

Schakel, Arjan H. et al.:

## REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE: TERRITORIALITY OF THE VOTE IN TEN COUNTRIES.

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Regarding the territoriality of the vote, there were very specific conditions in post-communist countries. After decades of communist rule, characterized by strong centralism, newly democratized states faced the problem of how to adequately arrange the lower tiers of government. Building a national party system through the process of nationalization diminishes differences between regions by integrating voters throughout an entire country. On the other side, there were also regionalist tendencies. Allowing facilitating strengthening the dominance of regional or ethnic political parties in some areas could lead to the rise of violence and autonomist demands. It could also lead to the stabilization of the system by giving appropriate voice to minorities (Bochsler 2010). Democratically elected political elites of newly liberalized countries faced the serious problem of how to strike a balance between these two demands. In some cases, it took decades to create an appropriate structure of regional representation, in other countries this process hasn't finished yet.

In general, we can say that consolidation of new party systems and democratic national elections in Eastern Europe have received the most scholarly attention. The political environment of new democracies can be considered as highly dynamic and volatile, with the constant appearance of new actors. By

contrast, regional differences of the vote and elections on the lower tiers remain almost unnoticed.

The *Regional and National Elections in Eastern Europe: Territoriality of the Vote in Ten Countries* introduces a comparative study focused on factors and processes determining regional voting behaviour in Eastern European countries. In the first chapter of the book, the authors introduce the research of the territoriality of the vote through processes of nationalization and regionalization and present a common framework of analysis. Avoiding methodological nationalism, the widespread tendency of positioning the national level as a unit of analysis, the authors are putting the region at the centre of their research. The analysis of territorial heterogeneity in the vote seeks to find divergence of electoral outcomes between regions and between each specific region and the national level. The authors measure the congruence of the vote between regional and national levels with a formula consisting of three indexes: party system congruence, electorate congruence and election congruence. According to the authors, it's important to note that incongruences between regions and the state and between different types of elections does not necessarily indicate regionalisation. Processes of nationalization and regionalization are analysed through two lenses. Degree of nationalization of the vote is analysed under the premises of the second order elections theory. This widely accepted approach is based on the assumption that the situation in the national political arena affects a voter's choice in second order elections. Regionalization of the vote is measured by focusing on the presence and performance of non-statewide political parties and electoral alliances. After introducing tools to examine the degree of nationalization and regionalization of the vote, the authors present the stakes-based approach they used to ex-

plain the factors that underlie the territorial heterogeneity of the vote. The extent to which regional factors can boost the relevance of regional elections is examined by identifying territorial cleavages, measuring the regional authority index and examining electoral rules.

Then, ten country studies on the differences between regional and national elections follow. The countries considered are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Turkey. The introduction of each country chapter reviews the transition to democracy, regional government and regional elections. Country experts then analyse the extent of nationalization and regionalization of national and regional elections and factors underlying the territorial heterogeneity of the vote. Two processes structuring regional voting behaviour are operationalized through five dependent variables. Specifically, the authors of each chapter discuss congruence of the vote in regional and national elections (at the level of party system, electorate and election), differences in turnout and vote share between these two types of elections (second-order election effects), appearance and electoral strength of non-statewide political parties and occurrence of electoral alliances. In order to identify what causes territorial heterogeneity of the vote, experts also consider territorial cleavages, regional authority and electoral rules. According to previous research (Dandoy, Schakel 2013), these independent variables may increase the role of the regional electoral area for voters and political parties.

Despite the common analytical framework, country experts have taken to account each country's historical, institutional and contextual particularities. For example, country experts discussed specific conditions under ethnocracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, differences in regional vote between historical and current

administrative regions in the Czech Republic and the effects of strong ethno-regional and religious cleavages in Turkey. The authors have proposed any other factors they think may affect a regional vote. Qualitative data (which sometimes can indicate ambiguous outcomes) are interpreted with consideration to specific qualitative evidence. As a result, each country study introduces an in-depth comprehensive analysis of differences between national and regional electoral outcomes, processes structuring regional voting behaviour and the causes behind these processes.

In the final chapter, the authors make conclusions about the three main objectives. By adopting the same analytical framework as was used in a previous book on regional and national elections in Western Europe (Dandoy, Schakel 2013), the authors have the possibility to compare voting behaviour at the regional level between Western and Eastern European countries. The second objective is to explain the effects of the main distinctive characteristics of Eastern European countries. Finally, variables of a stakes-based approach are discussed in further depth to understand what lies behind regional electoral dynamics.

According to the congruence of the vote, there are greater differences between regional and national levels in Eastern than in Western European countries. Some of the dynamic and static factors have different impacts across Europe. For example, when regional and local elections are held concurrently, it decreases dissimilarity only in the West. The higher degree of dissimilarity in the vote in Eastern European countries can be explained by assumptions of second-order elections theory. On the other hand, some key effects of second-order voting are not observable in Eastern Europe. The results show a weak relationship between the timing of regional elections in the national electoral cycle and the second-order effects.

When voters are dissatisfied with a national government, they do not support opposition parties, but rather vote for new alternatives. When answering the question of which explanations for territorial heterogeneity of the vote for Western European countries could be applied for the East, the authors examine territorial cleavages, authority of the region and electoral rules. Variables under these headings appeared in several country chapters. This brings us back to the question from the introduction of the book: are regional elections in Eastern Europe regionalized or nationalized? The overall conclusion indicates that the most of regional elections in Eastern Europe are nationalized. Even the regional presence of significant ethnic minorities is not a sufficient condition for regionalization of the vote. Nationalization of the vote is enhanced by a widespread tendency of keeping regional government as weak as possible or by adopting mechanisms to restrain regional parties.

Based on these conclusions, the common explanatory model appeared to be powerful in the Eastern European environment too. But it is important to note that the presented results also confirm that some key second-order effects play out differently in the analysed countries. Apparently, voters in Eastern European countries behave in specific way. This opens up demands for further research.

The book *Regional and National Elections in Eastern Europe: Territoriality of the Vote in Ten Countries* provides a systematic examination of the processes structuring electoral behaviour at the regional level in Eastern Europe. Not placing the state at the common centre of analysis allowed its authors to comprehensively focus on territorial heterogeneity. The greatest value of this book lies in its cross country comparison of Eastern European countries without leaving out important contextual factors of the analysed countries.

Together with previous research devoted to territoriality of the vote in Western European countries, the authors present a complete picture of electoral outcomes at the regional level across Europe.

## References:

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Martina Mudříková  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University

## Pauwels, Teun:

### POPULISM IN WESTERN EUROPE: COMPARING BELGIUM, GERMANY AND NETHERLANDS.

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The book, written by Teun Pauwels, is the result of his PhD, and covers his main areas of research in Populism, Ideologies and Voting Behaviour. The relevance of his research in understanding the motives of populist rise and its voters are undeniable in the current situation. The rise of Trump to the White House, together with the 'near-misses' in France and Austria, and the general rise in populist parties across Europe and other areas have put in the limelight the old term 'populism'.

The research poses the question of *what causes people to vote for populist parties*. This is divided into who they are, why they gain support,