State Capacity in Crisis Conditions:
Preliminary Survey Results of Ukraine's Election Administration

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Introduction

The proper administration of elections is an essential function of all democratic societies and is a basic indicator of democratic state capacity. Impediments to free and fair elections, especially those introduced procedurally, undermine confidence in the legitimacy of election winners and their ability to govern effectively. When state sovereignty is threatened by violent conflict, the conduct of credible elections and maintenance of legitimacy is an even more acute challenge.

This paper explores how institutional, temporal, spatial, and partisan factors are associated with variation in civil servant[1] perceptions of the state's ability to successfully conduct elections. Our analysis relies largely on data from three surveys of appointed civil servants at the district and precinct levels of election administration in Ukraine. This unique set of surveys was conducted during the snap parliamentary elections held in late October 2014, during an intense period of civil conflict. Respondents, all of whom were temporary civil servants selected to manage election processes, answered questions about preparation, training, security, compensation, partisanship, and perceptions of election integrity. The survey results permit us to evaluate state capacity through the lens of bureaucratic attitudes and behaviors. While the current analysis is primarily descriptive, it provides preliminary insights into state management of elections under crisis conditions.

The paper proceeds in four parts. First, we present the context of Ukraine's 2014 snap parliamentary elections, noting how Ukraine's election administration apparatus is organized. Second, we outline the literature related to election administration, describe our theoretical expectations, and clarify the hypotheses that we evaluate in the paper. Third, we describe the data used in this paper, primarily surveys of election administrators. Fourth, we assess our hypotheses using survey data and discuss the implications. We conclude with a discussion of our future research agenda to extend the findings in this paper.

Ukraine's 2014 Snap Parliamentary Election

Ukraine's parliamentary elections provide a unique opportunity to investigate how state capacity is maintained in an environment in which sovereignty is threatened. The elections took place during an escalating conflict involving insurgent forces in the eastern part of the country, providing variation in state control. In addition, the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine, the leading institution managing elections, assented to a series of surveys assessing the attitudes and behaviors of commissioners, managed by the authors. Thus, we have unique opportunity to explore how various impediments to state activities affected the management of elections across the whole territory of Ukraine.[2]

Ukraine's 2014 snap parliamentary elections took place in late October, in response to an early dismissal of parliament following the collapse of the parliamentary majority. The origins of the snap election stretch back further in time, however, and are directly related to the large-scale protests that began in late 2013 in response to the regime's decision to renege on a promise to pursue closer relations with the European Union through an Association Agreement. President

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[1] In a technical sense, election administrators are civil servants as they are state agents who are provided a salary to implement policies. However, it is important to note that they are not beholden to the same influences as permanent

[2] Elections were not held in occupied Crimea or in some districts of Donetsk and Luhansk. To ensure the safety of enumerators, they were not deployed to areas outside of Ukrainian military control.

Viktor Yanukovych, who was legitimately elected to the presidency in 2010 after failing to gain it through illegitimate means in 2004 (Herron 2011), was increasingly perceived as corrupt and autocratic by a wide range of Ukrainians. The decision to more closely ally with Russia in economic and political matters mobilized Ukrainian citizens to occupy the main square of the capital city, Kyiv, and protest against the regime. Protests intensified, with government actors increasingly using force in an attempt to disperse protesters. Yanukovych fled the country in February after his support dwindled in the wake of the decision to authorize security forces to kill dozens of protesters. The ouster of Yanukovych prompted the interim government to call early presidential elections, held in May 2014. Petro Poroshenko, elected to the presidency, announced the dissolution of parliament in late August after the coalition collapsed in July, with early elections to be conducted in late October.[3]

The conditions for the implementation of elections substantially changed over the course of 2014. After Yanukovych's flight, Russia increased its direct involvement in Ukraine's political life, first by occupying and annexing Crimea, and later by instigating separatist violence in Donetsk and Luhansk. The annexation of Crimea, not recognized by the Ukrainian government, left 12 districts unable to conduct elections. Conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk further disenfranchised Ukrainian citizens by rendering elections impossible in many regions. On election day, 9 districts in Donetsk and 6 in Luhansk did not participate, and many polling stations in active districts were unable to function. Violence disrupted daily life in many corners of Donetsk and Luhansk, with concerns raised that the conflict might spread into other areas. At the time of the parliamentary election, one of Ukraine's regions (Crimea) was occupied and outside of state control, combat operations were being conducted in Donetsk and Luhansk, undermining state control, and heightened fears of expanded conflict threatened many other regions.

Ukraine uses a mixed electoral system to select parliamentary representatives. While the electoral system has changed several times since independence was achieved in late 1991, Ukraine retained the rules governing the 2012 parliamentary election for the 2014 snap contest. Voters receive two ballots, one for a party list and one for a local constituency. Seats are allocated equally between the two tiers, with 225 officially associated with each ballot.[4] Party list seats are divided among parties that pass the 5% threshold; constituency seats are allocated to the candidate receiving the plurality of recorded votes in the district.[5]

Tens of thousands of civil servants were mobilized by Ukraine's election administration to manage the process during this volatile situation. The election administration apparatus is hierarchical, with the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) functioning as a permanent body dedicated to managing the electoral process. Subordinated to the CEC are 225 District Electoral Commissions (DECs); and over 30,000 Precinct Electoral Commissions (PECs) are subordinated to the DECs. We focus on the lower two levels of election administration, DECs and PECs. Both

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[3] The dissolution of the majority was not due to unresolvable conflict, but rather as a pretense to hold early elections. Ukraine's constitution permits the president to call snap elections if the coalition collapses. Pro-European forces, eager to oust anti-European forces from parliament, pursued early elections as a tool to accomplish this goal.

[4] Conflict reduced the number of available seats in the constituency races, however, since elections were not held in 27 districts outside of Ukrainian government control.

[5] In some cases, this feature of the rules yielded victors who received a small number of votes. For example, in district 45, only four polling stations reported results as others were unable to conduct elections due to the conflict.

of these levels are temporary, with civil servants selected for the election period only. DECs are formed first, and they have responsibility for ensuring that PECs in their territory are staffed with the requisite number of officials, who receive needed training and resources to conduct the elections. The DECs and PECs constitute the front lines of election administration; they deal directly with parties, candidates, and voters, and are responsible for the casting, counting and ballot compilation processes.

Commissions are composed of members and officers, and vary in size. DECs ranged from 12-18 commissioners, while PECs in ordinary precincts varied from 10-18 commissioners, based on the number of voters registered in the polling place.[6] Commissioners manage different tasks in DECs and PECs. At the DEC-level, commissioners render decisions on PEC formation, composition of the membership and distribution of the officers' positions throughout the PECs, as well as compile and certify results. At the PEC-level, commissioners manage polling places, setting up for the election, checking voter identification, distributing ballots, maintaining a secure chain of custody for ballots, counting the ballots after the election concludes, and transferring official documentation to the DEC.

At both levels, registered parliamentary parties (factions) are guaranteed representation on the commissions. Within DECs, parties that participated in the 2012 parliamentary election on the party list could also nominate members. At the PEC-level, parties registered on the 2014 party list and candidates in the single member districts could nominate commissioners. After allocation of seats to the parliamentary faction representatives, the remaining seats were determined via lottery. In past elections, commission staffing has been volatile and also subject to partisan influence (Boyko and Herron 2014; Boyko, Herron, and Sverdan 2015).

Subjects of the electoral process are responsible for mobilizing members of DECs and PECs. Our survey data indicate that 55% of DEC officers were recruited via party meetings or gatherings, and 26% were invited by relatives or friends. At the PEC-level, only 38% of commissioners were mobilized by party organizations, whereas 47% were recruited by friends and relatives. The more extensive involvement of parties in recruiting DEC officers could be related to the importance of DECs relative to PECs, and also to the logistical challenges of filling the large number of PEC positions.

The positions on commissions are divided into two categories: members and officers. Members have voting rights, and participate in deliberations and decision-making, as well as managing the day-to-day activities of the commissions during the election period. Officers (chair, deputy chair, and secretary) have additional responsibilities as well as agenda-setting authority. Decisions rendered at the DECs and PECs can strongly influence election outcomes as commissions have the right to validate – or invalidate – individual ballots as well as the counts made by an entire polling place. Commissioners are powerful actors in the election process, and their activities help determine the legitimacy of the electoral contest.

The success – or failure – of election administration bodies provides important insights into the effectiveness of the state in managing democratic processes on its own territory. The following section describes general expectations linking aspects of state capacity to election administration,

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[6] The smallest commissions could be comprised of as few as 10 members; the largest could have 18 members.

and articulates specific testable hypotheses based on conditions in Ukraine.

Theoretical Expectations and Hypotheses

A key function of states is to provide services and protections that guarantee predictability for citizens in their daily lives. Economic activity, social interactions, and democratic competition cannot be successful if the environment is characterized by arbitrary decision-making or the prospect of violence. Scholars have long considered the challenges to developing competent state organizations, especially those that are insulated from partisan pressures (e.g., Geddes 1994). These concerns are especially salient in the management of elections.

In a democratic society, one of the primary actions that states must implement is elections: citizen input in decision-making is at the core of democracy, and the regular conduct of public votes is at the core of democratic state activity. Elections require vast technical, personnel, and financial resources and are challenging to implement even under the best circumstances. Increased scholarly interest in the integrity of elections has directed attention to the role that electoral management bodies play in ensuring that the process is fairly and efficiently conducted. Over the last decade and a half, researchers have assessed poll worker performance (Claassen et al 2008), ballot design and election technology (Wand et al, 2001; Herron and Sekhon 2003; Claassen et al 2013), post-election audits (Hall, Alvarez, and Atkenson 2012), and the overall contribution of efficient administration to free and fair election practices (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002; Hartlyn, McCoy, and Mustillo 2008; Birch 2008; Birch 2012; Alvarez, Atkenson, and Hall 2013). While much of the literature has focused on the experience of the United States, election management in the post-communist world has received scholarly attention (Popova 2006; Herron 2009; Sjoberg 2013).

The observations of civil servants provide a critical lens on the capacity of the state to provide basic services. Civil servants are the front-line bureaucrats who implement government policies and ensure that the basic functions of the state are realized. Because elections are a core function of democratic states, efficient election administration is a necessary component of democratic state capacity. Bureaucrats have direct insights into the quality and extent of services that are provided, and their impressions serve as a measure of state functions. We explore how institutional, temporal, spatial, and partisan differences are associated with variation in responses to survey items designed to explore administrative capabilities.

Institutional Effects

The institutional arrangements to conduct elections vary cross-nationally. Election administration may be hierarchical, with many tiers, or decentralized. Staffing may be permanent at some levels, or it may rely on temporary civil servants. Further, in some countries, partisanship is balanced on commissions while in others professional preparation is the key feature for assignment. The different responsibilities of the institutions, as well as the preparation of the administrators, could also affect how administrators evaluate the process.

In the case of Ukraine, we expect district-level (DEC) officials to have different perspectives on the upcoming election than their precinct-level (PEC) counterparts. Because DECs are at a higher level of authority in the election administration hierarchy, district commissioners have a wider area of responsibility and may also be at greater risk if the security situation were to

deteriorate. Thus, we would anticipate DEC officials to express more concerns about the preparations for the election than their counterparts in the polling stations.

Temporal Effects
If elections are conducted in a credible manner in a stable, democratic society, we would anticipate that administrator evaluations of the process should not vary substantially between the pre- and post-election periods. However, if problems emerge in the electoral process, it is possible that responses in post-election polls would differ from those in pre-election polls. The pre-election expectations for administrators in mature democracies should largely reflect confidence in the democratic process. However, if the election produces concerns about administrative integrity (e.g., the 2000 US Presidential Election), it is possible that post-election surveys would reflect greater skepticism about the election than the pre-election survey as respondents update their evaluations.

If elections are held in societies where stable democracy has not yet been institutionalized, we may also expect variation in responses from a pre-election to post-election survey. In this case, greater uncertainty is associated with the likelihood of elections being conducted credibly; administrators may thus express more pre-election skepticism about the potential for the process to be conducted well given this uncertainty. If the election proceeds successfully, post-election evaluations may be elevated as respondents update their expectations and express higher levels of confidence in the process.

In the case of Ukraine, the 2014 parliamentary elections were conducted in a society where democracy has not been institutionalized and the territorial integrity of the state was under threat. While the elections were held under uncertain conditions, international and domestic observers indicated that they largely conformed with democratic standards.[7] In other words, despite pre-election conditions that could increase the perception of threat, election day yielded little to undermine positive assessments of the process conducted by Ukrainian officials. Under these conditions, we expect that pre-election responses are more likely to manifest lower levels of confidence in the process than post-election responses. Specifically, we anticipate that the distribution of responses to questions related to process (e.g., quality, security, etc.) will reflect more confidence in the electoral process in the post-election period.

Spatial Effects
Elections are not only held in inchoate democratic societies, but they are also held when those states are under threat due to civil conflicts. Across the globe, elections are held during insurgencies and international conflicts, and we anticipate that holding elections under these conditions is likely to affect administrator evaluations of the process. If the state is experiencing internal conflict, it is likely that in regions of conflict, and those contiguous to the conflict, responses are likely to reflect heightened concerns. Administrators serving in conflict zones should be more likely to express concerns about the process than colleagues located further away from the conflict. Conflict may have regional effects, if active combat is concentrated in particular areas of the country, or it could have more widespread effects by undermining overall confidence in the process.

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[7] See, for example, the OSCE Final Report (http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/132556).

In Ukraine, we expect to find spatial variation in responses to questions about state capacity, notably security. Specifically, we anticipate that respondents in the regions of conflict, and in contiguous regions, will express lower levels of confidence, and higher levels of concern, than those located farther away from the conflict. To control for regions, we use an eight-region division (Barrington and Herron 2004)[8] that accounts for historical, economic, and social affinities that transcend formal political boundaries, but divides Ukraine into a manageable subset of regions (See Figure 1). We expect that respondents located in the East (Donetsk and Luhansk) to evidence the highest levels of impact due to conflict, with commissioners from the Eastcentral (Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia) and South (Odesa, Kherson, and Mykolaivsk) to manifest lower levels of impact than the East, but higher than other regions of the country.

Partisan Effects

Election administration staffing policies vary cross-nationally, with some balancing partisanship and others allocating positions in a non-partisan manner. If elections are managed neutrally, both approaches should yield similar processes and outcomes. That is, evaluations of the process and outcomes should not vary based on affiliations if elections are perceived as free and fair by the participants.

In the case of Ukraine, partisan affiliations guide the allocation of commission positions. As noted above, parliamentary factions have guaranteed representation on commissions. This feature of Ukraine's legislation permits the Party of Regions – the former party-of-power affiliated with Yanukovych – to gain commission seats even though it boycotted the election. Other parties associated with the ousted president, such as Strong Ukraine and the Opposition Bloc, also received commission positions. Parties associated with the opposition to Yanukovych, notably National Front, Petro Poroshenko Bloc, Batkivshchyna, and Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko, also received commission seats. The distribution of positions to advocates of diametrically opposed views about the proper direction of Ukrainian politics could induce differences in commissioner views of the process.

In addition to major parties receiving commission positions, they have also adapted to the rules, creating or supporting minor parties that seek positions on commissions to "stack" the commission in favor of those major parties. The minor parties, labeled "technical parties," may not be active participants in the election campaign, but earn the right to have representatives on DECs and PECs. Because more parties desire position on the commissions than the commissions can accommodate, a lottery is held to determine which parties will gain priority to the available commission seats. In some cases, major parties have been excluded from representation while small parties that are not legitimate contenders have gained positions. Major parties from across Ukraine's partisan landscape have taken advantage of this system to influence the electoral process in their favor. Indeed, research has demonstrated that technical party control over key positions in PECs is associated with an electoral "bonus" for the affiliated major party (Boyko and Herron 2014; Boyko, Herron, and Sverdan 2015).

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[8] Crimea is excluded from the analysis, so the division is effectively seven-region.

We anticipate several types of partisan effects. First, we expect that commissioners associated with the former ruling party would be more likely to express skeptical views of the election process, whereas affiliates of newly empowered parties are likely to express less skeptical views. Second, we expect that commissioners would recognize the presence of technical parties and generally express negative attitudes about their role in the process.

In sum, we anticipate that bureaucrats' evaluations of the election process will be influenced by several "lenses." The institutional lens focuses bureaucrats' attention on different aspects of the process based on their portfolio of responsibilities. The temporal lens allows bureaucrats to update their evaluations based on experiences on the ground. The spatial lens is associated with risk assessment in Ukraine, with proximity to zones of conflict most strongly influencing evaluations. The partisan lens is likely to enhance, or temper, positive assessments depending upon how the individual expects his or her party to perform in the election. In an ideal scenario, neutral, well-managed elections should produce little variation in evaluations. However, we anticipate that even if elections are conducted fairly, assessments may vary based on these features. The degree to which these factors affect evaluations could support, or undermine, perceptions of legitimacy and the capacity of the state to perform its basic functions.

Description of the Data
Surveys
The primary data used in this analysis come from three surveys of civil servants implemented from late September to early November 2014. The project required the cooperation of Ukrainian officials, and we received substantial support from the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine which sanctioned the implementation of the survey and permitted us to distribute questionnaires during its sessions with commissioners. All three surveys collected basic demographic information about the respondents, as well as their level of education, occupation, partisan affiliation, nominating party/candidate, location of services, and experience on electoral commissions (See the Appendix for more information).

The first survey implemented chronologically assessed the attitudes of district electoral commission (DEC) officials, asking questions about the formation and functions of DECs, member knowledge and training, logistical support for DECs, member compensation, influences on DECs, and the functions of precinct electoral commissions (PECs) directed by the DECs. Surveys were completed via two methods from September 30-October 8, 2014. Questionnaires were distributed for self-completion (273) at the Central Electoral Commission's training session for DEC officers, and 141 surveys were completed by telephone interviews. In sum, we received 414 completed surveys. The total population consists of 639 individuals (DEC officers), rendering a sampling error of 2.9% with 95% confidence.

The second and third surveys consisted of a pre- and post-election panel survey of PEC members and officers. PEC officials were interviewed in person and by telephone, with 2,020 participants in the pre-election survey and 1,758 in both the pre- and post-election surveys (12.97% attrition).[9] The pre-election PEC survey asked similar questions at the PEC-level, and also included questions about voter lists. The post-election survey rephrased many pre-election survey questions, and asked a battery of questions about respondents' experiences on election

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[9] The cooperation rate for the first wave was 66% and for the second wave it was 90%.

day. In the first survey wave, conducted from October 13-23, 2014, two-thirds of the interviews were face-to-face. In the second wave, conducted from November 1-November 21, 2014, two-thirds were conducted by telephone. The first survey wave included respondents serving as officers or commission members in 1,540 different polling stations and 179 districts across Ukraine (excluding Crimea). The second survey wave included respondents from 1,382 polling stations and 178 districts. Based on the population of polling station officials, the sampling error does not exceed 2.2% for the pre-election survey and 2.3% for the post-election survey.[10]

Election Observation Reports
We supplement the survey data with reports gathered from election observers during the parliamentary elections. The Committee for Open Democracy, a US-based NGO conducting election monitoring internationally, granted us access to the precinct-level observation data gathered by their short-term observers. The observers were trained to visit PECs on election day, collecting information and reporting their perceptions of the election process's quality. These data serve as a valuable source of validation for some impressions recorded by bureaucrats, and we report observation data where it provides a parallel to questions posed in the surveys.

While we have data from 375 PEC observations, it is important to note that the sample was not constructed randomly. That is, the Committee for Open Democracy allocated its limited observation resources to regions where problems were more likely to occur – in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Zaporizhzhia – rather than distributing observation teams more broadly across the country.[11] The data may not be fully representative of activities on the ground, but may overstate problems given the criteria for deployment.

Personnel Data
The Central Electoral Commission also provided us with detailed personnel records of registered PEC commissioners and changes to the composition of PECs on election day. In recent elections, the identities of personnel assigned to commissions have changed, with replacements of officials conducted by some parties and candidates. This phenomenon has permitted researchers to identify technical parties based on their personnel exchanges with major parties. The lottery-based allocation of PEC seats has prompted parties to participate, however many parties do not receive positions on commissions. These parties may provide their "unused" personnel to allied parties; tracking these personnel movements permits us to identify likely technical parties. To identify technical parties, we follow the methods described in earlier research (Boyko and Herron 2014; Boyko, Herron, and Sverdan 2015), classifying parties with personnel exchanges greater than two standard deviations from the mean as technical parties for the target major party.

Analysis
This section presents preliminary findings from the surveys, differentiating assessments of institutional, temporal, spatial, and partisan factors.

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[10] Because of the short timeline from PEC formation until the election, many interviews were conducted at training sessions managed by the International Foundation of Electoral Systems. It is possible that surveying respondents who were more likely to receive training could introduce bias into the results. However, the logistics of the election required this accommodation.

[11] CfOD deployed teams in Kyiv, L'viv, Chernighiv, and other locations, but focused its resources on the South, Eastcentral, and East.

Institutional Effects

As noted above, we conducted surveys of election officials at the district and precinct levels. DEC officials have different responsibilities than their PEC counterparts, and are drawn from a different pool of potential participants. DECs manage candidate and party electoral matters (especially related to the SMD seats), form and oversee the PECs in their region, tabulate and certify district-level results coming from the PECs, and adjudicate disputes from the PEC-level. The respondent pool from the DECs was more male, experienced, and educated than administrators in the PECs (see Table A1 in the Appendix). Because of variation in the responsibilities allocated to different levels of the election administration, many questions directed to DEC-level officials were not parallel to those directed at PEC-level officials. However, some questions about preparation and the security situation were identical in wording.

Overall, DEC responses were more cautious and concerned than those communicated by PEC officials. DEC officials were less optimistic about the timeline for election preparation than their PEC counterparts; 63% indicated that the timeline was sufficient compared to 74% in PECs. DEC officials also expressed heightened concerns about security. Except for two response items (receiving additional training for the security situation, and whether or not the respondent considering resigning from the commission due to the situation), DEC officials were more likely to be in direct contact with law enforcement, concerned about the safety of themselves and their friends as well as the potential for violence, and to note that work is more complicated due to the security situation (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Commissioners on DECs also differed from their PEC counterparts regarding their attitudes about compensation (see Table 2). Officially, commissioners receive a stipend from the state. Many parties unofficially supplement this pay to encourage individuals to serve on commissions. A common perception is that the additional compensation may also come with "strings attached"; commissioners are expected to support the interests of the party or candidate that nominated them.

Insert Table 2 about here

DEC commissioners were less likely than their PEC counterparts to indicate that commission members received supplementary pay, or to indicate that this pay was important. Indeed, 27% of DEC members indicated that support was important or somewhat important to their participation, compared with 49% in the PEC pre-election poll. These responses suggest that DEC officials may be more motivated by professional incentives rather than pecuniary ones. It is also possible that DEC officials were more prone to interpret the question as an implied investigation of bribery, and answered negatively (or refused to answer) due to the possible implications.

Civil servants in the DECs were far more likely than those in PECs to acknowledge the presence of technical parties. Almost 1/3 of DEC respondents indicated that technical parties were present, compared to 6% of PEC respondents on the pre-election survey. DEC respondents named at least one technical party that is consistent with personnel data (Green Party), but also identified many

others that were less prominent in exchanging staff with major parties.

Insert Table 3 about here

In sum, the responses of DEC commissioners differed from their PEC counterparts in several categories. DEC respondents were more concerned about preparation and security, less motivated by supplementary compensation, and more likely to allege that other commissioners served technical parties.

Temporal Effects
As the data in the previous section indicated, officials at the DEC- and PEC-levels of election administration varied in their views of the level of preparation for the upcoming parliamentary election. In addition to conducting pre-election surveys at the PEC-level, we also held a post-election survey, re-interviewing most of the participants from the pre-election poll. Post-election responses differed from the pre-election responses, generally in a positive direction. That is, given the successes of the election, administrators seem to have updated their views and expressed more positive evaluation of preparations after the election was held.

Insert Table 4 about here

Table 4 shows the differences between the pre-election and post-election assessments about the problems present during the election period. The table also shows the PEC-level observations of an NGO that deployed monitoring teams on election day (see above for details). Prior to the election, administrators expressed the most widespread concerns about the accuracy of voter lists and the potential for long lines at the polling stations. They indicated lower-level concerns about the management of the mobile ballot box, vote counting errors, external interference, violence, and voter processing errors. In the post-election survey, when respondents were asked about what problems occurred in the polling stations, inaccurate voter lists remained as the top concern, but was identified by only 5% of respondents; far below the 33% who expressed pre-election concerns about voter lists. Indeed, every question about expected problems was overstated relative to the post-election poll; difference of means tests reveal a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-election answers.

If we compare the survey responses to monitoring data from election observers, the post-election impressions are further substantiated. While the observers did not gather data on all of the items in the survey, they evaluated voter lists, lines, and violence. The observers found problems with voter lists in 6% of the PECs, long lines in 5% of the PECs, and violence (or threats) in 2% of the PECs. Each of these observations is higher than the post-election responses, but it is important to reiterate that the Committee for Open Democracy over-sampled regions where problems were more likely to occur. Their observations are more in line with the survey respondents' post-election responses than with their pre-election expectations.

A similar phenomenon is evident when one evaluates responses to questions about the security situation (see Table 1). As noted above, when we compared the DEC and PEC perspectives, the plurality response from DEC and PEC election officials was that the security situation was not a concern. PEC officials' post-election responses were even more emphatic: 81% of respondents

indicated that security was not a concern after the election occurred. For all questions, except for the one about resignation, the pre-election and post-election responses are statistically different from one another, with the post-election results more positive than the pre-election expectations.[12]

Post-election evaluations of compensation do not change substantially from the pre-election assessments, save for the percentage of respondents indicating that supplementary support was received. Supplemental compensation was almost twice as important for PEC members as DEC members, and this did not change in the post-election survey. The sufficiency of state support remained steady at 27%. The percentage of respondents indicating that parties providing supplementary support also expected more votes (i.e., supplementary support was a quid pro quo), dipped slightly, from 21% to 17%.

The general calm on election day, experienced in most of the country, may have contributed to the changing attitudes expressed in the pre- and post-election surveys. The short time frame for election preparations and Eastern insurgency may have heightened concerns about the level of preparation and safety that were not borne out on election day. The successful completion of elections, with few incidents, contributed to more positive post-election assessments.

Spatial Effects
Because conflict in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk is a likely source of security concerns, we anticipate spatial variation in responses to our survey items, with participants located in or around the areas of conflict more likely to express concerns or witness irregularities than those located farther away. In short, we anticipate evidence that the conflict is a localized disruption to services rather than a widespread phenomenon.

The location of each respondent's commission was recorded by survey enumerators and we have recoded the responses to conform with macroregions that combine regions with similar historical, social, and economic conditions (Barrington and Herron 2004). The two regions of focus in this assessment are the East, encompassing the areas of conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk, and the Eastcentral, encompassing the regions that are contiguous to the conflict areas.

Insert Table 5 about here

Table 5 shows responses for items related to preparedness, security, and election quality, with responses sorted by macroregion. Across the country, the vast majority of respondents indicated that the PECs had appropriate staffing to conduct their duties, with 85% or more of the respondents rating staffing as sufficient or somewhat sufficient. However, in the East, only 58%

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[12] It is also worth noting that post-election memories seem to be more positively inclined. In the pre-election survey, 13.4% of respondents indicated that they received additional training due to the security situation. In the post-election survey, only 4.2% indicated that they received this additional training. It is possible that respondents in the pre-election survey were scheduled for additional training that did not occur, or that training they perceived to be due to the security situation in the pre-election period was re-evaluated in their post-election responses. In any case, even an objective item such as receiving training seems to have been re-assessed in the pre- and post-election periods.

of respondents assessed staffing as adequate. [13]

A similar phenomenon manifested itself in the evaluations of security. Administrators in the East were more concerned about personal safety (20%) than in any other region, followed by respondents in the Northcentral (8.4%), West (6.5%), Westcentral (6.3%), South (5.8%), Eastcentral (4.7%), and Southwest (3.0%). In contrast to expectations, some of the regions located most closely to the areas of conflict did not report elevated security concerns. Indeed, greater concerns about personal safety were expressed by administrators in the Northcentral, West, and Westcentral regions than in the South or Eastcentral regions.

If the question addresses concerns about violence, administrators in the East express the greatest concerns (10.1%), followed by the South (7.4%), Northcentral (3.9%), and Eastcentral (3.5%). The Westcentral, West, and Southwest, located farthest away from insurgent regions, reported few concerns about violence.

Perceptions of fraud, gathered in the post-election survey, yielded different outcomes, however. Respondents in the West reported the highest level of concern about election fraud, with 10.4% indicating that fraud was common or somewhat common. Following the West was the East (7.6%), Northcentral (4.5%), South (4.2%), Eastcentral and Westcentral (3.1%), and Southwest (1.5%). These results are most likely related to the nature of partisan conflict in Ukraine, and particularly during this set of parliamentary elections. The disintegration of the partisan networks associated with Viktor Yanukovych's party-of-power (Party of Regions) is likely to have enhanced competition in the East, encouraging extreme methods to win elections. However, the reduced capacity of the former party-of-power may have enhanced competition among the former opposition, many of whom find their core support in the West. These parties may have most vigorously competed in their home territories in the West, elevating perceptions of fraud.

Partisan Effects
In our assessment of partisanship's role in election administration, we investigate two related issues: how respondent evaluations vary by party affiliation, and how technical parties affected the election process. Differentiating responses by parties generates some challenges, however. The three main parties encompassing the former supporters of ousted President Yanukovych include the Party of Regions (which boycotted the election, but participated in administration), Strong Ukraine, and the Opposition Bloc. However, many Yanukovych supporters found homes in former opposition groups, such as the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko. While establishing "clean" connections between parties contesting the election and the former groups that supported Yanukovych is problematic, the affiliations most likely to express skepticism based on partisanship are the three noted above, along with the Communist Party. The leading parties that opposed Yanukovych,[14] People's Front, Poroshenko Bloc, Batkivshchyna, and Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko, are more likely to be positively inclined toward the proceedings.

Insert Table 6 about here

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[13] In DEC 45 (Donetsk), all of the PEC members were appointed by the DEC, and the results were determined by four operational PECs. This case speaks to the relative under-staffing experienced in the East.

[14] The party Samopomich (Self-Help) is excluded from the analysis because it had few affiliated officials. The party was new in 2014, and associated with a regional mayor, likely contributing to its limited presence on commissions.

Respondents varied little in their evaluations of the preparation for the election, at least in terms of the sufficiency of staffing. While the responses reveal some variation, the vast majority of officials indicated that the basic staffing conditions were in place for the election. However, responses varied more substantially in questions related to security. The greatest concerns about personal safety were expressed among the affiliates of the former president, the Communist Party, and district candidates. Officials that were still nominated by the Party of Regions expressed the greatest concerns, with 26% indicating that they were worried about their personal safety due to their participation in the elections. By contrast, however, none of the Party of Regions respondents expressed concerns about insurgent violence. Affiliates of the Communist Party, Strong Ukraine, and SMD candidates reported the highest levels of concern; concerns were uncommon among representatives of former opposition parties.

Concerns about fraud were more common among officials related to the former ruling party, Communist Party, and SMD candidates. Representatives of Strong Ukraine were the most likely to indicate that fraud was common (19.3%), followed by the Communist Party (17.0%), and SMD candidates (11%). These concerns were not absent among former opposition parties, but were expressed at a lower level, with nominees of the People's Front (9.1%), Radical Party (6.7%), and Poroshenko Bloc (6.0) identifying fraud less frequently.

As noted above, DEC officials were far more likely to acknowledge the presence of technical parties than PEC officials, although both sets of officials identified some of the same culprits; the Party of Greens and New Policy were mentioned by both DEC and PEC officials. Associated with technical parties is personnel change, especially after the lottery determines which parties receive representatives on commissions. These changes were widely perceived as having a negative impact on the election process. While just under half of respondents indicated that the effects were negative, only one-fifth to one-quarter called them positive; the remainder indicated that they did not know how the changes affected commission work.

Discussion
We posited several preliminary hypotheses about the influence of institutional, temporal, spatial, and partisan factors on the conduct of elections. Under the assumption that administrators may be influenced by the different responsibilities of their offices, we suggested that DEC respondents, who are more likely to be experienced and professionalized than their PEC counterparts, would be more likely to express concerns about preparations and security than their PEC counterparts. Indeed, these expectations were generally reflected in the data. We further suggested that Ukraine's generally positive experience in the 2014 snap parliamentary elections could prompt officials to update their evaluations for the post-election survey, producing more positive assessments. In general, post-election responses were more positive than pre-election responses.

Ongoing conflict in Ukraine's East prompted us to anticipate more negative responses from administrators in and around conflict zones. While respondents in the East expressed more concerns about security and preparation than their counterparts elsewhere, administrators in neighboring areas did not generally demonstrate elevated concerns relative to other administrators. We finally evaluated partisanship and its potential effects, noting that affiliates of

the former party-of-power would be more likely to express lower levels of confidence in the process. In general, these expectations were also borne out in the data.
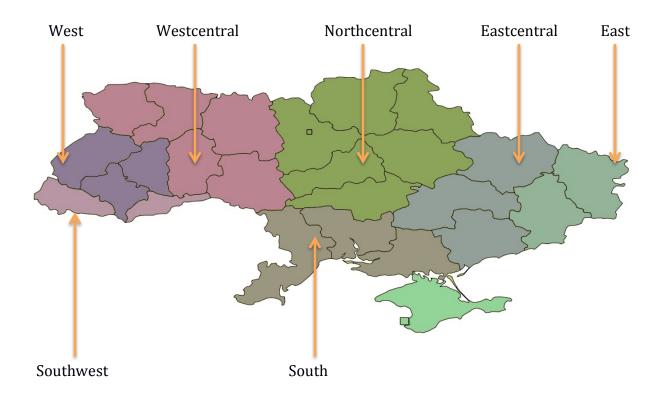
It is important to note that these findings are preliminary, and based on simple descriptive statistics and basic hypothesis tests. More rigorous analysis is needed to further refine our understanding of bureaucratic attitudes about state capacity.

Conclusion
The successful conduct of elections is a critical task for all democratic societies, and it is especially challenging when state sovereignty is at risk. Ukraine's 2014 snap parliamentary election provided an especially useful case to evaluate state capacity under crisis conditions. In this paper, we presented preliminary results from a survey of election administrators that asked public officials to evaluate the quality of the process.

While officials generally expressed confidence in preparations and the process, the survey also revealed several areas of concern. Temporal, spatial, and partisan differences in the evaluations of elections suggests that transparent, fair electoral practices are not yet institutionalized in Ukraine. The reliance on technical parties to populate commissions may undermine election integrity. Further research is needed to better understand how Ukraine and other transitional societies enhance state performance in challenging circumstances.

We plan to extend the project to better understand how states adapt to crisis conditions. We plan to enhance our analysis of the survey data, further incorporate personnel data, and develop more detailed spatial analysis of election results to clarify how election administrators respond to civil conflict and other challenges to state sovereignty. A more systematic assessment of the Ukrainian case should be instructive for other societies that have faced similar conditions.

Figure 1: Macroregions of Ukraine

Table 1: Security Situation

	Pre-Election		Post-Election
	DEC	PEC	PEC
Direct Contact with Law Enforcement	43.1	29.2	12.3
Concerned about Personal Safety	13.8	7.5	3.6
Concerned about Friends	11.3	2.7	1.0
Concerned about Violence	10.0	3.2	0.9
Work More Complex Due to Security	4.5	1.7	0.6
Received Additional Training	3.9	13.4	4.2
Considered Resigning Due to Security	0.7	0.7	0.6
Security Situation Not a Concern	40.3	45.0	81.4

Note: The response items on this table were separate questions with a yes/no reply.

Table 2: Compensation

	Pre-Election		Post-Election
	DEC	PEC	PEC
Party/Candidate Support Received	19.0	25.1	34.5
Party/Candidate Support Important	27.2	49.4	51.0
State Support Sufficient	29.4	27.2	27.4
Parties Paying More Expect Votes	N/A	20.6	17.3

Note: Several items are on a Likert scale; the data in this table reflect the combination of the top two positive response items (e.g., "important" and "somewhat important").

Table 3: Technical Parties

	Pre-Election		Post-Election
	DEC	PEC	PEC
Technical Parties Present	32.8	5.9	9.5
Most Common Technical Parties Named	**Green Party** Party "Greens" Green Planet New Policy People's Labor Union Sobor Ukraine Forward Ukraine's Future	**Internet Party** Liberal Party New Policy **Party of Greens** **Spade**	**Internet Party** Liberal Party **Party of Greens** **Spade**
Negative Effect of Staffing Changes	45.6	49.8	53.1

Note: Technical parties in bold/underline are those confirmed by an analysis of personnel movements, consistent with the methodology described in Boyko, Herron, and Sverdan (2015). The coding of responses in the PEC survey collapsed the Green Party, Party "Greens" and Green Planet into a single "Party of Greens."

Table 4: Expected and Actual Problems

	PEC Pre-Election	PEC Post-Election	COD Observation
Inaccurate Voter Lists	32.8	5.0	6.1
Long Lines	21.3	1.3	5.3
Mobile Box Management	7.7	1.5	N/A
Vote Count Errors	7.3	1.5	N/A
External Interference	6.4	1.5	N/A
Violence/Threats	3.6	1.0	2.4
Voter Processing Errors	3.3	0.5	N/A

Note: The pre-election question asked "how likely" the problems were, in the view of the respondent. The post-election question asked "how serious" the problems were based on the respondent's observations on election day. Regional weights applied. The election observation data indicates the percentage of polling stations in which the observers noted the behavior.

Table 5: Spatial Variation in Responses

	East	Eastcentral	South	Northcentral	Westcentral	West	Southwest
Sufficient Staff	58.45	86.32	86.24	85.41	93.18	91.34	93.93
Concerned about Personal Safety	20.20	4.69	5.82	8.37	6.25	6.49	3.03
Concerned about Violence	10.10	3.52	7.41	3.86	0.85	0.87	0.00
Fraud Common	7.58	3.13	4.23	4.51	3.13	10.39	1.51

Note: Responses for the first three items are drawn from the pre-election poll; the final item is from the post-election poll.

Table 6: Partisan Variation in Responses

	CPU	PoR	Strong Ukraine	Opp. Bloc	People's Front	Poroshenko	Batkivshchyna	Lyashko	SMD
Sufficient Staff	84.91	89.47	84.21	81.97	90.90	85.78	85.66	93.33	88.88
Concerned about Personal Safety	15.09	26.32	7.02	6.56	5.05	4.74	5.73	4.44	8.99
Concerned about Violence	9.43	0.00	5.26	3.28	4.04	0.86	2.15	0.00	5.82
Fraud Common	16.98	10.53	19.30	8.20	9.09	6.03	3.58	6.67	11.11

Note: Responses for the first three items are drawn from the pre-election poll; the final item is from the post-election poll. Partisan affiliations are based on which party/candidate the respondent indicated nominated him/her to serve on the commission.

Appendix
Table A1: Respondent Characteristics

	DEC Pre-Election	PEC Pre-Election	PEC Post-Election
% Male	42.5	21.0	20.3
% Experienced (>1 election as commissioner)	90.7	78.8	80.0
% Officer	100	76.9	77.7
% Member	0	23.2	22.3
% Completed University Education	84.5	48.4	48.5
Location: % Oblast Center	N/A	15.7	15.7
Location: % City >20,000	N/A	12.2	12.2
Location: % City<20,000	N/A	11.1	11.1
Location: % Village	N/A	61.0	61.0
PEC Size: Large (>1,500)	N/A	31.3	30.8
PEC Size: Medium (500-1500)	N/A	36.8	36.8
PEC Size: Small (<500)	N/A	32.0	32.4

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