Multi-level voting and party competition in vertically simultaneous elections: the case of Ukraine

Ailsa Henderson & Valentyna Romanova

a Politics & International Relations, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
b National Institute for Strategic Studies, Kiev, Ukraine

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Multi-level voting and party competition in vertically simultaneous elections: the case of Ukraine

Ailsa Hendersona* and Valentyna Romanovab

aPolitics & International Relations, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK; bNational Institute for Strategic Studies, Kiev, Ukraine

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Vertically simultaneous elections to state-wide and regional legislatures provide us with a naturally occurring experiment in which to examine regionalism and multi-level voting. We examine the 2006 vertically and horizontally simultaneous state-wide and regional elections in Ukraine to determine how the internal dynamics of regionalism within a state account for the dissimilarity of voting behavior across electoral levels. Drawing on the party competition literature, we demonstrate that variations in both supply (parties) and demand (voters) produce considerable dissimilarity between regional and state results, with lower levels of consolidation and greater fractionalization at the regional level. We show that political cleavages operate differently across levels, that regional distinctiveness rather than regional authority better predicts first order-ness in regional elections, and that voters display varying tolerance for polarization at the regional and state level.

Keywords: multi-level voting; second-order theory; regionalism; Ukraine; simultaneous elections; party competition; regional parties

Introduction

Current research on multi-level voting provides us with contradictory expectations about the anticipated similarity of voter preferences across simultaneous elections and we can distinguish between second-order and balance approaches. For second-order theorists (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Reif 1984, 1985, 1997), votes cast in regional, substate elections might be cast on state issues, with voters using evaluations of state government performance to determine their vote choices across both electoral levels. Second-order theory would therefore predict similar political preferences expressed in simultaneous state-wide parliamentary and regional elections if regional elections are second-order contests. Balance theorists (Alesina and Rosenthal 1995, 1996; Fiorina 1996; Erikson and Filipov 2001) would suggest that voters consciously stabilize the partisan composition of the political system, using substate elections to offset or balance the partisan distribution of power in the state arena (or vice versa). This would lead us to expect dissimilar preferences in simultaneous state and regional elections. To evaluate these rival claims, we examine voting behavior and the nature of party
competition across two electoral levels during the vertically and horizontally simultaneous state-wide parliamentary and regional 2006 elections in Ukraine. The result is a considerable advance on our understanding of voting in multi-level polities and the ability of existing voting theories to account for electoral trends in post-Communist states.

Literature review

For what we might call balance theorists, voters not only cast ballots differently at distinct electoral levels, they do so consciously to facilitate a partisan balance across the political system as a whole. Such research, which originally highlighted the way American voters sought to establish a partisan balance across the Presidency and Congress to ensure moderate policy choices (Erikson 1988, 1990; Mughan 1988; Alesina and Rosenthal 1995, 1996; Fiorina 1996; Scheve and Tomz 1999; Mebane 2000), has since been adapted to examine cross-level voting in federal political systems, most frequently in the USA (Simon 1989; Simon, Ostrom, and Marra 1991; Carsey and Wright 1998), Canada (Erikson and Filipov 2001), and Germany (Gabriel 1989; Lohmann, Brady, and Rivers 1997; Kern and Hainmüller 2006), as well as by-elections and local elections in the UK (Curtice and Payne 1991; Cook and Ramsden 1997). Although the balance hypothesis originates from an examination of mid-term US elections, it has been shown to travel well to multi-level systems. Such research suggests that voters prefer moderate policy choices, and seek to facilitate these by delivering a system that balances partisan strength across institutions or levels. It is not surprising that such research originated in a two-party system, but research in Canada and Germany proves also that it may help us to understand the motivations of voters in multi-party systems. In such systems, the issues on which voters seek to establish a balance need not be economic left-right, but can include issues of national constitutional importance. Timing, in this sense the length of time between state and substate elections, is irrelevant. Regardless of whether elections are consecutive or concurrent, we would expect dissimilar voting preferences in state-wide and regional elections.

For second-order theorists, by contrast, the congruence or dissimilarity of voting decisions is conditional on what is “at stake” in each election and the timing of elections. Those casting ballots in first-order elections – when there is something “at stake” because governments can be formed, or legislatures have considerable autonomy – use cues or evaluations specific to that democratic level (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Reif 1984, 1985, 1997). In other words, voters casting ballots in state elections evaluate the performance of the state government, identify their preferences for state policy, or use cues provided by state political parties to reach a voting decision. Those voting in second-order elections might rely on cues and issues relevant to levels of “first-order” importance. In practice, this can mean that voters casting ballots in European, regional, or by-elections vote according to state issues or the performance of state governments, each second-order election effectively serving as a referendum on government
popularity or valence issues such as its handling of the economy. Such research, which claims that the salience of particular institutional levels affects the way in which voters reach their voting decisions, has often been interpreted in a way that suggests regional elections are typically less important than state elections. This was not the original claim of Reif and Schmidt, who merely emphasized the influence of varying levels of institutional salience on voters.

Furthermore, for second-order theorists, the timing of state and substate elections would influence what we might expect in terms of voter preferences. Even if voters consistently use state cues to reach their voting decisions for both regional and state elections, we should not expect uniform vote choices from voters. A regional election held during the honeymoon period for a state government might well return the governing party to office in the region as well. One held later in the electoral cycle might punish the state governing party for its record. Reif and Schmitt (1980) argued that we can observe a cyclical effect to support for governing parties. Critically for us, however, the second-order thesis would suggest that for elections held on the same day, voters would exhibit uniform preferences across levels, if the regional elections were not themselves first-order contests (Hough and Jeffery 2006b). This raises three distinctions between the second-order and balance approaches. For balance approaches, timing and state performance are less relevant, as decisions are motivated by the logic of balance: state-level incumbents will always fare worse in substate elections because the role of such elections is to balance the results of state contests. For second-order approaches, timing, the salience of the substate legislature, and the evaluation of state performance will determine whether a governing party maintains or loses support. In simultaneous elections where the regional institutional level is weak – where regional elections truly are second order contests – we would expect similar results.3

There is, of course, a considerable body of research which suggests that certain types of polities are more or less likely to produce regional elections that operate as second-order contests. Certainly there is a growing consensus that regional elections need not necessarily be second order, that voters demonstrate distinct preferences (Heath et al. 1999; Jeffery and Hough 2003; Wolinetz and Carty 2006; Schakel and Jeffery 2013), and take into account the performance of regional governments (Cutler 2008; Johns et al. 2009) or the regional economy (Atkeson and Partin 1995; Leyden and Borrelli 1995; Ebeid and Rodden 2006). Both Anderson (2006) and Cutler (2004) show that confusion over attributions of responsibility in federal systems can at the very least dampen the propensity of voters to punish state governments for any mishandling of the economy. We have reasons to suspect that “split-level democratic citizenship” (Cutler 2008), in which voters perform differing evaluations across multiple levels, is easier in federal systems where substate jurisdiction is obvious to voters. This was, of course, one of the original claims of Reif and Schmidt, that the institutional salience of different democratic levels affects whether individuals treat the contests as first or second order. We know, likewise, that turnout is not uniformly lower in regional elections (Horiuchi 2005; Schakel and Dandoy 2014) but dependent on regional
identity and regional autonomy (Henderson and McEwen 2010). Regional elections are more likely to operate as first-order contests in regions where regional identity is high or there is a greater degree of perceived distinctiveness, whether because of regional language, regional cultural institutions, or regional parties (Henderson and McEwen 2010). This sits comfortably with research showing the resilience of regions to operate as distinct small political worlds (Elkins and Simeon 1980; Agnew 1988, 1994; Shin and Agnew 2002; Pallarés and Keating 2003). In short, the extent to which second-order theory would predict similar preferences in simultaneous elections depends on whether regional elections are truly second order. How then might we evaluate the claims of second-order and balance theorists?

We believe that the literature on party competition holds the key to distinguishing between the relative merits of balance and second-order approaches. Research on party competition is useful for two reasons. First, debates about party nationalization – the homogeneity of party strength across a state (Caramani 2004; Bochsler 2010) – suggest that we might find dissimilar trends at the state and substate level. Second, in its focus on supply and demand factors party competition research helps us to understand whether voter behavior alone or voter and party behavior is responsible for dissimilar preferences. We address each theme in turn.

Research on party competition suggests we might expect greater nationalization – greater similarity of parties’ vote shares across the state – at state elections (Jones and Mainwaring 2003) and greater regional diversity for substate elections. This holds for Central and Eastern Europe (Meleshevich 2007) as well as Western Europe (Caramani 2004). Schakel and Jeffery (2013) argue that regional elections display lower levels of nationalization, with variation increasing markedly as the timing between parliamentary and regional elections widens. Such research would suggest greater levels of inter-regional similarity for simultaneous elections. The indicators upon which such claims are based include the degree of congruence between party shares across substate units and variations in the effective number of parties (ENPs) across regions. These help us to identify the levels of nationalization, and in so doing understand the capacity for similar voting results across electoral levels.

For our purposes, the party competition literature is also useful because it focuses on both the supply and demand side of electoral contests (Rose and Mishler 2010). Political parties clearly reflect the supply-side of electoral competition (Marsh and Norris, 1997; Pallarés and Keating 2006; Katz 2008; Brunsbach, John, and Werner 2012). Parties select candidates, establish electoral agendas, and develop manifestos in the hope of introducing their policy programs when in office. Differences in the nature and number of parties standing for seats might affect the electoral outcomes of state-wide and regional elections as well as the potential for the similarity of results. If parties standing for office in regional elections do not contest seats in state-wide elections, then supply-side factors will affect the extent to which voters could ever express similar preferences across electoral levels. Voters, by contrast, present the demand side of the equation, and
might make different voting decisions when faced with the same parties in
different electoral arenas (Marsh and Norris, 1997; Katz 2008; Rose and Mishler
2010). Second-order theory has long argued that voters are more willing to cast
ballots for smaller parties in second-order contests, where the stakes of electoral
competition are low, than they are in first-order contests. Of course, we might find
variations in both supply and demand across electoral levels. We know from
studies of electoral competition that we are more likely to find regional or
regionalist parties standing for seats in substate elections – where the chance of
forming a government increases significantly – than in state-wide elections where
such parties can at best hope to operate as swing votes in the national legislature.
We can distinguish here between regional parties, which receive their vote share in
one or a restricted number of regions (Brancati 2008) and regionalist parties,
which seek greater self-government for particular regions (De Winter 1998). Both
tend, in varying degrees, to appeal to regional identities that are popular within
certain territorially bounded communities and to set agendas that are most relevant
for particular regional, rather than state-wide, arenas (Passarelli and Tuorto 2012;
Schakel and Jeffery 2013). Their presence provides an opportunity for variations
in voter behavior.

This leads us to our two main research questions: How similar or dissimilar are
the voting results across vertically simultaneous elections? And how might we
account for variations in support? For the first question, we are interested not only
in the similarity of preferences, but interested too in whether we can record similar
levels of nationalization, fragmentation (Sartori 1976, 120), and salient political
cleavages across electoral levels. For the second question, we are interested in
seeing whether regions that are typically more likely to produce first-order
substate contests are more likely to demonstrate dissimilar results, and interested
too in the extent to which any variations in support are the product of supply- or
demand-side factors. This leads to our more general aim, to distinguish between
the ability of second-order and balance “theories” to account for multi-level voting
in simultaneous elections (and identify the conditions under which they may do
so).

For the most part, efforts to examine multi-level voting have focused
predominantly on the demand side of the equation (Johnston 1980; Clarke and
Stewart 1987; Stewart and Clarke 1998; Erikson and Filipov 2001; Jeffery and
Hough 2003; Hough and Jeffery 2006a; Cutler 2008; Henderson and McEwen
2010; Schakel and Dandoy 2014). We believe, however, that variations in supply-
side factors at different levels can affect the capacity of voters to express similar
preferences across multiple levels and furthermore believe we can disaggregate
among supply factors. We are interested in how parties coalesce into clusters, and
whether the nature of clusters changes across levels. Our assessment of the second-
order and balance approaches therefore takes into consideration demand-side
behavior as well as supply-side variations. Of particular interest to the supply side
is the presence and role of regional parties.

If, as second-order theorists claim, smaller and more regional parties are more
likely to contest seats at the substate level, voters may be given the opportunity to
express dissimilar preferences at different levels. Of interest, however, is the extent to which such parties offer different political cleavages according to which electoral competition might be structured, or whether they reinforce existing political cleavages at the state level. For example, the absence of regionalist parties in parliamentary elections and their presence in regional elections might introduce a regionalist dimension to party competition in substate elections that is otherwise lacking in state elections. Alternatively, regional parties might integrate themselves into a left-right political cleavage, providing merely an additional means of supporting a left- or right-wing political bloc. Research interested merely in dissimilarity would view these two situations as identical, but a focus on political competition seeks to distinguish the ways in which voting and the context of voting might vary across different electoral levels.

Hypotheses

We believe that second-order approaches are correct in their emphasis on institutional salience but believe that regional legislatures can serve as important organs of regional expression even in cases where institutional jurisdictional authority is minimal. Therefore:

H1: We will find significantly dissimilar voting patterns in vertically simultaneous elections.

In keeping with the literature (Jones and Mainwaring 2003; Meleshevich 2007) on nationalization and fragmentation, to the extent that there are dissimilar preferences across levels:

H2: We will find higher nationalization and lower fragmentation for state elections and lower nationalization and higher fragmentation for regional elections.

Furthermore, if we cluster parties by blocks, according to, for example, their economic position, attitudes toward language, foreign policy, and history, we will be able to see whether voters support different parties but consistently back similar party clusters. Support for one right-wing state-wide party might vary from one electoral level to the next, but if we group together all right-wing parties we would expect to see greater consistency of support. This clustering also allows us to determine if voter consistency is better explained by economic or identity motivations. Therefore:

H3: We will find greater consistency when we examine electoral competition by electoral clusters rather than parties.

We believe that regional jurisdictions possessing linguistic and ethnic profiles that distinguish them from their neighbors, and in which there is an appetite for additional regional autonomy, are also more likely to develop political landscapes in which regional parties contest seats and where regional elections are fought on regional issues. We expect not only that regional elections will therefore be more
fragmented, but that the degree of fragmentation is dependent on levels of regional identity, cultural diversity, and support for regional autonomy, features which we believe are more likely to produce split-level citizenship. This will have obvious consequences on the extent to which we can find similar preferences across levels. Therefore:

H4: The similarity of voting preferences will vary by regional identity and measures of regional distinctiveness, with more dissimilar preferences in regions where identity and perceived regional distinctiveness are stronger.

H5: Dissimilar voting patterns across regional and state elections will be explained by the stronger support for regional parties in “distinctive” regions.

Methodology

Case selection

Vertical simultaneity across state and regional elections is relatively rare outside the USA. Fabre estimates that there have been fewer than 20 instances in post-war Western Europe when national elections coincided with regional elections (Fabre 2010). Often this involves a single region holding its elections on the same date as state elections. Since 1996, for example, elections in the autonomous community of Andalusia have been held on the same day as Spanish elections. Rarer still is a combination of horizontal (all regional elections at the same time) and vertical (region and state at the same time) simultaneity, in which all the regions across a state elect their regional legislatures and national legislature on the same day. This occurred, for example, in France in 1986, and in Belgium in 1995 and 1999. Simultaneous elections to the national parliament and regional assemblies is a regular practice in Ukraine (with the exception of 2010); however, only the 2006 multi-level elections in Ukraine were held according to the same electoral rules, in this case, proportional representation with no independents.

We have opted to study the 2006 vertically and horizontally simultaneous elections in Ukraine for five reasons. First, there is relatively little “at stake” in regional elections in Ukraine. In 2006, Ukraine was a unitary state with 27 meso-level administrative units: 24 oblasts, two special-status cities (Kyiv and Sevastopol) and one autonomous republic, Crimea. With the exception of Crimea (Sasse 2007), regional legislatures do not form governments but share authority with regional state administrations. Furthermore, the 450-seat national legislature, the Verkhovna Rada, is unicameral. There is no upper chamber that represents regional interests. If, as Cutler (2008) argues, voters are more likely to have “split-level citizenship” in polities with clear areas of jurisdiction across levels, and where regions wield clear autonomy over policy, we must assume this is less likely to occur in Ukraine, where regional autonomy is not well established. Were we to find a significant difference in voting patterns across parliamentary and regional elections we would have reason to doubt the critical importance of institutional salience upon which second-order theory hinges many of its claims.
Second, Ukraine is regionally diverse, portrayed as a “state of regions” (Sasse 2001), with different components formerly belonging to different empires and states (Katchanovski 2006). Indeed it is often perceived as a country with two different halves, a predominantly rural, Catholic, Ukrainian-speaking, European-oriented, and liberal Western half, and an Orthodox, Russian-speaking, pro-Soviet and pro-communist East (Solchanyk 1994; Hesli 1995; Barrington 1997; Kuzio 1998; Shulman 1999; Aberg 2000; Birch 2000; Kubicek 2000; Katchanovski 2001, 2006; Munro 2007; Clem and Craumer 2008), although as Sasse (2001) points out, various cultural and social cleavages are cross-cutting rather than mutually reinforcing (see also Arel 1995; Matsuzato 2001; Wolczuk 2002; Rodgers 2006; Kulyk 2008). As a result, Ukraine provides a useful case where regional institutional authority is low but regionalism and regional identities are strong (Sasse 2001, 2010; Wolczuk 2002; Barrington and Herron 2004; Stepan 2005; Razumkov Centre 2005) and politically salient (Miller et al. 1998; Hinich, Khmelko, and Ordeshook 1999; O’Loughlin and Bell 1999; Barrington and Faranda 2009), which enables us to determine the precise roles for legislative competence and perceptions of regional distinctiveness.

Third, Ukrainian electoral institutions have typically been designed to exert a nationalizing influence on party competition. All parties are officially state-wide, although they have core regions in which they gain particular support.7 The 2004 Law on Elections of Deputies in Ukraine has allowed regional branches of state-wide political parties to create electoral blocs and stand for regional elections in one or several regions.8 This provides new institutional opportunities for regional parties and blocs (Laboratory of Legislative Initiatives 2006) that were formerly not possible.

Fourth, the 2006 elections in particular provide a useful case study. Until 2006, all regional elections were held according to a majoritarian electoral system and included large numbers of independents. The 2006 parliamentary (Herron 2007; Clem and Craumer 2008) and regional (Syneokiy 2006) elections, however, both employed proportional representation, with a 3% electoral threshold and excluded independent candidates. The 2006 elections were also recognized as free and fair by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and numerous international and domestic observers (OSCE/ODIHR 2006; see Myagkov and Ordeshook 2005 for an analysis of electoral fraud in earlier elections).

Fifth, multi-level voting behavior and party competition in Central and Eastern Europe is heavily understudied. However dominant the state focus on voting behavior in Western Europe, this is far more prevalent in former republics of the Soviet Union. In 2002, Tucker lamented that there had been only one – Russian – study of regional party competition in any post-Communist state.9 Despite academic attention to the importance of the 1990 regional elections in the USSR as vehicles of democratization, post-communist regional elections remain understudied. As a result, claims regarding post-communist voting behavior and party systems are based almost exclusively on studies of national elections (Birch 1995, 1998; Bojucn 1995, 2011; Kuzio 1995; Miller et al 1998; Wilson and Birch 1999; Ishiyama 2002; Copsey 2006, 2008; Meleshevich 2007; Clem and Craumer, 2008; Zimmer and Haran 2008; Bochsler 2010).10
Data and variables

To analyze the dynamics of multi-level voting we have created a dataset that employs regions as cases. Electoral data on vote shares in the 2006 parliamentary and regional elections are from official election results (Central Electoral Commission 2006) and electoral reports. Our analysis relies on aggregate data. Individual recall of voting decisions in surveys, including whether a respondent cast a ballot and which party was supported, is heavily conditioned by social desirability. We know that individuals are more likely to say that they cast a ballot when in fact they did not (Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001; Karp and Banducci 2008) and we know also that respondents are more likely to say that they backed the eventual winners. One benefit of using official electoral returns, therefore, is that it avoids these problems. Aggregate data raise other issues of validity, however. We are able to identify correlations between particular variables but unable to demonstrate their effect at the individual level. A region in which we know there to be a high degree of support for regional identity might demonstrate greater support for a regional party, or might display greater dissimilarity of preferences across electoral levels, but we cannot at this stage determine whether individuals with a greater strength of pride cast their ballots in this particular way. Furthermore, aggregate stability of responses might mask considerable individual-level volatility in voter preferences (LeDuc et al. 1980). We must therefore remain mindful of the ecological fallacy when we interpret our results.

To begin our analysis we classified parties according to three dimensions. We distinguished, first, between government and opposition parties and blocs, a full list of which appears in the Appendix. We also identified regional parties, using Brancati’s definition (2008) of parties that seek seats in a restricted number of regions. Region-only parties can be found in 8 of the 27 meso-level administrative units and in 2006 included ethnic parties beyond Russian or pro-Russian ones. We further distinguish between the regionalist (De Winter 1998) aims of such parties, separating (a) those parties that appeal to the regional identities of those in territorially-bounded polities and position themselves at the extreme ends of state-wide cleavages such as language, which we refer to as “ideological” regional parties; and (b) those parties that claim to represent the interests of territorial communities better than state-wide parties but refer neither to regionalist agendas nor state-wide ideological cleavages. This classification was based on the content of party manifestos, as well as domestic analytical reports on campaigning (Laboratory of Legislative Initiatives 2006; Yermolayev, Lupacyi, and Romanova 2006).

While studying stable multi-party systems, academics group parties into party families (Deschouwer 2000; Fitzmaurice 2004), but such an approach is not necessarily appropriate when party systems are not fully institutionalized (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). We believe that clustering parties would be more helpful in this case because it helps us to identify consistent cleavages within the Ukrainian electorate at a time when the existence of parties can be fairly
short-lived. We have created four clusters to examine the consistency of support across electoral levels – an economic (left-right) cluster, and three additional cleavages we believe tap identity considerations: attitudes toward language, attitudes toward foreign policy, and attitudes toward history. These cleavages are perceived to have long-standing relevance to Ukrainian voters (Khmelko 2007) and were predicted to structure party competition in the 2006 campaign (Razumkov Centre 2005). Our clustering is based on the content of party manifestos. Parties and blocs are distributed fairly evenly across the economic cluster but their manifestos offered consistent approaches across the three identity clusters. Parties or blocs scoring 1 on the foreign policy cluster, for example, tended to have similar scores for the language and history clusters. For this reason, in the analysis that follows we have created an “average identity cluster” score. Full details for the scores for each cluster, however, may be found in the Appendix.

To evaluate our hypotheses we have calculated several indices, including measures of dissimilarity and fractionalization. To evaluate H1, which addresses the consistency of voting across multiple levels, we have calculated an index of dissimilarity for all state-wide parties, expanding this to include all parties contesting seats in each region. Our index takes the absolute value of the difference in party performance across state-wide parliamentary and regional elections. We then calculated an aggregate score for each region by adding together the absolute differences for each of the state-wide parties and dividing by two (Johnston 1980; Pallarés and Keating 2003). Our state-wide party dissimilarity index allows us to evaluate how state-wide parties fare across state and regional elections. Our total party dissimilarity index allows us to examine the nature of party competition as a whole, rather than just the performance of certain types of political parties.

To account for variations in simultaneous voting behavior across state and regional elections, we have calculated two measures of electoral fractionalization within each region for both state and regional elections: the proportion of votes earned by the two largest parties; and the ENPs. We are using the Laakso and Taagepera (1979) formula for the ENPs: one divided by the sum of the squared proportions earned by each political party (see also Blais and Carty 1991). The results will provide us with additional methods of evaluating voting behavior across state and regional elections.

To evaluate H4, we will employ the previously constructed dissimilarity scores as dependent variables in an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. Our independent variables include various measures of identity and distinctiveness. Drawing on the comparative substate political behavior literature (Hough and Jeffery 2006b; Pallarés and Keating 2006; Wyn Jones and Scully 2006; Henderson and McEwen 2010), we have constructed a measure of regional identity using data from the 1999 World Values Survey dataset. The indicator reflects the proportion of respondents who identified the region as the geographic group to which they are most attached. Our other identity variables employ data from a 2007 survey of regional identities conducted by the Razumkov Centre. We seek to separate
attitudes toward culture and attitudes toward language, and also to distinguish between attitudes toward Ukraine and toward Russia. We believe these to be important fault lines, particularly relevant to us because of the possible east-west variation in responses we might find. We also include two measures of perceived regional strength. The regional autonomy variable measures support for greater institutional authority for the meso-level, and the regional distinctiveness variable reflects the proportion of survey respondents in each oblast who believe that residents of eastern and western Ukraine are so different they should be considered different peoples. These we believe are essential to testing H4, as well as identifying the oblasts in which we are more likely to find regional parties. In addition, we have created indicators that relate to the party clusters, including a measure capturing identification with and the perceived importance of European identity, and an indicator of external identity, which is measured as perceived closeness to Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and Romania (see White, McAllister, and Feklyunina 2010 on the tensions between these). Finally, we have included other indicators as controls, including socio-demographic variables such as average educational attainment, average income, regional gross domestic product, and ethnic profile. These regional socio-demographic data are from the State Statistics Committee. The resulting dataset offers for the first time regional-level data on voting behavior at multiple electoral arenas, political cleavages, socio-demographic variables and attitudinal variables on regional identity, regional diversity, and views of regional autonomy. Full details on the coding and data sources appear in the Appendix.

Results

We begin with a review of the performance of parties and blocs across electoral levels, the results of which appear in Table 1. The results provide us with two obvious findings. First, the three largest state-wide parties and blocs (Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, the Party of Regions, and Our Ukraine Bloc) performed better in the state-wide parliamentary elections than they did in the regional ones, regardless of whether they were in (or aligned with) government or opposition. On average they lost between 2.6 and 8.8 percentage points from the state to the regional level. Second-order elections theory would predict similar results in both electoral arenas, as there is little “at stake” in Ukrainian regional elections, while balance approaches would predict voters to offset their government and opposition preferences. An initial review therefore gives us reason to question each approach.

Second, we can see regional trends in the varying success of parties across electoral levels. As Table 1 demonstrates, state-wide parties tended to lose most support in regional elections in those “core” regions in which they fared best in state elections (Copsey 2006; Katchanovski 2006; Hesli 2007). For smaller state-wide parties, voters’ support across electoral levels appears remarkably consistent, as we can see in the dissimilarity scores for the Socialist and Communist parties, as well as Pora-PRP, the Vitrenko Bloc, and the Kostenko-Plyushch Bloc. This
suggests a possible modification of the second-order theory where we distinguish not only between decreased support for governing vis-à-vis opposition parties but for large state-wide parties vis-à-vis smaller parties. Such a conclusion would also provide a new dimension to previous research on the structure of party competition and voting behavior in 2006, all of which has been generated on the basis of state-level evidence (Copsey 2006; Hesli 2007; Katchanovski 2006; Clem and Craumer 2008).

To examine further the position of smaller parties, we examined the performance of regional parties, the results of which are presented in Table 2. In eight regions, regional parties won seats in substate elections but not in state elections. Within these eight regions, total support for such parties ranged from 4.58% for the sole regional party in Volynska Oblast to between 15% and 17% in
Crimea and Kyiv. Obviously this affects the degree to which support for state-wide parties can be mirrored across state and regional elections.

Table 2. Regional political parties and blocs in the 2006 regional elections in Ukraine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oblast</th>
<th>Regional political parties and blocs</th>
<th>% support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crimea</td>
<td>Union Party</td>
<td>7.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kunitsyn Bloc</td>
<td>7.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volynska</td>
<td>Klymchuk Bloc “Native Volyn”</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnipropetrovsk</td>
<td>Lazarenko Bloc</td>
<td>11.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakarpatska</td>
<td>Democratic Party of Hungarians in Ukraine</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Community of the Hungarian Culture in Zakarpatty</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivano-Frankivska</td>
<td>National Choice Bloc</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Renaissance of Prykarpatty Bloc</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lvivska</td>
<td>Svoboda</td>
<td>5.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevastopil</td>
<td>Ivanov “For Sevastopil” Bloc</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kondratevskiy Bloc</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyiv</td>
<td>Chernovetskiy Bloc</td>
<td>12.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil Activists of Kyiv</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results are percentage won in each regional election.

Crimea and Kyiv. Obviously this affects the degree to which support for state-wide parties can be mirrored across state and regional elections.

To what extent might these results change if we explore clusters of parties rather than individual parties across electoral arenas? Table 3 provides descriptive

Table 3. Variations in support for clusters of parties and blocs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Average performance state-wide parliamentary elections</th>
<th>Average performance regional elections</th>
<th>Average difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic clusters (10.06)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>8.86 (5.72)</td>
<td>10.10 (5.85)</td>
<td>−1.24 (3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>15.15 (11.66)</td>
<td>19.56 (12.08)</td>
<td>−4.41 (7.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right</td>
<td>51.59 (12.21)</td>
<td>40.77 (11.10)</td>
<td>10.81 (11.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign policy (7.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>36.14 (23.44)</td>
<td>27.81 (20.91)</td>
<td>8.33 (4.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>24.31 (13.13)</td>
<td>25.33 (13.40)</td>
<td>−1.03 (4.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU/NATO</td>
<td>15.16 (11.66)</td>
<td>15.48 (13.82)</td>
<td>0.32 (3.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language (7.05)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian language</td>
<td>32.38 (27.72)</td>
<td>25.05 (24.73)</td>
<td>7.33 (5.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority languages</td>
<td>31.50 (16.95)</td>
<td>29.00 (14.91)</td>
<td>2.50 (5.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian language</td>
<td>16.85 (14.66)</td>
<td>15.24 (13.63)</td>
<td>1.61 (2.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History (5.99)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Army saved Ukraine in WWII</td>
<td>36.14 (23.44)</td>
<td>29.83 (23.55)</td>
<td>6.31 (5.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both saved Ukraine in WWII</td>
<td>25.84 (13.82)</td>
<td>23.68 (12.71)</td>
<td>2.15 (3.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPA saved Ukraine in WWII</td>
<td>16.85 (14.65)</td>
<td>15.24 (13.63)</td>
<td>1.60 (2.76)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Results are average percentage won in each election (with standard deviations in parentheses). For difference, higher numbers indicate greater support in state elections. Negative numbers indicate improved performance in regional elections. UPA = Ukrainian Patriotic Army.
accounts of the performance of our four sets of electoral clusters. As with parties, we can identify those clusters that fare well or poorly at each level. Right-wing parties in economic terms perform less well in regional elections, as do those favoring a pro-Russian foreign policy. Indeed across the three identity clusters, we see that the pro-Russian cluster consistently fares less well in regional elections. One possible interpretation is that polarized political options fare better in state-wide elections than in regional elections. Parties occupying the middle ground on economic policy, for example, fare better in regional elections, suggesting that the electorate is more polarized over economic issues in state-wide contests. This can be seen as a modification of regional elections as balancing elections. Rather than achieving a moderate political culture by backing polarized views at different levels, voters appear to have differing levels of tolerance for polarized political debate at different electoral levels. This is not a uniform finding, however, for we see little difference in the performance of the moderate and Ukrainian components of the history and language clusters. We can also see that across the three categories for each cluster there is greater absolute variation for the economic cluster than for the identity clusters.

We turn now to our measures of cross-level competition to evaluate demand and supply variations at different levels. Table 4 provides us with descriptive information about party competition in parliamentary and regional elections in each region, outlining the most popular party, the proportion earned by the two largest parties, and the ENPs in each contest. The results also show that there are cross-level differences in the ENPs, with a greater number of effective parties in regional elections in all cases (7.45 vs 4.57). The differences are significant ($t = 5.2$, $p < 0.01$). Not surprisingly, we see similar results for the electoral dominance of the two largest parties, which in all cases is greater in state-wide parliamentary elections than in regional elections.

The results in Table 4 demonstrate that there are significant levels of dissimilarity across the two levels. In his analysis of 4000 regional and national elections in 18 countries Schakel (2013) explains that dissimilarity is lowest in vertically simultaneous elections, with average dissimilarity scores of 12. The average dissimilarity score for Ukraine, which was not included in Schakel’s study, is 31.84 when we examine all state-wide parties, and 33.47 when we add regional parties. No region reports a dissimilarity score of less than 16.07. This is obviously a greater degree of dissimilarity than we usually find, and suggests that Ukrainian voters are expressing distinct political preferences across electoral levels, despite low levels of regional institutional autonomy. If we examine dissimilarity scores for clusters of parties, rather than individual parties, we find greater similarity, which we expected, and in particular greater consistency for identity cleavages rather than the economic cleavage. A brief evaluation of our preliminary hypotheses suggests that we have significant levels of dissimilarity, that this can in part be explained by greater degrees of fractionalization at the regional level, where regional parties are more present, and that clusters of parties display greater similarity, with greater stability for the identity cleavages rather than the economic cleavage. The structure of party competition therefore
Table 4. Multi-level voting in vertically simultaneous elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oblast/region</th>
<th>State-wide parliamentary elections</th>
<th>Regional elections</th>
<th>Difference state-region</th>
<th>Dissimilarity indices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Largest party</td>
<td>Sum, two largest parties</td>
<td>ENP</td>
<td>Largest party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimea</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>65.63</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>Yanuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinnytska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>53.25</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volynska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>64.63</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnipropetrovska</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>60.01</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donetska</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>80.43</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhytomyska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>42.91</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakarpatska</td>
<td>OU</td>
<td>46.08</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>OU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaporizhka</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>62.17</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivano-Frankovska</td>
<td>OU</td>
<td>75.45</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>OU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyivska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>56.13</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirovohradska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>50.23</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lviska</td>
<td>OU</td>
<td>70.99</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>OU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhanska</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>79.54</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mykolaivska</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>62.23</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odeska</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>57.36</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poltavska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>47.19</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivenska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>56.78</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumsksa</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>52.64</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ternopska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>68.65</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharkivska</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>64.38</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khersonska</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>56.57</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmelnytska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherkaska</td>
<td>YT</td>
<td>51.64</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>YT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
Table 4 – continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oblast/region</th>
<th>State-wide parliamentary elections</th>
<th>Regional elections</th>
<th>Difference state-region</th>
<th>Dissimilarity indices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum, two largest parties ENP</td>
<td>Sum, 2 largest parties ENP</td>
<td>Sum, 2 largest parties ENP</td>
<td>State-wide parties All parties Economic cluster Average, ideological clusters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chernivetska</td>
<td>YT 57.38 5.45</td>
<td>YT 40.96 10.47</td>
<td>16.42 5.01</td>
<td>34.34 34.34 6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chernihivska</td>
<td>YT 49.5 5.9</td>
<td>YT 38.22 9.45</td>
<td>11.28 3.54</td>
<td>22.13 22.13 7.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyiv</td>
<td>YT 55.06 2.34</td>
<td>YT 37.57 4.8</td>
<td>17.49 2.46</td>
<td>30.11 50.77 17.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevastopil</td>
<td>PR 74.35 5.05</td>
<td>PR 51.93 9.97</td>
<td>22.42 4.92</td>
<td>45.61 38.58 18.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: PR, Party of Regions; YT, Yulia Tymochenko; OU, Our Ukraine; Vit, Vitrenko bloc; SPU, Socialist Party of Ukraine; Lyt, Lytvyn; Yanuk, Yanukovich Bloc.
appears to differ across levels in two important ways. First, different parties – or rather different types of parties – fare better at one electoral level. Second, the gap between vote shares in parliamentary and regional elections appears to differ geographically. Identifying why this might be the case is the focus of our next section.

Second-order theory suggests that regional institutional authority will determine whether regional elections can be perceived as second- or first-order contests. We believe that while institutional authority might be important, so too might other indicators of regional salience, including identity and perceived distinctiveness. To understand the factors that account for the performance of parties and clusters across different electoral levels, we have conducted a multivariate analysis of multi-level electoral competition. Table 5 presents the results of this analysis. Second-order theory would predict similar preferences in simultaneous elections but it is possible that in regions where regional identity and regional distinctiveness are strong, regional elections are in fact first-order contests. The results in Table 5 therefore identify the variables that push together or drive apart political preferences at the state and regional level. As the dependent variables are dissimilarity scores, we can interpret positive coefficients as accounting for greater dissimilarity, and negative coefficients as driving cross-level convergence.

We have identified three groups of variables. The first speak to internal divisions within Ukraine, namely the Ukrainian–Russian divide. We created four variables, two testing support for Ukrainian or Russian cultural identity and two probing support for and use of Ukrainian or Russian languages. The four are, of course, clearly related.\(^22\) To probe the two distinct features, we included in our

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party dissimilarity state-wide ((\delta = 31.84))</th>
<th>Economic cluster dissimilarity ((\delta = 10.06))</th>
<th>Average identity cluster dissimilarity ((\delta = 6.78))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>19.12 (11.47)</td>
<td>-14.41 (10.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian language</td>
<td>-0.127 (0.08)</td>
<td>0.136 (0.08)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian culture</td>
<td>0.779 (0.42)*</td>
<td>1.88 (0.39)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European identity</td>
<td>0.480 (0.30)</td>
<td>0.299 (0.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External relations</td>
<td>0.390 (0.27)</td>
<td>-0.240 (0.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of living</td>
<td>3.14 (14.68)</td>
<td>19.70 (13.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional autonomy</td>
<td>0.088 (0.25)</td>
<td>-0.182 (0.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional distinctiveness</td>
<td>0.244 (0.43)</td>
<td>-0.214 (0.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional identity</td>
<td>-0.052 (0.23)</td>
<td>-0.085 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. (R^2)</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Results are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \(\delta\), dissimilarity score. The dissimilarity score for the identity cluster is the average across all three components.

*\(p < 0.10\); **\(p < 0.05\); ***\(p < 0.01\).
regressions the variable on Ukrainian language and the variable on Russian culture. Full details of the variables may be found in the Appendix. We would expect indicators of Ukrainian language to have a nationalizing effect on voting (in other words, prompting greater similarity across levels) and support for Russian culture to prompt greater dissimilarity as voters engage with regional concerns. Our second group of variables concerns external engagement, and explores attitudes toward Europe as well as attitudes toward neighbors, in this case Russia, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania. Our second group of variables also includes measures of standards of living across the regions of Ukraine. We would expect wealthier regions and those with greater engagement with Europe and neighbors to exert a nationalizing impact on the vote. Lastly, our third group of variables includes measures of regional identity, desired regional autonomy, and a belief in regional distinctiveness. We would expect each of these to prompt higher levels of dissimilarity as voters engage in first-order voting at both levels. What we can see from the start is that none of the variables we have assembled is able to account for variations in the levels of dissimilarity among state-wide parties, with the exception of Russian culture: A one unit increase in Russian culture produces a 0.779 increase in the dissimilarity of state-wide parties, or, the more Russian an oblast, the more dissimilar the cross-level performance of its state-wide parties. This confirms our initial expectations, but it is when we turn to the clusters that we begin to understand the dynamics of cross-level competition.

If we cluster parties according to their economic attitudes, Russian culture is again a positive predictor of dissimilarity. Those oblasts with higher scores on Russian culture are more likely to display greater dissimilarity for the cross-level performance of parties clustered according to their economic views. When we turn to the identity clusters we see that our variables are better able to account for variations across the different levels. Higher scores for the Ukrainian language produce a decrease in dissimilarity, as predicted earlier, although it is worth noting that the opposite is true for the economic cluster of parties. A desire for regional autonomy also brings political preferences together. These results provide us with two findings.

First, regional authority, the classic barometer of whether a regional election might be considered first order (Jeffery and Hough 2009), should facilitate divergence. If both regional and state-wide contests are first order then we have no reason to anticipate similar results. What our results suggest, however, is that increases in regional authority prompt similar results across electoral levels when we cluster parties ideologically. This suggests we might wish to distinguish between different measures of first-orderedness, namely institutional salience and sociological distinctiveness.

Second, the distinction between language and culture suggests that if regional identities form around culture, we will see greater dissimilarity across state and regional elections than if they are formed around language. We should distinguish, however, between the extent of dissimilarity and our ability to account for it. The identity clusters are themselves more consistent across state and regional elections for some regions – which raises the possibility that identity is a more enduring
cleavage of political competition – while what difference there is across levels we are better able to explain with the presence of our variables.

Previous multi-level voting research reminds us that dissimilarity across electoral levels is partially explained by the presence of regional parties and blocs. In 2006, regional parties and blocs were successful in eight of our regions, but within these regions we are able to determine which factors drive support, and for which type of regional party. Were we to lump all regional parties and blocs together, we would claim that oblasts with higher scores for the Russian culture, European identity, and standard of living prompt greater support for regional parties (Table 6). If we distinguish among the different types of regional parties and blocs, as we highlight above, we can see that standard of living relates only to those pragmatic regional parties and blocs – that is, those parties who claim to represent the interests of territorial communities better than state-wide parties but refer neither to regionalist agendas nor to state-wide identity cleavages. The electoral success of ideological regional parties – that is, those choosing to appeal to regional identities – however, is positively influenced by Ukrainian language and by Russian culture, as well as desired regional autonomy. These findings further develop our understanding of markers of first-orderedness, namely sociological distinctiveness as captured by language and culture and regional autonomy, for they exert independent effects on dissimilarity. In regions with successful regional parties and blocs that appeal to the political identities of their voters, sociological distinctiveness might help to explain the losses of state-wide parties in regional elections.

Of course, we know that one particular oblast is perceived to be particularly distinct. For this reason we replicated the results without Crimea in the dataset. When we do so, we see little change in the predictors significant at the 0.05 level in the original model. There are no changes at the 0.05 level in the all-parties dissimilarity model, the dissimilarity of ideological clusters, or for pragmatic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All regional parties and blocs</th>
<th>Ideological regional parties and blocs</th>
<th>Pragmatic regional parties and blocs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian language</td>
<td>0.054 (0.05)</td>
<td>0.100 (0.04)**</td>
<td>-0.046 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian culture</td>
<td>0.550 (0.26)**</td>
<td>0.638 (0.18)*****</td>
<td>-0.089 (0.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European identity</td>
<td>0.403 (0.18)**</td>
<td>0.196 (0.13)</td>
<td>0.207 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External relations</td>
<td>0.085 (0.16)</td>
<td>0.135 (0.12)</td>
<td>-0.050 (0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of living</td>
<td>33.773 (8.88)***</td>
<td>4.690 (6.37)</td>
<td>29.08 (6.2)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional autonomy</td>
<td>0.015 (0.15)</td>
<td>0.213 (0.11)*</td>
<td>-0.197 (0.10)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional distinctiveness</td>
<td>-0.483 (0.26)*</td>
<td>-0.316 (0.19)</td>
<td>-0.168 (0.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional identity</td>
<td>0.126 (0.14)</td>
<td>-0.092 (0.10)</td>
<td>-0.034 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. $R^2$</td>
<td>0.434</td>
<td>0.389</td>
<td>0.583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Results are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. 

Table 6. Modeling support for regional parties and blocs.
regional parties and only one variable significant at the 0.05 level ceases to be significant for the model involving all regional parties (Russian culture is no longer significant). All other significant variables perform as they did for the entire dataset. There are two exceptions to this. When we cluster parties according to the economic dimension, the social distinctiveness variables (language and culture) cease to be significant but the regional autonomy variable becomes significant, predicting similarity across levels. With the ideological regional parties, the regional distinctiveness variables remain significant, but the social distinctiveness variables cease to be so. In general, then, the language and culture variables are less strong when we exclude Crimea from the dataset, but the regional autonomy variables as well as European identity and standard of living are fairly consistent across the two. This suggests that Crimea is elevating the perceived importance of Ukrainian–Russian distinctiveness when we look at Ukraine as a whole.

Conclusions
An analysis of the vertically and horizontally simultaneous 2006 elections in Ukraine not only offers the first comprehensive investigation of multi-level voting in a post-Communist state, and thus widens the geographical area of a field typically restricted to established democracies in Western Europe and North America, but it also advances our understandings of multi-level voting in general. Our analysis relies on aggregate voting results and we must be mindful that any effort to understand the individual calculations made by voters requires an analysis of individual-level attitudes and behavior. This would help us to determine, for example, whether policy moderation, or the perceived competitiveness of elections (Burden and Kimball 2004) is in fact motivating voter behavior, or whether individuals back different political parties if they have a stronger sense of regional identity or if they have more polarized or moderate preferences. From the aggregate data we can draw five main conclusions.

First, our findings confirm H1, showing that simultaneous multi-level elections in which there is little “at stake” in regional elections, can still produce dissimilar voting behavior across the two electoral arenas. Indeed we found dissimilarity scores more than twice those identified in other studies (Schakel 2013). This in itself is a significant finding, as regional legislative autonomy is relatively low in Ukraine, something that would suggest regional elections should be second-order contests, fought and won on the same issues as those determining state-level results. Certainly if legislative autonomy is the only measure of salience we would have reason to doubt second-order theory. In addition, our research also shows that the largest state-wide parties saw the largest deviation in vote shares across levels, with parties losing support in regional elections and losing most in their core regions of support. One possible modification of second-order theory, therefore, would distinguish not between the fortunes of government and opposition parties, but between large state-wide parties and small parties.

Second, we see greater nationalization and lower fragmentation for state elections vis-à-vis regional elections, confirming H2. The performance of smaller
parties at regional elections is partly why we are able to demonstrate that regional elections are more fractionalized than state-wide elections (which in turn confirms H5). This is evident both in the lower levels of consolidation (measured as the proportion of support for the two largest parties) and higher numbers of effective parties for regional elections. Our analysis also helps to identify the regions in which regional parties, as one important form of small parties, are likely to fare well, with higher standards of living driving the presence of pragmatic regional parties and Ukrainian language use and support influencing ideological regional parties. Our third hypothesis, that we would see greater consistency by clusters is also confirmed. Dissimilarity scores for the economic and ideological clusters are lower than for state-wide parties.

Our fourth hypothesis, that dissimilarity can be explained by variations in regional identity and regional distinctiveness, is also partially confirmed. Our efforts to identify the variables most likely to drive apart cross-level voting results vary by form, Russian culture being most likely to drive apart state-wide parties in general as well as those treated as part of economic clusters. Our analysis of identity clusters suggests that Ukrainian language and desired regional autonomy makes voting more consistent. What then, might we conclude of the utility of second-order and balance approaches?

Second-order theory would predict similar preferences in simultaneous elections if the regional elections are in fact second-order contests. We see, however, that the two simultaneous elections produce dissimilar results. Balance theorists would suggest that we would see different results because voters would seek to punish incumbent state parties, but this does not appear to explain our results either. Governing parties and opposition parties both lose support in regional elections (and lose most in their core regions). One might assume Ukrainian regional elections to be second-order contests due to low levels of regional institutional authority, but were they instead to be first-order contests, the second-order elections theory would correctly predict divergent results. When we include models that test regional salience – the mechanism that would transform second-order contests into first-order contests – including, for example, regional identity, perceived regional distinctiveness, and support for further regional autonomy, we find that desired regional institutional salience drives preferences together.

When we turn to clusters we see increased tolerance for more moderate economic choices in regional elections, and for more polarized views with respect to foreign policy. This, we would argue, offers an important modification to balance hypotheses. We interpret the results as suggesting that across levels there are varying degrees of tolerance for polarization. The balance hypothesis suggests that voters are intolerant of extreme political systems, preferring to achieve moderation by backing different partisan options that in the aggregate balance each other. The 2006 elections in Ukraine suggest that voter preference for balance and moderation might well be correct, but that tolerance for balance or extremism varies across electoral levels, with electorates offsetting more polarized political climates at one level with more moderate ones at another level. The issue,
therefore, is not whether voters balance institutions to achieve a “moderate” political culture, or whether they perceive one democratic institution to be more salient than another, but rather that the dynamics of political competition in different elections held on the same day demonstrate that parties and voters are motivated by different issues at different levels.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes

1. Throughout, we refer to the regional level as the meso-level, between the state and municipal or local level. We use regional and substate interchangeably.

2. Here regional elections mean the elections to the Parliament of Crimea, to Kyiv and Sevastopol city assemblies, and to regional assemblies in 24 oblasts of Ukraine.

3. We distinguish between two issues: the extent to which individual voters express similar preferences across electoral levels; and the decision-making calculus of voters, whether, for example, they evaluate the issues, leaders, parties, and policies specific to the level for which they are casting a ballot. Reaching the same voting decision can of course be arrived at through different processes. Individuals can vote according to state factors in both elections and support the same parties or might choose different parties if there are variations in the supply of options at different electoral levels. Alternatively, individuals might evaluate each election on its own terms and find themselves drawn to similar or to different parties. The two issues – similarity of preference outcomes (votes cast) and the similarity of the decision-making process (voter motivations) – are therefore distinct.

4. Massetti (2009) notes, for example, that there are approximately 30 regionalist parties that are significant players in regional party systems.

5. In this paper, we refer to political cleavages that were salient during the particular electoral campaign, rather than to the classic understanding of sociological cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

6. According to the Law on Local Self-Government in Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada 2001a), which governs regional assemblies, legislatures can set tax rates over estate property and parking. In all but Crimea, taxes levied are sent to the center, which then redistributes these to the oblasts. Each regional assembly therefore has discretionary power over the distribution of regional spending returned from the center. They have little institutional influence over constitutional debates and no right to protect minority languages in their region. At the time of the 2006 elections, the Crimean parliament has more authority, with primary legislative power, and the ability to form a government with a prime minster, albeit one appointed by the Crimean parliament with the consent of the Ukrainian president.

7. According to the Law on Political Parties in the Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada 2001b), all parties should maintain a state-wide program of social development (Article 2), and prove their public support in at least two-thirds of the districts in at least two-thirds of the regions (Article 10).

8. Specifically, the Law on Elections of Deputies in Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada 2004) allows the same party to stand as part of a bloc with other parties for one election (parliamentary or regional) and as a stand-alone party at the other electoral level.

9. A rare exception to this trend includes the most recent studies of regional elections in Russia (Ross 2011a, 2011b) that link party competition at regional elections with the
state-wide democratic record and encourage us to investigate voting behavior at regional elections in other post-communist states.

10. For exceptions in the case of Russia, see Gel’man and Golosov (1998), Golosov (1999), and Moraski and Reisinger (2003).

11. During the 2006 electoral campaign, government and pro-government parties and blocs coalesced into the Orange team (Copsey 2006; Katchanovski 2006; Hesli 2007; see also Mykhnenko and Swain 2010). Mainly national democrats (Way 2005), these were represented by state-wide parties and blocs such as the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, the Our Ukraine Bloc, by small and new blocs of parties such as Pora-PRP and the Kostenko-Plyushch Bloc, as well as a small and established party Rukh. The opposition camp was mainly represented by the Party of Regions. Its leader Viktor Yanukovych lost the 2004 presidency, but the party still had parliamentary representation in 2005–2006. Parties of the Ukrainian left (the Socialist Party of Ukraine, the Communist Party of Ukraine, and the Vitrenko Bloc) are classified as state-wide small parties. The largest state-wide parties and blocs therefore included the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, the Our Ukraine Bloc, and the Party of Regions.

12. The Community of Hungarian Culture in Zakarpattya, and Democratic Party of Hungarians in Ukraine.

13. For example, Svoboda and The Russian Bloc Party.

14. For example, the Chernovetskiy Bloc and the Civic Activists of Kyiv.

15. Yakymenko (2008) notes that Ukrainian voters pay attention to party manifestos while casting their ballot: The party manifestos and the activities of political parties and blocs is very important for 60.2% of voters and relatively important for 26.5% of voters. This is further supported by a more recent study showing that voters are affected by party manifestos, ideas, and suggestions (Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2012). In his 2008 report, Yakymenko claims that the differences between parties are small on issues such as the rule of law and respect for human rights, but he later (Yakymenko 2011) clarifies that parties offer meaningful differences, particularly with respect to language policy and foreign policy, two of the items we have evaluated. This later view is supported by research both before and after the 2006 elections (Romanyuk and Shveda 2005; see also the UNIAN news item (2012) on research by Dr Oleksandr Vyshnyak).

16. Dissimilarity = $\sum_{i=1}^{n} |x_{is} - x_{ir}|/2$, where $x_{is}$ is performance in state elections and $x_{ir}$ is performance in regional elections.

17. In one particular region the presence of regional parties complicates our understanding of the similarity of voting preferences. In Crimea, the Party of Regions did not run as a separate political party in the regional elections, but teamed with the Russian Bloc (party) to run as the Yanukovich Bloc. Voters seeking to exercise uniform political preferences would therefore have had to cast a ballot for different political actors. Also in Crimea, Rukh ran as a separate party in regional elections but as part of the Our Ukraine Bloc in state-level parliamentary elections. For the analysis that follows, we treat the Yanukovich Bloc as the equivalent of the Party of Regions and Rukh as the equivalent of Our Ukraine Bloc for the regional elections in Crimea. Once we turn to clusters these issues disappear.

18. ENPs = $1/\sum_{i=1}^{n} (p_i)^2$, where $p_i$ is the proportion of valid votes earned by a political party. See also Golosov (2010) for an alternative formula.

19. The survey was conducted during the period 31 May–18 June 2007. The sample size is 10,956. The survey was conducted in 403 locations (212 urban and 191 rural ones). The theoretical error of the sample, disregarding design effect, is no more than 1.0%.

20. We rely on language use as well as native language. See Kulyk (2008) on the significance of this distinction.

21. There are statistically significant differences ($p < 0.10$) in dissimilarity scores for those regions where regional parties compete and those where they do not.
22. Collinearity diagnostics, as well as correlations among the variables, suggest it would be problematic to include all four in a regression equation. For this reason we have chosen the two variables that do not present collinearity problems (in this case tolerance levels less than 0.2, a variance inflation factor greater than 5) (Hair et al. 2006). We are also subscribing to best practice on the ratio of predictors to sample size (Van Voorhis and Morgan 2007).

23. Neutrality in foreign affairs means avoiding membership in international military blocs and prioritizing the interests of national business rather than fostering membership in international economic unions.

24. According to the 1996 Constitution, Ukrainian is the only official state language, and it is impossible to introduce a second state language without constitutional changes. Nevertheless, calls to introduce Russian as the second state language were frequent during electoral campaigns.

25. Attitudes toward history not only reflect preferences for public policies in education (such as the teaching of and research in history), but also reflect identity politics (Rodgers 2006). Interpretations of history played a crucial role in the nation-building project of President Viktor Yushchenko (Motyl 2010). Here attitudes toward history include those toward World War II (WWII) and the Holodomor (the Great Famine) of 1932–1933 in Ukraine. For example, both the Soviet Army and the Ukrainian Patriotic Army participated in WWII, but were on opposing sides. Contemporary public opinion is divided on the extent to which one or the other defended or betrayed Ukraine (Motyl 2010).

26. Rukh campaigned on its own in Crimea in regional elections.

27. The Party of Industry and Business of Ukraine won seats in the Lvivska regional assembly on its own.

28. The Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists joined the Our Ukraine Bloc in the parliamentary elections.

29. Campaigned individually in Sevastopil’.

References


Appendix

Scoring for party clusters
If the party manifesto made no reference to cluster topics they were coded as missing.

Economic cleavage

(a) Scores 1–3: the left, parties and blocs opposed to liberalism, calling for increased share of state-owned property.
(b) Scores 4–6: the middle, parties and blocs who support further foreign and domestic privatization of state-owned property and expect that state to increase public spending.
(c) Scores 7–9: the right, parties and blocs actively supporting further economic liberalization and/or represent the interests of big business.

Foreign affairs

(a) Scores 1–3: parties and blocs in favor of stronger economic and military cooperation with Russia.
(b) Scores 4–6: “neutrals” who suggest Ukrainian cooperation with the EU should not automatically preclude foreign trade with Russia.
(c) Scores 7–9: parties and blocs eager to join NATO and to remove the Russian fleet from Sevastopol as soon as possible.

Language

(a) Scores 1–3: parties and blocs that call for the introduction of Russian as a state language, either across Ukraine as a whole or in specific regions.
(b) Scores 4–6: parties and blocs that support Ukrainian as a state language but promote minority language rights, including rights for Russian speakers.
(c) Scores 7–9: parties and blocs that call for the increased use of Ukrainian in public services and the media throughout the state, regardless of the ethnic structures and linguistic profiles of regions.

History

(a) Scores 1–3: parties and blocs that claim the Soviet Army saved Ukraine during WWII.
(b) Scores 4–6: parties and blocs seeking to remain neutral in their attitudes toward history.
(c) Scores 7–9: parties and blocs who believe that the Soviet Army betrayed Ukraine during WWII.

Manifestos


Electoral contestants (blocs and political parties)
Scores for clusters are in brackets [economic, foreign affairs, language, history].

Parties and blocs that won seats in the state-wide parliamentary and regional elections in 2006

Communist Party of Ukraine [2, 1, 1, 1]

Our Ukraine Bloc (The Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists + People’s Rukh of Ukraine + the Party of Industry and Business of Ukraine + Party of Christian-Democratic Union + Political Party “The National Union Our Ukraine” + Ukrainian Republican Party “Sobor”) [6, 10, 10, 10]

Party of Regions [7, 4, 1, 1]

Socialist Party of Ukraine [3, 3, 4, 4]

Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (All-Ukrainian Association “Fatherland” + Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party) [7, 6, 5, 5].

Parties and blocs that won seats in the 2006 regional elections but did not win seats in the 2006 parliamentary elections

Kostenko-Plyushch Bloc (The Party of Free Peasants and Businessmen of Ukraine + Political Party “Ukraine United” + Ukrainian People’s Party) [8, 10, 10, 10]

Lazarenko Bloc (Party “Social-Democratic Union” + Hromada Party + Social-Democratic Party) [7, -, 5, -]
Lytvyn Bloc (People’s Party + Party of All-Ukrainian Association of the Left “Fairness” + Ukrainian Peasant Democratic Party) [5, 5, 5, 5]

Oppositional Bloc “Ne Tak” (All-Ukrainian Political Association “Women for Future” + Political Party “All-Ukrainian Association The Center” + the Republican Party of Ukraine + the Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine [united]) [7, 4, 3, 3]

Bloc Pora-PRP (POR A Party + “Party of Reforms and Order”) [9, 10, 10, 10]

Viche [9, 5, -, -]

Vitrenko Bloc “People’s Opposition” (Party “Russian-Ukrainian Union” (RUS) + Progressive Socialist Party) [1, 1, 1, 1].

Parties and blocs that won the 2006 regional elections and did not stand in the 2006 parliamentary elections

Electoral Bloc “Civic Activists of Kyiv” (Kyiv city branches of Liberal-Democratic Party of Ukraine + The Party of Legislative Supporters of Non-Governmental Organizations of Ukraine – “Party of Legislative Support” + People’s Party of Banks’ Investors and Social Security) [4, -, -, -]

Electoral Bloc of Leonid Chernovetskyi (Kyiv city branches of Christian-Liberal Party of Ukraine + Ukrainian Party “Green Planet”) [4, -, -, -]

Ivanov Bloc “For Sevastopol” (Sevastopol city branches of Party of Industry and Business of Ukraine and the Party “Christian-Democratic Union”) [5, 1, 1, 1]

Klymchuk Bloc “Native Volyn” (Volyn branches of Motherland Party, Republican-Christian Party, and Ukrainian Conservative Party) [5, -, -, -].

Kondratevskiy Bloc (Sevastopol branches of the Party of National-Economic Development of Ukraine and Young Ukraine Party) [5, 1, 1, 1]

Kunitsyn Bloc (Crimean organizations of National-Democratic Party, Democratic Party of Ukraine, and Party of State Neutralism of Ukraine) [5, 1, 1, 1]

National Choice Bloc (Ivano-Frankivsk regional branches of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists and Ukrainian Republican Party “Sobor”) [5, 10, 10, 10]

Bloc “The Renaissance of Prykarpatty” (Ivano-Frankivsk regional branches of the following parties: Renaissance + Republican-Christian Party + Democratic Union) [4, 5, -, -]

Russian Bloc Party [1, 1, 1, 1]

Yanukovych Bloc (Party of Regions + The Russian Bloc Party) [4, 1, 1, 1].

Variables

Ukrainian language (\(\alpha = 0.924\))

Additive index created from:

*Ukraine should be the only state and official language
*Speak Ukrainian at home
*Ukrainian native language.

**Russian culture** \((\alpha = 0.689)\)

Additive index created from:
* In 20–25 years Russian cultural traditions will dominate Ukraine
* In 20–25 years Soviet cultural traditions will dominate Ukraine
* Identify with Soviet cultural tradition
* Identify with Russian cultural tradition
  + Russian national identity.

**External relations** \((\alpha = 0.945)\)

Additive index created from:
* How close do you feel (0-10) to:
  - Hungary (8, 9, 10 close)
  - Slovakia (8, 9, 10 close)
  - Romania (8, 9, 10 close)
  - Poland (8, 9, 10 close).

**Europe** \((\alpha = 0.620)\)

Additive index created from:
* Identify with all-European cultural tradition
* In 20–25 years all European cultural tradition will dominate in Ukraine.

**Standard of living** \((\alpha = 0.856)\)

Additive index created from:
# Index of finances
# Living conditions
# Level of education
# Demographic development
# Job market development
# Welfare.

**Regional autonomy** \((\alpha = 0.584)\)

Additive index created from:
* One would like oblast to gain autonomy in Ukraine
* One would like oblast to get more competencies.

**Regional distinctiveness**

*Western and eastern Ukraine are so different that can be called two different peoples.

**Regional identity**

+ To which geographic group do you belong first (region)?

Notes: \(\alpha\), Cronbach’s \(\alpha\). Original data sources: *, Razumkov Centre; +, World Values Survey; #, Ministry.