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## The Regional Level of Ukraine's Party System in 2005–2012

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# The Regional Level of Ukraine's Party System in 2005–2012<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article describes the results of a regional-level study of Ukrainian political parties' interactions. The study sought to identify the congruence or incongruence of the party affiliation of the regional executives and the heads of regional assemblies across Ukraine when Ukraine's democratic performance rose and fell. The study found that when democratic performance rose, so did regional-level, party-affiliation incongruence, with the greatest ideological incongruence occurring in regions with special institutional arrangements, such as Kyiv and Sevastopol. When Ukraine's democratic performance fell, the number of ideologically congruent regions rose. These shifts occurred because a decline in democratic performance leaves little institutional room for statewide opposition, and the main competitors of the ruling party in regional bodies of power are non-statewide parties and blocs. Thus, this article argues that political cleavages in a regionally diverse post-communist state do not automatically mirror the statewide party competition.

**Key Words:** Ukraine, regions, party system, party politics, congruence.



## Introduction

Party politics in Ukraine has been a popular subject of academic investigation. However, the regional dimension of party politics has been largely absent from national and international scholarship. Instead, academics have drawn conclusions about Ukraine's party system exclusively from the statewide (national) point of view; that is, on the parties' interactions at the statewide level. This approach ignores the developments of party politics at the sub-state level and results in an overly simplified understanding of party politics in Ukraine.

This article takes a different approach and, in so doing, attempts to add a regional perspective to academic discussions on the party system in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution<sup>2</sup> and before the collapse of the political regime of ex-president Viktor Yanukovich. In particular,

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- 1 The study presents research results of a Marie Curie project “Territorial Politics in Ukraine during Transition from Authoritarian Rule” that was conducted by the author at the University of Edinburgh under the supervision of Prof. Charlie Jeffery (2010–2012). The author acknowledges helpful comments and suggestions of Dr. Martin Brusis.
  - 2 The Orange Revolution was a massive civilian protest against the electoral fraud during the 2004 presidential elections. As a result, the “Orange” candidate Viktor Yushchenko gain presidency, while his opponent Viktor Yanukovich — the leader of the Party of Regions (PRU) — lost.

this article's study investigates the regional level of Ukraine's party system and draws a nuanced picture of parties competition when Ukraine's democratic performance rises and falls.

The article starts with a literature review on its subject, states its hypotheses, and describes its analytical framework, a framework derived from insights from the literature on democratization and territorial politics. It then explains its underlying study's results. These results confirm that political cleavages in a regionally diverse post-communist state do not automatically mirror the statewide parties competition.

## Literature Review and Hypotheses

The sub-state level of Ukraine's party system remains largely understudied. Indeed, most international and domestic academics investigate Ukraine's statewide party system.<sup>3</sup> A nuanced picture of party competition at the regional level in Ukraine has been rare, except in work by Matsuzato.<sup>4</sup>

At the time of the study, the regional level included the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, 24 *oblasts* [regions], and two cities with a special status — Kyiv and Sevastopol. After the study was completed, the Russian Federation occupied the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol. This article disregards that occupation.

In investigating the political parties' interactions at the regional level in Ukraine, this article's study excluded the electoral arena. It focused on the congruence or incongruence of regional executives' and the heads' of regional assemblies party affiliation across Ukraine. In other words, it examined the similarity of this variable across Ukraine's regions. Matsuzato<sup>5</sup> recognized that party affiliation of the key regional political actors is the fundamental criterion

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- 3 Vicky Hesli, "The 2006 Parliamentary Election in Ukraine," *Electoral Studies* 26 (2007): 507–33; Ivan Katchanovski, "Regional Political Divisions in Ukraine in 1991–2006," *Nationalities Papers* 34.5 (2006): 507–32; Mykola Riabchuk, "Dvi Ukrainy," ["Two Ukraines,"] *Krytyka* 10 (2001), accessed March 20, 2013, [http://spilka.us.org.ua/library/riabczuk\\_kr.html](http://spilka.us.org.ua/library/riabczuk_kr.html); Gwendolyn Sasse, "The 'New Ukraine': A State of Regions," in *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in the Conflict*, ed. Gwendolyn Sasse and James Hugh (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 69–100; Kataryna Wolczuk, "Catching up with 'Europe'? Constitutional Debates on the Territorial-Administrative Model in Independent Ukraine," *Regional and Federal Studies* 12.2 (2002): 65–88; Paul D'Anieri, "Ethnic Tensions and State Strategies: Understanding the Survival of the Ukrainian State," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 23.1 (2007): 4–29.
- 4 Kimitaka Matsuzato, "From Communist Boss Politics to Post-Communist Caciquismo: The Meso-Elite and Meso-Governments in Post-Communist Countries," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 34 (2001): 175–201; Kimitaka Matsuzato, "All Kuchma's Men: The Reshuffling of Ukrainian Governors and the Presidential Election of 1999," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 42.6 (2001): 416–39; Kimitaka Matsuzato, "From Ethno-Bonapartism to Centralized Caciquismo: Characteristics and Origins of the Tatarstan Political Regime, 1990–2000," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 17.4 (2001): 43–77.
- 5 Matsuzato, "From Communist Boss Politics," Matsuzato "All Kuchma's Men," Matsuzato, "From Ethno-Bonapartism to Centralized Caciquismo."

for investigating the sub-state dimensions of party systems and political regimes in post-communist states.

This study's key measure was party system polarization at the regional level from 2005 through 2012. Party system polarization at the regional level was identified in accordance with the main dividing line between the "Orange" and "White-blue" political parties and blocs — groups of parties aligned mainly for electoral purposes — at the statewide level. This study acknowledges that in Ukraine, as well as in most post-communist states, party affiliation is not necessarily synonymous with party membership. Party affiliation can mean running on a party's or a bloc's list or being a member of a party's or a bloc's faction.

During the period under study, the statewide party system was often regarded as bipolar because it resembled the ideological divide evident during the Orange Revolution (for the nuanced analysis of parties and blocs in Ukraine see Meleshevich,<sup>6</sup> Razumkov Centre<sup>7</sup>). The most severe case of ideological polarisation within the statewide party system occurred during the "cohabitation" of the "Orange" president and the "White-blue" prime minister. The resulting confrontation between the two was so intense that early parliamentary elections were scheduled for 2007.<sup>8</sup> Unlike in 2006, an "Orange" coalition was successfully formed after the early 2007 elections, and Yulia Tymoshenko became the prime minister for the second time.<sup>9</sup>

The hypotheses tested by this study stemmed from the classic approach toward studying party politics,<sup>10</sup> the literature on post-communist party systems,<sup>11</sup> and the literature on territorial party politics in democracies.<sup>12</sup>

Sartori, who understands ideological polarization as "distance," argues that the polarization of a party system reflects the character of social cleavages.<sup>13</sup> He believes that a divided society

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6 Andrey Meleshevich, *Party Systems in Post-soviet Countries: A Comparative Study of Political Institutionalization in the Baltic States, Russia and Ukraine* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

7 "Party System in Ukraine," Razumkov Centre, accessed January 18, 2013, <http://razumkov.org.ua/ukr/journal.php?y=2010&cat=156>.

8 Nathaniel Copsey, "The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections of 2007," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 24.2 (2008): 297–309.

9 Erik Herron, "The Parliamentary Election in Ukraine, September 2007," *Electoral Studies* 27 (2008): 547–77.

10 Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

11 Cameron Ross, "Regional Elections and Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 63.4 (2011): 641–62; Cameron Ross, "The Rise and Fall of Political Parties in Russia's Regional Assemblies," *Europe-Asia Studies, Special Issue: Russian Regional Politics under Putin and Medvedev* 63.3 (2011): 429–48.

12 Lori Thorlakson, "An Institutional Explanation of Party System Congruence: Evidence from Six Federations," *European Journal of Political Research* 46 (2007): 69–95; Lori Thorlakson, "Patterns of Party Integration, Influence and Autonomy in Seven Federations," *Party Politics* 15.2 (2009): 157–77; Charlie Jeffery and Dan Hough, "Understanding Post-Devolution Elections in Scotland and Wales in Comparative Perspective," *Party Politics* 15.2 (2009): 219–40.

13 Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*.

is likely to produce a highly polarized party system and that polarization becomes a natural consequence of voters' preferences and party politics in a divided democratic society. The literature on regional party systems under authoritarian rule stresses that a non-democratic political regime provides favorable conditions for establishing one-party rule at statewide and sub-state levels.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, regional autonomies do not make sub-state party systems autonomous from the central rule.<sup>15</sup> Research on democracies has found that multi-level party systems tend to be least congruent in polities with strong regional autonomies and regionalised social cleavages — in other words, regional diversity matters.<sup>16</sup>

The study's hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis 1. *In Ukraine — a diverse post-communist state — the regional level of the party system of Ukraine should not be congruent.*

Hypothesis 2. *When Ukraine's democratic record is low, the regional level of the party system should be congruent.*

Hypothesis 3. *In democratic Ukraine, the regional level of the party system should not be congruent, particularly in regional autonomies.*

## Analytical Framework

I studied the regional dimension of the Ukraine party system when its democratic record rises, as it did between 2005 and 2012, and falls, as it did between 2010 and 2012. Freedom House data reflect these changes (please see Table 1). I considered the criticism of this data's analytical shortcomings, in particular, the difficulty of clearly identifying a regime type within a population of so-called "hybrid" regimes.<sup>17</sup>

In late 2004, Ukraine experienced the Orange Revolution, which led to the rotation of political elites and to changes in the political system.<sup>18</sup> The 2004 constitutional reform, which fully came into force in 2006, weakened the president and strengthened the national parliament. Specifically, the parliamentary majority became responsible for suggesting the prime minister to the president.

In 2010, however, the Constitutional Court annulled the 2004 constitutional reform; the 2010 regional elections limited the opportunities for oppositional parties; and the key opposition leaders were sentenced to prison terms and could not contest the 2012 parliamentary elections.<sup>19</sup>

14 Ross, "Regional Elections," Ross, "The Rise and Fall of Political Parties."

15 Ross, "Regional Elections," Ross, "The Rise and Fall of Political Parties."

16 Thorlakson, "An Institutional Explanation," Thorlakson, "Patterns of Party Integration," Jeffery and Hough, "Understanding Post-Devolution Elections."

17 Carsten Q. Schneider, "Issues in Measuring Political Regimes," *DISC Working Paper Series 12* (2010): 14, accessed April 15, 2013, [https://disc.ceu.hu/sites/default/files/field\\_attachment/page/node-3320/discwp12a\\_0.pdf](https://disc.ceu.hu/sites/default/files/field_attachment/page/node-3320/discwp12a_0.pdf).

18 Robert Christensen, Edward Rakhimkulov and Charles Wise, "The Ukrainian Orange Revolution Brought More than a New President: What Kind of Democracy Will the Institutional Changes Bring?" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 38.2 (2005): 207–30.

19 OSCE. Observation of the parliamentary election in Ukraine (October 28, 2012). Election observation report of 2012.

**TABLE 1. DEMOCRATIC RECORD OF UKRAINE IN 2005–2012**Source: *Freedom House*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Democracy Score	4.50	4.21	4.25	4.25	4.39	4.39	4.61	4.82
National Democratic Governance	5.00	4.50	4.75	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.75
Electoral Process	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75
Civil Society	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
Independent Media	4.75	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75	4.00
Local Democratic Governance	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.50	5.50
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.50	6.00
Corruption	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00

Ukraine is one of the most regionally divided European states. Its “right bank,” or western Ukraine, is Ukrainian in terms of ethnicity, Ukrainian-speaking, agrarian, Catholic, and pro-European in terms of geopolitics. Its “left bank,” or eastern Ukraine is heavily populated with the Russians and is industrial, Orthodox, and geopolitically pro-Russian.<sup>20</sup>

Ukrainian regionalism, however, is more nuanced than a mere division of the country into a right and left bank. Those who speak Russian can represent ethnic minorities and an ethnic majority.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Wolczuk proves that political identity is not the same in the oblasts of Western Ukraine, and “[t]here is not a single regional divide in Ukraine, but many that overlap.”<sup>22</sup>

Yet, at the same time, Ukraine remains one of the most institutionally centralized states in Europe. The country is unitary, with an asymmetric Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Apart from Crimea, there are 24 sub-state territorial units [*oblasts*] and two cities with special status, Kyiv and Sevastopol. Crimean voters elect their regional parliament, which forms their regional government. Crimea’s Head of the Council of Ministers is appointed and dismissed with the consent of the President of Ukraine, as provided for in Article 136 of the Constitution of Ukraine.

20 Riabchuk, “Dvi Ukrainy.”

21 D’Anieri, “Ethnic Tensions and State Strategies.”

22 Wolczuk, “Catching up with ‘Europe’?”

Regional voters in *oblasts* elect assemblies, while regional executives — the heads of regional administrations — are centrally appointed. The heads of regional assemblies are elected in regional assemblies, not by direct popular vote.

Regional assemblies can express no confidence in the head of the respective regional state administrations. They also can affect statewide politics in Ukraine. In 2004, for instance, the regional assemblies refused to recognize the results of the 2004 presidential elections and largely contributed to the democratic uprisings during the Orange Revolution.

The party system in Ukraine from 2005 through 2012 was weak institutionally and volatile. Few national and international academics believed that the parties and blocs served to put mass interests above elite interests.

Domestic and international experts acknowledged that the “Orange” team was not united,<sup>23</sup> and sometimes confrontation within the team was severe. This negatively affected the life expectancy of “Orange” cabinets — the two Cabinets of Yulia Tymoshenko and one Cabinet of Yuriy Yekhanurov — and the “Orange” parliamentary coalitions. The major representatives of the “Orange” team included the party and the bloc chaired by President Yushchenko. This party and bloc included “Our Ukraine” in 2005; the bloc of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists; the People’s Rukh of Ukraine; the Party of Industrialists and Businessmen of Ukraine; the Party of Christian-Democratic Union; the Political Party “The National Union “Our Ukraine””; the Ukrainian Republican Party “Sobor” in 2006; and Our Ukraine — People’s Self Defence Bloc in 2007. Significantly, it also included the bloc led by Yulia Tymoshenko, the All-Ukrainian Association “Motherland” and the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party. Tymoshenko was Yushchenko’s closest ally during the Orange Revolution. Later, Yushchenko and Tymoshenko stood for elections separately and even opposed each other.

The “White-blue” team was centered on the Party of Regions (PRU) — the main loser of the Orange Revolution. Other parties shifted their affiliation between the two teams. During the Orange Revolution the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU) supported the Orange Revolution and stood for the 2006 elections as the member of the “Orange” team. Once in office, however, the SPU formed an “anti-Orange” parliamentary coalition with the PRU and the communists. The SPU did not pass the electoral threshold at the 2007 early parliamentary elections. The Lytvyn Bloc — the People’s Party, the Party of All-Ukrainian Association of the Left “Fairness,” and the Ukrainian Peasant Democratic Party — was the bloc of parties led by the parliamentary speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn that formed an “Orange” parliamentary coalition in 2007; however, in 2010 it, too, joined the “White-blue” team.

For analytical purposes, this study drew a distinction between statewide and non-statewide parties. Officially, Ukrainian parties and blocs are statewide. The 2001 Law “On Political Parties in Ukraine” prohibits regional, or non-statewide, parties. To be registered, a party must present 10 thousand voters’ signatures in not less than two-thirds of districts [*raions*] of two-thirds of Ukraine’s regions; that is, in 24 *oblasts*, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Kyiv, and Sevastopol.

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23 Henry Hale, “The Uses of Divided Power,” *Journal of Democracy* 21.3 (2010): 84–98; Copsey, “The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections of 2007.”

Parties in Ukraine, however, tend to have regionalized and fragmented electorates.<sup>24</sup> As used here, “non-statewide parties” (or blocs) are those parties (or blocs) that have no representation in the national parliament; they have seats only in one or more regional assembly. Non-statewide parties do not necessarily exploit a regionalist agenda. In most cases, they prioritize regional issues rather than statewide political battles. They also tend to obtain clientelistic and other links with well-established statewide parties or blocs.

From 2005 through 2012, non-statewide parties and blocs included the Chernovetskyi Bloc (Kyiv city branches of Christian-Liberal Party of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Party “Green Planet”), the United Centre, the Klymchuk Bloc (Volyn branches of the All-Ukrainian Association “Motherland” [“Batkivschchyna”]), the Republican-Christian Party, and the Ukrainian Conservative Party), and “Svoboda” [“Freedom”]. “Svoboda” was classified as non-statewide party until the 2012 parliamentary elections, when it gained parliamentary representation.

## Research Results

### *The Regional Level of the Party System of Ukraine in 2005–2009*

Between 2005 and 2009, the number of regional executives with party affiliation grew. After the 2004 constitutional reform fully came into force in 2006, regional executives were appointed and dismissed by the president with the consent of the prime minister. Because the president and the prime minister could have different party affiliations, appointing a “compromise” candidate sometimes became necessary. More than this, the “quota-principle” and the norms of the constitutional reform ensured the diversity of their party affiliation and precluded establishing “the party of power” in the regions. President Yushchenko followed the “quota-principle” when appointing regional executives to ensure that his appointees represented various “Orange” allies. As a result, by the end of 2005, only five of 27 regional executives had no party affiliation.

However, the “quota-principle” had important pitfalls. Two newly appointed regional executives from the People’s Party of Ukraine had to leave their posts soon after being appointed because of massive public and elite protests in their respective regions. As noted earlier, Lytvyn joined the “Orange” team during the Orange Revolution. Previously, he openly supported the “White-blue” presidential candidate Yanukovych. Not surprisingly, regional voters and elites did not perceive Lytvyn’s regional allies as the representatives of the “Orange” team. The protests were so severe and striking that the president dismissed the two executives and appointed new ones.

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24 Vicky Hesli, “The 2006 Parliamentary Election in Ukraine,” *Electoral Studies* 26 (2007): 507–33; Andrew Wilson and Sarah Birch, “Voting Stability, Political Gridlock: Ukraine’s 1998 Parliamentary Elections,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 51.6 (1999): 1039–68; Hinich Melvin et al., “A Spatial Analysis of Ukraine’s 1998 Parliamentary Elections,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15.2 (1999): 149–85; Sarah Birch, *Electoral Systems and Political Transformation in Post-Communist Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Lowell Barrington and Erik Herron, “One Ukraine or Many? Regionalism in Ukraine and its Political Consequences,” *Nationalities Papers* 32.1 (2004): 53–86; Nathaniel Copsey, “The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections of 2006,” *Representation* 42.4 (2006): 333–45.



The number of heads of regional assemblies with party affiliation also significantly increased. In 2005, there were 10 heads of regional assemblies without party affiliation (see Table 2). The main reason for this was the lack of institutional incentives: regional assemblies were elected according to the majoritarian electoral law (2002), which favored independent candidates over party members.<sup>25</sup> In 2005, the heads of regional assemblies and regional state administrations without party affiliation were in the Mykolaiv *oblast* in the south, the Kirovohrad *oblast* in the center, and the Chernivtsi *oblast* in the west. In 2005, in 12 out of 27 cases there were heads of regional state administrations and/or heads of regional assemblies without party affiliation.

In 2006 the situation changed. The 2006 regional assemblies were elected according to the proportional representation electoral law. No independent candidates allowed to stand for the 2006 regional elections. Only parties and blocs could run. As a result, all heads of regional assemblies obtained party affiliation (see Table 3).

Thus, as Tables 2 and 3 show, from 2006 through 2009, more regional executives and heads of regional assemblies were affiliated with a party than in 2005.

**TABLE 2. PARTY AFFILIATION OF THE HEADS OF REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATIONS (APPOINTED) AND THE HEADS OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (ELECTED IN REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES) IN 2005**

Source: *Official data and domestic analytical reports*

	Heads of regional state administrations	Heads of regional assemblies
<b>WITH PARTY AFFILIATION</b>		
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS (THE "ORANGE" TEAM)</b>		
Kyiv	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
Kyiv <i>oblast</i>	People's Party	People's Party
Lviv <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
Volyn <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	People's Party
Odesa <i>oblast</i>	Socialist Party of Ukraine	People's Party
Sumy <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
Ternopil <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY INCONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS (THE "ORANGE" TEAM VS. THE "BLUE-WHITE" TEAM)</b>		
Crimea	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Party of Regions
Zhytomyr <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (united)

25 "Political Elites of Ukrainian Regions," accessed May 11, 2013, <http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/ukregions/titulna.html>.

Rivne <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (united)
Kharkiv <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Party of Regions
Khmelnysk <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Party of Regions
Cherkasy <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (united)
Vinnytsia <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	People's Democratic Party
Luhansk <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Party of Regions
<b>WITHOUT PARTY AFFILIATION</b>		
Dnipropetrovsk <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	
Donetsk <i>oblast</i>	—	Party of Regions
Zakarpattia <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	
Zaporizhzhia <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	—
Ivano-Frankivsk <i>oblast</i>	Our Ukraine Bloc	—
Mykolaiv <i>oblast</i>	—	—
Kirovohrad <i>oblast</i>	—	—
Poltava <i>oblast</i>	Socialist Party of Ukraine	—
Sevastopol	—	Party of Regions
Kherson <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	—
Chernihiv <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	—
Chernivtsi <i>oblast</i>	—	—

**TABLE 3. PARTY AFFILIATION OF HEADS OF REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATIONS AND HEADS OF ASSEMBLIES IN 2006–2009**

Source: *Official data and domestic analytical reports*

	Heads of regional state administrations	Heads of regional assemblies
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
<i>THE "ORANGE" TEAM</i>		
<i>THE SAME PARTIES AND BLOCS</i>		
Ivano-Frankivsk <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
Lviv <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
Khmelnysk <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
Vinnytsia <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
Zakarpattia <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	"Our Ukraine" Bloc
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
<i>THE "ORANGE" TEAM</i>		
<i>DIFFERENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</i>		
Kyiv <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc
Volyn <i>oblast</i>	"Our Ukraine" Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc

Sumy <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc
Ternopil <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc/ United Centre, from 2007	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc
Zhytomyr <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	“Our Ukraine” Bloc (from 2008 — Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc)
Rivne <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc
Kirovohrad <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc
Cherkasy <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc
Chernivtsi <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc
Chernihiv <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BUT)

**IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS**

***THE “BLUE-WHITE” TEAM***

***THE SAME PARTIES AND BLOCS***

Crimea	Party of Regions	Party of Regions
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**IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS**

***THE “BLUE-WHITE” TEAM***

***DIFFERENT PARTIES AND BLOCS***

Sevastopol	People’s Democratic Party/ the United Centre, from 2008 ( <i>a shift to a non-statewide axe</i> )	Party of Regions
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**IDEOLOGICALLY INCONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS**

***THE “ORANGE” TEAM VS. THE “BLUE-WHITE” TEAM***

Odesa <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Kherson <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Kharkiv <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Luhansk <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Dnipropetrovsk <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Donetsk <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Zaporizhzhia <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Mykolaiv <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions
Poltava <i>oblast</i>	“Our Ukraine” Bloc	Party of Regions (PRU)

**A NON-STATEWIDE BLOC JOINS IN:**

Kyiv	“Our Ukraine” Bloc (OUB) Heads of regional state administrations	The Chernovetskyi Bloc Heads of regional assemblies
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<b>IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
<i>THE "ORANGE" TEAM</i>		
<i>THE SAME PARTIES AND BLOCS</i>		
Ivano-Frankivsk <i>oblast</i>	OUB	OUB
Lviv <i>oblast</i>	OUB	OUB
Khmelnitsk <i>oblast</i>	OUB	OUB
Vinnytsia <i>oblast</i>	OUB	OUB
Zakarpattia <i>oblast</i>	OUB	OUB
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
<i>THE "ORANGE" TEAM</i>		
<i>DIFFERENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</i>		
Kyiv <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
Volyn <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
Sumy <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
Ternopil <i>oblast</i>	OUB/United Centre, from 2007	BUT
Zhytomyr <i>oblast</i>	OUB	OUB (from 2008 — BUT)
Rivne <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
Kirovohrad <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
Cherkasy <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
Chernivtsi <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
Chernihiv <i>oblast</i>	OUB	BUT
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
<i>THE "BLUE-WHITE" TEAM</i>		
<i>THE SAME PARTIES AND BLOCS</i>		
Crimea	PRU	PRU
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY CONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
<i>THE "BLUE-WHITE" TEAM</i>		
<i>DIFFERENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</i>		
Sevastopol	PDP/from 2008 the United Centre ( <i>a shift to a non- statewide axe</i> )	PRU
<b>IDEOLOGICALLY INCONGRUENT PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
<i>THE "ORANGE" TEAM VS. THE "BLUE-WHITE" TEAM</i>		
Odesa <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
Kherson <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
Kharkiv <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
Luhansk <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
Dnipropetrovsk <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU

Donetsk <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
Zaporizhzhia <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
Mykolaiv <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
Poltava <i>oblast</i>	OUB	PRU
<b>A NON-STATEWIDE BLOC JOINS IN:</b>		
Kyiv	OUB	The Chernovetskyi Bloc

When Ukraine's democratic performance improved from 2005 through 2009, the regional level of the party system was not congruent. In 2005, it was ideologically congruent in seven cases out of 27. In the western macroregion and in Vinnytsia *oblast* in the geographical center of Ukraine, regional executives and the heads of regional assemblies represented the same "Orange" parties and blocs. In the central macroregion and in two cases in western Ukraine, the ideological congruence of the regional level of the party system was achieved with the help of different "Orange" parties and blocs.

Nevertheless, the regional level of the party system was ideologically incongruent in 8 out of 27 cases. This incongruence, found mainly in southern and eastern Ukraine, is explained by the regionalized social cleavages there. This ideological polarization had significant implications. As Christensen et al. predicted, regional assemblies in Luhansk and Kharkiv *oblasts* in eastern Ukraine attempted to use their constitutional right to express no confidence in the heads of respective state administrations.<sup>26</sup> This also occurred in the Donetsk *oblast*, where the head of regional state administration had no party affiliation, while the head of regional assembly was the member of the PRU.

A few regional assemblies in eastern and southern Ukraine made decisions that were the responsibility of the national parliament. For example, they voted for the official status of the Russian language in their respective areas. The courts, however, quickly annulled these initiatives.

In 2006, the extent of ideological polarization of the regional level of the party system increased from 8 to 10 cases. Apart from southern and eastern Ukraine, the regional level of the party system was ideologically polarized in Poltava *oblast* and Kyiv (the central macroregion).

Non-statewide parties or blocs also played a role in the party system's regional level in several regions. In Kyiv, for instance, the directly elected mayor represented the regional bloc of parties — the Chernovetskyi Bloc. The Chernovetskyi Bloc did not stand for elections anywhere else and largely ignored the political struggle between "Orange" and "White-blue" teams while campaigning.

In 2007–2010, a similar situation happened in Ternopil *oblast* in the west of Ukraine and, in 2008–2010, in Sevastopol in the south of Ukraine. Kyiv and Sevastopol are cities with special institutional arrangements, unlike the Ternopil *oblast*. The ideological congruence of the regional level party system in Crimea and Sevastopol (southern Ukraine) resulted from their respective institutional structure — Crimea is an Autonomous Republic and Sevastopol has special institutional arrangements. Interestingly, the ideological congruence of the regional

26 Christensen et al., "The Ukrainian Orange Revolution."

level party system in Crimea and Sevastopol contrasted with the congruence of the statewide party system; it was not “Orange,” but “White-blue.”

Thus, when Ukraine's democratic performance rose, so did the ideological incongruence of parties' interactions in nine of 27 cases. The regional level of the party system appears to be least ideologically congruent in institutional autonomies. In two of three cases, the territorial units — Kyiv and Sevastopol — had special institutional arrangements. This confirms Hypotheses 1 and 3.

### *The Regional Level of the Party System of Ukraine in 2010–2012*

After the 2010 regional elections, the PRU gained dominant positions in regional assemblies. There were no regional elections in 2010 in Kyiv because early regional elections were held there in 2007. In 2010, however, the directly elected mayor of Kyiv de facto stopped performing his duties for the benefit of the presidential appointee. This also happened even in regions where the PRU previously suffered from low public support. The 2010 regional elections followed the mixed electoral law; however, its majoritarian component did not allow any independent candidates. Thus, all heads of regional assemblies had a party affiliation.

Following the 2010 presidential elections, all heads of regional state administrations were rotated. The majority of the newly appointed regional executives were PRU members. Only one had no party affiliation — the executive in the Lviv *oblast* in western Ukraine. One of possible reasons for this singular exception was that the PRU's party roots were weak in the region. In the Volyn *oblast* in western Ukraine the newly appointed head of the regional state administration was the leader of the non-statewide bloc of political parties — the Klymchuk Bloc. This regional bloc was successful in the regional elections and did not oppose the PRU.

There is little room for statewide opposition in the sub-state institutional arena. In only six regions did PRU members not take the key positions in regional assemblies — the five regions in western Ukraine and the capital of Kyiv. In the former instance, regionalized social cleavages help explain this outcome.

As a side effect of the lack of institutional room for statewide opposition, in a few regions the heads of regional state administrations and regional assemblies represented non-statewide parties or blocs. The PRU and the People's Party of Ukraine (PPU) were the partners in the coalition in the national parliament. The PRU's leaders held the presidency and the post of the prime minister. The leader of the PPU was the speaker of the national parliament. There was only one region with a head of regional state administration without party affiliation — the Lviv *oblast* in western Ukraine. In the Zakarpattia *oblast* the head of regional assembly was the representative of the United Centre. In three other cases, the heads of regional assemblies were members of the “Freedom” Party [“Svoboda”]. In the 2010 regional elections, the Freedom Party performed particularly well in those regions where the statewide party led by Yulia Tymoshenko [“Batkivshchyna”] was not able to contest elections due to the legal constraints and inadequate administrative resources.<sup>27</sup>

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27 “Hore Peremozhenym,” [“Grief to the Defeated,”] Situations Modeling Agency. The agency's report at the round table on the 2010 regional elections. November 11, 2010; Andreas Umland, “Ukraine's Party

When Ukraine's democratic performance declines, the majority of regions witness striking ideological congruence in the parties' interactions in the regional institutions studied. This supports Hypothesis 2. In the rare cases of incongruence in the party system's regional level, the dominant statewide party is "opposed" by the non-state-wide party or bloc.

**TABLE 4. PARTY AFFILIATION OF HEADS OF REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATIONS AND HEADS OF ASSEMBLIES IN 2010–2012**

Source: *Official data and domestic analytical reports*

	Heads of regional assemblies, 2010	Heads of regional state administrations, 2010
<b>THE SAME PARTIES AND BLOCS</b>		
Crimea	PRU	PRU
Vinnytsia <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Dnipropetrovsk <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Donetsk <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Zhytomyr <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Zaporizhzhia <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Kyiv <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Kirovohrad <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Luhansk <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Mykolaiv <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Odesa <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Poltava <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Rivne <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU

Sumy <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Kharkiv <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Kherson <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Khmelnysk <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Cherkasy <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Chernivtsi <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Chernihiv <i>oblast</i>	PRU	PRU
Sevastopol	PRU	PRU
<b>NON-STATEWIDE PARTIES OR BLOCS JOIN IN:</b>		
Kyiv	The Chernovetskyi Bloc	PRU
Zakarpattia <i>oblast</i>	United Centre	PRU
Volyn <i>oblast</i>	The People's Party of Ukraine (it cooperates with PRU in this electoral cycle)	The Klymchuk Bloc
Ivano-Frankivsk <i>oblast</i>	"Svoboda"	PRU
Ternopil <i>oblast</i>	"Svoboda"	PRU
<b>NO PARTY AFFILIATION</b>		
Lviv <i>oblast</i>	"Svoboda"	No party affiliation

The study finds that from 2009 through 2012 the statewide and regional levels of the party system became more congruent than they were from 2005 to 2009. The number of regions where the regional level of the party system was ideologically congruent increased. While this confirms Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 1 is not supported when Ukraine's democratic performance falls.



## Conclusions

This study has captured a nuanced picture of parties competition at the regional level in Ukraine from 2005 through 2012. It has shown that political cleavages in a regionally diverse post-communist state do not automatically mirror the statewide parties competition.

The study analyzed parties' interactions at the regional level in Ukraine to identify the congruence or incongruence of party affiliation of regional executives and the heads of regional assemblies across Ukraine when the country's democratic record rises and falls.

The study tested three hypotheses based on the classic approach of studying party politics,<sup>28</sup> the literature on post-communist party systems,<sup>29</sup> and the literature on territorial party politics in democracies.<sup>30</sup> It found that the improvements in democratic performance are associated with the incongruence of the regional level of the party system. Moreover, the regional level of the party system appears to be least ideologically congruent in regions with special institutional arrangements. In two cases out of three, the territorial units have special institutional arrangements: Kyiv and Sevastopol.

The study concludes that regional diversity does affect the regional level of the party system of a regionally diverse state under democratic rule. When democratic performance fell, the number of regions where the regional level of the party system was ideologically congruent increased. The decline in democratic performance leaves little institutional room for statewide opposition, and the main competitors of the ruling party in regional bodies of power are non-statewide parties and blocs.

This study's findings can be tested further with the help of other cases from post-communist states that combine severe regional diversity with institutional centralization.

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28 Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*.

29 Ross, "Regional Elections," Ross, "The Rise and Fall of Political Parties."

30 Thorlakson, "An Institutional Explanation of Party System Congruence," Thorlakson, "Patterns of Party Integration," Jeffery and Hough, "Understanding Post-Devolution Elections."

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MAP 1. THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF UKRAINE.



Western macroregion includes Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytsk, and Chernivtsi *oblasts*; central macroregion represents Vinnytsia, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Cherkasy, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Chernihiv *oblasts* and the city of Kyiv; southern macroregion includes Odesa, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv *oblasts*, Crimea, and Sevastopol; eastern macroregion represents Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk *oblasts*.



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