Conclusion

Lessons Learned and New Questions

Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow and Nika Palaguta

The East European Parliamentarian and Candidate dataset (EAST PaC) and its in-depth methodological description is intended to aid societies and their citizens towards increased electoral control over their democracies. Studies of the early post-Communist era had found that, though there is much party switching in Central and Eastern Europe, repeated elections do function as a form of electoral control over politicians and parties (Zielinski et al 2005; Słomczyński and Shabad 2011; Roberts 2008). Updated, comprehensive information about parliamentarians and candidates continues to be a fundamental resource for citizens and scholars to understand how well the electoral system functions and to hold parliament, parliamentarians, and parties accountable for their actions.

There is much more work to be done. Methodological findings of this book, built on previous works, suggest new questions to ask. The first question concerns the nature of political and party ideologies. We ask this about Ukraine, where party ideology seems subservient to outside interests.

WHAT IS POLITICAL IDENTITY AND PARTY IDEOLOGY IN POST-INDEPENDENCE UKRAINE?

Ideologies might seem to be an established attribute of all political parties and yet, when faced with extremely politically unstable countries such as Ukraine, the questions about the notion, the content,

necessity, and even existence of ideologies need to be re-interrogated. Some political scientists and philosophers debate on whether we are facing post-hegemonic, post-ideological society, where politicians and population merely take part in a ritual of democracy; indeed, they are aware of the instrumental character of party ideologies. How instrumental are party ideologies in Ukraine?

Political identity

Voter political identity both shapes and is shaped by electoral politics; its manifestations can impact electoral control of parties and politicians. In countries where elections take place, political identity refers to the personal connections an individual makes to electoral politics and the ways in which they see themselves and the political world around them. Individuals form their political identity in many ways, and like most phenomena of its type, it is formed by individual and group location in the social structure, the society's history of inequality, and the current state of economic and political affairs.

Where there is a political identity, there is the possibility of political cleavage. Parties and politicians play an influential role as they have an outsized capacity to shape the political agenda and the policies that impact daily life, and thus the uses and abuses of political divides. Sarah Birch (2000) elucidated the formation of political cleavages in the region:

> "... scholars of post-socialist transformations in Eastern Europe generally agree that the political divides which emerge at the mass level after the demise of the old regime depend on (a) the social and political structure of society before the regime change, (2) the form the regime change takes, and (3) the nature of the ensuing transformations, including the extent to which parties are successful in mobilizing voters..." (18).

In its early post-Independence years, Ukraine's electoral politics and political identities were heavily influenced by both the early 20th Century and its Soviet past, though as of 1998, according to Birch (2000), "there is ... little evidence to suggest that this structure has yet molded itself closely to the party system (or vice versa)... this was undoubtedly due in large measure to the electoral inexperience of many

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party strategists, but it can also be attributed to popular aversion to party politics as such and a tendency for many voters to vote on the basis of the non-party attributes of candidates" (141).

Considering the last 25 years of electoral politics in Ukraine, the question arises as to the extent to which parties are guided by ideology or are guided by the idea of "power for power's sake." Ideologies are generally regarded as an established attribute of all political parties in all nations. Candidates and politicians, as citizens themselves, may have difficulties in forming strong party attachments and stable political identities based on ideology rather than personal attributes. That they, too, may have these characteristics can help to explain the weak formation of party ideology in Ukraine.

Research on the nature of ideological attachments reflects changes in the organizational structure of Ukrainian political parties over time. Attempts have been made to classify the parties according to existing Western types. For example, Wilson and Bilous (1993) wrote that early 1990s parties have the following characteristics: small; few members; despite the fact that some of them claim to be all-Ukrainian, they are mostly regional and party organizations rarely exist outside regional borders; limited access to the national media; weak identities due to the fact that the former Soviet state prevented groups from organizing openly; parties represent interests of their small groups, but not a society as a whole; and a division between elite and all the rest of the society.

Wilson and Bilous (1993: 697–701) classified five types of party blocs as (i) ultra-nationalists (the Union of Independent Ukrainian Youth, the Federation of Ukrainian Statehood and Independence, the Ukrainian Nationalist Union and others united into the Ukrainian Nationalist assembly (UNA) – had a Parliamentary wing – the Ukrainian National Self-Defense Forces); (ii) national democratic (Rukh, the Ukrainian Republican Party and Democratic Party of Ukraine); (iii) liberal-democratic (the United Social Democratic party of Ukraine, the "Green Party", the Ukrainian League of Businesses with Foreign Capital, the Confederation of Industrialists, the Union of Co-operative workers New Ukraine, the Union of Political Revival of Ukraine, the Social-Democratic party); (iv) state-bureaucratic (Kravchuk`s party); and (v) socialist (the Socialist party of Ukraine, the Peasant Party of Ukraine).

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In his later work, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (2000), Wilson stresses that here has been an increasing oligarchization of the parties and a detachment from their own manifestoes, names, and logos. According to Wilson (2000), this may be regarded as an overall reason for the failure of the Ukrainian left (see also "Reinventing the Ukrainian Left: Assessing Adaptability and Change, 1991–2000" (2002)).

After 2000, it became apparent that Ukrainian members of parliament only weakly identified with their own parties. In the period from 1998 to 2002, "462 deputies changed party affiliation 527 times" (Thames 2007: 224). Thames (2007) asked whether the party system is important for Ukrainians, since there are many MPs elected without party attachment and that they frequently enter into coalitions in the Parliament independent of party membership. He concluded that deputies are aware of their careers; they switch to the successful parties that increase their chances for reelection. Ukrainian social scientists also argue that there is a materialistic reason – mainly connection to business groups and self-promotion– that heavily influenced political party behavior and fostered a lack of ideological attachment.

Herron (2002) searches for the answers to this question by paying close attention to the system of factions in the Ukrainian Parliament. He finds that there are several reasons for fluid party membership: (1) legislation, which allows changing membership; (2) no punishment for switching; (3) events and circumstances may influence the desire of the deputies to change faction; and (4) low threshold to faction formation. He concluded that factions contribute to volatility of the political party system. Analyzing the ideology of Ukrainian political parties after the Orange revolution Miklaschuk (2009) argues that political parties did not have a strong ideological position because of frequently changing legislation, low political knowledge in the population, and effective political engineering.

Interviews with other political scientists conducted in 2010 by the Razumkov Center (a large social science research center in Ukraine), lends support to Miklaschuk's (2009) argument. Igor Kogut, the Head of the Council for Legislation Initiatives, said that "the pure notion of "political projects [*in distinction to political parties*] illustrates very clearly a transplant of business approaches into the activity of contemporary political parties." Andrii Malyshevich, the Head of the Institute of Legal Sciences of Kyiv-Mohila Academy, argued that "…parties stay

"fragile", personified [*identification of the party with party leader*] and
mostly non-ideological. They do not have roots in the society and do
not represent interests of the population; the level of social trust in them
is very low". Oleksij Garan, a Professor of Kiev-Mokhyla Academy and
Scientific Head of the School of Political Science, points out that while
it is too early to talk about the "end of ideologies" in Western societies,
in Ukraine there is a tendency to eliminate strict borders between main
political currents. He said, "we can say that there are no parties with
well-defined ideologies: social-democrats, liberals, conservatives. Those
niches are vacant, but it also means that Ukrainian society has no need
of them." Igor Zdanov, President of analytic center "Open Politics"
argued: "In reality, activity of the majority of Ukrainian parties is con-
centrated on translation, integration and provision of interests either
of a group of politicians – political leaders, or their sponsors from
the same Financial-Industrial Groups. Their most effective function
coincides with the goal for which the party is created – struggle for
power. However, parties are used as instruments of political struggle.
Frequently there is no real content in them in a form of developed
political programmes that would not only represent strategic vision of
Ukrainian development, but also a number of real policies that would
allow for the achievement of goals".

Volodymyr Fesenko, Head of the Board of Directors of the Center
of Political Research "Penta", argued that "Parties as institutes do not
influence on system of power as much as party leaders and their circles,
and powerful business groups inside and outside the party". He goes
on to say that, "Contemporary parties alienate more and more from
representing social interests, they rather represent interests of charis-
matic leaders and certain business groups... While forming their elec-
toral campaigns, parties do not care so much about certain social in-
terests, as they play with social instincts, imitation of social interests,
and manipulation".

The debate on weak ideological attachment is also taken up by
Shveda (2012). He concludes that only thirty Ukrainian parties have
some ideological stances indicated in their programmes. The names and
content of party programmes are frequently very different and parties
rebrand quite often. Ideology of the parties (if there is one declared)
has an instrumental character: not only do party members switch from
party to party (or faction), but parties also enter into alliances that do

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not correspond to their ideological positions (e.g. Between the Communist Party and the Party of the Regions that represents business interests of major corporations). Shveda finds that few parties participate in the political life of the country (even fewer took part in more than three elections), a significant number of parties do not have subsidiaries in regions, or on local, city level. If they are registered, most of the population is not aware of their existence. He also points out that many parties – as the state does not finance them – are subsidized by business interests; thus the function of the parties shifts from representation of people's interests to representation of business interests.

Lilia Goniukova (2009) finds that while the number of political parties in Ukraine grows, the number of party members hovers around two to five percent of the population. Party membership usually grows during the elections mainly because people search for material reward for their participation, rather than for ideological succor. Prymush (2014) argues that Ukrainian parties are almost-parties

> "which are formed around some leader or certain Financial-Industrial Group with the aim to form state policy, that is why ideological principles are of the second order, the place of ideologies is taken by the 'hybrid ideology,' which unites some positions of classical ideologies in a united 'proto-ideology.' This leads to a paradoxical situation in which parties stop representing citizens' interests, but rather turn into private electoral enterprises" (195).

Elections are oriented on the party leader and the position of the party changes significantly after the elections. While there are more than 200 political parties in Ukraine, major parties tend to represent business and, for financial reasons and with poorly defined political positions, the small parties cannot compete with them.

According to the institutional approach, expressed by North et al (2007), despite similar institutional forms to the West, developing countries are different in their core. Countries are required to comply with formal requirements of financial supporters (e.g. the IMF and the World Bank). When the institutional forms are established, there is no intention and little possibility for them to function properly. For those states North et al (2007) apply the notion of "limited access orders" (LAO), by means of which, in order to secure a stable income, elite groups engage in rent-seeking to monopolize violence and prevent external actors from entering. Elite groups will bargain among

themselves, and unless someone strongly disagrees and desires for any reason to enter in open conflict, these groups will attempt to maintain peace. Disputes sometimes end up with armed conflict.

North et al (2007) distinguish three types of LOA: fragile, basic, and mature. Fragile states are characterized by a very unstable political coalition, with commitments of dubious force. Coalitions resort to violence when they determine that the reward for violence is desirable. In basic states, the coalition is relatively stable and rights and commitments among the elite are largely respected and institutionalized. Violence is under control of the state. Individuals who wish to enter into political activity have to use the state, while organizations outside the state are perceived as a threat. The USSR is a classic case of a basic state. In mature LOAs, there is a variety of organizations outside the state that have to be sanctioned by the state. There is state bureaucracy that helps to resolve disputes in the coalition. In this LAO, political and economic activities are exercised by the same actors (e.g. contemporary Russia).

In contrast, North et al (2007) wrote, an Open Access Order (OAO) exists when "a society is able to produce three outcomes: (1) entry into economic, political, religious, and educational activities is open to all citizens without restraint; (2) support for organizational forms in each of those activities are open to all citizens; and (3) the rule of law is enforced impartially for all citizens" (17).

In order to move from a LAO to a OAO there must be a transition though "(1) the rule of law for elites; (2) support for perpetually lived elite organizations; and (3) centralized and consolidated control of violence" (19).

LOA theory applies to Ukraine. There are institutional forms that did not function properly. Political parties were a new construction that tried foreign institutional forms. In the first years of independence, the names and the images the parties created for themselves did not match those found in the West, e.g. except for the names, the Social-Democratic Party (united) and the Green Party had nothing in common with European social-democrats or environmentalists. In the following years, especially in 2004 and afterwards, there emerged large business groups that became closely connected to the political elite. Some became the political elite directly or indirectly. Their coalitions were not stable, as occasionally the political elite went looking for

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opportunities to publicly confront their opponents, as was the case in the Orange Revolution of 2004. The same elite continued functioning until 2013, when growing crisis inside the elite and in the Party of the Regions in particular provoked open conflict.

Overall, LOA theory regards civil society as a positive development, as well as a means of communication. North et al (2007) highlight the historical importance of the free media. However, in Ukraine media manipulations and the creation of fake civil society groups took place that suited the needs of particular politicians and parties. Ukrainian political parties were positioned between basic and mature LOA, when institutions outside the state were allowed, as there was a large number of political parties and civil organizations registered officially. Due to technological advances adopted by Ukraine, the means of communication were opened as well: internet, social networks, and media outlets that are independent of state control. But because of poor economic performance of the country, a weakened civil society, and the presence of many small political organizations and parties, the means of communication and the institution of elections serves the goals of a non-consolidated elite. In addition, unlike in OAO, parties in Ukraine emerge rather by demand of the market and big political players rather than on demand of the underrepresented population.

The case of Ukraine shows that political parties can function without ideologies, but as a result it is difficult for the population to predict their behavior by simply looking at their names and programme documents.

HOW CAN EAST PaC BE USED?

EAST PaC offers a window into understanding not only why personal characteristics and biographies matter, but how they affect elections and democracy across a range of general and case-specific contexts. Generally, EAST PaC's value lies in its selection of cases as well as in the time and number of elections that it spans across each case. First, the democracies of Central and Eastern Europe are new: less than three decades since transitioning to democratic regimes, the systems in this region are still in the process of consolidation and institutionalization (Markowski 2006). As such, these systems share

many of the characteristics found across most new democracies: fluid party systems, electoral volatility, nascent or often weak institutions. EAST PaC provides an opportunity to understand the conditions of how democracy and one of its central institutions (regular elections) develop. Second, it is important to understand how this develops over time. EAST PaC permits the researcher to observe and understand the changing nature of political and social cleavages in or across contexts, how the characteristics of those competing in elections change, and what this means for the development and consolidation of electoral behavior (by participants and voters alike) as well as of political party systems in new democracies. Third, if who the candidates are matters, then EAST PaC also provides a window into understanding who everyone is and what this means. Put differently, scholars of elections and legislative assemblies are overwhelmingly interested in who wins— but what about those who lose? Who are they? What do they do? Does this contribute to their lack of success, or does the answer lie in something systematically structural?

Harmonization with other Data

While many analyses can be done with EAST PaC as such, perhaps an even more popular use will be to harmonize it with survey and non-survey sources. As for survey sources, both Shabad and Słomczyński (2011) (see Introduction) and Dubrow (2007) connected an earlier version of EAST PaC to POLPAN.

The presentation of Alexander, Bolzendahl, and Barnes during the concluding event for the project (see Chapter 12, this book) was designed to allow engagement in an extended discussion on harmonizing survey data sources of EAST PaC on the topic of gender political inequality. Cross-national surveys provide useful data on the values and attitudes that are both the foundation of individual and group behaviors and the underpinnings of inequality and discrimination. Gender values and attitudes are embedded in everyday social, economic and political relations. In calling for better data on these relations, Davis and Greenstein (2009: 100) put it succinctly and well: "Decisions we make in our lives are often guided by the way in which we believe the relationships between women and men should be." There is wide agreement in the international scientific community that gender values

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and attitudes are important, but we can do better to understand how
gender matters. A critical dataset that can be harmonized with gender
values surveys is EAST PaC. Gender and age are common variables
across all three countries, and as such demographic intersections can
be constructed. Contextual data that measures the structures of power
at the district level can be brought in to understand gender as a mul-
ti-level context.

As for non-survey sources, there are many imaginative possibilities,
and the effort by Peter Tunkis (forthcoming in *Ask: Research and Methods*)
is exemplary. Comprehensive data on the biographies and activities of
parliamentarians can address fundamental questions of accountability,
representation, and political inequality. EAST PaC can be connected to
roll-call voting and other parliamentary data. Tunkis compiled data on
the affiliations, assignments, positions, and biographies of Polish par-
liamentarians that cover three parliamentary terms between 1997 and
2007. What Tunkis has called the Members of Parliament Affiliations
Data (MPAD) includes information about party affiliations, govern-
ment/parliamentary office positions, committee assignments, select
electoral data (preferential votes, incumbency/history), and select bi-
ographical information (level of education, alma mater, past political
associations). Tunkis connected MPAD to EAST PaC and produced
a forthcoming methodological article in *Ask: Research and Methods* and
a substantive article forthcoming in *Problems of Post-Communism*.

Expanding EAST PaC to Other Countries

The Electoral Control project encouraged scholars working on coun-
tries outside the main focus on the project to collect their own "EAST
PaC" data. In the course of this project, we have been in contact with
researchers and students who are interested in candidate data outside
our target countries of Poland, Hungary and Ukraine. We worked with
Mihail Chiru and Marina Popescu on the collection of Romanian can-
didate data that improves upon and updates the previous effort from
the Project on Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in
Post-Communist Europe at the University of Essex that was initially led
by Marina Popescu. Chiru and Popescu attempted to collect the universe
of candidates who ran for national election from 1990 to the present.
However, they found that critical information about the candidates

during this period has vanished (see forthcoming article in *Ask: Research and Methods*). During Workshop 2 (see Chapter Twelve), Chiru and Popescu documented the efforts of a team a researchers to uncover and reconstruct candidate data in order to build a comprehensive matched panel data set. The data they have been able to collect varied by election. They found that the data improve over time. The Romanian Permanent Electoral Authority (ROAEP) told the Romanian team to go to the county tribunals, which should have archived the candidate lists, according to ROAEP's interpretation of electoral law interpretation. In mid-January 2014 they sent freedom of information (FOI) requests to all 43 county tribunals in Romania asking for electronic copies of the 1990–2004 electoral lists used in those counties, or for the possibility to copy them ourselves. As of March 2014 they received 14 substantive answers, but the news is rather mixed. Some claim to have destroyed the lists following a law that apparently makes mandatory the destruction of voting materials three months after the elections. Others say that they have sent the documents to the National Archives. Finally, only two courts did send them the lists, while two others invited them to visit their archives to make copies. Of the two courts that sent them the lists one has made illegible much of the personal information (e.g. profession and year of birth).

Czech data had been collected for prior elections in a previous project, including also by the University of Essex. Project participants suggested that these data should be available in any form, and that interested scholars can update these data. Our project played a limited role, but we hope that, by investigating the possibility, future funding can be secured or, at least, it provides information for the international scientific community to update and improve these data.

Sanjaya Mahato, a PhD student at the Graduate School for Social Research of IFiS PAN, attended all of the events of the Electoral Control project in an attempt to learn how to collected EAST PaC data for Nepal. According to Sanjaya, candidates self-report their biographical information during the nomination for their candidacy. They fill a form and submit it to the election commission. For the legislative elections 1991, 1994 and 1999, the data were taken from the library of the Election Commission which was recorded in the form of a physical book, as no electronic version was ever produced in Nepal. Sanjaya visited the election commission office in Kathmandu, sat in

the office, and typed the whole thing into his laptop. For the Constituent Assembly elections of 2008 and 2013, the data were available in the website of Nepal's electoral commission. The information was clear, portable and easy to access. All data are in original Nepali version that he then translated into English. Nepalese election data contains information on district; constituency number; name of the candidate; ethnicity of the candidate; gender; age; political party; votes received; and results (elected or not). The Nepali data lacks information on education, occupation, and place of residence, and in the data there are some spelling errors that Sanjaya had to correct. As with the methodological problems of matching data in EAST PaC, Sanjaya found that the last name of the some candidates appeared in one way in an earlier election to reappear as a new last name in subsequent elections. To assist him in this painstaking work, during the Workshops a core member of the team, Zsófia Papp, spent considerable time training Sanjaya on how to deal with these methodological problems. Sanjaya is using these data for his dissertation.

The Polish team, led by Zbigniew Sawiński and Dorota Laskowska from IFiS PAN's ORBS, their fieldwork center, has amassed considerable methodological expertise in collecting and cleaning candidate data. Their methods and their software enabled scholars in other countries to better collect and manage their own candidate data.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although this project is well within the realm of political sociology it also has an obvious interdisciplinary component. In theoretical and substantive domains, it joins sociology with political science. This project's links to the area studies on CEE enhance our knowledge of the functioning of democracy in Ukraine, Poland, and Hungary.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of EAST PaC data is that its very existence compels scholars to take the long view of electoral politics in Central and Eastern Europe. The history of elections is now easily accessible; the contours of the electoral scene are clear and present in these data. We invite scholars to use the information in this book and these data to build stronger electoral controls over the parliaments, parliamentarians, and political parties of Central and Eastern Europe.

Towards electoral control in Central and Eastern Europe, J. K. Dubrow, N. Palaguta (eds.),
Warsaw: IFiS PAN Publishers 2016.

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