

Assessing Bureaucratic Technical Parties in Postcommunist Politics: Evidence from Ukraine's 2012 Parliamentary Election Administration

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An apocryphal quote, widely attributed to Joseph Stalin, states: "It doesn't matter who casts the votes, but who counts the votes." This assertion emphasizes the potentially pivotal role that electoral administration practices may play in determining election outcomes. Prior to the 2000 presidential elections in the United States, election scholars largely marginalized the study of election administration. But, the decisive effects of ballot design, coupled with concerns about the methods of recording votes, directed scholarly attention to additional influences on the vote (e.g., Wand et al 2001; Herron and Sekhon 2003). In recent years, the expanding research agenda on election integrity (e.g., Elklit and Reynolds 2005; Norris 2013) has directed increased attention to the quality of election processes and administration (e.g., Alvarez, Atkinson, and Hall 2013; Birch 2012), the detection of fraud (e.g. Alvarez, Hall, and Hyde 2008), and a more systematic understanding of the role that observation may play in deterring improper behavior (Kelley 2012; Hyde 2007; Herron 2010).

Despite growing interest in comparative election administration (e.g., Mozaffar and Schedler 2002; Birch 2008 and 2012; Hartlyn, McCoy, and Mustillo 2008), few scholars have systematically analyzed the effects of election administration on the results produced in polling stations.¹ Election management bodies (EMBs) at all levels of the administrative process play crucial roles in registering candidates and voters, making site decisions that affect accessibility, counting and certifying votes on election day, and adjudicating disputes. The organization and staffing of EMBs varies cross nationally, but even at the highest levels of EMBs, partisanship can be a key factor in allocating decision-making positions. According to one study, party affiliation helped guide the staffing of EMBs in 55 countries, or one-third of all countries where information about EMB membership could be evaluated.² Partisanship can create conflicts of interest; EMB members must render decisions at all levels of the administrative process that could affect their co-partisans or allies. Further, depending on the staffing rules, as well as the institutional provisions for party and candidate registration, partisan staffing of EMBs can generate incentives for political actors to attempt to stack EMBs with sympathetic members.

This paper directly investigates the phenomenon of partisan EMB staffing, using extensive data from Ukraine. In many post-communist countries including Ukraine, strong "parties-of-power" have developed, dominating elections and governance (Herron 2009). Parties-of-power and other major parties have often relied upon small parties, commonly called "technical parties", to buttress their efforts to win elections. Technical parties are most often understood as groups that are officially registered as political parties but lack many of the essential ingredients typically associated with competitive parties: they have weak or ephemeral organizations, they contest few (or perhaps no) seats, they campaign minimally, and they win only a handful of votes. However, technical parties can play a disproportionately large role in the administration of elections, participating as observers and commission members at all levels of the elections hierarchy.

Despite the perception that technical parties are ubiquitous and influential, the effects of their participation in election administration have not been systematically analyzed. We use a unique dataset identifying officials assigned to polling stations in Ukraine's 2012 parliamentary election

¹ A notable exception is Sjoberg (2013).

² This assessment is based on data from the Ace Project (<http://aceproject.org/>).

to assess how partisan staffing of polling stations affects election outcomes, while controlling for other key factors that may determine a party's performance.

The paper proceeds in four parts. In the first section, we outline our theoretical expectations about the role of minor parties in elections, and classify different types of minor parties. In the second section, we describe the institutional and political features of Ukraine, focusing on EMBs. In the third section, we describe our data and hypotheses. In the fourth section, we present two layers of analysis: we empirically distinguish "bureaucratic technical parties" from other minor parties, and we demonstrate that the presence of partisan-affiliated polling station officers directly affects election outcomes for co-partisans. We conclude by discussing the implications for scholarship and practitioners.

Theoretical Expectations

Role of Minor Parties in Elections

The literature on party politics emphasizes a distinguishing feature of parties: they are organizations aiming to "[place] their avowed representatives in government positions" (Janda 1980, 5). Indeed, most research emphasizes competitive parties, often relegating minor parties to a residual "other" category.³ However, minor parties can exert a non-trivial effect on electoral competition.

Most of the research on minor parties focuses on those that strive to gain seats, but occupy a narrow "niche" in the constellation of parties. These parties are competitive, but may only be capable of securing a small number of seats rather than enough support to gain a majority or near-majority in the legislative body. Central to the discussion about these parties is an emphasis on the apparent differences between "niche" and "mainstream" parties (Adams, Ezrow, and Glasgow 2006), especially regarding position-taking. Niche parties tend to adhere to ideological principles that render them less likely to emphasize broad platforms, focusing instead on other issues salient to them (Wagner 2012; Meguid 2008). Even though niche parties are small, they strive to influence policy especially by winning elections and participating in government.

We focus on a different subset of minor parties, often called "technical parties", whose organizing principle is not ideology or policy; indeed, they participate in elections without aspiring to win seats for themselves.⁴ Rather, these formally registered "technical parties" allegedly serve in a supporting role for major political parties and candidates. In other words, they are shadow parties that seek to help place their "avowed representatives" in government, but these representatives are associated with a different party label.

Technical parties can be subdivided into at least two categories: "clone" parties that are tasked with siphoning votes from competitors, and "bureaucratic" parties that are tasked with influencing the election administration process to provide advantages to their partners. "Clones" are groups or candidates with names similar to existing competitors, registered in an effort to weaken the primary contestant by confusing voters. For example, in the 2002 parliamentary election, the Communist Party of Workers and Peasants contested alongside the Communist

³ Katz and Mair's (2005) often cited party classification is based on the assumption that parties fit a Janda-type definition in which they are primarily electoral contenders.

⁴ See, for example, Wilson's (2005) discussion of virtual parties.

Party of Ukraine (the "rightful" holder of the label). An effort to hijack partisan supporters was even more egregious in the 2010 local elections when the official Fatherland Party withdrew from competition in the L'viv region because a rogue organization had taken over the party label (Herron and Boyko 2011). Clones may also represent long-dormant political groups, such as Hromada, claim the name of a former party although they may not be successors to the previous organization. The primary purpose of clone parties is to draw voters away from an alternative party that is a challenger to the clone party's patron organization.

"Bureaucratic" technical parties also participate in elections, but their main purpose is not to siphon voters from other parties. Instead, they are registered to participate in the administrative process in ways that positively affect the performance of their patron party, or negatively affect the performance of their patron party's foes. By gaining a plurality or majority of votes on polling station-level or district-level election commissions via allied bureaucratic technical parties, major parties can influence crucial decisions that cumulatively may help secure victories.⁵

In sum, we anticipate that minor parties can affect elections in several ways. The primary focus in research has been on minor party advocacy of niche issues, and potential their role as spoilers for major parties. We propose that minor parties may also influence elections through the administrative process, especially where EMB staffing is determined in whole or part by partisanship.

Partisanship and EMBs

Sjoberg (2013) develops and tests a theory of EMB influence over the vote, relying on the random assignment of officer positions in Armenia's 2013 presidential election. He finds that PECs chaired by ruling party officials were associated with enhanced results for the ruling party candidate, and that fraud forensics tests are consistent with vote falsification as the mechanism by which this outcome was achieved. We extend Sjoberg's research to encompass the role of bureaucratic technical parties.

EMBs may be populated by experts, partisans, or a combination of these types of election professionals. The formal use of partisanship, and especially the proportional allocation of positions, is designed to ensure representation and balance on EMBs. Non-partisan EMBs could be staffed with "secret" partisans; the formal use of partisanship as a criterion for membership addresses this potential concern. However, "secret" partisans could pack EMBs through other

⁵ One of the authors witnessed the effects of bureaucratic party administrative control during the 2004 presidential election. The polling station commission was populated by representatives of many candidates that had not passed through the first round of competition. However, these representatives colluded with a major candidate's representative to render decisions that benefited that candidate. Several dozen ballots were questionable, and their validity was determined by a vote of the commission. In most cases, the voter's preference was clear: a mark had been made in a box adjacent to the name of the preferred candidate. However, on these questionable ballots, stray marks were also present. In some cases, the name of the opponent was crossed out (likely due to Ukraine's balloting procedures in 1994 and earlier in which negative ballots were used). Technically, these ballots violated the election law, as only a mark in favor of a single candidate could be counted. In all of the cases where the questionable ballots would support the regime's favored candidate, the election commission voted to validate the ballots. In all of the cases where the questionable ballots would have supported the opposition candidate, the election commission voted to invalidate the ballots. Support from technical candidate representatives facilitated this outcome.

mechanisms, especially if party registration rules permit the proliferation of small groups and their access to representation on EMBs.

In principle, if EMB staff acted as specialists with no partisan intentions, variation in the partisanship of EMB staff and EMB officers should not be associated with variation in election outcomes. If partisan staff and officers were disproportionately allocated to areas of core support for their affiliated parties, an association might be present, but is less likely to be causal. That is, legitimate partisan mobilization could produce favorable election outcomes, and disproportionately high staffing levels by co-partisans in those areas could be a coincidental circumstance. However, partisans in critical EMB decision-making positions, like officer roles, could improperly influence outcomes. EMBs verify voters, count ballots, determine the status of potentially invalid ballots, and complete documentation for the vote compilation process. Biased decision-making could affect the process, reflected in election outcomes.

The underlying assumptions of our analysis flow from these general theoretical expectations. The first assumption is that some parties participating in the administrative process have covert partisan affiliations with major parties, and that these affiliations may be revealed through personnel movements. The second assumption is that the partisan affiliations of polling station commissioners, especially officers, may be associated with outcomes. The third assumption is that if we control for areas of regional strength, where party performance may be the result of mobilization efforts, officer partisanship should not be associated with outcomes if officials are behaving neutrally. The next section of the paper further discusses these expectations given the institutional features of Ukraine's 2012 parliamentary elections.

Institutional Context

Brief History of Ukrainian Elections

Election quality in Ukraine has varied over time. During the 1990s, elections were generally described as failing to meet international standards, but showing progress. After extensive fraud in the 2004 presidential election precipitated the Orange Revolution, election quality improved. The 2006 and 2007 parliamentary elections, as well as the 2010 presidential election, were labeled as free and fair by most international monitoring organizations. The 2010 local elections were subjected to more criticism, with evidence of fraud and manipulation present in some municipalities. As the 2012 elections approached, local and international actors raised concerns about the potential for manipulation to influence election outcomes.⁶

Election rules also varied since independence. The first parliamentary election used a majority-runoff system that was replaced by a mixed electoral system in 1998 and 2002. After experimenting with nationwide proportional representation in the 2006 and 2007 parliamentary elections, Ukraine returned to a mixed electoral system in 2012. The election law replicated many of the provisions in past elections, dividing the Verkhovna Rada's 450 seats evenly between PR and SMD, allocating PR seats at the national level via LR-Hare, and prohibiting dual candidacy. Eighty-seven parties and five factions officially took part in the parliamentary elections; twenty-two gained ballot access for the PR vote⁷ and the remainder nominated candidates to SMD constituencies and staff to EMBs.

⁶ International observers and researchers (Sjoberg and Herron 2013) noted evidence of illicit activities in 2012.

⁷ One party withdrew from the list vote prior to election day.

Rules for Staffing EMBs

The system of election administration in Ukraine consists of three levels: the Central Election Commission (CEC), 225 District Election Commissions (DECs), and 33,762 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs).⁸ Unlike the CEC, DECs and PECs are temporary institutions whose lifespan is dictated by the election calendar. According to the current law, DECs are formed by the CEC no later than sixty-two days before the election, and PECs are formed by their respective DECs no later than thirty-one days before the election. DECs consist of 12 to 18 members, and PECs include 10 to 24 members, depending on the number of registered voters assigned to cast ballots in the station. Each DEC and PEC also has a leadership team that includes a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson⁹ and Secretary.

In addition to election rule changes noted above, the law introduced new provisions affecting the allocation of places on electoral commissions. In 2012, lotteries determined DEC and PEC staffing. At the DEC level, the staffing lottery was conducted by the CEC; at the PEC level, the lottery was held by the corresponding DEC. The new provisions limited variation in the staffing of PECs and also created conditions in which major contenders could be locked out of representation on EMBs.¹⁰

Subjects of the election process (SEPs) - factions of parliamentary parties and political parties - were permitted to participate in the lotteries to form DECs and PECs.¹¹ Authorized SEPs were required to nominate and file a list of potential representatives, additionally providing signed confirmation from potential staff members indicating their willingness to work on election commissions. Each parliamentary faction had the right to place one of its representatives on each DEC and PEC, but the remaining political parties and SMD candidates were required to earn access via a lottery system if more contestants requested seats than were available in any given DEC or PEC.

In April and September 2012, the CEC adopted resolutions on the lottery process for DECs and PECs respectively. Lots with political party names (and SMD candidates in case of PECs) that nominated commissioners were sealed in envelopes and placed in a cylinder. A random draw established the priority order for all SEPs submitting candidates. Afterwards, each commission was filled by the SEP nominees in order of the lottery results. For the DECs, if an SEP received a commission position via the lottery, but had no individual nominated for that position, the right for representation on that commission passed to the next SEP in the lottery ranking, continuing until all positions were filled.¹² The mechanism was slightly different for PECs, with the row, not party, being the primary unit for staffing.

Each SEP that nominated representatives to election commissions was entitled to a proportional share of leadership positions. The share of officers for each SEP was determined by calculating

⁸ Ukraine has 33,646 polling stations in the country, and 116 abroad, for a total of 33,762.

⁹ Some small PECs (under 50 registered voters) were permitted to omit the Deputy Chairperson position.

¹⁰ For example, UDAR, a major opposition party, was excluded from DEC representation.

¹¹ SMD candidates were also considered SEPs in the constituencies and permitted to have representatives on PECs only.

¹² It is worth stressing that the lottery is conducted only one time and its results are applied to all commissions. In other words, each DEC fills its places according to one lottery, and each PEC according to the DEC lottery.

the number of candidates nominated to election commissions in relation to the total number of positions available on the commissions. Further, leadership positions were to be distributed spatially in an approximately uniform manner to balance leadership assignments among small, medium, and large PECs. Lastly, no party could receive multiple officer positions on a single commission.¹³ The formula for officer allocation was the following:

A (the share of officer positions for the particular SEP) = (**B** (number of nominees from this SEP to the determined category of election commissions) * **C** (total number of nominees that became members of election commissions for the determined category (small, medium, large) from all SEPs)) / **D** (general amount of managerial positions for the determined category of election commissions).

$$A = (B * C) / D$$

If all available positions were not filled, the SEP with the highest remainder would receive the next available position until all positions were filled.¹⁴

The formula allocates the total number of officers that each SEP should receive, but the specific appointment of an individual to a particular PEC was generated by the DEC. In practice, these appointments were negotiated among key players in the SEPs and DEC. The CEC's protocols identify only two rules for appointment: the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary should be from different SEPs, and the overall territorial distribution should be equitable. In practice, DEC partisanship influenced assignments; they were not randomized.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1 shows the outcome of the PEC-level lotteries¹⁵ and the distribution of positions to parties.¹⁶ Party factions were well represented, as expected given their guaranteed position on election commissions. Some parties had many nominated candidates on the party lists and in districts, and also many personnel members on PECs, such as the Party of Regions, UDAR, and Communist Party. However, many parties were well represented in PECs as members and officers but did not extensively participate in the elections as candidates, including European Party, People's Rukh, Citizen's Position, Reforms and Order, Youth Party, People's Initiative, Veche Party, Union.Chornobyl.Ukraine, Just Ukraine, Slavic Party, State Party, Solidarity of Women Party, Agrarian Party, Christian Democratic Party, and many others. Our expectation is that the parties over-represented on commissions relative to electoral participation form the core of technical parties participating in the election administration process.

Data and Hypotheses

¹³ The order for distribution of managerial positions in the PECs was determined by CEC Protocol 89 issued on May 17, 2012.

¹⁴ In case of a tie, the SEP that registered its list of nominees earlier with the DEC was to have precedence.

¹⁵ In practice, not all DEC's conducted the lottery correctly. Some DEC's confused the logic of ranking, some of them mixed up the meaning of the numbers on the lots. In some cases the CEC electronic system did not accept incorrect inputs, requiring the DEC's to conduct the draw once more. In other cases, when there were not enough members of DEC to provide quorum, the decision-making improperly included other officials and staff.

¹⁶ Candidate-affiliated representatives are omitted.

Our analysis relies on election results and electoral commission personnel data acquired from the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine. Election results data are posted on the CEC website, at the district (DEC) and polling station (PEC) levels.¹⁷ The combination of these two data sources permits us to identify bureaucratic technical parties and their patrons, and assess if the presence of affiliated officers affects election outcomes.

The election data provide results recorded on election protocols in each PEC. For each PEC, we have its unique identifier, the number of voters registered, the number of votes cast, and the distribution of votes across political parties contesting seats. The country was divided into 225 DECs, and within those districts, 33,646 PECs.¹⁸

Electoral commission personnel data are public records collected by the Central Electoral Commission, with lists of proposed members submitted for the process of electoral commission formation, and a final list of the personnel assigned to the commissions on election day. CIFRA, a Ukrainian research organization directed by one of the authors, filed a public records request with the CEC to gain access to DEC and PEC records. The CEC provided the records, and CIFRA converted the information into electronic records that include commissioner names, partisan affiliations, and positions (e.g., officers or standard members). Our personnel list includes 663,162 entries, including individuals who were present for the initial registration period and/or listed as commission members for election day.¹⁹

The personnel data include important features for our analysis. The initial registration data differ from the final election day data in several ways. While party allocations are generally stable, the individual personnel entries are not. Some changes are what we label "standard", characterized by the presence of an individual on the initial PEC list and his/her absence on the final PEC list. We labeled some personnel changes "nonstandard", characterized by the presence of the same person in the initial or final dataset, but a change in their PEC assignment, position on the commission, party affiliation, or some combination of these three characteristics. We are especially interested in affiliation changes, and these form the core of our data to identify bureaucratic technical parties. We tracked the affiliation changes between party pairs, calculating the total number of personnel who "migrated" to and from the party organizations. In this analysis, we focus on the party factions as our patron, or root, organizations, and identify the number of individuals who were donated to other parties (party affiliation changes from the faction to another party from the initial to final personnel data) or who were received from other parties (party affiliation changes to the faction from the initial to final personnel data).

The foundation of our argument about identifying bureaucratic technical parties is that these groups are more likely to share personnel with their patrons than with other groups. As personnel migration between pairs of parties increases, they are more likely to reflect patron-technical party relationships. Because of the large number of individuals who moved from party to party, and the presence of both small and large scale movements, we focus our attention on the party-

¹⁷ Election data are available at <http://www.cvk.gov.ua/>

¹⁸ As noted above, 116 polling stations were abroad, yielding a total of 33,762.

¹⁹ Based on earlier research conducted in L'viv by CIFRA, personnel changes are not limited to the initial entries and election day staffing. While changes may have taken place in between these reporting periods, we do not have national-level data for changes that took place in between these periods.

faction pairs that exhibit the strongest personnel sharing relationships. We classify bureaucratic technical parties as those parties whose proportion of personnel movements with established party factions are one standard deviation or higher than the established party's mean.

Based on this definition of bureaucratic technical parties, we can further evaluate if their activities are associated with the performance of their patron parties. Our expectation, noted above, is that in the presence of neutral PEC officials, the identity of officers should not affect results, especially given the provision to equitably distribute PEC personnel and officers across the territory of each DEC. These underlying expectations lead to two related sets of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: The presence of technical party-affiliated officers is likely to be associated with improved performance for the patron party at the PEC level. Specifically, the presence of an affiliated chair (H1a), deputy chair (H1b), secretary (H1c) is likely to be associated with higher performance for the patron party than in PECs without technical party-affiliated officers.

Hypothesis 2: The presence of party-affiliated officers is likely to be associated with improved performance for the patron party at the PEC level. Specifically, the presence of an affiliated chair (H2a), deputy chair (H2b), secretary (H2c) is likely to be associated with higher performance for the patron party than in PECs without party-affiliated officers.

Several additional factors, measured at the PEC-level, could affect results, and we discuss these potential influences in our description of the additional explanatory variables below. Notably, we control for PEC-level turnout, PEC size, the volume of personnel changes, and the region of the country in which the PEC is located to account for alternate explanations of how the vote for Batkivshchyna and the Party of Regions might be produced.

Analysis

Identification of Bureaucratic Technical Parties

PEC personnel data permit us to track how registered political parties and factions shared individuals, identifying how extensively party pairs interacted in the staffing of polling stations. Our underlying expectation is that higher levels of personnel sharing are indicative of closer relationships between parties. Our baseline for measuring technical parties is their relationship with a patron, which we identify as the party factions. As we noted above, party factions are the formal organizations of parliamentary parties that were guaranteed representation on DECs and PECs. We used the party personnel data to track migrations to and from factions from the initial phase to election day registration.

Parties traded personnel, in some cases across ideological boundaries. However, for many pairs of parties, the number of individuals who moved was quite small, suggesting that their relationship might not be as integrated as we expect from patron parties and their affiliated technical parties. We chose to conservatively identify bureaucratic technical parties associated with the major factions, including only those parties whose level of interaction with the faction was one standard deviation or higher for donation or receipt of personnel.²⁰ This decision rule identifies the bureaucratic technical parties associated with factions.

²⁰ Specifically, we evaluated how each party contributed to the proportion of personnel donations/receipts, calculated the mean and standard deviation, and classified based on this value.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 2 shows the five party factions and their affiliated technical parties, along with the year that the organization was officially registered with the Ministry of Justice. The table reveals three distinct groups of party factions; two pairs of parties (Our Ukraine-People's Self Defense and Batkivshchyna, and People's Party and the Party of Regions) share many of the same technical parties, and the Communist Party has no affiliated technical parties aside from its own electoral party.

The opposition-oriented factions, OU-PSD and Batkivshchyna shared larger than average personnel movements with the European Party, Reforms and Order, Citizen's Position, and People's Rukh in addition to the electoral party for Batkivshchyna. None of these parties were registered solely to participate in the 2012 competition; all of them have existed for at least three election cycles. Rukh gained seats as an independent party in early elections, and contested in coalition with opposition parties in subsequent elections along with Reforms and Order. The European Party and Citizen's Position also contested as units in a party bloc. The People's Party and Party of Regions also shared technical parties, and both had a larger number of small parties sharing personnel than did the opposition factions or Communist Party. Many of the technical parties associated with both of these factions have long histories as registered organizations in Ukraine; only two (People's Initiative and Russian Unity) were new for the 2012 elections.

Insert Figures 1-4 about here

Figures 1-4 further display the relationship of technical parties to the patron factions. The exterior circle identifies the total amount of personnel exchange within the pair. The central circle shows the number of individuals received by the patron, and the inner circle shows the number of individuals donated to by the patron. The technical parties are arrayed by magnitude, beginning at the top of the circle and continuing clockwise. These figures include both technical parties and electoral parties affiliated with the patron party faction. For example, Figure 2 for the Batkivshchyna Faction also includes personnel movement to/from the electoral party Batkivshchyna which was separately registered for electoral administration purposes. The figures also show the magnitude of personnel movement between parties; these figures do not encompass all movements, but only those among identified technical parties and related electoral parties.

In sum, this section has established that small parties contesting in Ukraine's 2012 parliamentary election shared personnel with established parties at different rates. Moreover, the identity of the most active donors and recipients varies among party groups, with the opposition and regime supporters sharing clusters of technical parties while the Communist Party was largely insulated from this activity. Our fundamental assertion is that these closely related minor parties are most likely bureaucratic technical parties that are designed to serve their patrons in election administration decisions. Their presence on the commissions, especially in officer roles, could influence how PECs conduct their work and exert an effect on election outcomes. We explore this possibility in the next section, focusing our analysis on the effects of technical party

involvement in PEC activities for the two main contenders: Batkivshchyna and the Party of Regions.

Assessment of Effects on Election Results

In the previous section, we established empirically the level of personnel sharing among parties and factions, treating the factions as patrons and the associated parties as their bureaucratic technical parties. Using personnel data from the initial phase of PEC management and also from election day, we traced the paths of individual PEC members as they moved from one affiliation to another. While these networks are complicated, and factions donated and received individuals from many registered parties, we focused on the highest level of donor and recipient organizations, labeling any group that was at or above one standard deviation from the mean for interactions with each party as a bureaucratic technical party. The identification of these parties gives us two clusters of related groups – opposition and pro-regime technical parties that served different pairs of patrons.

While the previous section identified these parties, it did not address another critical question: does the activity of personnel associated with bureaucratic technical parties influence election outcomes, especially favoring their patrons? To test this relationship, we further coded personnel data to identify the party affiliation of PEC Chairs, Deputy Chairs, and Secretaries, the three officer positions present in all PECs. We identified officers affiliated with bureaucratic technical parties of Batkivshchyna and the Party of Regions, and separately coded officers associated with the electoral party and party faction for each party. This coding produced six dichotomous independent variables, denoting the presence of affiliated officers for technical parties or the parties themselves.²¹

Insert Figures 5 and 6 about here

Figures 5 and 6 show the spatial distribution of PEC Chairs for Batkivshchyna and the Party of Regions. The Party of Regions has a higher maximum proportion of affiliated chairs, in part because more bureaucratic technical parties are associated with it. While Party of Regions chairs are distributed throughout the country, it is notable that clusters in the East and South, areas of traditional core support for the Party of Regions, have relatively high concentrations of affiliated PEC Chairs. However, the Party of Regions also had strong representation in other regions of Central and Western Ukraine. Batkivshchyna, by contrast, has fewer affiliated PEC chairs and these chairs are distributed across the country. The party has notably higher representation in Zhytomyr Oblast, as well as districts scattered across the country. While the goal was to evenly distribute officers across space, technical parties facilitate some spatial concentration.

To assess the effects of personnel allocation on results, we evaluated models in which the performance of the target party (Batkivshchyna or Party of Regions) at the polling station level is the dependent variable. We include variables representing the technical party and party-affiliated personnel, along with variables covering other critical factors: turnout, PEC size, volume of personnel turnover, and region.

²¹ Coding produces undercounts on officer allocations, likely due to incomplete or inaccurate information from the CEC.

PEC turnout, calculated by dividing the number of votes cast by registered voters, could affect party performance in both benign and sinister ways. Voter mobilization, especially effective local mobilization of like-minded partisans, may improve election outcomes. Alternatively, manipulation of voters through vote buying or intimidation or manipulation of the vote through ballot box stuffing or other fraud, could enhance outcomes.²²

The size of the polling station, often associated with location in rural or urban areas, could affect outcomes in similar ways. The benign interpretation is that some parties have stronger appeals in rural or urban locales. The sinister interpretation is that rural areas are often associated with voter manipulation, especially because smaller voting stations renders individual voters less "anonymous" and more susceptible to pressure. We included the natural log of polling station size to assess the effects of station magnitude.

Our officer variables account for PEC management, but we also need to address the potential effects of personnel change on outcomes. We have included a variable that measures the percentage of polling station officers that changed for any reason between the initial notification and election day. Large scale changes could reflect efforts to assign personnel who would be more capable of affecting outcomes, but could also reflect counter-measures by other parties.

The maps of PEC chairs, along with extensive research on Ukraine, notes that regional effects are important in electoral competition. We use an eight macro-region division (Barrington and Herron 2004) to assess the potential effects of region on election outcomes. We exclude the West, Batkivshchyna's area of strength, for the analysis. We anticipate generally positive coefficients for the Party of Regions and negative coefficients for Batkivshchyna because the West is our reference group.

Insert Table 3 about here

The results of robust regression are presented on Table 3. For Batkivshchyna, the presence of technical officers exerts a significant and positive effect on outcomes. However, the presence of party-affiliated Chairs and Deputy Chairs is not statistically associated with any effect on outcomes. Higher levels of turnout and personnel changes negatively affect party performance, whereas larger polling stations are associated with improved outcomes. The regional variables are largely negative and significant, with effects generally in the expected direction: Batkivshchyna performs best in the Westcentral and West, followed by Northcentral, South, Eastcentral, Crimea, and the East.

Results for the Party of Regions differ in important ways from the Batkivshchyna results. The effects of officers are significant and positive, except for party-affiliated Deputy Chairs that are significant only at the .10 level. Turnout positively affects outcomes, but polling station size and personnel change negatively affects outcomes. As with Batkivshchyna, regional effects are large and follow expectations: Party of Regions performance peaks in the East and decreases from Crimea, Eastcentral, South, Southwest, Northcentral, Westcentral, to the West.

Insert Figures 7 and 8 about here

²² See Sjoberg and Herron (2013) for more discussion of this issue.

Figures 7 and 8 are designed to better illustrate the substantive effects of officer affiliations. Each figure is derived from simulations performed in Clarify, with the control variables set at their means and the region set to the party's core area of support. The expected values, along with their 95% confidence intervals, are arrayed on the figures. The Y-axis is set at five percentage points so that the relative effects may be gauged properly. Batkivshchyna's performance is expected to be lowest with no affiliated officers, although this outcome cannot be statistically distinguished from alternatives unless the committee includes technical party officers. Under the assumptions of the simulation, we expect Batkivshchyna to receive around 1.5 percentage points more if the PEC has all of its personnel associated with bureaucratic technical parties, and around 1 percentage point more if the chair is party affiliated and the remaining officers are technical party members. By contrast, the Party of Regions is expected to gain 2 or more percentage points when its technical party affiliates control PECs, or it has a party-affiliated chair and other technical officers. In sum, technical party personnel are associated with improved outcomes for both parties, but the circumstances that benefit Batkivshchyna are more limited, and the expected magnitude of effect is greater for the Party of Regions.

Our analysis demonstrates that personnel decisions on partisan election commissions can be associated with non-trivial differences in election outcomes. The presence of bureaucratic technical party officers was accompanied by enhanced performance by both Batkivshchyna and the Party of Regions. The presence of party-affiliated Chairs and Secretaries was accompanied by enhanced performance for the Party of Regions, but only party-affiliated Secretaries were associated with enhancements for Batkivshchyna. Further, the magnitude of effect for the presence of affiliated officers was greater for the Party of Regions. While these results do not constitute evidence of fraud, manipulation of the vote counting and results compilation is one mechanism by which these outcomes could be explained.

Conclusions

The paper asked a critical question in the study of election administration and integrity: how do personnel management decisions affect election outcomes? In countries that use partisanship as a criterion for participation in administration, this question is especially acute. Neutral and objective election administration is an essential component of free and fair elections. If partisanship demonstrably affects results, questions about the integrity of elections could be raised. Further, Ukraine's system of party registration and personnel assignment permits patron organizations to encourage participation by affiliated bureaucratic technical parties to assert control over the administrative processes in PECs. We sought to investigate this phenomenon by identifying bureaucratic technical parties and assessing if their presence in PECs influences results.

We defined bureaucratic technical parties based on personnel movements between party factions and each registered party in the elections, focusing on the party pairs with the most extensive personnel exchanges. We noted that, based on our definition of bureaucratic technical parties, the opposition and pro-regime parties had unique clusters of technical parties while the Communist Party did not have an extensive network of technical parties. We further coded the officers in each polling station to identify the PECs in which Batkivshchyna and the Party of Regions had affiliates.

After defining bureaucratic technical parties, we assessed how the presence of technical party- and party-affiliated officers were associated with results when controlling for other potential factors affecting election results. We found that both Batkivshchyna and Party of Regions experienced enhanced election outcomes when their technical parties had officers in PECs, and that the magnitude of effect was greater for the Party of Regions. These results suggest that technical parties indeed have an effect, and that both the opposition and pro-regime forces benefited from these connections. However, the Party of Regions benefited more extensively from personnel affiliations, both in terms of the range of personnel that was associated with improved outcomes and the magnitude of effects.

These findings are important both for scholars of elections and practitioners who provide technical assistance to encourage the conduct of free and fair elections. The findings demonstrate that election administration has a non-trivial effect on election outcomes. Partisan electoral commission staffing contributes to outcomes; even though the extent of the effect may be small, it could influence outcomes as well as negatively influence perceptions of the neutrality of election administration. Partisanship is likely to remain a key criterion for the staffing of election commissions, but coupled with liberal party registration rules and absent a tradition of non-interference, bureaucratic technical parties are likely to remain as potentially troubling, and influential, players in the party system.

Table 1: PEC Personnel by Party Faction and Electoral Party

	PR Candidates	SMD Candidates	PECs	Chair	Dept.	Sect.
Batkivshchyna Faction	0	0	31644	1691	1659	1618
Our Ukraine-People's Self Defense Faction	0	0	31514	1620	1606	1533
Party of Regions Faction	0	0	31506	1790	1541	1573
People's Party Faction	0	0	30358	1553	1532	1521
Communist Party Faction	0	0	30160	1544	1515	1466
European Party	0	5	31514	1620	1606	1533
Party of Regions	222	204	13034	671	624	656
Batkivshchyna	204	152	11678	545	576	546
People's Rukh	0	1	11075	524	505	525
Citizen's Position	0	1	11032	504	517	509
Reforms and Order	0	0	10896	502	535	517
UDAR	209	183	10568	513	527	527
Youth Party	0	9	10132	459	497	471
Communist Party	214	220	10114	487	475	466
People's Party	0	58	10005	475	485	469
Party of Pensioners	29	6	9964	449	462	475
People's Initiative	0	14	9956	475	458	459
Veche Party	0	14	9820	454	454	474
Liberal Party	55	3	9629	460	431	468
Ukraine-Forward!	149	105	9419	438	458	459
Union. Chornobyl. Ukraine.	0	13	9317	438	410	452
Green Planet Party	225	18	9207	396	426	430
Just Ukraine Party	0	6	9052	403	418	414
Slavic Party	0	6	8941	428	422	442
Our Ukraine	185	25	8841	410	410	422
State Party	0	14	8811	410	408	413
Solidarity of Women Party	0	7	8385	388	413	400
Agrarian Party	0	3	8310	397	402	405
People's Labor Union	17	3	8083	372	348	370
Christian Democratic Party	0	3	7753	358	378	355
Greens Party	56	18	7483	358	359	366
Youth to Power	0	1	7218	333	343	346
Marine Party	0	13	7017	316	322	324
Russian Bloc	34	10	7007	311	343	332
Ukrainian National Assembly	114	5	6912	321	320	323
Russian Unity Party	0	4	6311	290	286	281
Brotherhood Party	0	1	5926	262	273	287
United Motherland	0	0	5914	254	268	272
United Russia Party	0	3	5767	261	261	270
Svoboda	218	35	5515	254	271	288
People's Ecological Party	0	1	5469	239	256	251
Party of Socialists	0	4	5414	229	234	238
Social Democratic Party (United)	0	1	5399	246	240	243
Ukrainian People's Party	0	34	5372	247	268	247
Citizen's Solidarity	0	4	5213	250	226	248
Cossack Ukrainian Party	0	1	5182	213	233	233
Homeland Party	0	4	5136	222	235	240
People's Order Party	0	1	5099	209	236	235
Union of Anarchists	0	2	5078	215	228	240
Liberal Ukraine	0	1	5052	225	214	212
Free Democratic Party	0	1	5005	220	238	234
Union Party	0	13	5003	221	226	222
Liberal-Democratic Party	0	1	4897	212	203	227
New Politics Party	69	26	4689	196	245	230
Right Will of Ukraine	0	1	4378	183	196	197
Social Patriotic Assembly of Slavs	0	1	3948	152	181	176
Democratic Party of Hungarians	0	1	3874	160	171	173
Small and Medium Business Party	0	2	3481	153	148	161
Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists	0	25	3424	153	173	168
Center	0	1	2926	152	133	143
Patriotic Party	0	8	2838	122	125	115
Party of Workers	0	0	2617	116	103	131

Socialist Party	155	58	2513	105	116	118
United Center	0	9	2443	114	118	125
Native Homeland Party	106	6	1445	60	70	66
Cathedral Party	0	12	1361	60	61	73
Party of Greens	78	15	1082	47	51	52
European Platform Party	0	1	973	44	44	46
People's-Democratic Party	0	9	731	37	34	33
Hromada	41	4	691	31	33	30
Ukrainian National Conservative Party	0	5	679	34	32	34
Radical Party of Oleg Lyashko	139	28	647	31	33	36
Ukrainian Party	0	2	511	25	24	24
Heads of DECs	0	0	289	31	7	35
United Left and Peasants Party	0	14	233	12	15	10
People's Will Party	0	0	227	11	12	12
Ukrainian Future Party	30	17	209	8	10	15
Internet Party	0	1	198	10	9	9
KMKS Party of Hungarians	0	3	186	11	7	10
Spiritual Ukraine Party	0	2	135	7	7	6
Great Ukraine Party	0	1	134	7	7	6
Blokov Party	0	1	104	7	5	3
For People's Rights Party	0	1	89	5	5	4
Young Ukraine	0	4	9	0	1	0
People's Party of Depositors & Social Protection	0	2	1	0	0	0

Table 2: Party Factions and Affiliated Bureaucratic Technical Parties

Faction	Bureaucratic Technical Parties
Our Ukraine-People's Self Defense	Batkivshchyna (1999) European Party (2006) Reforms and Order (1997) Citizen's Position (2005) People's Rukh (1993)
Batkivshchyna	Batkivshchyna (1999) European Party (2006) Reforms and Order (1997) Citizen's Position (2005) People's Rukh (1993)
Communist Party	Communist Party (1993)
People's Party	Liberal Party (1991) Youth Party (1999) People's Party (1996) Veche Party (1993) Solidarity of Ukrainian Women (1999) Union Chornobyl Ukraine (2002) Party of Regions (1997) People's Initiative (2011) People's-Labor Union (2006) Slavic Party (1993)
Party of Regions	Agrarian Party (2006) Liberal Party (1991) Youth Party (1999) People's Party (1996) Veche Party (1993) Solidarity of Ukrainian Women (1999) Union Chornobyl Ukraine (2002) Party of Pensioners (1999) State Party (1999) Party of Regions (1997) People's Initiative (2011) People's-Labor Union (2006) Russian Unity Party (2008) Slavic Party (1993) Green Planet Party (2005)

Note: Registration information is based on the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice database (<http://rgf.informjust.ua/home/index>)

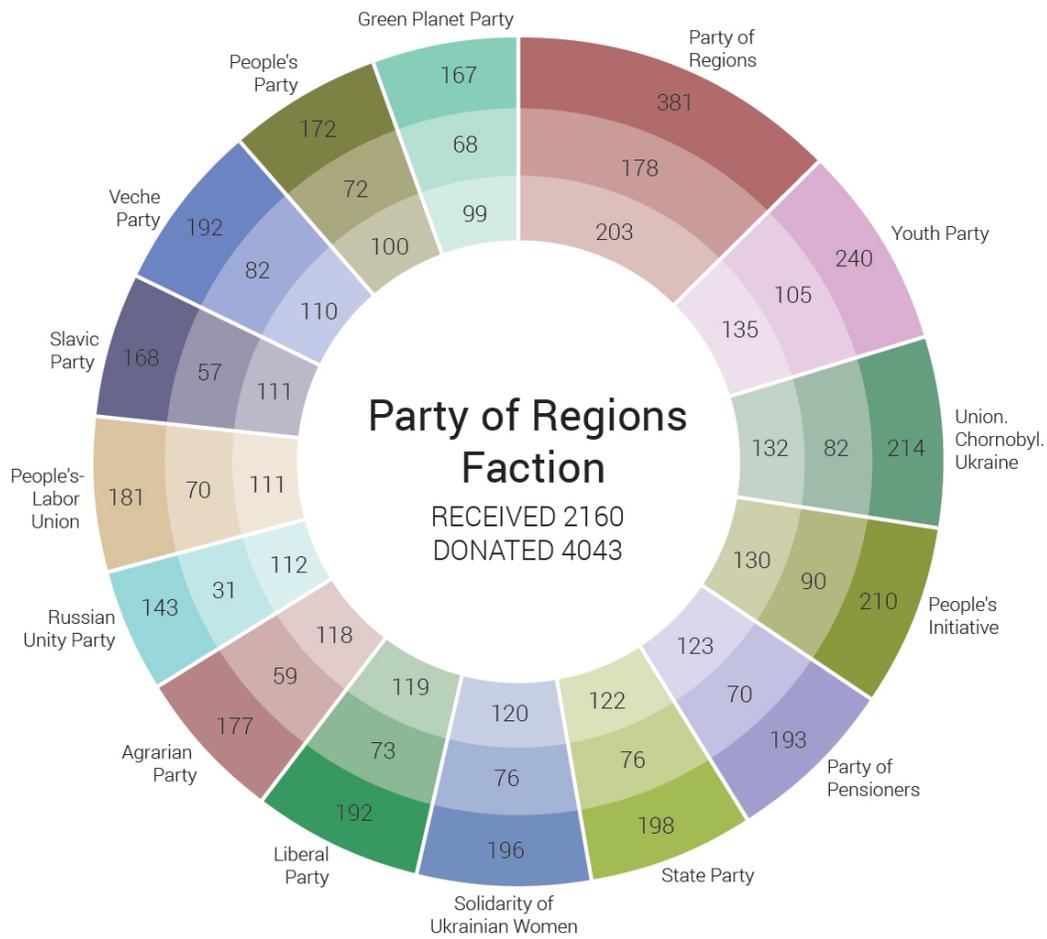


Figure 1: Party of Regions Faction and Affiliated Parties

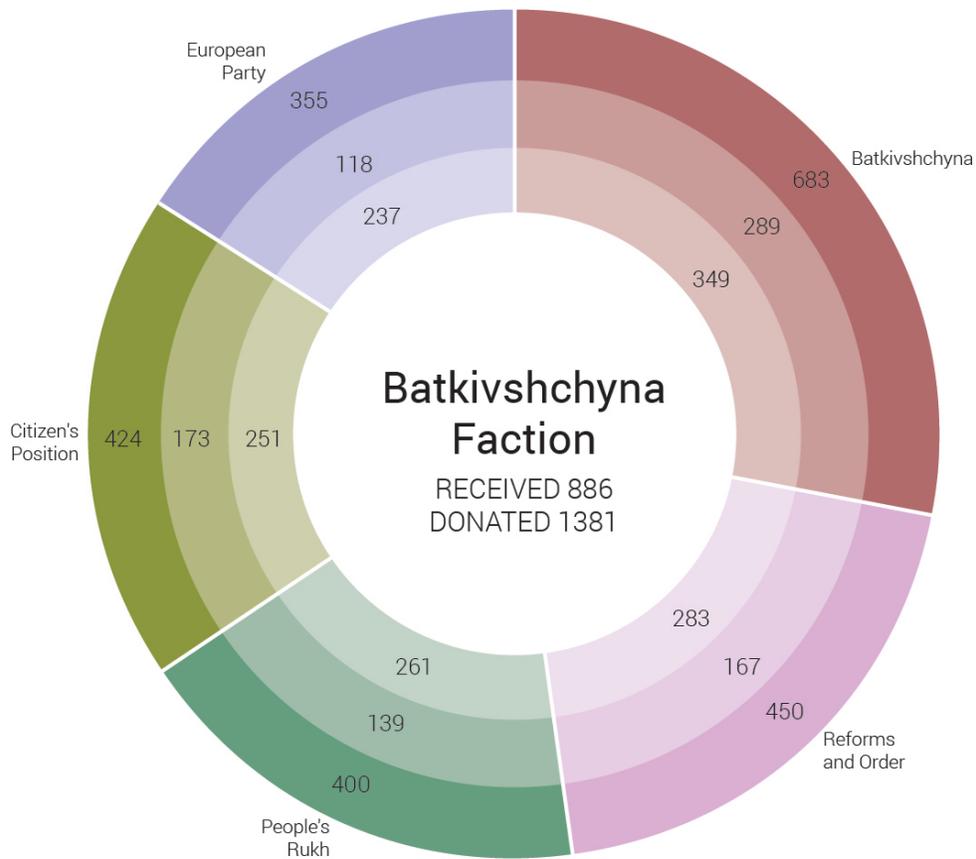


Figure 2: Batkivshchyna Faction and Affiliated Parties

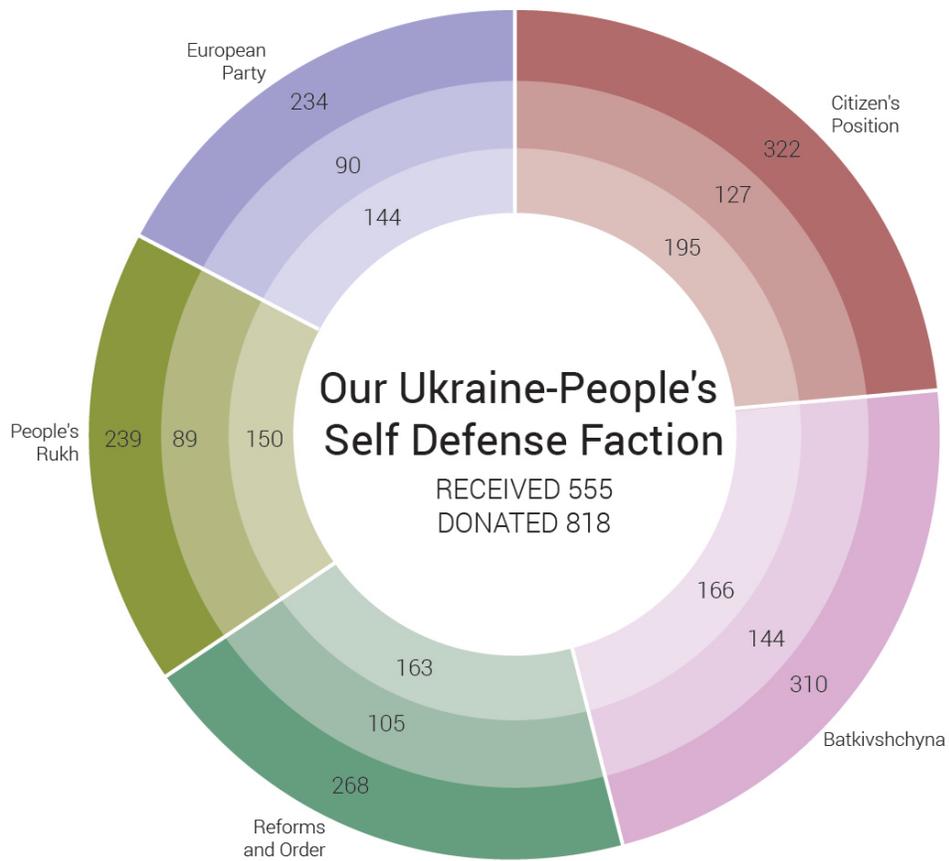


Figure 3: Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defense Faction and Affiliated Parties

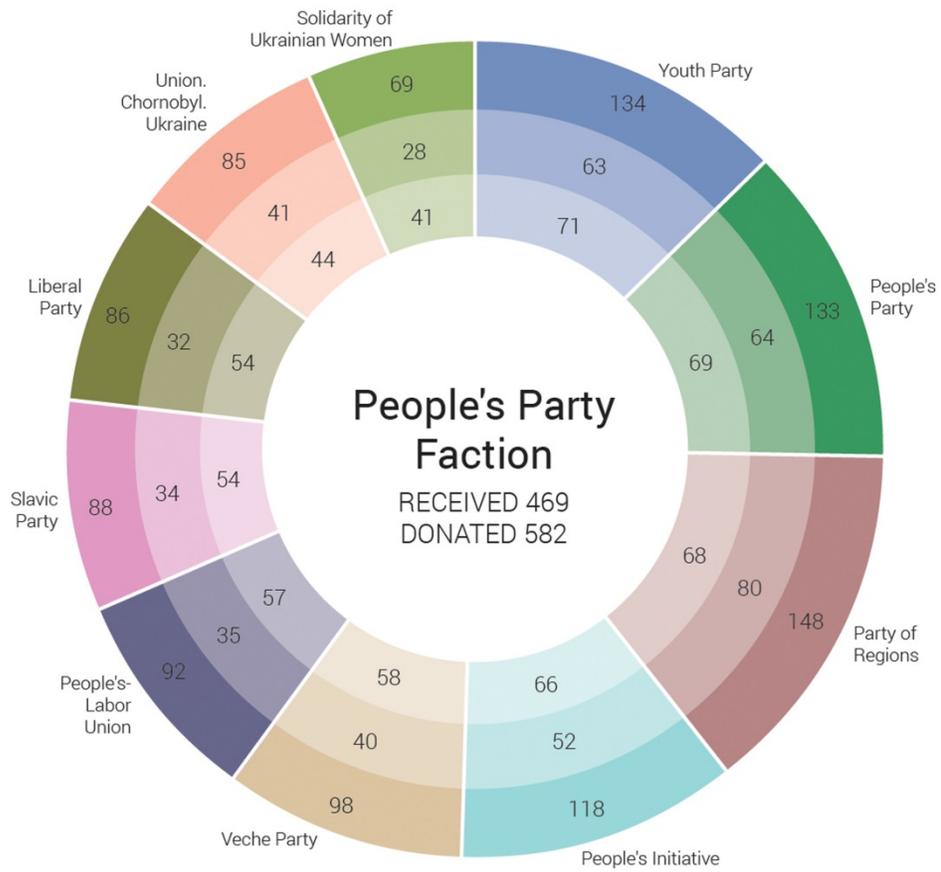


Figure 4: People's Party Faction and Affiliated Parties

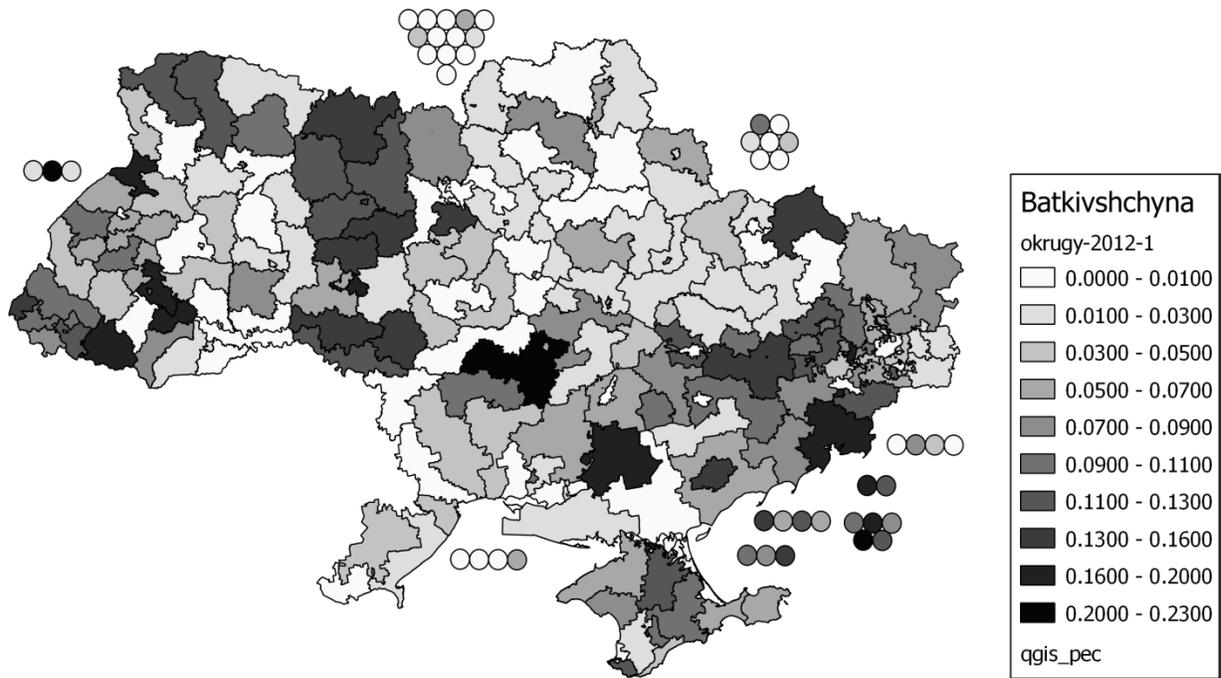


Figure 5: Proportion of Batkivshchyna-Affiliated PEC Chairs, DEC-level Means

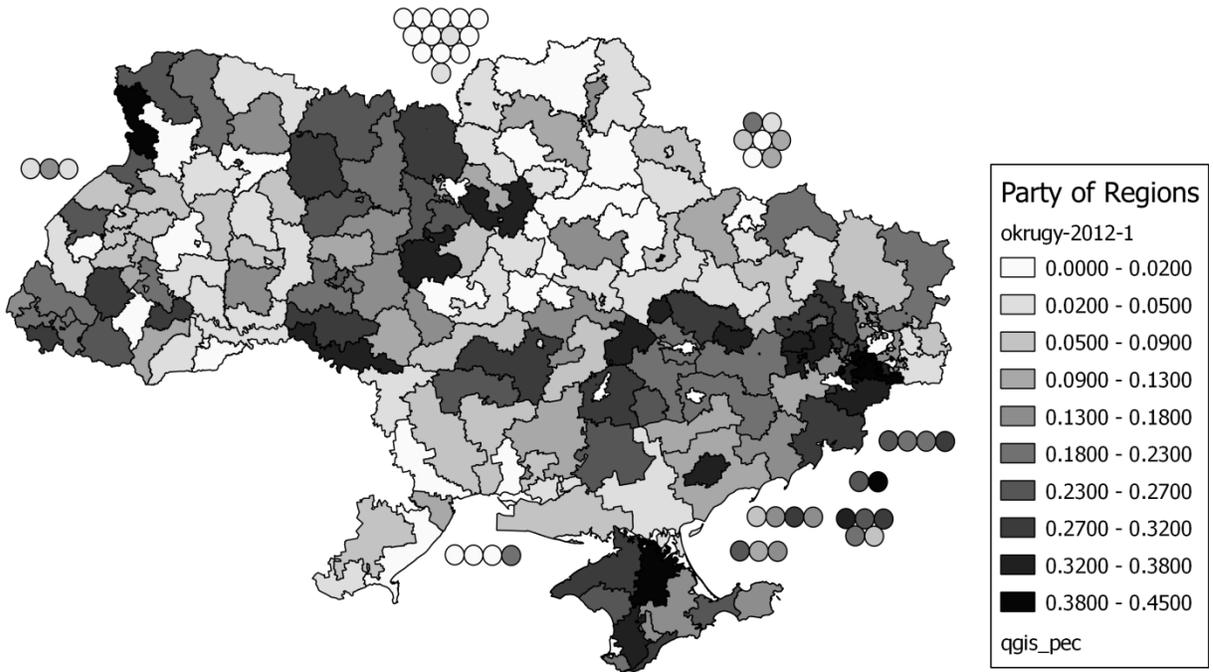


Figure 6: Proportion of Party of Regions-Affiliated PEC Chairs, DEC-level Means

Table 3: Robust Regression Results

	Batkivshchyna		Party of Regions	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Turnout	-0.0191**	0.0054	0.0886**	0.0059
PEC Size	0.0032**	0.0006	-0.0355**	0.0007
PEC Change	-0.0057**	0.0026	-0.0337**	0.0029
East	-0.3368**	0.0019	0.5760**	0.0021
Eastcentral	-0.2389**	0.0019	0.3683**	0.0020
Crimea	-0.2804**	0.0027	0.4916**	0.0029
South	-0.2195**	0.0021	0.3504**	0.0023
Northcentral	-0.0625**	0.0016	0.1574**	0.0018
Westcentral	0.0034**	0.0017	0.1378**	0.0018
Southwest	-0.0806**	0.0027	0.1955**	0.0029
Tech. Chair	0.0084**	0.0027	0.0092**	0.0018
Tech. Dept.	0.0075**	0.0020	0.0065**	0.0014
Tech. Sect.	0.0008	0.0027	0.0054**	0.0017
Party Chair	0.0044*	0.0025	0.0081**	0.0023
Party Dept.	0.0001	0.0019	0.0038*	0.0020
Party Sect.	0.0053**	0.0025	0.0067**	0.0025
Constant	0.3820**	0.0069	0.2408**	0.0076
N	32398		32398	
F	4338.8**		7141.8**	

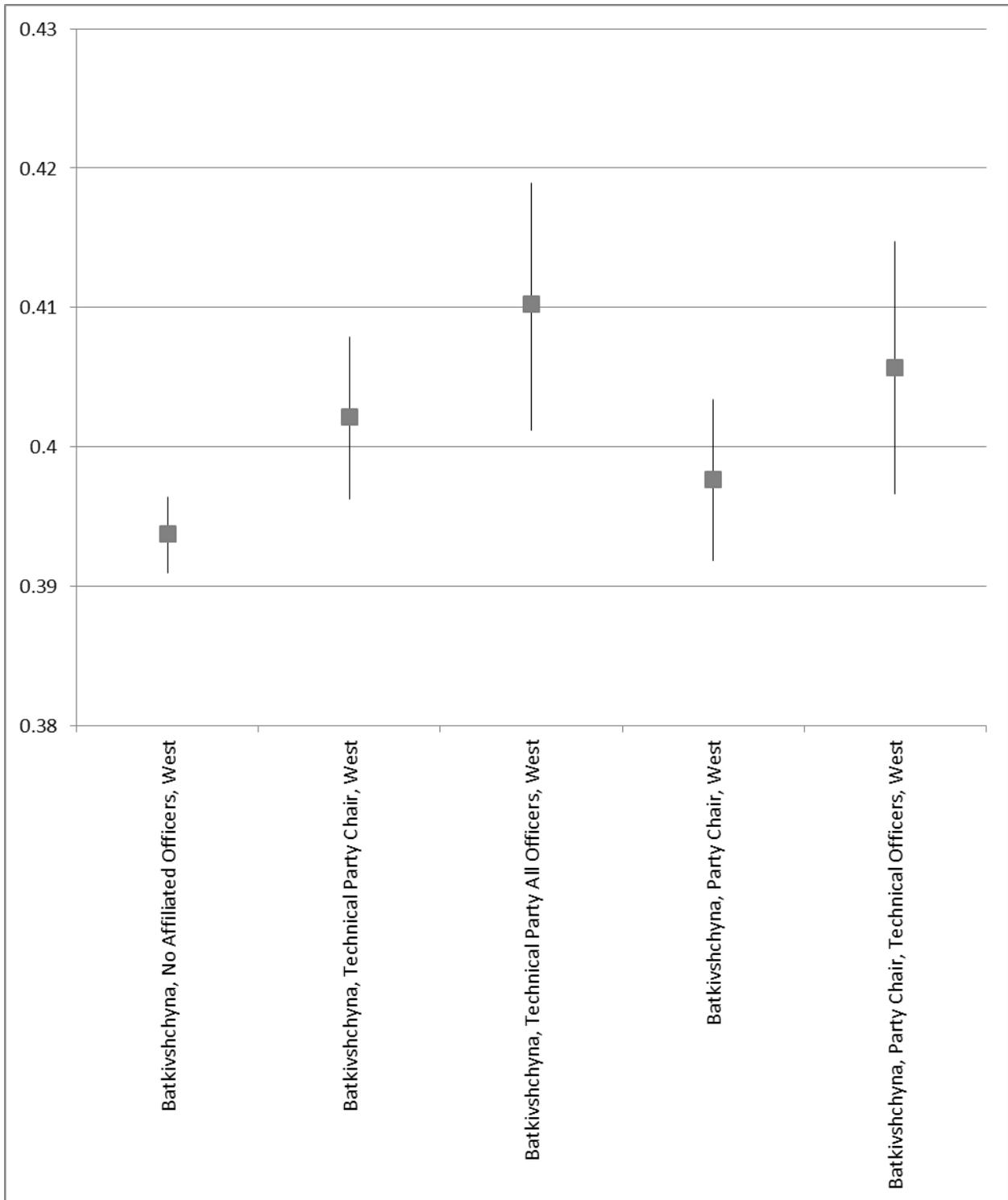


Figure 7: Estimated Values for Batkivshchyna PEC Vote Varying Officer Identities

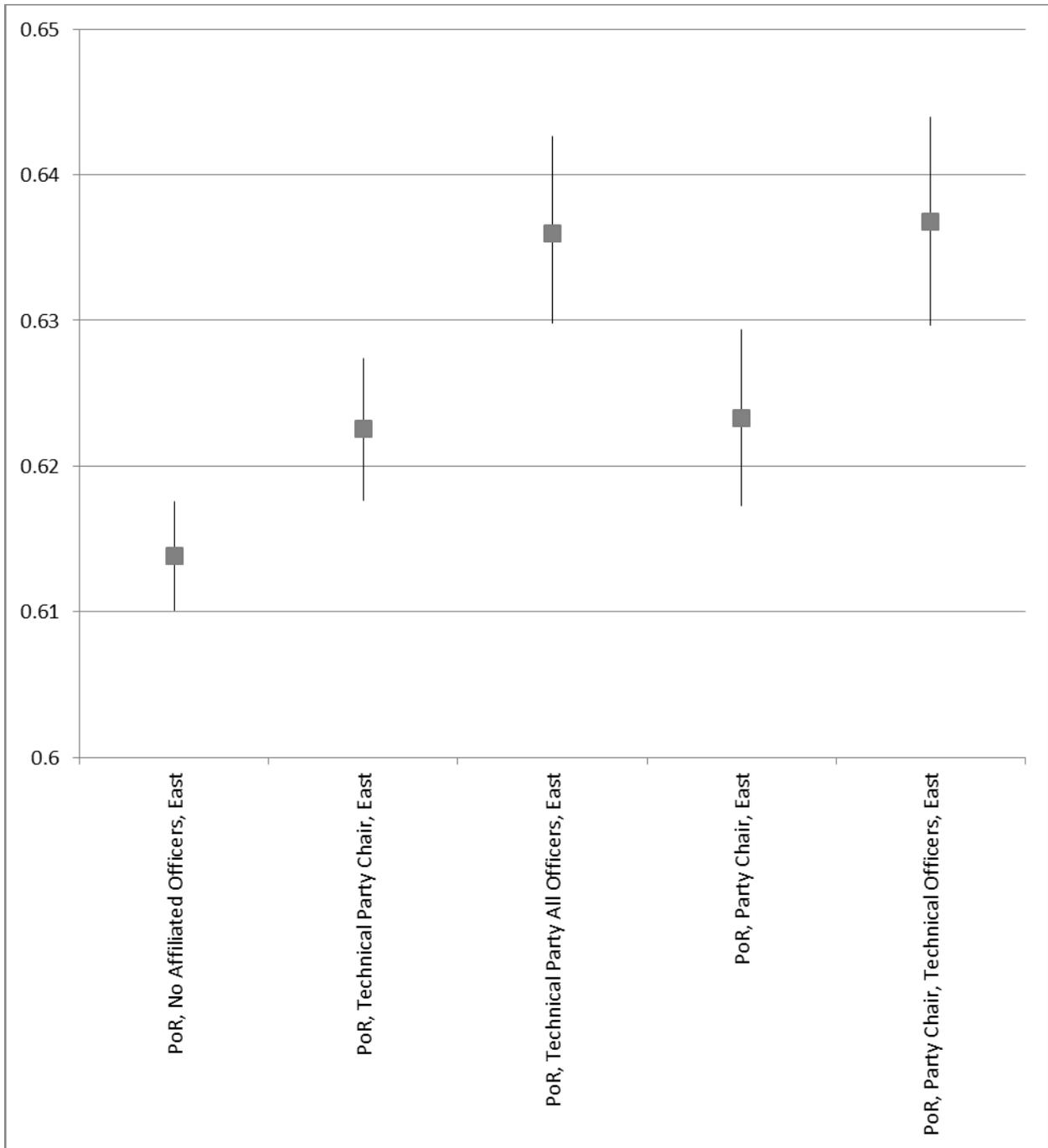


Figure 8: Estimated Values for Party of Regions PEC Vote Varying Officer Identities

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