12 Conclusion: Towards an Explanation of the Territoriality of the Vote in Eastern Europe

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12.1. Introduction

This book sets out to explore the territoriality of the vote in ten Eastern European countries which provide for ample opportunities to analyze nationalization processes of electoral politics. These countries recently democratized after decades of communist party rule and have re-established or introduced regional elections during the 1990s and early 2000s except for Turkey which has held provincial elections before. In addition, ethnoregional minorities are omnipresent across Eastern Europe but are often dispersed across regional and national borders. The countries also vary highly with regard to regional authority and powerful regions may be found in the (con-)federal countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro (until 2006) whereas weaker regional government is present in authoritarian Russia and in the unitary countries of Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey (Hooghe et al., 2016a). Scholars of democratization processes in authoritarian and post-communist countries have paid much attention to the consolidation of national elections but territorial heterogeneity of the vote (Bochsler, 2010a; Tiemann, 2012)

and regional elections have received very little scholarly interest (Romanova, 2013; Tucker, 2002).

To remedy this national-level outlook and 'national bias' (Swenden and Maddens, 2009, p.4-5) we have asked experts to study processes of nationalization and regionalization of regional and national elections in their country according to a common analytical framework. Each country chapter describes congruence between regional and national elections according to dissimilarity between regional and national party systems, electorates and elections. The authors then explore the extent to which nationalization (second-order election effects) or regionalization (non-statewide parties and electoral alliances) underlie regional electoral dynamics. With regard to the independent variables, each chapter investigates the impact of territorial cleavages, regional authority and electoral institutions on regional electoral behavior (top-down approach) but the country experts also propose additional causes for diverging regional party systems (bottom-up approach). Adopting a similar analytical framework throughout this book and also in our previous book on regional and national elections in Western Europe (Dandoy and Schakel, 2013) puts us in an excellent position to compare regional electoral dynamics between Eastern and Western Europe. The first objective of this chapter is to investigate in how far variables proposed to explain territoriality in the vote in the West have similar explanatory power for electoral outcomes in the East. More in particular, we will assess the impact of territorial cleavages, regional authority and electoral institutions on congruence between the regional and national vote and on second-order effects in regional elections.

A second objective of this concluding chapter is to account for regional electoral dynamics which are distinctive for Eastern European countries. In Chapter 1 we observe that electoral dynamics in the East stand out in two respects when compared to elections in the West. First, party systems in the East are highly dynamic and there is a marked degree of

volatility between elections whereby parties constantly enter and leave the electoral arena. This lead us to hypothesize that second-order election effects may manifest differently in regional elections. For example, due to voter discontent government parties lose vote share but new parties instead of opposition parties attract the protest vote. A second marked difference is an abundance of electoral alliances in the East whereby the participating parties tend to change across regions and between national and regional elections. In Chapter 1 we hypothesized that electoral alliances have an important impact on electoral dynamics but that it is difficult to determine beforehand whether electoral alliances can be conceived as a sign of nationalization or regionalization of elections. Electoral alliances may serve as a means for statewide parties to secure votes in a region but may also serve as a means for non-statewide parties - which tend to be electorally strong in particular regions - to exchange votes for seats in national parliament or for policy concessions. The country chapters provide for an in-depth qualitative examination of electoral alliances and these findings will help to determine when and where alliances regionalize or nationalize elections.

This leads to the third aim of this concluding chapter which is to take stock of the insights provided by applying a bottom-up approach in the country chapters and which helps to gain further understanding of regional electoral dynamics. We will discuss three factors in particular: the impact of historical (regional) territorial boundaries, weak regional government, and the rules regulating regional elections. The second and third sections analyze congruence of elections and second-order election effects and compare Eastern to Western European regions. In the fourth section we discuss the insights which surface from applying a bottom-up approach in the country chapters. In the final section we discuss the implications of our findings and point out fruitful avenues for further research.

12.2. Congruence between regional and national elections in Eastern and Western Europe

Territoriality of the vote can be usefully explored by looking at congruence between regional and national elections. Party system congruence subtracts vote shares in regional elections from those won in national elections, sums absolute values across parties and divides the sum by two while one party's gain is another party's loss (see Chapter 1, p.3). Party system congruence is an informative measure on the overall difference between regional and national party systems but it conflates two underlying sources of variation while it compares regional to national *elections* as well as regional to national *electorates*. To disentangle the sources of variation two additional measures are included. Electorate congruence keeps the type of election (national) constant and compares regional to national electorates while election congruence keeps the level of aggregation (regional) constant and compares regional to national election results within a region. In Chapter 1 we compare dissimilarity between Eastern and Western European countries and observe that party system dissimilarity tends to be relatively high in the East which is mainly due to higher election incongruence (Table 1.2). In this section we assess in how far the same explanatory model can account for election congruence in the East and West. Before introducing the independent variables, we first break down variance in dissimilarity scores across countries, regions and elections. In Table 12.1 we display the results of a hierarchical linear model which contains a constant only and which clusters dissimilarity scores within regions and countries. In this analysis, and the analyses that follow in this chapter, we include elections for Western European countries and Turkey which have been held since the 1990s.

<Table 12.1 about here>

The constant can be interpreted as an overall mean and collaborates the insights discussed in Chapter 1: party system dissimilarity is higher in the East than in the West and this is mainly due to incongruence between regional and national elections rather than between regional and national electorates. Table 12.1 reveals another interesting finding. Variance apportioning across countries, regions, and elections is the same between East and West for electorate congruence but is strikingly different for election congruence. Not surprisingly electorates differ mostly across regions (about 50 per cent) and countries (about 40 per cent). However, variation in election congruence is highest between regions for Western European countries (66 per cent) but hardly varies between regions in Eastern European countries (a mere three per cent). In the East, election congruence varies mostly across elections (57 per cent) and countries (40 per cent). This may signal that regional elections are second-order elections whereby regional electorates respond in similar ways to cues originating from the national electoral arena. These observations have important implications for the analysis of congruence between regional and national elections. Dynamic factors can be expected to have more explanatory power in the East whereas static factors should have more traction in the West. In this section we present a model to analyze congruence between regional and national elections and we explore second-order election effects in further depth in the next section.

Table 12.2 presents the results of a hierarchical linear regression model on party system, electorate and election dissimilarity scores which are clustered within regions and countries. The models include a first-order autocorrelation coefficient while congruence scores may correlate across elections. Dissimilarity scores are pooled in regions and countries and thereby our dataset represents a typical cross-section time-series dataset. The robustness of our results are assessed by estimating Prais-Winsten models to control for serial correlation and with panel corrected standard errors to control for clustering of congruence scores within

regions and we include country dummies to accommodate for clustering of elections and regions within countries (Beck and Katz, 1995, 2011). The results appear to be highly robust and we do not report on these analyses (the results can be requested from the authors).

The first independent variable introduced into the models is the turnout gap between regional and national elections (Table 1.3) which is operationalized by subtracting regional from national turnout (that is positive values indicate that turnout is lower for regional elections). The turnout gap allows us to observe in how far dissimilarity can be ascribed to lower stakes for regional elections which arouse less interest among voters except for those who would like to use the regional election as an instrument to voice their discontent. This would indicate nationalization because the regional vote is based on cues arising from the national electoral arena which induce voters to switch their vote from parties in government to parties in opposition (Schakel and Dandoy, 2013).

The effects of territorial cleavages are assessed by a dummy variable indicating whether an election is taking place in a Rokkan region (Table 1.5). Differences in party vote shares can also be due to different degrees of politicization of territorial cleavages. Non-statewide party strength in regional and national elections tends to be highly correlated and cannot be introduced into the models at the same time (Pearson R is 0.88, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, we include a variable non-statewide party strength which is operationalized by subtracting the total vote share won in a regional election from the total won in the previously held national election (Table 1.5). Dissimilarity resulting from non-statewide party strength is a clear indication of a regionalization of the vote (Schakel and Dandoy, 2013).

The model further contains three types of institutional variables. The impact of regional authority is assessed by the regional authority index (Hooghe et al., 2016a; Table 1.6) and higher scores should lead to incongruence and a regionalization of the vote. Regions which have more powers also have more opportunities for political parties to cater party manifestos

and policy towards regionally based preferences which in turn helps them to galvanize the regional voter (Thorlakson, 2007, 2009). The effect of electoral cycles is evaluated by introducing three dummy variables respectively indicating whether a regional election is held simultaneously with local, (other) regional or national elections (Table 1.6). Increasing simultaneity should lead to a nationalization of the vote and lower dissimilarity scores because increasing stakes induces voters to turn out (Schakel and Dandoy, 2014) and cast a ballot while statewide parties are encouraged to set up a nation-wide campaign and to compete in sub-national elections (Jeffery and Hough, 2006).

Finally, differences between regional and national vote shares may also be induced by the incentives produced by electoral systems especially when these differ between regional and national elections. Regional elections can be held under more proportional or majoritarian rules and we include dummy variables for both situations (Table 1.6). Dissimilarity should increase under more proportional rule while the number of votes needed to win a seat will be lower making it easier for non-statewide parties and independent candidates to gain representation (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Neto and Cox, 1997). Hence, we may expect a regionalization of the vote although this is dependent on the presence and size of an electoral threshold. Regionalization can also be expected for elections which are held under majoritarian rule with single or multiple member districts whereby candidates and parties only have to mobilize voters within a district (Benoit, 2001; Moser, 1995). However, since a majority or plurality of the votes is needed to win a seat it can also be expected that mostly statewide parties will manage to surpass this threshold. Thus, it is not clear from the outset whether regional elections held under more majoritarian rule leads to a regionalization or nationalization of the vote.

We explore differences between the East and West by introducing a dummy variable which scores positive for Eastern European regions and the interactions between this dummy

and each of the independent variables. Based on the variance partitioning presented above (Table 12.1), we may expect that the dynamic factors (turnout gap and non-statewide party strength) have greater traction in the East whereas the relatively static variables (Rokkan region, regional authority, simultaneity between elections, and electoral system differences) are likely to have more explanatory power in the West.

<Table 12.2 about here>

Interestingly, electorate congruence is similar across European countries but the positive and statistically significant beta coefficient for the East dummy re-confirms, but now with control variables, the observations from Tables 1.2 and 12.1 that dissimilarity between regional and national party systems and elections is larger for Eastern European countries. All our hypotheses are confirmed because the beta coefficients for the independent variables have their hypothesized sign and reach statistical significance. However, some independent variables resort different effects depending on where in Europe the election takes place. Rokkan regions, regional authority, and regional more PR seem to have a similar impact, though there are some nuanced differences. Rokkan regions and regional more PR tend to have stronger effects in Eastern than in Western European regions. And regional authority impacts on election congruence in Western but not in Eastern Europe.

Six independent variables have a different impact in the East than in the West. First, a turnout gap of one per cent increases dissimilarity by 0.15 to 0.28 per cent in Eastern Europe but decreases incongruence with similar magnitudes in Western Europe. These effects are also apparent for electorate congruence which compares regional to national electorates for national elections whereby differential turnout between regional and national elections should have no impact at all. These results can be explained by the differential degrees of party system stability over time. First, lower turnout rates for regional elections induces second-order voting across Europe but the protest vote is captured by opposition parties in Western

Europe but by new parties in Eastern Europe. A turnout gap reduces dissimilarity in he West but increases it in the East because opposition parties often tend to contest elections across the statewide territory whereas new parties regularly compete in particular regions. The validity of this explanation is further assessed in section 12.3 where we explore second-order election effects.

A second independent variable with a differential effect in the East and West is non-statewide party strength. This variable is operationalized as the difference in total vote share between regional and previously held national elections. It reduces electorate congruence in both Eastern and Western European countries and this is not surprising considering that in most regions non-statewide parties compete in both national and regional elections rather than in exclusively one type of election only. Non-statewide party strength increases party system and election dissimilarity in the East but not in the West and a one per cent difference in total vote share translates into a 0.3 to 0.4 percentage point difference in congruence. This result is a bit surprising since non-statewide parties in the West tend to win larger vote shares in regional elections compared to national elections (Table 1.5): the difference is 2.47 per cent in the West but 1.08 per cent in the East (the difference of 1.40 per cent is statistically significantly different: $t = 5.60$, $p < 0.001$, two sample t-test with unequal variances). However, non-statewide party strength does not differ between East and West for regional elections (5.17 versus 5.57 percent; $t = 2.44$, $p < 0.01$, two sample t-test with unequal variances) but it is higher for national elections (4.10 versus 3.10 percent; $t = 2.31$, $p < 0.05$, two sample t-test with unequal variances). Given the operationalization of congruence, non-statewide party participation in national elections contributes to dissimilarity for all regions whereas exclusively participating in regional elections contributes to dissimilarity of the vote for only those regions where the non-statewide party is competing.

The simultaneity variables also play out differently in the East when compared to West but the direction of the impact is the same and holding elections concurrently may decrease dissimilarity up to 10 per cent. When regional elections are held concurrently with local elections it decreases dissimilarity in the West but not in the East. Simultaneous regional elections affects electorate congruence in the West but election congruence in the East. The differential impacts of simultaneity with local and other regional elections can be ascribed to varying 'electoral cycle regimes' (Schakel and Dandoy, 2014; Table 1.6). Almost all regional elections in the East are held concurrently with local (94 per cent) and other regional elections (96 per cent) whereas in the West there is much more variation (respectively 57 and 73 per cent). Hence, it is practically impossible to disentangle the effects of local and regional simultaneity in Eastern European countries. Incongruence is also reduced when regional and national elections are held on the same day but it positively impacts electorate congruence in the East but negatively in the West. Concurrent regional and national elections occur in federations (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Russia) in the East but (almost exclusively) in one unitary country (Sweden; Table 1.6) in the West and thereby simultaneity with national elections may tap into the heterogeneity of electorates.

A final variable which has a different impact across Europe is regional more MAJ which scores positive when a regional election is held under more majoritarian rule than a national election (that is a mixed or majoritarian regional versus a proportional or mixed national electoral system; Table 1.6). This variable decreases incongruence in the East but increases election dissimilarity in the West. However, this result comes about because regional majoritarian systems can have a regionalization as well as a nationalization effect. Majoritarian electoral systems boost vote shares for independent candidates and locally based parties in regional elections in Greece, Switzerland and Slovakia (Bochsler and Wasserfallen 2013; Skrinis, 2013; Rybář and Spáč, Chapter 10) whereas in Russia these systems help the

statewide party United Russia to secure majorities in the regions (Hutcheson and Schakel, Chapter 8). In the next section we will explore nationalization of regional elections in further depth by comparing second-order election effects between Eastern and Western European regions.

12.3. Second-order election effects in regional elections in Eastern and Western Europe

The second-order election model is widely applied to explain regional election outcomes (Hough and Jeffery 2006). According to this model, voters behave differently in regional than in national elections: they (1) turn out less, (2) disfavor parties in national government and cast their vote for parties in national opposition and small parties and (3) the extent to which voters behave in this way depends on the timing of the regional election in the national election cycle. Second-order election effects are smallest when regional elections are held close to the previous or next national election but are largest when they take place at mid-term of the national election cycle (see Chapter 1, p.4-5). In Table 12.3 we analyze second-order election effects between regional elections held in the East versus those held in the West. Regional election results are compared to previously held national elections and second-order election effects are measured by a turnout gap (derived by subtracting regional from national turnout) and swings in total vote share between regional and previously held national elections for parties in national government and opposition.

As independent variables we include local and regional simultaneity, regional authority, Rokkan region, regional more PR and regional more MAJ which are similarly operationalized as above (Table 12.2). Second-order election effects are expected to be smaller when regions have more authority, when elections are held in Rokkan regions, and when simultaneity is increasing. Regional more PR and MAJ are introduced as control

variables because differences in electoral systems may affect the extent to which voters vote strategically or sincerely (Gschwend, 2007; Karp et al., 2002). The variable time (that is the number of years between a regional and a previously held national election) and time squared ($time^2$) are introduced to assess the impact of the placement of the regional election in the national election cycle. The expectation that second-order election effects are highest at mid-term in the national election cycle (that is two years when national elections are held every four years) is confirmed when we observe a positive beta coefficient for time but a negative beta coefficient for $time^2$. Finally, a dummy variable is included which scores positive when a regional election has been held with compulsory voting (Table 1.6) and this should reduce second-order election effects.

We explore differences between the East and West by introducing a dummy variable which scores positive for Eastern European countries and the interactions between this dummy and each of the independent variables. We employ hierarchical linear regression models whereby turnout gaps and vote share swings are clustered within regions and countries and which include a first-order autocorrelation coefficient. To test for the robustness of our results we also estimated Prais-Winsten models with an autocorrelation coefficient to control for serial correlation and with panel corrected standard errors to control for clustering within regions and with country dummies to accommodate for clustering of elections and regions within countries (Beck and Katz, 1995). The results appear to be highly robust and we do not report on these analyses (the results can be requested from the authors).

<Table 12.3 about here>

The statistical significant beta coefficients for the dummy variable indicating whether elections take place in Eastern Europe indicate that the turnout gap is 32 per cent points larger and that government parties lose 22 per cent more vote share in the East. This result suggests that second-order election effects are stronger in the East which is in contrast with

what we observed in Chapter 1 (Tables 1.3 and 1.4). However, opposition parties do not seem to gain from the significant loss in vote share of government parties. We will come back to this finding below.

Regional authority reduces the turnout gap in both the East and West and a one-point increase in regional authority index score reduces the turnout gap by 2.3 per cent points in the East and 0.4 per cent points in the West. Government parties seem to fare less well in Western European Rokkan regions whereas opposition parties gain an electoral boost in Rokkan regions in Eastern Europe. This difference may be caused by differences in electoral mobilization of territorial cleavages. Above we compare non-statewide party strength between Eastern and Western European countries and it appears that it is not different for regional elections but is higher in the East for national elections. Hence, non-statewide parties are more successful in gaining representation in national parliament and oppose national government in the East but not in the West. Compulsory voting does not resort an impact but given the time scope of the analysis - elections since 1990 - this results is not surprising because the obligation to turn out as well as the enforcement of this rule has been decreasing over time (Birch 2009).

Holding regional elections concurrently with local and other regional elections boosts regional turnout and decreases the turnout gap. In Eastern European regions, government parties profit but opposition parties do not benefit nor suffer when regional and local elections are held simultaneously. As noted above, about 95 per cent of regional elections in the East are held concurrently with local and other regional elections and thereby the positive beta coefficient for the variable simultaneity regional is cancelled out by the negative beta coefficient for simultaneity local. The placement of the regional election in the national election cycle affects the turnout gap in the West (the turnout gap difference for year 1, 2, 3 and 4 is respectively 3.3, 4.0, 2.1 and -2.5 per cent) but not in the East. Parties in national

government in the East appear to lose vote share beyond the third year (vote share swings for year 1, 2, 3 and 4 are respectively 1.1, 1.1, 0.1 and -2.0 per cent) whereas parties in national opposition seem to lose vote share in a linear rather than a quadratic relationship with time (vote share swings for year 1, 2, 3 and 4 are respectively -2.2, -3.9, -5.1 and -5.8 percentage points).

When opposition parties do not seem to benefit from discontent with parties in national government the question rises which parties do? In Chapter 1 (pp.5-6) we propose to look at new parties because party systems in Eastern Europe tend to to be relatively volatile and many parties enter and leave the electoral arena. The results for the variables regional more PR and MAJ, which reach statistical significance in Eastern European countries only, suggest that new parties attract the discontent voter. Opposition parties lose 11 per cent vote share when regional elections are held under more proportional rule whereas they lose 3.3 per cent vote share under more majoritarian rule. Furthermore, government parties gain 8.4 per cent vote share and the turnout gap increases with 4.9 per cent under more majoritarian rule. These results suggest that the permeability of proportional rule allow independent candidates and new parties to enter the regional electoral arena whereas with majoritarian rule statewide parties are able to capture the regional vote.

To gain more insight into second-order election effects in Eastern Europe we re-ran the models of Table 12.3 with two amendments. On the dependent variable side, we introduce six types of parties. We differentiate between the largest and smaller government and opposition parties which allows us to observe whether the largest parties tend to attract more voter discontent than smaller parties. New parties are defined as parties which did not participate in the previous national election and which make their first appearance in the regional electoral arena. Second, no representation parties participated in the previous national election but did not manage to win a seat in the national parliament. On the independent variable side, we

include four variables which tap into the effects of electoral alliances. Electoral alliances are virtually absent in Western European elections but involve more than half of the party vote shares in Croatia (58 per cent) and the Slovak Republic (59 per cent), about a third of the party vote shares in the Czech Republic (38 per cent), Hungary (33 per cent) and Romania (33 per cent), close to one fifth in Poland (18 per cent) and one tenth of the party vote shares in Vojvodina (8 per cent). In Russia and Turkey there are practically no electoral alliances and when they are present, as is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the partners constituting the alliance do not change across the territory. The vote share won by an electoral alliance can often not be broken down to the partners of the alliance. In many countries electoral alliances present one candidate list whereby seat shares are allocated at the party list level and the party affiliation of candidates who win a seat is often not administered. Since most electoral alliances involves the same senior statewide parties while the junior parties tend to change across the regions we decided to assign the vote share won by an electoral alliance to the senior party of the coalition (p.7-8). Senior parties are parties which obtained the largest vote share in the previous national or regional election compared to the smaller, junior parties involved in the electoral alliance.

When parties participate in an electoral alliance in one type of election or in one region but present their own list in another type of election or in another region then this electoral alliance strategy directly affects the vote share swing between regional and national elections. We kept trace of electoral alliances and their vote shares by introducing four dummy variables (Schakel, 2015). A senior party can be in alliance in a national or regional election and thereby attract a larger vote share than when it would have participated in the election on its own. We capture these strategies by introducing two dummy variables labeled ‘in alliance national’ and ‘in alliance regional’. Junior parties can participate in an alliance in one election (where the vote share is ascribed to the senior party) but present their own list in another

election. These alliance strategies are captured by the dummies 'out regional alliance' (in an alliance in regional elections but out of that alliance in national elections) and 'out national alliance' (in an alliance in national elections but out of that alliance in regional elections). Our unit of analysis is the region hence we calculated the proportion of party vote shares in a regional election affected by the four electoral alliance strategies. Table 12.4 presents the results of hierarchical linear regression models which are similarly operationalized as above (Table 12.3) but with the addition of the electoral alliance variables and run separately for six different types of parties. We also employed similar Prais-Winsten robustness models as described above and we ran models whereby we excluded 'zero-cases' (for instance when there are no smaller government parties because there is only one party in national government or when new parties did not participate in the regional election). The results appear to be highly robust and we do not report on these analyses (the results can be requested from the authors).

<Table 12.4 about here>

Regional authority and Rokkan region do not resort much impact on vote share swings. As expected simultaneity with local and regional elections decreases second-order election effects and benefits the largest government and smaller opposition parties to the detriment of the largest opposition and no representation parties. The placement of the regional election in the national election cycle has a quadratic relationship with vote share swings for the largest government party and the smaller opposition parties. In the first year the largest government party increases its vote share by 1.8 per cent and the peak is achieved in the second and third years at 2.6 per cent and then the vote share gain decreases to 1.6 per cent in the fourth year. Smaller opposition parties incur a loss of 1.6 per cent in the first year which increases to losses of 2.4 and 2.7 per cent in the second and the third year and then reduces to a 2.2 per cent vote share loss in the fourth year. Vote share swings for the smaller government and new

parties follow a linear trajectory over time. Smaller government parties are confronted with a vote share loss of 1.0 per cent in the first year which increases to 2.0, 2.8 and 3.6 per cent with the subsequent three years. New parties start with a win of 0.6 per cent in the first year which increases to 2.0, 4.1 and 6.8 per cent during the following three years.

Interestingly, the largest government party benefits to the detriment of smaller government, opposition and no representation parties no matter whether regional elections are held under more proportional or majoritarian rule. However, the two variables have a different impact on new parties which gain 6.4 per cent vote share under more proportional rule but lose 5.2 per cent vote share under more majoritarian rule. This result collaborates the findings above and strongly suggest that in Eastern European countries new parties are able to attract the protest vote of the discontent voter and they are especially able to do so when the regional election is hold late in the national election cycle and is held under more proportional rule.

A striking finding in Table 12.4 is that electoral alliances clearly have a large impact on vote share swings for all types of parties except for new parties. It is important to note that the alliance strategies within elections are correlated with each other. The strategy 'in regional alliance' is strongly associated with the strategy 'out alliance national' (Pearson's R of 0.62, $p < 0.001$) and the strategy 'in national alliance' is strongly correlated with the strategy 'out alliance regional' (Pearson's R of 0.68, $p < 0.001$). The largest statewide government and opposition parties gain vote share (or reduce their vote share loss) in regional elections by forming alliances with smaller parties (in regional alliance). The junior parties involved in these electoral alliances tend to be smaller opposition parties which lose vote share in regional elections (out alliance national) although it should be noted that the recorded loss can result from the way in which we assign vote shares won by electoral alliances. When a party scores positive on 'out alliance national' it means that the vote share

for regional elections is set at zero because the vote share won by the alliance is allocated to the senior party. But the party receives a positive vote share in national elections because there the party presented its own list of candidates which leads to a negative vote share swing. It appears that especially smaller government and opposition parties form alliances for national elections and thereby receive higher vote shares (in national alliance) to the detriment of the largest opposition, new and no representation parties. The largest government and opposition parties will incur vote share losses when junior members of an electoral alliance for preceding national elections decide to participate in regional elections on their own (out alliance regional).

Electoral alliances matter for second-order election effects but it is difficult to tell whether the collaboration between parties signals nationalization of regional elections by statewide parties or regionalization of national elections by non-statewide parties. To gain more insight we built up on the insights provided by the inductive (bottom-up) approach included in the analytical framework of the book. Interestingly, the empirical evidence indicates that electoral alliances are used in both ways. Through the formation of pre-electoral alliances the two major statewide parties HDZ (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica*; Croatian Democratic Union), HSS (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*, Croatian Peasant Party) and SDP (*Socijaldemokratska Partija Hrvatske*; Social Democratic Party of Croatia) in Croatia have been able to deliver the county governor in all 21 counties except for *Istarska* which remains the stronghold of IDS (*Istarski Demokratski Sabor*; Istrian Democratic Assembly) and HDSSB (*Hrvatski Demokratski Savez Slavonije i Baranje*; Croatian Democratic Union of Slavonia and Baranja) which has managed to form the county government in *Osječko-baranjska* county since 2005 (Koprić et al., Chapter 3). However, for national elections the IDS frequently enters into electoral alliances with the SDP in order to secure seats in national

parliament. For the HDSSB it is difficult to form an electoral alliance with one of the statewide parties because the party originates from a split-off from the HDZ.

Whereas electoral alliances tend to follow the left-right dimension of party politics in Croatia, in Slovakia alliances are formed that cross-cut the left-right dimension of political competition and the government-opposition divide at the national level. The electoral system and the subordinate status of regional to national elections induce political parties to form electoral alliances. For national elections proportional rule is applied whereas majoritarian rule is employed for regional elections. Party affiliations of candidates are often not recorded on the ballot paper and this allows parties to form electoral alliance across the left-right and government-opposition divide. Regional elections tend to attract less than 25 per cent of the voters which are the lowest recorded turnout rates across Eastern and Western Europe (Table 1.3). Hence, parties try to increase the visibility of their candidate lists and frequently present nationally or regionally well-known persons on their ballot papers. Parties and alliances are not required to present the same candidate lists across the regions nor for the regional assembly elections and the directly elected regional president. As a result, parties form different alliances within and between regions with only one notable exception of the Nitra region. In this region the SMK (Hungarian: *Magyar Közösség Pártja*, Slovak: *Strana Maďarskej Komunity*; Party of the Hungarian Community) represents the Hungarian minority and all major non-Hungarian parties typically unite in a single alliance to compete against the SMK. This effectively means that ethnicity becomes the main differentiating aspect of candidates (Rybář and Spáč, Chapter 10).

Further and more detailed evidence concerning the use of electoral alliances by statewide and non-statewide parties is provided in the chapters on the Czech Republic and Romania. In the Czech Republic the KDU-ČSL (*Křesťanská a Demokratická Unie – Československá Strana Lidová*; Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party) tailors the title

of its candidate lists towards the region, for example Coalition for the Pardubický Region, Coalition for the Královéhradecký Region, and so on. A closer look at the candidate lists reveals that the KDU-ČSL usually partners up with groups of non-partisans or with marginal local parties. For example, the Coalition for the Pardubický Region presented a list of 50 candidates in 2012, 22 candidates were members of KDU-ČSL, 4 were members of a local party and the rest were non-partisans. Members of KDU-ČSL and non-partisans usually take turns on the candidate lists, so that the list of elected representatives appears to be well-balanced between party members and non-partisans. This strategy strongly suggests that electoral alliances are used by statewide parties to capture the regional vote. However, the UDMR (*României Magyar Demokrata Szövetség*; Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania), a party which represents the Hungarian minority in Romania, clearly shows that electoral coalitions are used by ethnoregional parties to obtain policy concessions from central government. Since 1996, the UDMR has provided support for various statewide parties across the left-right political spectrum and through coalition bargaining the party managed to secure extensive linguistic rights in education and local administration, as well as a restitution of buildings, churches and museums, which had been nationalized by the former communist regime (Dragoman and Gheroghita, Chapter 7).

The discussion on the question whether electoral alliances can be interpreted as nationalization of regionalization of elections clearly reveals that adopting an in-depth, qualitative perspective is pertinent for understanding the nature and causes of electoral dynamics. In the next section we will further draw upon the insights provided by the country chapter through applying the inductive part of the analytical framework in order to address the question which factors contribute to the subordinate status of regional elections.

12. 4. Understanding regional electoral dynamics in Eastern Europe

In the previous section we observed that second-order elections effects play out differently in Eastern than in Western European regions. This finding is corroborated by the country experts for all seven non-federal countries included in this book, that is Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey. The authors observe that the expectations of the second-order election model only partly bear out yet they still conclude that regional elections are subordinate or subject to national politics. Rather one may speak of regional elections as 'barometer' or 'test' elections signaling the popularity of national government which does not necessarily and often does not depend on the timing of the regional election in the national election cycle (see the chapters on Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey). In this view, regional elections signal the developments in the electoral market in between national elections which can be more or less favorable for government parties. For example, Gagatek and Kotnarowski (Chapter 6) show that vote shares for opposition parties in Polish regions positively and statistically significantly correlate with regional unemployment rates which suggests that dissatisfaction with national (economic) policy is driving the magnitude of second-order election effects. In general, dissatisfaction with parties in government seems to prevail but opposition parties do not benefit. Compared to the Western European voter, it seems that Eastern European voters tend to be more often dissatisfied with the complete party offer and are more inclined to opt for new contenders and are more willing to experiment with their vote and give less experienced parties a chance to assume office. Although second-order election effects are hardly traceable in the three federations, the authors of the country chapters on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, and Serbia and Montenegro (Chapters 2, 8 and 10) nevertheless conclude that significant nationalization of regional elections has taken place. In this section we are interested in identifying the factors and variables that can explain these regional electoral

dynamics in Eastern Europe which escape the conceptual lens of the second-order election model.

The common analytical framework allows authors to propose factors or variables that are important to understand or explain regional dynamics in their country. It is striking to observe that the conditions conducive for the nationalization of regional elections mentioned by the (con-)federal country experts are the same kind of factors contributing to the subordinate status of regional to national elections identified by the authors with an expertise in the non-federal countries. In Chapter 1 (pp.8-11) we mention territorial cleavages, regional authority, and electoral systems as three sets of independent variables that impact regional elections in Western European countries (Dandoy and Schakel, 2013). These variables are derived by a 'stakes-based' approach which stipulates that regional-scale factors and processes will play a larger role when the regional electoral arena becomes more relevant for voters and parties (Hough and Jeffery, 2006). In this section we focus on variables that appear in several country chapters and we will categorize and discuss them under the headings of territorial cleavages, regional authority, and electoral systems.

Territorial cleavages

Territorial borders have frequently changed in Eastern Europe. During the 1800s and early 1900s many Eastern European countries were governed by two empires. The Austrian Empire (1804-1867) and the Kingdom of Hungary (1526-1867) which both merged into the Austrian-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918) included the territory of current Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovak Republic and Vojvodina and covered large parts of todays Poland and Romania. During the same time span the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923) comprised present Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey and also included large parts of Serbia and Montenegro and Romania. Historical regions are territorial entities which were adopted from

the previous regime or created and maintained during the Austrian(-Hungarian) and Ottoman Empires but were often abolished in the late 1940s when the communists seized power. During communist rule new tiers of regional government were established which did not exist for long because these were liquidated or significantly reformed in the early 1990s. Only in Russia, Serbia and Turkey can the current regional borders be traced back to those of the early 1900s but significant boundary changes and a significant number of splits and mergers have taken place in these countries except for Vojvodina in Serbia.

Given the recent nature of todays regional territorial borders it is likely that voter preferences and party competition are not (yet) aligned with the territorial boundaries of current regional government. Hence, several country chapters analyzed incongruence between regional and national elections for 'historical regions' in addition to the current institutional regions. The country experts provide ample of evidence that dissimilarity in the vote between regions is higher when electoral results are analyzed according to the territorial boundaries of historical regions instead of contemporary regional government. Pink (Chapter 4) compares election congruence scores in the Czech Republic across three 'Crown Lands' which existed during the 19th century and observes that party system and election incongruence is higher in Bohemia than in Moravia and Silesia. In Bohemia the Christian and Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL) tend to receive less voter support in national elections but attracts the protest vote in regional elections because the party is perceived as the genuine opposition party in national parliament. The current Polish territory was partitioned between Prussia and the Austrian and Russian empires during the 19th century and Gagatek and Kotnarowski (Chapter 6) find that electorate dissimilarity scores are higher for the Austrian part. In contrast to the Prussian and Russian parts, the Austrian territory enjoyed a considerable level of autonomy: it had its own parliament, there

was a ministry in the Austrian government dedicated to Polish affairs, and some Poles were members of the Austrian government.

The Czech Republic and Poland are examples where 'historical regions' lead to territorial heterogeneity in the vote without a territorial concentration of ethnic or regional minorities. Croatia and Romania are two countries where historical regional boundaries and ethnoregional territorial concentration overlap and which leads to significant territorial heterogeneity in the vote. Koprić et al. (Chapter 3) observe higher dissimilarity scores for Istria when compared to the four other historical regions of Dalmatia, Slavonia, Central Croatia and the metropolitan region of Zagreb. Istria has been ruled for centuries by the Venetian Republic (697-1797) and high proportions of Italian speaking people can still be found in the coastal areas of Istria. The regionalist party Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS, Croatian: *Istarski Demokratski Sabor*, Italian: *Dieta Democratica Istriana*) has participated in all national elections since 1992 and has governed Istarska County since the first county election of 1993. Party system and electorate dissimilarity scores are significantly higher for countries encompassed by the historical region of Transylvania in Romania. This historical region was part of the Hungarian Kingdom and three counties in Eastern Transylvania are inhabited by Szeklers, a Hungarian-speaking ethnic minority descending from ancient settlers, who defended the Eastern borders of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom in exchange for extensive autonomy granted by the Hungarian King. The historical autonomy of Szeklerland or Székelyland (*Székelyföld* in Hungarian and *Ţinutul Secuiesc* in Romanian), which covers almost entirely the counties of *Harghita*, *Covasna* and *Mureş*, is currently invoked for the recognition of a special autonomous status for ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania (Dragoman and Gheroghita, Chapter 7). Obviously, the territorial concentration of minorities matters for the territorial heterogeneity of the vote no matter whether the concentration overlaps with historical regional boundaries or not. In Turkey, the Kurdish

minority is scattered across the territory but tend to be geographically concentrated in 15 provinces. When these 15 provinces are compared to the remaining provinces it appears that the difference in party system and electorate incongruence has been steadily increasing since the 1990s and is more than 30 per cent higher in Kurdish provinces (Massetti and Aksit, Chapter 11).

Since there are many instances whereby present day territorial boundaries of regional government split up territorially concentrated minorities and intersect and cross-cut the borders of historical regions, the question may be raised what argumentation was underlying this conscious choice of politicians? In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the drafters of the Dayton Peace Agreement drew regional institutional borders in such a way that the three ethnic groups - Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs - form majorities in their regions. As a result, there are two completely different party systems between the entities of *Republika Sprska*, in which Serbs constitute 80 per cent of the total population, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which encompasses Bosniaks and Croats. Within the Federation there are ten cantons whereby either Bosniaks or Croats constitute a majority except for two cantons (Hulsey and Stjepanović, Chapter 2). However, ample of evidence is presented in other country chapters that politicians more often sought to divide up ethnoregional minorities in order to 'curb' regionalism and to prevent (excessive) regionalization of elections.

In the Czech Republic regional government was introduced after an intense debate of eights years whereby the proponents of the reinstatement of the 19th century 'Crown Lands' were overshadowed by the opponents who feared that strong regions would challenge the unity of the country or would interfere with the autonomy of municipalities. As a result, regional borders were drawn in a 'random' manner and split up historical regions into smaller units and leading to a number of municipalities to swap regions and induced some regions to change their name (Pink, Chapter 4). Similarly, the number and boundaries of regional

government has also been heavily debated in Croatia and in an effort to weaken the opposition parties, the dominant Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) managed to split up five historical regions into 21 counties against the advice of scholars and experts who indicated that this would lead to inefficient government (Koprić et al., Chapter 3). In addition, when regional reform was debated in 2000, politicians discussed whether the new governmental tier could adopt the label 'region' but the answer was negative out of fear that this word could reinforce autonomy demands of Istarska County (Koprić et al., Chapter 3, endnote 6).

Further evidence is reported by Gagatek and Kotnarowski (Chapter 6) who note that in Poland, the fear of excessive regionalization and secession was explicitly voiced by right-wing politicians during parliamentary debates on regional reform. In addition, in Slovakia the Hungarian minority is distributed over two regions so that the Hungarian minority will not be able to get their 'own' region (Rybář and Spáč, Chapter 10). In Romania a similar reasoning underlies the decision in the early post-communist years to keep the 41 counties and the capital Bucharest which were established in 1968. The status quo has been kept because Transylvania is divided up into nine counties which prevents the Hungarian minority - and especially the Szeklers Hungarian minority which is concentrated in the counties of Mureș (36.5 per cent), Covasna (71.6 per cent) and Harghita (82.9 per cent) - to have a region of their own (Dragoman and Gheroghita, Chapter 7).

The dominant hypothesis in the literature is that the presence of ethnoregional minorities leads to territorial heterogeneity in the vote especially when minorities are territorially concentrated. However, the chapters on Serbia and Russia show that ethnic minorities forming a significant minority or majority in a region is not a sufficient condition for regionalization of elections. On the contrary, it may even help the nationalization of elections. In Russia, political elites in the ethnic republics and autonomous regions may re-orient their electoral 'machines' to deliver electoral support for the center against concessions

for their regions (Hutcheson and Schakel, Chapter 8). In Vojvodina, an autonomous region in Serbia, voters show consistent support for regional autonomy, yet this has not led to a fully mobilized center-periphery cleavage. This is because the Vojvodinan vote is split between three parties: a statewide party (*Demokratska stranka*, Democratic Party, DS) which has an electoral stronghold both in the region as well as in the capital and therefore cannot take up radical positions; a regionalist party (League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, *Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine,* LSV) which is strongly in favour of increasing the province's autonomy; and an ethnic party (*Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség*, Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, SVM) which mobilizes the vote along Hungarian ethnonational identity (Zuber and Džankić, Chapter 9). The relationship between ethnic identities and territory is complex and subject to manipulation by politicians as is nicely illustrated by the case of Montenegro. From 1998 until 2006 the ethnic and territorial cleavage largely overlapped and Serb voters supported the common state of Serbia and Montenegro. After independence in 2006, the Serb vote became detached from the territorial cleavage and related almost exclusively to ethnic identity, which has not yet resulted in new territorial demands *within* Montenegro (Zuber and Džankić, Chapter 9).

Regional authority

Several scholars have been interested in the effects of regional authority on the nationalization of elections. The idea is that regional candidates will adopt their own party labels when regional government makes the important decisions but stick to statewide party labels when essential policy-making power lie with national government (Chhiber and Kollman, 2004). Political candidates respond to the locus of power in order to make sure that regional based preferences are translated into policy (Thorlakson 2007, 2009). In Chapter 1 (Table 1.7) we compare regional authority scores between Eastern and Western European

regions and we notice that the seven Eastern non-federal countries score on the low end of the scale. Regional government typically falls in between a central government outpost and self-government. Regions often have limited policy-making capacity and implement cultural and educational policies on behalf of the central government. Fiscal autonomy is also limited and frequently regions can only set the rate for minor taxes such as tourism and vehicle registration and they remain fiscally reliant on shares in tax revenues collected and distributed by central government. Many regions have no borrowing autonomy, no role in central government decision-making, and executive power is regularly shared with central government.

The question rises why weak regional government is omnipresent in Eastern European unitary countries despite the presence of territorial cleavages and ethnic minorities. One explanation is that regions have been kept weak to curb regionalization. In the previous section we already alluded to this explanation. The fear of excessive regionalism has been explicitly expressed during parliamentary debates in the Czech Republic and Poland when parliamentarians discussed regional reform. In Romania, the sensitive ethnic situation in Transylvania, where the Hungarian minority resides, has prevented regional reform and the status quo introduced in 1968 whereby Transylvania is divided up into nine counties has been kept. Similarly, in Slovakia, regional boundaries have been drawn so that the Hungarian minority is split across two regions.

The post-communist non-federal countries underwent regional reform whilst negotiating accession to the European Union and in order to be granted membership these countries needed to adopt the *aqcuis communautaire*. Despite EU-accession criteria it seems that politicians have done the minimum in order to keep regional government as weak as possible. One characteristic of regional government in non-federal Eastern European countries is that regional executive government is either practically absent (Hungary) or powers are executed

by (Turkey) or shared with (Poland and Romania) an official who is appointed or needs to be approved (Croatia until 2001and Russia since 2005) by central government.

Curbing regional executive power is an effective tool for nationalization of the vote as is exemplified by Russia. Hutcheson and Schakel (Chapter 8) show that significant nationalization of regional elections has taken place during the 2000s and they relate this to reforms in 2000 when regional governors lost their seat in the powerful upper chamber of national parliament and in 2005 when gubernatorial elections were replaced by a system whereby regional parliaments confirm presidential nominees. Direct gubernatorial elections were reintroduced in 2012, but prospective candidates are required to collect nomination signatures from between five and ten per cent of deputies in a region's municipal assemblies from at least four-fifths of municipal councils and regional assemblies. Regions are also allowed to replace direct elections with appointment by the head of state.

Another way of weakening regional executive government is to increase competition between subnational tiers by strengthening local government. For example, in Croatia a reform in 2005 introduced the category of large towns with more than 35,000 inhabitants which have almost the same competences as counties. Similarly, in Turkey the number of metropolitan municipalities has gradually increased from three in 1984 to 16 in 1999 to 30 in 2013, and a reform in 2012 extended their geographical area of responsibility to provincial boundaries and abolished the respective provincial administrations. In 2014, no less than 77 per cent of the total Turkish population lived in metropolitan municipalities (Massetti and Aksit, Chapter 11). Another means to weaken regional government is through deconcentrated central government offices. In Slovakia, eight self-governing regions share competencies with 79 okres (Rybář and Spáč, Chapter 10) and in the Czech Republic 14 *kraje* shared competencies with 73 *okresy* until 2003 when the *okresy* were abolished (Pink, Chapter 4). The best example of introducing competing subnational tiers is Hungaria where 19 counties

(*megyek*) are 'hollowed out' from below by municipalities forming micro-regions (*társulás*) and local government associations (*kistérség*) and by 198 districts (*járás*) which are subdivisions of county level central government agencies (*megyei kormányhivatal*). Further 'sideways hollowing out' is caused by cities with county rank (*megyei jogú város*) and a parallel deconcentrated central government structure with more than 40 agencies (*kormányhivatal*). Finally, county government is 'hollowed out' from above by regional development councils (*fejlesztési tanácsok*) (Dobos and Várnagy, Chapter 5).

Electoral rules

Regional reform often goes hand-in-hand with regional electoral system reform and it appears that politicians in Eastern European countries often resort to electoral institutional engineering with the intention to benefit the party in power and/or to curb regionalism. The most effective mean to restrain regional parties is by outlawing them and by increasing entry requirements for competing in elections. Nationalization in Russia is achieved through outlawing interregional and regional parties and by imposing territorial penetration requirements and minimum participation criteria for parties. Federal legislation stipulates a five per cent threshold (was seven per cent) and stipulates that at least 25 per cent (was 50 per cent) of the deputies have to be elected from party lists. As result, most regions changed their electoral system from majoritarian rule to a mix of proportional and majoritarian rule. Nationalization is further enhanced by replacing regional elections that took place on their own cycles by bi-annual and later annual 'unified days of voting' in which all regional legislative elections due that year are held simultaneously (Hutcheson and Schakel, Chapter 8). In Turkey Kurdish regionalism is restrained by prohibiting Kurdish parties to compete in elections and by imposing a ten per cent electoral threshold in national but also in provincial elections at the district level. As a result, Kurdish candidates only manage to win a seat in

national parliament when they compete in elections as independent candidates in districts with a high percentage of Kurdish voters (Massetti and Aksit, Chapter 11).

Electoral engineering also occurs in genuinely democratic countries. In Croatia electoral district boundaries and rules translating votes into seats were constantly amended during the 1990s by the HDZ to secure its dominance at the local, regional and national levels. Once the its dominance was secured, majority rule was replaced with proportional rule in 2000 and since then both the HDZ and SDP need to enter into pre-electoral alliances with minor statewide and regional parties to be able to 'capture' the regional vote (Koprić et al., Chapter 3). In Slovakia, a two round majority electoral system for the election of the regional president was introduced with the argument that it would give the regional presidential office more legitimacy and that it would lead to a strong and independent role for the regional president. However, opponents of majority rule argued that the main reason was to prevent the election of ethnic Hungarian candidates in the Nitra region (Rybář and Spáč, Chapter 10).

Once in national government and enabled by its two-thirds majority in national parliament, Fidesz (*Magyar Polgári Szövetség*, Hungarian Civic Alliance) in Hungary quickly reformed the electoral system for national and regional elections and these reforms effectively increased the entry requirements for new parties. For national elections a mixed electoral system with a national (partially) compensatory list is applied. Since 2012 parties need to present candidates in at least 27 single member districts, nine counties and in Budapest but before the reform parties could participate in the compensatory list when they appeared on the regional lists in seven counties. For regional elections, districts were merged and as a result an average party needs 6.7 times more recommendations in order to be allowed to present a list in regional elections. Before the reform of 2010, there were on average 22.1 party lists per county and this number decreased to 3.8 in 2010 and 5.6 in 2014 (Dobos and Várnagy, Chapter 5).

Holding elections at the same time is also an effective means for nationalizing the vote. Simultaneity between local, regional and national elections can decrease dissimilarity up to ten percentage points (Table 12.2) and concurrent elections seems to be the norm in Eastern Europe (Table 1.6). However, the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that simultaneity is not a sufficient condition for a nationalization of the vote. Despite full simultaneity between cantonal, entity and confederal elections dissimilarity in the vote is high at all territorial scales (Hulsey and Stjepanović, Chapter 2). The country chapters also reveal two other conditions that are conducive for the subordinate status of regional elections in Eastern European countries. Statewide party interest in regional elections is increased when participation is rewarded. One major incentive for competing in regional elections is when parties receive a financial bonus for every seat they win in regional parliament. In the Czech Republic parties receive almost 9,000 euros in state finance for every regional mandate. Although this is significantly less than the 32,000 euros reward for a seat in the national assembly, the large number of regional seats (675 regional versus 200 national seats) still make for an important revenue resource (Pink, Chapter 4). In Slovakia, regional elections are 'low stake affairs' for political parties because they do not earn a financial bonus when they win regional mandates. As a result, independents have increasing chance to compete in regional elections and win seats but candidates need to finance their campaigns by themselves (Rybář and Spáč, Chapter 10).

Another bonus which increases statewide parties interest to participate in regional elections is access to media. In Poland, the electoral law specifies that parties which manage to present candidates in at least half of the constituencies and a list in each region have access to free airtime on national TV and radio. This is a very strong incentive for statewide parties to run a nationwide regional election campaign and, consequently, parties represented in national parliament win all 561 regional mandates except for one seat in 2006 and 20 seats in

2010 (Gagatek and Kotnarowski, Chapter 6). Another contributing factor to nationalization of regional elections is *cumul des mandats*, that is the practice to combine and accumulate electoral mandates which allows politicians to reap and accumulate the benefits of elected offices at various territorial levels. The magnitude of *cumul des mandats* can be quite considerable and until its abolishment in 2012 on average about a fifth of elected national politicians in Hungary also occupied seats in local and/or regional assemblies (Dobos and Várnagy, Chapter 5).

12.5. The way ahead

In this concluding chapter we set out to answer the question in how far regional elections in Eastern Europe require their own explanatory model. A comparison between Eastern and Western European regions reveals that the former stand out by a larger degree of incongruence between regional and national elections. This does not mean that Eastern European elections are to a higher degree regionalized. On the contrary, it appears that dissimilarity in the vote can be explained by second-order election effects whereby government parties lose vote share and opposition, small and new parties win vote share in regional elections in comparison to previously held national elections. Regional elections in Eastern Europe probably do not require their own explanatory model but second-order effects do play out differently. For example, it appears that especially new parties benefit from voter dissatisfaction with national government and the magnitude of second-order election effects does not seem to depend on the placement of the regional election in the national election cycle. Hence, the terms ‘barometer’ and ‘test’ elections are used in many country chapters to describe regional electoral dynamics.

The conclusion that most regional elections in Eastern Europe are nationalized seems to be justified. Second-order election effects are thought to come about because voters, politicians, political parties and the media consider regional elections to be low-stake affairs and voting, campaigning and reporting about elections are conducted with a national frame. The inductive part of the analytical framework applied in the country chapters reveals 'best practices' on how to achieve high levels of nationalization. Create institutional boundaries which cross-cut the boundaries of historical regions or split up territorially concentrated ethnic minorities. Keep regional government weak by introducing competing tiers of subnational government or by curbing regional executive government. In addition, hold elections simultaneously and under majoritarian rule which provides for strong incentives for regionally based parties to enter into electoral alliances with statewide parties. Finally, impose minimum participation criteria or ban regional parties altogether and introduce other rules which incentivize statewide parties to compete in regional elections such as a financial bonus for every regional seat won.

In this final section we would like to address two additional issues which come to the fore in several country chapters and which affect the study of elections in general. The first concerns the level of aggregation at which territorial heterogeneity in the vote is studied. Evidence presented in the chapters on Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Turkey invariably shows that dissimilarity in the vote is higher when election outcomes are studied at the level of 'historical regions' or at the territorial level where ethnoregional minorities reside rather than at the territorial scale of current regional government. In other words, one may severely underestimate territorial heterogeneity in the vote when one focuses on institutional regions. This potential caveat has not only analytical repercussions but also raises practical and normative questions. At the practical level one may ask in how far territorial heterogeneity in the vote can matter for government formation and policy-making

when the heterogeneity of preferences is not translated into seats in regional assemblies and national parliaments. A normative question which pops up is whether it is allowed in a democracy that politicians purposefully draw regional institutional boundaries so that they cross-cut the boundaries of regions citizens identify with or that politicians intentionally introduce electoral systems which significantly raise the hurdles for ethnoregional parties to gain representation. The most important lesson we draw is that in order to be able to address these research questions it would be very important to collect election data at the lowest territorial scale which often is at the constituency level. This would allow for aggregating election results at any desirable higher territorial scale.

The second issue we would like to raise involves an apparent paradox. Most regional elections in Eastern Europe are clearly second-order and/or subordinate to national elections. In great part this is not surprising considering that many regional borders do not match and often cross-cut the boundaries of cultural and historical regions citizens identify with. A survey held in 2001, when Slovakia held regional elections for the first time, indicates that two-thirds of Slovak citizens identify with one of the 20 cultural-historical areas (former counties which origin can be traced back to the Kingdom of Hungary, 1526-1867) but only six per cent identified themselves with one of the newly created self-government regions (Rybář and Spáč, Chapter 10). Yet, even when citizens do not identify with or feel attached to present day regional government, public opinion data evidently shows that more than an absolute majority of citizens find regional elections important and regional elections are often ranked higher than European elections or elections for an upper chamber. The percentage of citizens that classify regional elections as important is 58 per cent for the Czech Republic (Pink, Chapter 4) and more than 60 per cent of Polish respondents were interested in the upcoming subnational elections of 2010 (Gagatek and Kotnarowski, Chapter 6). Why do we observe second-order election effects such as low turnout whereas citizens indicate that they

find regional elections important? Do citizens give socially preferable answers or do citizens find it valuable that they have an opportunity to vote for regional government when they would like to (but which does not often happen)? Or do citizens appreciate regional elections because they can be used as an instrument to voice their discontent with national government? These questions are important because their answers have consequences for democracy in multi-level party systems. When regional elections are second-order they are about national and not regional issues and this weakens the prospects for regional democracy. Nevertheless, voters may perceive second-order regional elections as an effective instrument to correct national policy and thereby national democracy may be reinforced at the regional level. However, these questions can only be answered when we ask citizens whether and why they find regional elections important. Hence, election voter surveys with representative samples across regions would be a very welcome addition to the study on territorial heterogeneity of the vote.

Table 12.1 Variance decomposition of congruence scores in Eastern and Western European countries

	Party system congruence				Electorate congruence				Election congruence			
	East		West		East		West		East		West	
Country	36.02	24%	51.65	25%	55.40	37%	107.91	44%	54.53	40%	17.95	11%
Region	49.67	33%	122.72	59%	75.95	50%	125.80	51%	3.57	3%	108.74	66%
Election	62.69	42%	32.90	16%	20.28	13%	13.29	5%	76.84	57%	38.50	23%
Constant	27.98		22.00		14.83		16.84		21.56		13.51	
N elections	1312		1166		1312		1166		1243		1166	
N regions	302		261		302		261		292		261	
N countries	10		13		10		13		10		13	

Notes: Shown is variance in congruence for Eastern and Western European countries for elections held since 1990.
Party system congruence: dissimilarity between the national vote at the national level and the regional vote in the region (NN-RR).
Electorate congruence: dissimilarity between the national vote at the national level and the national vote in the region (NN-NR).
Election congruence: dissimilarity between the national vote at the regional level and the regional vote in the region (NR-RR).

Source: Western European election data is obtained from Dandoy and Schakel (2013).

Table 12.2 Explaining congruence between regional and national elections in Eastern and Western European regions

	Party system congruence			Electorate congruence			Election congruence		
	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.
East dummy	18.08	8.84	*	-8.99	7.12		46.27	8.98	**
Turnout gap	-0.15	0.04	**	-0.16	0.02	**	-0.26	0.04	**
East	0.15	0.05	**	0.23	0.03	**	0.28	0.05	**
Rokkan region	6.88	1.50	**	9.23	1.62	**	3.78	1.24	**
East	11.46	1.51	**	15.33	1.63	**	1.54	1.26	
Non-statewide party strength	0.05	0.04		-0.05	0.02	*	0.07	0.04	
East	0.40	0.04	**	-0.06	0.03	*	0.33	0.05	**
Regional authority	1.24	0.20	**	0.28	0.14		2.00	0.19	**
East	1.30	0.37	**	0.05	0.25		0.45	0.41	
Simultaneity local	-6.11	1.48	*	-0.66	1.00		-4.68	1.47	**
East	-5.57	6.12		7.01	5.74		-8.61	5.58	
Simultaneity regional	-4.39	2.21	*	-5.43	1.65	**	-2.02	2.07	
East	-6.62	1.32	**	0.98	0.77		-6.20	1.38	**
Simultaneity national	-2.40	1.38		-1.88	0.82	*	-5.74	1.46	**
East	-3.99	1.51	**	2.47	0.94	**	-10.27	1.55	**
Regional more PR	3.18	1.51	*	4.30	0.86	**	4.65	1.62	**
East	8.86	3.92	*	3.86	2.51		11.05	4.04	**
Regional more MAJ	-0.15	4.03		-0.92	4.21		6.97	3.39	*
East	-5.44	0.81	**	-3.17	0.46	**	-5.92	0.86	**
Constant	5.89	5.13		14.08	3.88	**	-16.90	5.16	**
Rho	0.20	0.04	**	0.61	0.05	**	0.20	0.04	**
Variance country	119.53	42.66	**	74.33	27.13	**	143.43	48.17	**
Variance region	44.84	4.47	**	58.05	5.57	**	22.35	3.50	**

Variance election	49.59	2.46	**	29.28	3.56	**	57.84	2.87	**
Log likelihood	-8293			-7342			-8223		
Wald chi^2	499		**	308		**	552		**

Notes: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.
Shown are the results of a mixed effects linear regression model whereby 2,349 elections are clustered in 562 regions and 23 countries. Election congruence scores are not available for ten cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina (30 observations).

Source: Western European election data is obtained from Dandoy and Schakel (2013).

Table 12.3 Explaining second-order election effects in regional elections in Eastern and Western European regions

	Turnout gap			Government parties			Opposition parties		
	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.
East dummy	32.15	7.20	**	-22.26	5.23	**	3.06	3.83	
Simultaneity local	-4.74	1.32	**	0.32	1.37		-0.82	1.03	
East	-5.42	4.64		17.47	2.89	**	-5.14	2.14	*
Simultaneity regional	6.16	1.76	**	1.20	1.95		-2.19	1.40	
East	-3.84	1.20	**	1.12	1.58		3.75	1.37	**
Time	4.65	0.80	**	0.64	1.03		1.04	0.88	
East	0.46	0.54		1.58	0.68	**	-2.42	0.56	**
$Time^2$	-1.32	0.21	**	-0.74	0.27	**	-0.30	0.23	
East	-0.04	0.16		-0.52	0.19	**	0.24	0.16	
Regional authority	-0.44	0.16	**	0.00	0.17		-0.20	0.12	
East	-2.25	0.32	**	0.08	0.21		-0.30	0.16	
Rokkan region	-1.23	0.95		-2.29	1.15	*	-0.75	0.76	
East	1.04	0.99		-2.17	1.18		1.70	0.81	**
Regional more PR	-1.89	1.47		-2.19	1.73		-0.29	1.43	
East	2.39	3.54		3.73	2.68		-11.11	2.07	**
Regional more MAJ	-0.53	2.64		-3.33	2.18		-2.20	1.86	
East	4.90	0.76	**	8.36	1.02	**	-3.25	0.91	**
Compulsory voting	-2.71	1.41		-0.26	1.40		0.84	1.14	
Constant	12.78	4.27	**	-1.27	4.01		5.22	2.80	
Rho	0.40	0.02	**	0.10	0.03	**	-0.01	0.03	
Variance country	91.00	31.96	**	6.72	3.38	*	3.83	1.72	*
Variance region	0.00			12.55	2.65	**	0.35	1.22	
Variance election	60.18	2.08	**	86.71	3.25	**	71.89	2.39	**

Log likelihood	-8104		-8963		-8560	
Wald chi^2	175	**	172	**	104	**
N regions	562		559		557	
N elections	2368		2421		2400	

Notes: * p < 0.05. ** p < 0.01.
Shown are the results of a mixed effects linear regression model for regional elections held in ten Eastern and thirteen Western European countries.

Source: Western European election data is obtained from Dandoy and Schakel (2013).

Table 12.4 Explaining second-order election effects in Eastern European regional elections

	Government largest			Government smaller			Opposition largest			Opposition smaller			New			No representation		
	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.	beta	s.e.	sig.
Simultaneity local	15.15	2.94	**	0.79	2.73		-6.17	2.56	*	-1.60	2.30		-3.33	2.54		-2.75	0.67	**
Simultaneity regional	-0.96	1.79		1.46	1.20		-2.78	1.22	*	6.79	1.48	**	-1.54	1.02		-0.43	0.78	
Time	2.21	0.77	**	-1.09	0.55	*	-0.34	0.49		-1.88	0.55	**	0.27	0.41		-0.37	0.29	
$Time^2$	-0.45	0.22	*	0.05	0.16		-0.13	0.14		0.33	0.16	**	0.36	0.12	**	0.09	0.07	
Regional authority	0.02	0.23		0.08	0.21		-0.01	0.20		-0.14	0.19		-0.20	0.18		0.00	0.04	
Rokkan region	0.82	1.25		-3.14	1.10	**	-0.29	0.74		1.80	0.73	**	0.12	0.59		0.73	0.48	
Regional more PR	6.98	3.08	*	-2.73	2.63		-1.65	2.79	**	-7.85	2.72	**	6.36	2.69	**	-1.67	0.56	**
Regional more MAJ	9.58	1.21	**	-1.58	0.80	*	-2.34	0.84	*	-1.36	1.01		-5.18	0.71	**	-1.23	0.49	**
Out alliance national	14.48	5.31	**	-5.07	3.49		8.47	3.41	**	-20.92	4.08	**	-3.46	2.95		7.74	2.18	**
In national alliance	6.47	5.76		21.25	3.64	**	-28.50	4.02	**	27.02	5.01	**	-7.98	3.41	*	-10.45	2.39	**
Out alliance regional	-31.13	6.03	**	23.70	3.80	**	-19.27	4.33	**	26.50	5.48	**	-3.41	3.60		10.69	2.61	**
In regional alliance	19.75	5.08	**	-29.47	3.23	**	-19.30	3.57	**	25.29	4.38	**	1.15	3.00		-10.64	2.07	**
Constant	-21.76	4.04	**	-0.54	3.41		11.39	3.36	**	-3.49	3.25		9.84	3.32	**	2.90	1.17	*
Rho	0.22	0.04	**	0.37	0.04	**	-0.11	0.04	**	-0.26	0.04	**	0.01	0.04		0.02	0.03	
Variance country	9.45	6.03	*	9.65	5.88	**	13.88	7.40	**	8.76	5.60	*	23.03	14.28	*	0.00	0.00	
Variance region	0.00	0.00		9.37	2.55	**	3.43	1.18	**	0.00	0.00		0.00			0.00	0.00	
Variance election	126.63	5.25	**	57.42	3.51	**	51.63	2.25	**	87.95	3.73	**	37.27	1.47	**	25.09	0.98	**
Log likelihood	-5018			-4506			-4499			-4772			-4252			-3972		
Wald chi2	142		**	365		**	172		**	213		**	166			71		**

Notes: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.
Shown are the results of a mixed effects linear regression model whereby 1,311 elections are clustered in 302 regions and 10 countries.