a wealthy candidate can help voters (in the Ukraine this was at least partially true during election campaigns), while the second view is that ‘a leopard cannot change his spots’ and those with new-found wealth do not follow altruistic goals in politics (Petrun’ko, 2000). Notwithstanding this distinction, in most other respects the way post-Soviet voters organised their knowledge of political leaders and candidates was as expected. This is evidenced both by the structure of politician-related schemas and by embedded leader prototypes. Furthermore the

combination of mass survey, Q-methodology, multivariate statistical modelling and projective methods elicited a stable set of cognitive schemas through which citizens organise their knowledge about politicians. In both less and more politically sophisticated voters a four-dimensional model was derived, which included political potential, competence, formal status and trustworthiness and political perspective.

It is important to emphasise that the categorisation dimensions achieved by applying a semantic differential approach do not entirely overlap with the schema structures elicited using Q-methodology. This is particularly evident with the affluence and personal characteristic dimensions although these criteria are apparently incorporated into other schemas and were made explicit by respondents in thinking-aloud comments. There are two possible reasons for this inconsistency. The first, and perhaps most plausible, is the difference in research methodology, i.e., semantic differential versus Q-sorting. Somewhat less likely is objective change in respondents' cognitive systems explained by an eighteen-month interval between the two studies. However, virtually identical solutions using samples of less and more politically sophisticated voters were obtained using Q-sort methodology, which suggests time lag was not the issue.

As the Subtyping model of schema change suggests, political leader schemas held by Ukrainian voters do accommodate a broad number of subtypes in order to account for the wide range of candidates. Although it is not possible to retrace their development, it is likely that by the mid- 1990s a communist leader type – presumably dominant prior to Perestroika – was not most salient for Ukrainian voters. Moreover, this and similar political types (the orthodox communist symbol of the past and political apparatchik) were more defined by the criteria of obsolescence and orientation to the past than by the ideology to which they adhered. In the absence of more elaborate political and ideological schemas, the orientation of politicians towards the future or past played an apparently important role in helping citizens develop basic expectations of their elected representatives.

This does not mean, of course, that voters were not detecting a 'legacy of

communism' in Ukrainian politics in the 1990s. It is more likely that due to the exodus from the Communist Party and divergence from prevailing ideology the presumed communist leader type transformed in the public consciousness into others, for example to dilettante, career-ist, demagogue or politically bankrupt, as all of these at least partially comprise former members of the Communist Party. The rapidly growing and chaotic political scene witnessed the spread of numerous ideologies and the entry of fresh political players, which in turn led to the development of new leader prototypes in the cognitive system of voters. However, most of these new types carry negative connotations as described above and these reflect fairly well the prevalent attitude of Ukrainian voters to domestic politics and politicians. The reason for this could be attributed to a huge economic crisis and the deterioration of living standards in the Ukraine after the fall of the USSR. In comparison, the relative prosperity of Western nations led Ukrainian respondents to recognise Western leaders as uniformly credible, competent and experienced politicians.

Our findings suggest that in terms of social-economic instability the major call of Ukrainian respondents was not only for a trustworthy and competent leader but also for the economist-reformer type able to cope with crisis. This type summarised the conception of an ideal Ukrainian politician in the 1990s. Paraphrasing Kinder et al. (1980), this conception may stem from widely shared beliefs about 'cure-all' modern reformers fuelled by the media and politicians, when in reality their ability to cope with such a crisis, as well as the limitations of current politicians, led many to fall short of this standard.

Somewhat contrary to our expectations, respondents with relative political expertise essentially have the same set of leader schemas as political novices. Similarly to Pierce (1993), we find that sophisticated voters do not differ from novices in their use of less abstract personal and performance characteristics of politicians. Also contrary to what was expected, political sophisticates did not appear even partially to organise information about politicians based on ideological criteria. There is, however, a substantial difference between sophisticates and novices in the

effective number of political subtypes they develop, store and apply in considering political leaders. Those with relatively more political expertise seem to have a more developed conceptualisation of political leaders though, once again, these political subtypes essentially fit the same leader schemas. Nevertheless it is also possible that eliciting more leader subtypes can be partially attributed to the expanded list of politicians suggested to respondents in the final study. While flaws in design cannot be completely ruled out, thinking-aloud protocols collected from the politically aware sample do indicate an increased abstract knowledge of politics.

Our findings confirm the assumption that in the course of social and political transformations following the collapse of USSR, voters developed relatively simple cognitive schemas relying on personal and professional characteristics: likeability, charisma, competence and reliability as well as politicians' orientation to the past or future. In terms of socio-political changes and ideological chaos in Ukraine in the 1990s, these cognitive categories were proven to be more robust and less prone to change as they focused on stable and fundamental characteristics instead of more complex and malleable political-ideological criteria.

As our studies have been inductive and exploratory in nature, it is important to point out certain theoretical and methodological limitations. Given a limited set of studies on voters' cognitive system in the postcommunist states we had to rely on assumptions rather than established views in our theoretical framework. Due to the absence of specifically designed mass surveys in the Ukraine we devised our own methodology for the empirical part of the study. Nevertheless, our studies shed some light on the cognitive system of Ukrainian post-Soviet voters shortly after the collapse of the USSR, which have been and largely remain terra incognita for political psychologists. We believe that future studies may find it interesting and practical to focus on further dynamic changes in cognitive schema during the late 1990s and 2000s. This, in its turn, necessitates mobilisation of methods typically used in political schema research, as outlined in this chapter.

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