

**When War Sets Agenda:
The Case Of Ukraine**

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Professor Arturas Rozenas

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Abstract

In the developed democracies the spread of certain ideological preferences among the general public is often reflected by the legislators, who try to vote in accordance with their constituents in order to be reelected. In non-consolidated democracies the reelection of the legislators depends more on their relationship with the ruling party than on the actual preferences of the electorate. It means that such legislators might avoid following the public inclinations in the period of the territorial armed conflict and continue voting in line with the ideological framework of the party they belong to. Thus, it remains puzzling why in non-consolidated democracies legislators are motivated to follow the preferences of the general public in the period of armed conflict. In the case of Ukraine, it can be observed that the Parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*) has turned nationalistic and anti-Russian since the beginning of the territorial conflict in Donbas region (Eastern Ukraine). If to take into consideration that the majority of Ukrainian legislators have multiple connections with Russia, the popularity of nationalist ideas in the Ukrainian parliament and the legislators' compliance with public preferences are puzzling. This paper aims to explain this shift in the ideal points of the parliamentarians by their desire to be reelected in unstable conditions of the territorial armed conflict when the power of the central government is put into question. Such incentives lead to populism and higher quality of legislative representation at the same time. Thus, territorial armed conflicts speed up the democratic consolidation in the short term, because even in non-consolidated democracies parliamentarians are prone to satisfy the demands of the general public, when the government is weakened.

Key words: Ukraine, parliament, war, public opinion, legislative voting.

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Introduction

Territorial armed conflicts are believed to be strongly associated with the spread of nationalism (Collins 2013, 38; Van Evera 1994). This observation can be explained by the fact that people get emotionally attached to the land they believe to be “their own” and thus, it becomes part of their identity, as argued by the constructivist school of thought (Touval 1972, Gorttman 1973, Sack 1986). The threat to the territorial integrity of the nation-state, and, thus, to the identity of its citizens, is accompanied by the rise of nationalistic ideas, which are aimed at reinforcement of the national identity within the citizenry.

In the developed democracies the spread of certain ideological preferences among the general public is often reflected by the legislators, who try to keep their ideal points close enough to the ideal points of their voters in order to be reelected (Gersbach 2008, 234). However, in non-consolidated democracies the reelection of the legislators depends more on their relationship with the ruling party than on the actual preferences of their electorate. It means that such legislators might avoid following the nationalistic inclinations of the general public in the period of the territorial conflict and continue voting in line with the ideological framework of the party they belong to.

Nevertheless, the territorial conflict threatens not only the territorial integrity of the country, but also the position of its incumbents. In case of the negative outcome of the warfare the ruling party and its leader might not be reelected (if elections take place) or can be removed by force through mass protest or impeachment. The previous research has shown that the political leaders who seek reelection are unlikely to participate, but this finding is true only for democratic regimes (Zaigler et al. 2013). Thus, it remains puzzling why in non-consolidated democracy legislators are motivated to follow the nationalistic inclinations in the general public, which are neither in line with their party ideology, nor lead to the establishment of liberal democracy.

In the case of Ukraine, it can be observed that the Parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*) has turned nationalistic and anti-Russian since the beginning of the territorial conflict in Donbas region (Eastern Ukraine). If to take into consideration that the majority of Ukrainian legislators have political, business, and personal connections with Russia, the popularity of nationalist ideas in the Ukrainian parliament is puzzling. Moreover, since Ukraine is a non-consolidated democracy and the parliamentarians are less dependent on the public preferences than their peers in developed democracies, it is puzzling why they follow the public sentiment.

I argue that in the period of territorial conflict the status-quo of all players within the political system of the state is challenged. Thus, legislators in non-consolidated democracies become sensible to the preferences of the general public. It happens because the crisis puts into the question the authority of the government, decreasing both its prestige within the society and its possibility to influence the legislators. Under such conditions, the legislators are likely to follow the ideological inclinations of their electorate, since the outcome of the next elections depends not on interpersonal relations with the representatives of the ruling party, but on the actual support from the general public.

Thus, in the period of territorial armed conflict parliamentarians might start making populist legislative initiatives, which would reflect the demands of the mass public, in such a way improving congruence between voters and legislators. The legislature can play the role of a mediator between the government, whose influence on the parliament considerably decreases during the territorial armed conflict, and citizenry, which now acts as an additional veto player.

Ukraine is one of the most illustrative cases to trace the change in congruence between legislators and citizens in armed conflict and stable periods, since it is currently experiencing a territorial armed conflict in Donbas region. It should be mentioned that during the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the mass public has often expressed dissatisfaction with the government, but did not question the legitimacy of the parliament (Ukrainska Pravda 2015). The latter, in its turn, proved to be capable of adopting the legislation, which met the ideological preferences of the general public.

Therefore, the research questions are the following:

How do mass public preferences change the ideal points of the legislators in the Ukrainian Parliament in the period of territorial armed conflict in comparison to the period of peace?

Why do the Ukrainian legislators vote in accordance with public ideological preferences under the circumstances of the ongoing armed conflict?

Based on the patterns of voting in the Ukrainian Parliament since April 2014, the research is intended to observe if the distance between the legislators and the citizenry experienced any changes as a result of increase of the agenda-setting power of the electorate during the territorial armed conflict and the willingness of the legislators to prevent their forced removal. The paper addresses the question of how in the time of war-related political instability the society can become the third veto player and force the legislature to vote for bills that would not otherwise pass. The research also aims to provide the theoretical explanation to the puzzling improved congruence between Ukrainian legislators and electorate.

The research is based on several assumptions. It is supposed that during the peace time the main veto player, whose opinion the parliament has to take into consideration, is the government. The reason of the government's predominance in the decision-making process is its ability to initiate the legislature (Gamm & Huber 2002, 323) and, thus, to offer the change of status quo which would be both close to the ideal point of the government and acceptable for other veto players (Tsebelis 2002, 34). During the period of territorial armed conflict, the dissatisfied citizenry, whose territory-focused national identity is questioned, usually challenge the legitimacy of the government, and, thus, it loses its ability to set agenda in the parliament. Instead, the members of the parliament become highly motivated to initiate the legislature which reflects the immediate demands of the citizenry, thus, making the mass public the main, even though not direct, agenda setter. Since policy stability in time of territorial armed conflict is low, the significance of agenda setting increases (Tsebelis 2002, 35).

Thus, the hypotheses of the research are the following:

H1: In the period of peace the congruence between voters and legislators should be weak, because in non-democratic countries, the parliament depends on the government and is relatively unaccountable to citizens.

H2: In the period of territorial armed conflict the congruence between voters and legislators should be strong, since the government loses its bargaining power as a result of questioning its efficiency by the citizenry and the legislators are highly motivated to introduce populist legislature due to the threat of forced removal.

Scientific novelty of this paper lies in the fact that it traces the changes in congruence between parliament and society, contrasting peaceful with war periods. It adds to the well-established debate about the relationship between the cabinet-level institutions and the legislative institutions the third actor, society as a whole, to which both legislative and the executive branch should be accountable. In addition, this paper aims to find out how the congruence between the citizens and policymakers depends on the foreign threat.

If the evidence supports the assumption that the parliamentarians' location moves closer to the electorate during the territorial armed conflict, this finding will provide theoretical explanation to the question why wars lead to democratization. It will also show that in contrast to the representative democracies, where the congruence between the legislator and citizens is very strong, because the former wants to be reelected, in non-democratic regimes the position of the legislator is floating and depends on the actor who controls the agenda-setting and legislator's likelihood to remain in the office. Finally, the research is supposed to show that the legislature plays an important role as a mediator between the government and the citizenry.

The remainder of the paper is organized in the following way. First, I discuss the previous literature on national identity, territorial conflicts, and congruence between voters and parliamentarians. Then I explain my theoretical expectations. I proceed to the analysis of the influence of the mass public preferences on the voting in the Ukrainian Parliament by presenting the available data and showing how it provides evidence for my theoretical assumptions. Finally, I close the paper with concluding thoughts.

Literature Review

The research aims to illuminate the mediatory role of legislature in the citizenry's ability to influence the policy change in the non-democratic country under the conditions of territorial conflict. Thus, this section aims to bridge the literature on congruence between the parliament and the electorate, territorial conflict, and the raise of nationalism as mass ideology. More specifically, the literature review will be devoted to the analysis and interlinking of the previous research, focused on the behavior of key veto players and how they can be influenced by the general public, this influence in the period of acute crisis, such as territorial conflict, and the impact of the territorial conflict on the spread of nationalistic ideas in the society. This section will be devoted to the overview of the previous studies and answers they provide with regard to the research focus of the paper.

With regard to the existing literature on relationship between citizens, government, and legislature, it must be emphasized that the citizenry is never treated as a collective veto player, similarly to the legislature or government. While researchers studied the relationship between citizens and government officials (Lupia & McCubbins 2000, Strom 2000), parliaments and governments (Strom et al. 2010, Martin & Vanberg 2005), president, parliament, and Supreme Court (Bailey 2007), or parliament, president, and voters (Bafumi & Herron 2010), none of them observed the legislature as the mediator between the citizens and government, especially in time of territorial conflict. In order to research the aforementioned relationship, it is necessary to refer to the literature on congruence between citizens and policymakers. According to median voter theorem, under majoritarian system the incumbents must represent the median voter, since the repeated process of electoral competition and legislative bargaining ensures that policymakers do what citizens want them to do (Downs 1957). Bingham Powell also observed that in proportional representation system the congruence was slightly higher than in majority control and mixed systems (Huber & Powell 1994, 309).

The Anthony Downs' party-competition model argues that the desire to win elections pushes both parties to the median voter (Downs 1957). Thus, the elected candidates must be located very close to the ideal point of a median voter. However, the observed relationship between the congruence and electoral rules is true only for democracies. In autocracies the incumbents can take advantage of fraudulent elections, thus, being not elected by the median voter (Magaloni 2010). In addition, even if they were democratically elected, the rent-seeking motivations and low level of accountability might result in the deviation of politicians from their pre-election promises, thus, increasing the distance between their location and the location of a median voter. The latter implies that the congruence between the electorate and the policymakers in the non-democratic systems (or under the conditions of transition to democracy) will differ from the congruence in democratic system. Since I didn't manage to find any literature on congruence in non-democratic systems, this paper aims to fill this gap by showing how the representation of citizens by legislators can be enhanced during the period of the territorial conflict.

The previous research on wartime legislating shows that the general public has proved to be successful in persuading the members of the parliament to follow the public opinion (Burstein & Freudenburg 1978). Nevertheless, other factors, in particular cumulative war costs are believed to be of particular significance. Since it is very difficult to measure what variables are more important in narrowing the gap between the legislators and the electorate, the public opinion as such has not been recognized as the decisive factor in improving the congruence between the citizenry and its parliament representatives in wartime (Howell & Rogowski 2013). Another major limitation of the existing research on legislating in the period of the armed conflict is that it focuses exclusively on the US, a powerful international actor which has a choice of leaving the warfare at any time or ending the armed conflict in short time framework, an expensive privilege, unavailable to such poor countries as Ukraine.

As it was mentioned above, the increase of public influence on the legislative decision-making should take place during the period of the territorial conflict. The previous research

sheds light on why it might be the case. In contrast to other types of crises, the territorial conflict initiates the shift in the national identity, thus making the electorate more nationalistic, as well as brings into question the territorial integrity and, thus, the very existence of the state, making the mass public more interested in international and domestic politics. Both processes have already been traced in the existing research, which is the reason why the territorial conflict as the cause of the shift in the congruence between the legislators and their electorate requires separate consideration.

For the purposes of this study I define a territorial conflict as a dispute, in which one or more parties are trying to assert their sovereignty over a piece of land (Sumner 2004). Up until recently international relations scholars have not devoted much theoretical consideration to the causes of territorial conflicts. According to the realist theory, all issues, including territorial disputes, can be easily explained by the struggle for power within the anarchic world (Morgenthau 1960). Thus, territory was regarded as a possible motive for war only as long as it served as a source of power. As a rare exception domestic causes were also considered, but this type of research concentrated predominantly on the domestic institutions and norms, not diversionary incentives (Huth & Allee 2002). In sum, a comprehensive review of the existing literature on territorial disputes shows that the available findings are contradictory at best, even though the existing theories range from the aforementioned neorealism to neoliberalism and post-modernism (Vasquez & Valeriano 2008).

The territorial conflicts, fought at the state's frontiers or even within the borders, and overseas conflicts, fought on far-away continents, might have different emotional appeal to the general public and, thus, considerable impact on the spread of nationalistic ideas. According to Tir (2010), territorial conflicts have greater "attention-grabbing" effects than any other type of conflict. As argued by Vasquez (1993) and Hensel (2000) the proclivity of humans to tie their collective inheritance to the territory makes territorial disputes to be particularly war prone. In other words, people are often ready fight for the territory even it has little resources or any other value.

The irrationalism of human choices with regard to territory allow assuming that such preferences are constructed. In fact, the constructivist school of thought (Touval 1972, Gottman 1973, Sack 1986) claims that people get emotionally attached to the land they believe to be “their own” and thus, it becomes part of their identity. This strong bond to the territory results in the national identity shift, which might lead to the popularity of nationalistic ideas. Since the attachment to the territory is constructed, it can be manipulated by the elites, escalating the territorial and nationalistic emotions when needed. By turning more nationalistic, the electorate might start requiring the same from the legislators who are supposed to represent the median voter in the parliament. Being threatened with the possible removal from the office, the legislators can start voting accordingly. By mobilizing the population to fight in both real terms (at the battlefields) and in “virtual” warfare (through TV-screens, as mentioned earlier), the political elites themselves provoke the spread of nationalist requirements, which they have to meet later. Thus, nationalism becomes the shield ideology to protect the incumbents from the loss of popularity as a result of long, escalating, costly, and protracted warfare which inevitable follows (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003).

The aforementioned literature is dominated by the cabinet-centered research, which focuses on the conflict between government and citizens, paying little attention to the role, played by parliament in general and to its role in the period of the acute crisis in particular. The agenda-setting power of the mass public is analyzed with regard to their influence on the executive, thus, it is not explained how agenda-setter influences the congruence between voters and legislators. While, giving evidence of the general efficiency of the public mobilization in influencing the policy-making, the existing research focuses predominantly on the ability of the electorate to terminate the government or legislature, and it does not provide a theoretical explanation of why the territorial conflict can move the ideological locations of the legislators without removing them. Thus, this paper differs from the previous literature in its goal to explain the underlying mechanisms of policy change through legislative mediation, rather than

trying to find the relationship between the territorial conflict and alterations of governmental policy.

It is impossible to analyze the war-related raise of nationalism without understanding how the national identity is formed. There are two major approaches to national identity, on the basis of which it is possible to make conclusions about the ability of the general public to influence the voting in the legislature. The first one, primordialism, argues that the identity is inherent and intrinsic, it is static and non-changing. Ethnicity is biologically and historically given, meaning that an individual is born with a certain ethnic identity, which he/she cannot escape. According to the second approach, constructivism, identity is manipulative and ever-changing, it is based on political, social, and cultural resources. Thus, ethnicity is socially constructed by social forces and can be manipulated from outside to create ethnic antagonism (Walicki 1998, 611-619). In this paper I argue that the national identity is both given and constructed. This equivocal nature of national identity makes the raise of nationalism possible in the period of acute crisis.

Antony Smith argues that “nationalism [...] is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the autonomy, unity, and identity of a nation” (Smith 1991, 74). In particular, the concept of ‘identity’ can be understood as ‘sameness’. The likeliness within the group is possible only as long as it is perceived as different from non-members outside the group (Smith 1991, 75). The national identity also can take its root in the philosophical and anthropological concepts of the “national character”, “ethnic past”, cultural and political homogeneity, fraternity, and autonomy (Smith 1991, 77). With regard to the research question in this paper it is extremely important to take into consideration this definition of the national identity, since it shows how the myths about ‘sameness’ and ‘otherness’ can become a derivative of the national identity and manipulated over the course of time.

But how does this distinction between “us” and “them” appear? Hobsbawm argues that nationalism is an elite phenomenon. It is constructed from above, but cannot be understood if not analyzed from below (Hobsbawm 1990, 10-11). So if the masses are proved to have “too

much belief in what is patently not so,” (Hobsbawm 1990, 12) the question remains: who popularizes and, what is even more important, creates such beliefs. To a certain extent this question is answered by Gellner, who argues that nationalism is a necessary phenomenon of the “inevitable process of mutual adjustment of state and culture” (Gellner 1983, 39). If nationalism emerges as a result of the structural needs of the industrial society, and leads to state-imposed homogeneity, one can conclude that state elites, guided by their situationist motivations, are responsible for initiating these processes (even if it does not happen as a result of a deliberate choice).

Much more definite answer to the aforementioned question is provided by Andersen. He argues that nation, nationality, and nationalism are innovative recent concepts which were created in late 18th century. Nation is an imagined community that is both limited and sovereign (Anderson 1991, 6-7). The emergence of the official nationalism, discussed by Andersen, is of particular importance, since, even though it appeared after and in reaction to the popular national movements, it was the first time when the political elites started to participate in the formation of the national identity actively enough to make large-scale assimilationist projects possible (for example, Russification launched by Alexander III) (Anderson 1991, 86-87). Such policies of national identity and homogeneity construction laid a solid base for the future nationalistic discourses.

An alternative approach to national identity, which will be employed in this paper, was offered by Erikson. Mentioned by David Laitin in his discussion of identity change, this approach to identity argues that national identity is Janus-faced. It is both primordial and instrumental. People are limited in their self-identification by their heritage, communities, and environment. From this point of view, the identity is given to them. However, individuals are also free to adjust their identities depending on the judgments of others and with regard to comfort or benefits a certain identity brings. Thus, identity is also constructed (Laitin 1998, 20-21).

As it can be concluded from the overview of the existing literature on national identity and nationalism, the identity is believed to be both given and constructed by the elites. Nevertheless, it is not completely clear if there is any backlash of nationalist ideas from society to the elites themselves. If the elites manipulate the nationalistic preferences of the general public, there should be some adverse reaction which forces the incumbents to fulfill the aspirations of the nationalistic masses. In such a way, the spread of nationalistic ideas gains grass root character which is not analyzed in the existing literature.

In conclusion, the paper aims to contribute to three broad debates in political science research: on agenda-setting power of the mass public, congruence between legislators and voters in non-democratic regimes, and territorial conflict as the prerequisite for the spread of nationalistic ideas. While the previous research has already analyzed the influence of the territorial conflict on the national identity and the raise of nationalism, as well existence of strong congruence between the legislature and the median voter in developed democracies, little attention was paid to the mediatory role of parliament between the electorate and the government in the period of territorial armed conflict. But investigating the changes in congruence between legislators and citizens in the war and peace time, this paper is aimed at adding one more dimension to the research on the influence of the general public on the legislature in nondemocratic regimes.

Theoretical Expectations

Under the conditions of the territorial conflict, the citizenry as a whole becomes a veto player, agreement of which is necessary for the change of status quo. Other two veto players, which can influence the policy change, are legislature and government. During the territorial conflict policy stability should be low (and winset of the status quo is large) (Tsebelis 2002, 22), since being threatened with the possibility of removal from the office (in case of

unsuccessful conflict outcome), the incumbents agree to change policy in accordance with preferences of the population. Thus, the policy adopted under the pressure of the citizenry must be more populist than the policy adopted during the time of stability.

The latter is possible due to the fact that during the period of the territorial conflict the citizenry becomes an agenda-setter, because its demands cannot be ignored and must be immediately considered. According to Tsebelis (2002, 35), the veto player who sets the agenda has a considerable advantage: citizenry can consider the winset of the others as its constraint and select from it the outcome it prefers. Since the policy stability is low, the significance of agenda setting should be very high.

It is necessary to mention that in the majority of democracies with only rare exceptions, parliaments must approve all major policy initiatives (Martin & Vanberg, 2005, 93). Thus, what is interesting with regard to aforementioned arguments is the location of the legislature relatively to the citizenry in the time of the territorial conflicts. While public disapproval is predominantly directed against governments, legislature can play the role of a mediator between two opposing actors by adopting the policy, which would be within the indifference curves of both the government and the electorate, in other words, finding the compromise between them.

Policy congruence can be analyzed by identifying the absolute distance between voters and legislators (Costello, Thomassen, Rosema 2012, 1239). Since this research is interested in the relocations of legislators' positions in periods of the territorial conflict in comparison to the periods of stability, the reference point for these relocations is the position of the citizenry. Thus, the research is focused on the comparison of the absolute distance between the positions of legislators and voters in time of stability in contrast to the same difference in time of the territorial conflict.

If in the period of stability, the legislators in the nondemocratic state vote in accordance with the position of the government, the distance between them is relatively small. The latter can be explained by the agenda-setting power of the government, which exploits its right to

propose the legislation in order to pull the policy in the direction favorable to the government and the existence of the pro-governmental parliamentary majority. The party discipline, coalition agreements, as well as threat of the parliament dissolution force the legislators to vote in accordance with the governmental position. As a result, they might deviate from their pre-election promises, if the position of the government does not match the position of voters. Thus, legislators might move away from their voters after the elections.

In contrast, during the period of the territorial conflict the citizenry should enjoy the agenda-setting power, since its demands cannot be ignored by the government and must be considered at the legislative level immediately. Thus, threatened with the public disapproval and possible forced removal, the legislators who want to preserve their mandates must move closer to citizens, adopting legislation which is located on the indifference curve of the citizenry. In the period of the territorial conflict government in its turn loses its agenda-setting power, since being challenged by the mass public, it does not have legitimacy and power to initiate legislation.

Therefore, the distance between the legislators and voters should be smaller (and the congruence stronger) in time of the territorial conflict than in time of peace. The relocation of legislators' positions closer to voters is explained by the willingness of the legislators to prevent parliament termination. As a result, the legislature acts as a mediator between citizens and government in conflict resolution. In non-democratic regimes, this process can lead to the democratic changes, if the demands of the electorate refer to relevant issues. In such a way the territorial conflict can become a locomotive of democratic transition.

It is important to mention that this research is applicable only to non-democratic regimes. As it was mentioned above, in democracies governments tend to represent the position of a median voter in peace periods and are interested to change policy as demanded even by minority groups, due to the threat of cabinet termination. Under conditions of high level of accountability and transparency the congruence between legislators and voters should always

remain strong, and, thus, one should not observe considerable changes of legislators' positions in period of peace in contrast to period of the armed conflict.

Historical Background: Armed Conflict in Eastern Ukraine

War in Eastern Ukraine is an ongoing armed conflict, which started on the 6th of April, 2014. From the beginning of March numerous rallies and demonstrations were held by the pro-Russian groups in Luhansk and Donetsk regions (together known as "Donbas"). This social unrest is believed to be a result of the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by Russia. The escalation into an armed conflict took place at the beginning of April, when separatist forces proclaimed the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. The Ukrainian government reacted with the deployment of troops to stop this separatist movement (Leonard 2014).

Russia didn't recognize its official participation in the armed conflict in Ukraine. Even though its deployment of armed forces remains highly debatable, it is estimated that Russian paramilitaries make up from 15% to 80% of all combatants (Baczynska 2014, Radio Liberty 2014, RU Media 2014). One of the most reliable ways to prove the presence of Russian military staff at the territory of Ukraine is the analysis of reports by the Central Russian Prosecutor Office, which lists the names of Russian soldiers who died on the territory of Ukraine (the reason of these deaths is not published by the report, which refers to the Law on State Secret) (BBC Ukraine 2014).

The conflict reached its most acute state when in August 22-25 the Russian artillery, personnel and so-called "humanitarian convoy" crossed the border of Ukraine without the permission of Ukrainian authorities (Gordon 2014). These military relocations were followed by the shelling of Ukrainian villages from the Russian side (Nicks 2014). Head of the Security Service of Ukraine Valentyn Nalyvaichenko announced that the August 22 a "direct invasion

by Russia of Ukraine" took place (Zinets & Madorsky 2014). The ceasefire agreement was signed on September 5, 2014 (BBC 2014), however, it is constantly violated. The territory is currently controlled by numerous warlords (Vasilyeva 2014), which led to the further destabilization and has devastating political and economic consequences for the region.

Research Design and Data

In order to test the hypotheses, I employ the case of Ukraine. The choice of the case is based on the assumption that the changes in legislative voting in time of peace and in time of the territorial conflict can be observed in the country which experienced both the periods of unchallenged nondemocratic regime and the territorial conflicts (annexation of Crimea and armed conflict in Donbas region). Thus, the paper is focused on relocations of legislators in *Verkhovna Rada* (Ukrainian parliament) relatively to the voters of Ukraine.

Ukraine has mixed electoral system, under which 225 legislators are elected according proportional representation system (no district division), and 225 legislators are elected according to majoritarian system in single-member districts. (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy 2014a) The right to initiate legislature belongs to the President of Ukraine, the legislators and the government (Article 93 of the Constitution of Ukraine) (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy 2014b). Since the testing of the hypotheses will be conducted at the aggregate level, as it will be discussed further, the differences between the legislators, elected according to majoritarian and proportional representation electoral rules, are not taken into consideration. All legislators are analyzed as similar actors, who have a right of legislative initiative and together represent the position of the parliament as a whole.

As it was mentioned above, to assess the policy congruence between voters and legislators it is necessary to measure the absolute distance between them. Since the research covers both past and present positions of these two veto players, the data with regard to respective years

(years of stability and years of conflict) is needed. In order to bridge parliament and voters in a way allowing common space ideal point estimates to be generated, this research would require the roll call data on voting by both of them. Whereas the roll call data on the Ukrainian Parliament is available, one cannot conduct the survey, which would reveal consistent roll call answers of the general public with regard to decisions made in the past. Thus, an alternative solution is needed.

To address this problem, the research relies on two sets of data. The legislators' position will be measured on the basis of roll call voting for the selected bills. This data is available at the official website of the Ukrainian Parliament.¹ The citizenry's position will be measured in accordance with the results of the sociological polls, conducted by Center Razumkova,² Kyiv International Institute of Sociology,³ and the Sociological Group "Rating"⁴ as three sources of the most consistent data on the mass public preferences, covering both the years and the issue areas of research interest. The details and limitations of using these data sources for estimation of legislators and citizens' positions will be discussed in the next section.

The measuring of distances between the legislators and the voters will be conducted within the framework of one issue area, nationalism, on the basis of the draft bills, which were voted for both during the territorial conflict and peace periods. The comparison of voting by the legislators in the period of peace and territorial conflict would be more consistent, if the analysis is conducted with regard to the political parties which were represented in the parliament in all time periods.

The most common dimension for identification of congruence between legislators and voters is left-right ideological continuum (Huber & Powell 1994, 294). It allows assimilating the various issues and alternatives, and, thus, could simplify the testing of the theory. However, the previous research showed that the Ukrainian parties have no coherent ideological programs

¹ "Пошук законопроектів за реквізитами". *Верховна Рада України*. ["Search for bills' details." *Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy*] <<http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc2>>

² "Sociological Polls." *Center Razumkova* <<http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/socpolls.php>>

³ "Sociological Polls." *Kyiv International Institute of Sociology* <<http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports>>

⁴ "Sociological Polls." *Sociological group "Rating"* <<http://ratinggroup.com.ua/products/politic/?filter=1>>

(Ishiyama & Kennedy, 2001, 1177), whereas the general public has difficulties distinguishing between the political “right” and “left.”⁵ Therefore, it can be concluded that selecting the ideology (nationalism), with regard to which bills were voted for in the parliament and reflected by the mass public in the sociological polls, is the most feasible option.

The time framework of this research starts from March 2013 and lasts till March 2016. The peace period is defined as time before the territorial conflicts started and will be traced one year before the annexation of Crimea. The territorial conflict started in March 2014 and is still ongoing, so 2014-2016 is the period of conflict. A limitation of this time framework lies in the fact that the peace period was also the period of the mass public protest. However, nationalistic preferences gained their popularity only with the start of the territorial conflict, since the Euromaidan protests held pro-democratic liberal character.

The testing of the hypotheses in this research is conducted by the comparison of policy distances between the legislators and citizens in time of peace and in time of the territorial conflict. If the analysis reveals that the distance between two veto players in time of peace is larger than in time of conflict, the hypotheses would be supported by the evidence. However, if the position of the legislators will not approach the position of the citizens under the conditions of the territorial conflict, the aforementioned hypotheses must be wrong.

As it was mentioned above, even though it would be the most logical solution to measure the absolute policy distance between the median voter and the median legislator, it is not possible due to the absence of data on citizens’ preferences, which would be analogous to roll call voting in the parliament. Thus, I start from the data, available through sociological polls. The results of the sociological polls cannot present the position of the median voter, but they show what percentage of voters supported the legislative initiative and what percentage of

⁵ As found by Razumkova Center, 60.3% of Ukrainians do not know the difference between the left and the right parties. (“Партії поділяються на ліві, праві та центристські. Чи знаєте Ви або маєте якесь уявлення про те, чим відрізняються, наприклад, праві партії від лівих? Соціологічне опитування”. 2009. *Центр Разумкова* <http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=555> [“Parties are divided into the left, the right, and centrist. Do you know the difference between, for example, the left and the right? Sociological poll.” 2009. *Razumkova Center*])

voters opposed it. In fact, this is the answer to “yes”/ “no” binary question, expressed in percentages at the aggregate level.

The roll call voting in the parliament also reveals similar data. By calculating the percentage of the legislators who opposed the approval of a bill draft and those who supported it, the results of the roll call voting become comparable and consistent with the findings of sociological polls. Therefore, the distance between the legislators and citizens (Δ) will be estimated in terms of the difference between the percentage of citizens supporting the legislation (y_x) and the percentage of legislators who voted in favor of adopting the law (y_o):

$\Delta = |y_x - y_o|$. If the empirical evidence supports hypotheses, in the period of peace Δ should be larger than in the period of the territorial conflict.

To test the hypotheses in the consistent way, y_x and y_o should be within the same issue area (nationalism) and the same time period. The identification of the issue in question and time period will be defined on the basis of the draft bill under. Roll call voting data on the draft bill will be used to calculate the percentage of legislators, who supported it. The sociological poll within the same issue area (found by the key word) and within the same time period will be used to measure the approval rate among the citizenry. Since it can be argued that voters tend to hold to certain preferences over a long period of time, the sociological poll is considered as suitable for the analysis if it was conducted within two months before or after the bill was voted for in the parliament. This temporal imprecision is an obvious limitation of the analysis, but it is unavoidable due to scarcity of available information on voters' preferences.

Another limitation of this research design is the fact that the voters and legislators face different wording of questions when asked to approve/ disapprove the draft bill. While the legislators might work on specific details, such as amendment of one article within a bill, the voters are usually asked general questions. To enhance the consistency between the positions of legislators and voters observed in the research, only the bills, which discuss the issues, relevant to the society as a whole, were selected for the analysis.

During the period of the territorial conflict, being threatened with the forced removal from the office, the incumbents might initiate exclusively the legislation, support of which is guaranteed by the majority in the parliament. If the legislators foresee that the proposed bill draft might provoke disagreement, they might refrain from setting the unpopular agenda. In such a way the agenda and, thus, the issue areas, available for this analysis, might consist exclusively of the bills which will be supported by extremely high percentages of legislative votes, thus, making the parliament on the aggregate level much more extreme in its preferences than the citizenry as a whole.

Thus, the territorial conflict might increase rather than decrease the difference between the percentages of bill approval among the legislators and voters, since the preferences of the latter will remain the same, while the position of the former might move “too far” in direction, presumably favorable for citizens. However, the parliamentary sessions which took place during the territorial conflict in Ukraine give evidence that the agenda consisted of both highly politicized and technical issues, voting on which was planned many months in advance.⁶ Since the agenda was mostly set through committee negotiations, similarly to the periods of peace, we should expect the same level of agreement/ disagreement among the legislators under the territorial conflict and peace circumstances.

In conclusion, to test the aforementioned theoretical assumption, it is necessary to compare the congruence between legislators and voters in period of peace and in period of territorial conflict. If the congruence is shown to be higher in period of conflict, the hypotheses will be supported by evidence. Bridging of two actors under consideration must be conducted in the common space, defined by one issue area (nationalism), on the basis of binary answers (approval/ disapproval), expressed in proportions of all voters or all legislators. Thus, it would be possible to observe if the territorial conflict resulted in the relocations of parliamentarians’ positions relatively to the citizenry.

⁶ “Transcripts of the Verkhovna Rada’s Sessions in the Territorial Conflict Periods.” *Verkhovna Rada*. <<http://portal.rada.gov.ua/meeting/stenogr/21>>, <<http://portal.rada.gov.ua/meeting/stenogr/55>>, <<http://portal.rada.gov.ua/meeting/stenogr/56>>

Congruence Between the Parliament and the Electorate in Peace Period

As it was mentioned above, the findings about the congruence between the parliament and the electorate in peace period are based on the roll call data from the Ukrainian Parliament and the sociological polls. The time framework is from March 2013 till March 2014, when the Seventh Ukrainian Parliament operated. Instead of taking into consideration all bills which were voted for in this time period, the analysis covers only those which were matched by the relevant sociological polls. Thus, the sample includes 30 observations.

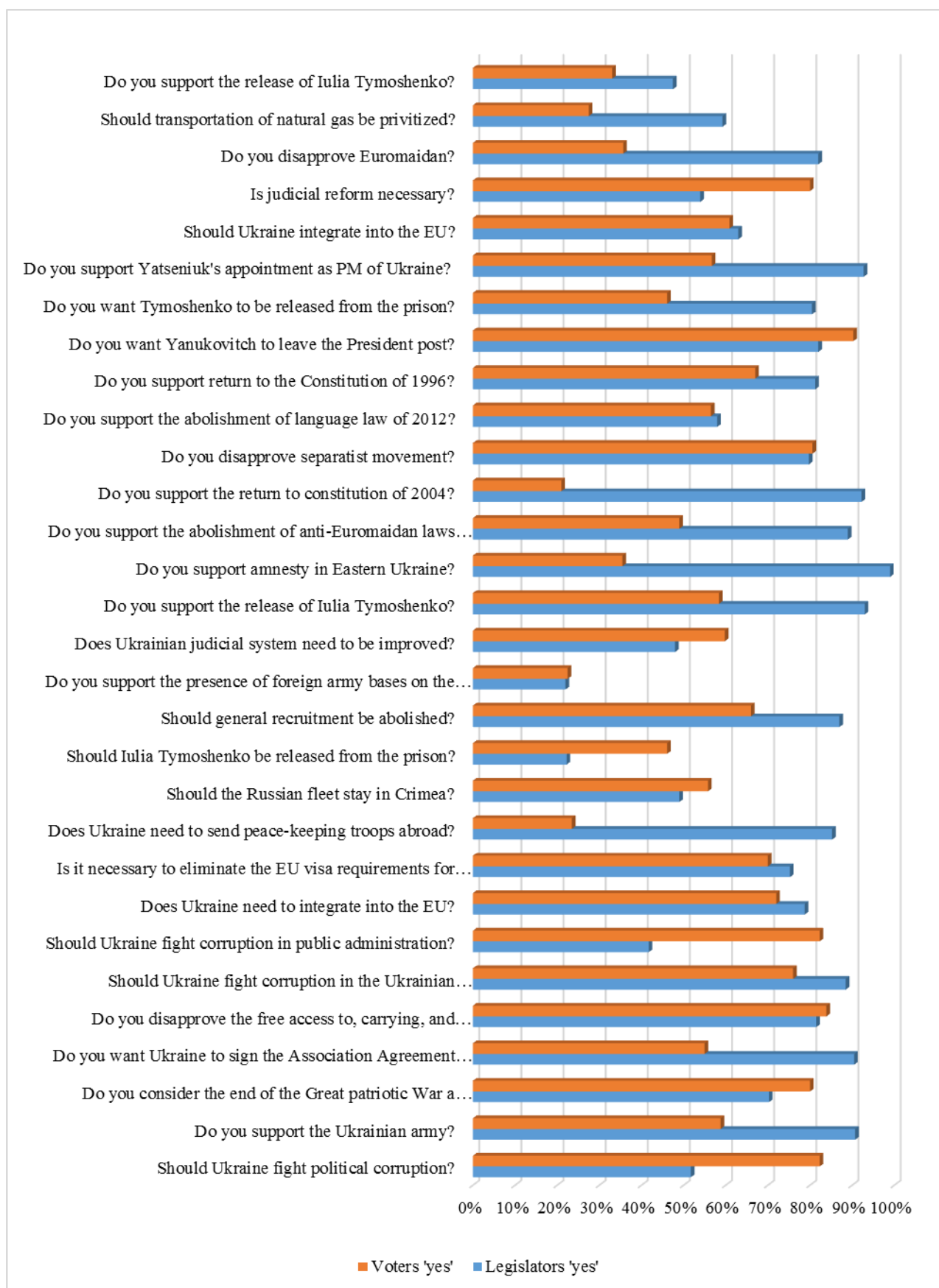
The congruence is measured on the basis of the percentage of sociological polls' respondents and parliament members who gave positive answers to the questions, embedded in the relevant bills. The 'yes' answers present particular interest to the research, because they show the actual preferences of the legislators/ electorate who supported the bill. In contrast, 'no' answers are applicable only on case of the general public. The legislators tend to skip voting for the bill if they do not support it, in such a way making it impossible to compare 'no' answers of the parliamentarians and the electorate.

Overall, the average difference in the percentage of the electorate and the legislators was 23.31, and the median difference was 22.4. The smallest difference in the percentage of voters who supported the bill was 0.5 with regard to the question "Do you support the presence of foreign army bases on the territory of Ukraine?" (meaning the Russian fleet in Crimea). The largest difference in the percentage of voters who supported the bill was 71.3 in case of the question "Do you support the return to constitution of 2004?" (meaning the Constitution which substituted presidential system with mixed parliamentarian-presidential system, thus limiting the president's power).

The difference in positive answers to bill questions in peace period was the following:

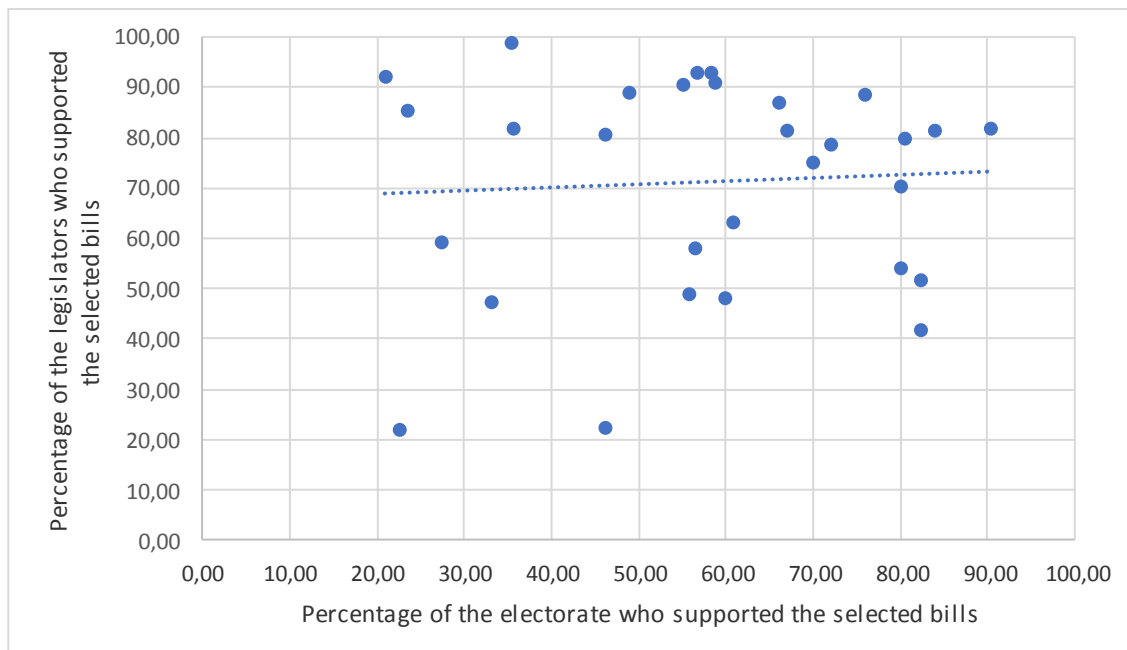
Figure 1. Differences in bills' support by the legislators and the electorate in peace

period



Sources: see References, section "Sources".

Figure 2. Congruence between the legislators and the electorate in peace period



Sources: see References, section “Sources”.

The analyzed bills can be divided into seven issue areas: constitutional amendments, EU integration, protest, corruption, nationalism, political repressions, defense. In each of these issue areas the difference between the legislators and electorate who supported the relevant bills varies. The smallest difference in the preferences of the legislators and the electorate is observed in case of EU-related bills. This is unexpected finding if to take into consideration that the mass protests which took place at the same time was directed against the government’s decision not to integrate to the EU. Thus, the Parliament voted not in accordance with the government’s policy preferences. The largest difference in views of the general public and the parliamentarians existed in the sphere of constitutional amendments. The average differences of voting in each issue area are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Average differences in bills support by issue area in peace period.

Issue area	Average difference
Constitutional amendments	42.8
EU integration	10.7
Protest	33.44
Corruption	24.27
Nationalism	14.35
Political repressions	26.8
Defense	17.9

Sources: see References, section “Sources”.

In conclusion, the differences in the percentage of the legislators and the electorate who supported the analyzed bills were large enough to argue that congruence in the peace period was low. The legislators did not vote in accordance with the public preferences, particularly in such issue areas as constitutional amendments, political repressions, and protest-related bills. These findings provide evidence that in peace period, which preceded the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the members of the Ukrainian parliament failed to represent electorate’s interests while voting for politically salient bills.

Congruence Between the Parliament and the Electorate in Armed Conflict Period

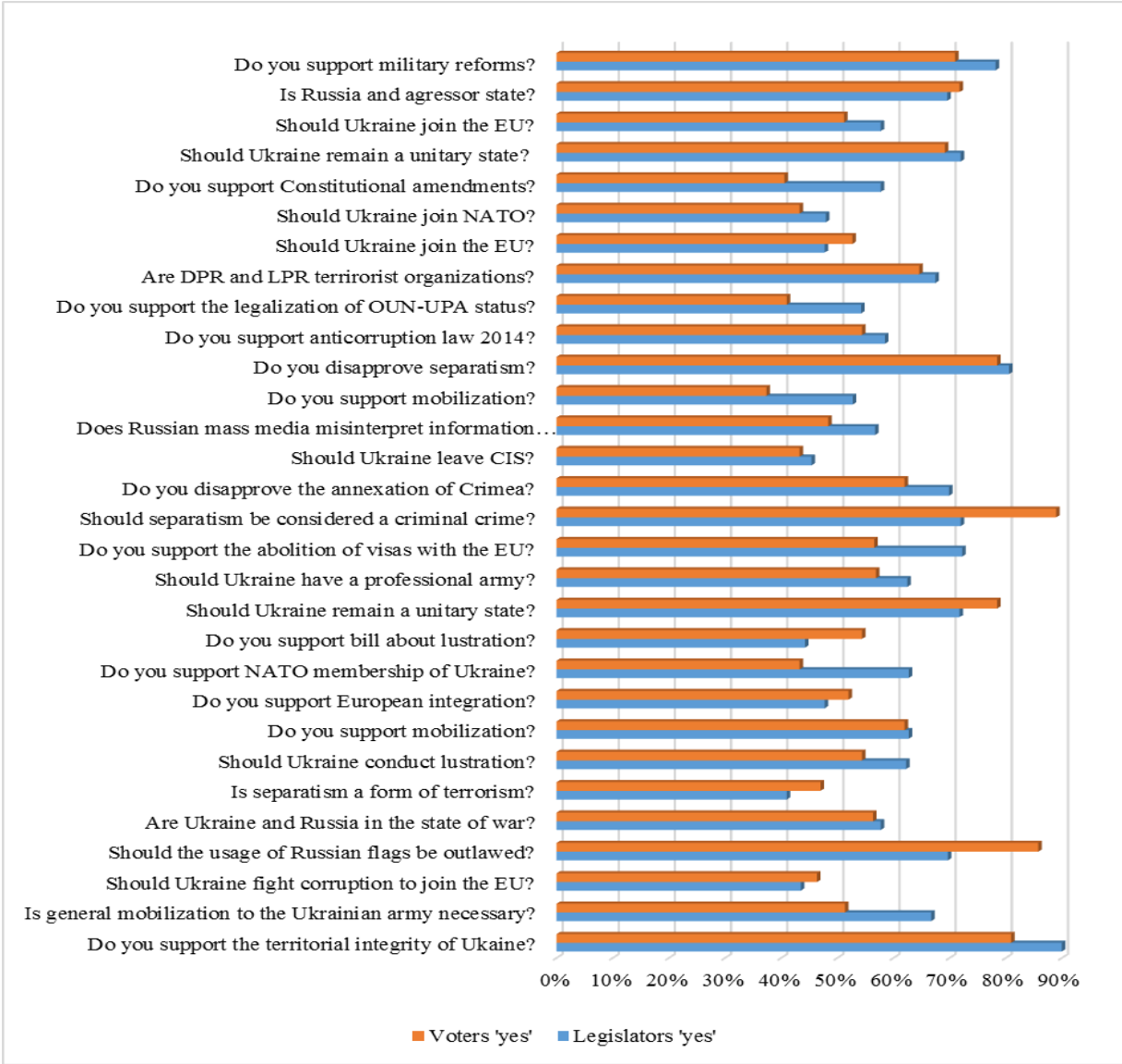
The measurement of the congruence between the parliament and the electorate in armed conflict period is based on the roll call data from the Ukrainian Parliament and the sociological polls. The time framework is from March 2014 till March 2015, when the Seventh and the Eighth Ukrainian Parliament operated. As in case of the measurement of congruence in peace period, the analysis covers only those bills which were matched by the relevant sociological polls. Thus, the sample also includes 30 observations, featuring positive answers to questions, embedded in analyzed bills.

The average difference between the percentage of the legislators and the electorate who supported the analyzed bills was 8, the median difference was 6.64. The smallest difference in

the percentage of voters who supported the bill was 0.75 with regard to the question “Do you support mobilization?” (meaning the mobilization to the Ukrainian army to participate in the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine). The largest difference in the percentage of voters who supported the bill was 19.45 in case of the question “Do you support cooperation with NATO?” (meaning the cooperation treaty between NATO and Ukrainian Government) (Verkhovna Rada 2015).

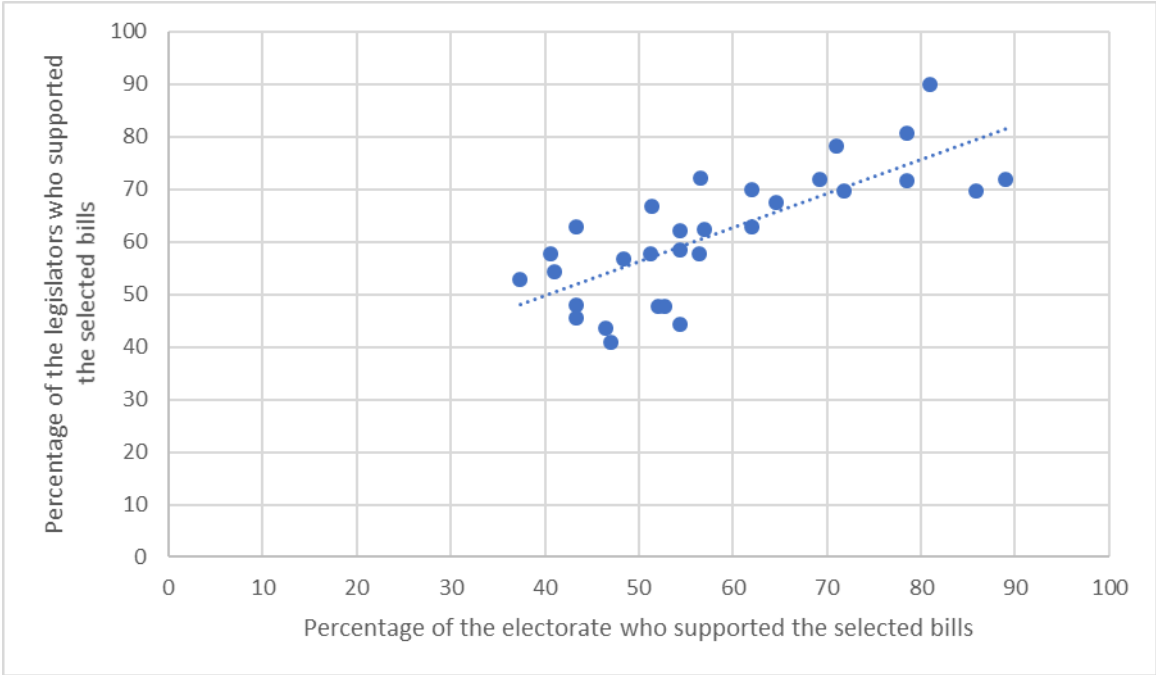
The difference in positive answers to bill questions in armed conflict period was the following:

Figure 3. Differences in bills’ support by the legislators and the electorate in war period



Sources: see References, section “Sources”.

Figure 4. Congruence between the legislators and the electorate in territorial armed conflict period



Sources: see References, section “Sources”.

The analyzed bills can be divided into five issue areas: constitutional amendments, EU integration, corruption, nationalism, and defense. Protest and political repressions are not present in the armed conflict period, because these issues became less salient after the end of the Euromaidan. In each of these issue areas the difference between the legislators and electorate who supported the relevant bills varied. The smallest difference in the preferences of the legislators and the electorate is observed in case of corruption related questions. This finding provides evidence that the legislators and the mass public did not have considerable differences in preferences with regard to pro-democratization reforms. The largest difference in views of the general public and the parliamentarians existed in the area of constitutional amendments, similarly to peace period. This issue area remained both salient and unaffected by the territorial armed conflict. The average differences of voting in each issue area in armed conflict period are summarized in Table 2.

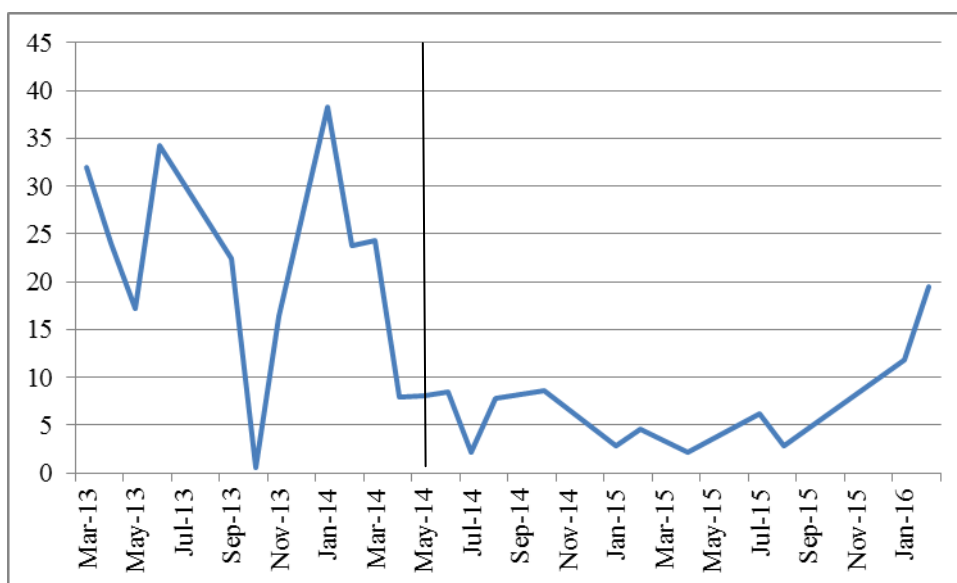
Table 2. Average differences in bills support by issue area in armed conflict period.

Issue area	Average difference
Constitutional amendments	17.15
EU integration	7.77
Corruption	6.25
Nationalism	9.95
Defense	7.58

Sources: see References, section "Sources".

In peace period the congruence between the electorate and the parliamentarians did not improve/ deteriorate over time, but instead fluctuated within the given time period (see Figure 1). This finding cannot represent the actual change in congruence (since only a small sample of bills voted in the Parliament were selected for this research on the basis of their comparability to the available sociological polls). Nevertheless, it is still possible to argue that there was no gradual change in congruence. In contrast, in case of the armed conflict period the variation over time in difference between the percentage of legislators and electorate who supported the analyzed bills is present and can be observed (see Figure 4). The congruence improved gradually till spring-summer 2015, and then started returning to its pre-conflict level. This change coincided in time with the agreement of the withdrawal of tanks, artillery under 100 mm and mortars up to 120 mm in eastern Ukraine, reached in September 2015. In contrast to Minsk negotiations this agreement was partially implemented and decreased the intensity of the warfare (ceasefire was hold, though not on the regular basis). The finding suggests that as the intensity of fighting and, thus, rate of war-relate casualties in eastern Ukraine dropped, the congruence between the electorate and the legislators decreased as well.

Figure 5. Average differences in bills' support by the legislators and the electorate in peace and armed conflict periods by month.⁷



Sources: see References, section “Sources”.

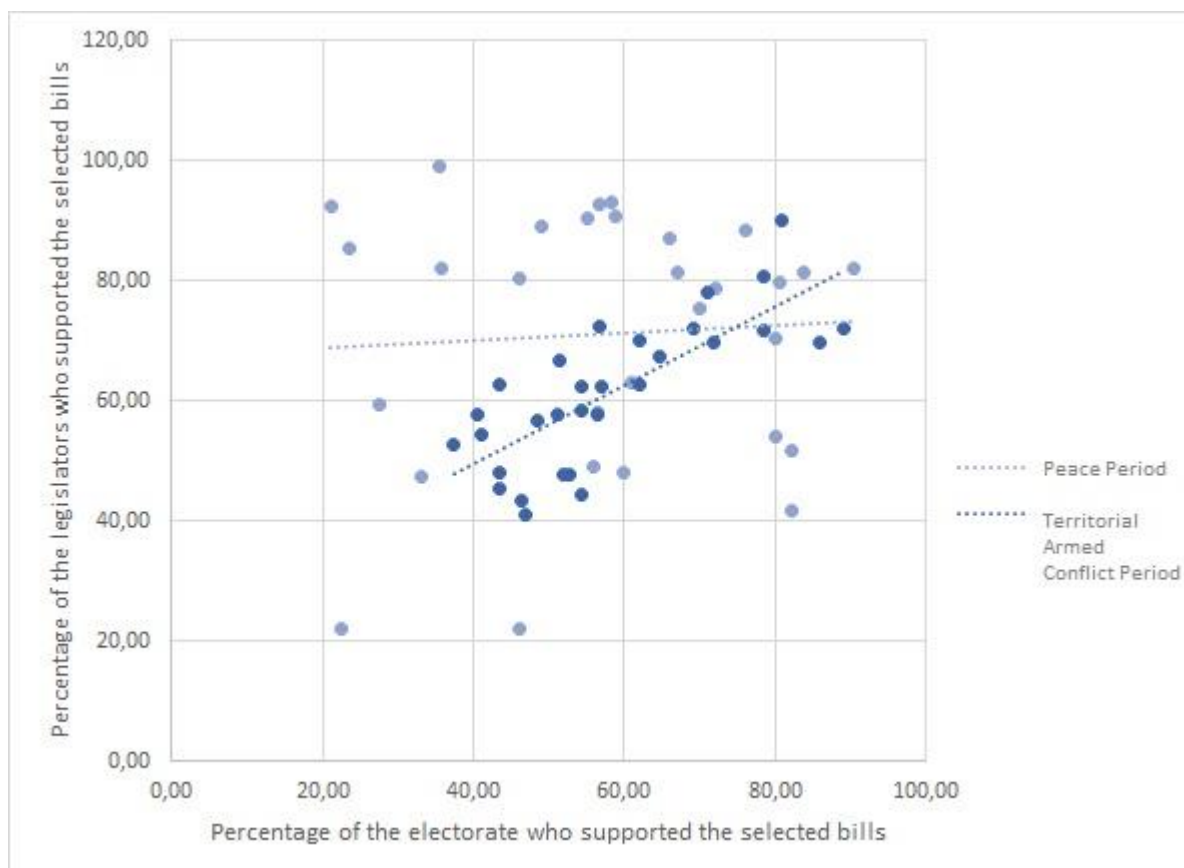
In conclusion, the congruence between the legislators and the electorate improved considerably in the armed conflict period in contrast to the peace period. Both parliamentarians and the general public were shown to have similar views with regard to such issue areas as fight with corruption, defense, and EU integration. These topics are interconnected in the Ukrainian context, since all of them represent the anti-Russian vector of Ukrainian foreign policy. In contrast, the constitutional amendments, initiated to provide Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine with special autonomous status, did not acquire support from the general public, leaving this issue area the most disputable. The congruence continued improving up until September 2015, when the ceasefire made the political situation more stabilized.

⁷ Some months are missing, because these were Parliament recess dates and no sessions took place.

Discussion: Improved Congruence Between Veto Players

Two previous sections showed that an average difference between the percentage of the Ukrainian parliamentarians and the general public who supported the analyzed bills decreased from 23.31% in peace period to 8% in armed conflict period. This change provides evidence that the congruence between the members of the Ukrainian parliament and the electorate improved under the circumstances of the territorial armed conflict in comparison to the preceding peaceful time period. Thus, these findings answer the first research question and support the first and the second hypotheses of this research. The difference of congruence between the legislators and the electorate in peace and territorial conflict periods are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Congruence between the legislators and the electorate in peace and territorial armed conflict periods



Sources: see References, section “Sources”.

However, it still remains questionable why the Ukrainian legislators vote in accordance with public ideological preferences under the circumstances of the ongoing armed conflict, instead of ignoring the public opinion as it happened before. More specifically, the incentives of the Ukrainian parliamentarians to reflect the public choices more accurately in the period of war and what factors influence this kind of populism remain unsolved. This section address this question by offering the explanation of this behavior from the point of view veto player theory.

As it was mentioned above, the agenda-setting veto player has an advantage in comparison to other veto players, since he/she can choose within the winset of the other an option he/she prefers (Tsebelis 2002, 34). In the case of voting in the Ukrainian parliament it means that even though the electorate does not have institutional tools to set the agenda, the legislators have a choice to either set the agenda salient and relevant to their voters or not. Whereas in the peace period the main agenda setter was the government, with the start of the armed conflict the incumbents lost their ability to define which issues required legislative support. Thus, the war set agenda, relevant to both the legislators and the electorate.

The territorial armed conflict creates a situation when status quo cannot be preserved (even if preferred), since it does not provide adequate response to the situation of the acute crisis, when the territorial integrity of the country is put into question. In such a way the players under consideration (the parliament and the electorate) do not veto the social choice, because status quo has to be changed to resolve the armed conflict. For example, bills on the general mobilization, terrorism, separatism, Russian aggression, and NATO cooperation belong to the aforementioned “defense” issue area and are direct responses to the ongoing armed conflict. These bills would not be part of the agenda if the war did not start. Logically, since this issue area was silent to both the legislators and the electorate the difference in the percentage of the legislators and the voters who supported the defense-related bills decreased

from 17.9% to 7.58%. Thus, salient agenda resulted in the improvement of congruence between the Ukrainian parliament and the general public.

As the policy stability of the system decreases, it become easier for the interested veto players to initiate and implement significant change in the status quo (Tsebelis 2002, 21). The territorial armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine destabilized all issue areas under consideration, in particular defense, nationalism, and constitutional amendments, within each of which the bills were adopted to address war-related problems. Since both the general public and the legislators had incentives to change the policy, the unanimity core shrank and created a larger set of points which could have been changed. Consequently, since the pre-war status quo was far away from all veto players its winset was large and the policy stability was low.

The readiness of the veto players to change the status quo had an effect on the congruence between them. Many issues, such as the general mobilization to the Ukrainian army or the necessity to cooperate with NATO (previously highly disputed issues) did not cause disagreement in the Ukrainian Parliament and in the society, because the adoption of the relevant law was dictated by the necessity to preserve the territorial integrity of the country and, ultimately the functioning of all state institutions, including the Parliament itself. Thus, the external thread created the conditions under which both the legislators and the electorate acquired common position on the most salient issues. The latter led to shared policy preferences and improved congruence.

As the analysis of congruence in peace period shows, the position of the general public in all issue areas was far away from the legislature which supported the bills offered by the President and the government. As a result, with the addition of the new veto player (the electorate) the policy stability changed considerably. Since the ideal points of the citizenry were not located within the unanimity core of the government and the parliament, the new veto player managed to gain the effect on the winset of other players and, thus, the position of the legislators moved closer to those of the general public.

It is also very important to consider the sequence of moves of the given veto players. The electorate cannot and does not act as a unitary actor: as the aforementioned findings show, only a certain proportion of the general public supported the bills, which addressed the war-related problems. The fact that the majority in the parliament and among the electorate approved bills belonging to such salient issue areas as defense or EU integration meant that they responded to the threads posed by the armed conflict. Thus, the agenda-setting process was preceded by the conflict developments.

Tsebelis argues that “the veto player who sets the agenda has a considerable advantage: he can consider the winset of the others as his constraint, and select from it the outcome it prefers” (Tsebelis 2002, 34). Since the electorate is not the unitary actor, the action of the mass public is not coordinated enough to consider which decisions are acceptable to the legislators and which are not. Sociological polls also show that a considerable number of respondents tend to abstain from answering the question of giving “I don’t know answers”. According to Gilljam (1993), these people hold opinions but refrain from expressing them, an option also available to the legislators, however rarely used. This line of argumentation implies that the electorate must be more extreme in its preferences than the legislators.

Nevertheless, an opposite trend is observed. The legislators tend to provide extreme support to the bills: in 39 out of 60 observations the parliamentarians were more extreme than their constituents. Even though it is difficult to find the bills with the same wording in both periods, the voting in support of joining the EU can be compared. In peace period Association Agreement with the EU was supported by 91% of legislators and 55% of their voters, thus, the Parliament had considerably more extreme preferences with regard to this issue. After the beginning of the armed conflict the congruence between two veto players improved: 48% of the legislators and 53% of the electorate supported the Association Agreement. Even though the distance between the parliamentarians and their constituents decreased, the voters were “leapfrogged”, when the extreme support for the EU association in the Parliament transformed into disapproval by the majority. This leapfrog representation was noticed by Bafumi (2010),

who traced it in the case of the US Congress, where “extremist” legislators left moderates with the lack of representation.

In conclusion, the analysis of the bill support by the legislators and the electorate shows that the congruence between two collective veto players considerably improved during the period of territorial armed conflict in comparison to the period of peace. The decrease in differences between the preferences of the legislators and the voters took place because of the warfare in Eastern Ukraine. The latter created conditions under which the agenda setting power of the central government decreased, the defense-related agenda became salient, as well as the citizenry and the parliament gained common interests, addressed at war-related problems. The combination of these factors led to the higher level of congruence between the veto players under consideration, but was also accompanied by the replacement of extreme legislators’ preferences with the opposing extremes, one of which became nationalism.

Use of Nationalism

One of the key indicators which allow arguing that the legislators started voting in accordance with the public opinion is the spread of nationalistic ideology in the Ukrainian society and support of this ideology in the parliament. Before the start of the armed conflict nationalism in Ukraine existed as a marginal ideology, supported only by several legislators in the Parliament and rejected by the society as a whole (Razumkov Center 2005). However, after the start of the Donbas conflict bills associated with defensive nationalism gained popularity both among the electorate and its legislative representatives. This section focuses on the influence of the spread of nationalistic preferences on the congruence between the citizenry and the legislators.

Some researchers associate the raise of the war-related (also known as defensive) nationalism among the Ukrainian electorate with the revival of patriotism, emphasizing on its

role in the post-Soviet national identity formation and democratization (Zagurska Antoniuk 2015). Others argue that the wartime nationalism can assist in the European integration of Ukraine (Tsybaliuk 2015). While tracing the origins and possible implications of the raise of nationalism remains difficult, the nationalism provides ideological framework for non-ideological Ukrainian parties, within which they can operate (Prymush 2015). As it will be shown further, while nationalism remains marginal ideology in Ukraine, it directs the populist legislation, thus improving the congruence between the parliamentarians and the electorate in the short term.

As it was mentioned above, the conflict itself created conditions for specific defense-related agenda in the Ukrainian parliament. Some bills within this wide category had explicit nationalistic character. For example, the prohibition to use Russian flags and other Russian state symbols in public places in Ukraine was caused by the spread of pro-Russian separatism. However, since the bills were directed specifically against Russian national emblems, their main function was to preserve Ukrainian national identity in the public space. Similarly, the anti-propaganda bills were also directed against Russian media. Even though Russia is perceived as the “enemy” in the ongoing armed conflict, the existence of laws targeting this country specifically signifies the raise of nationalism.

The territorial armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine also allowed the legislators to raise the questions, which were not on the agenda in the peace period, but were discussed for a long period of time (Tkachenko 2007). The recognition of the status of OUN-UPA veterans (nationalist partisans, who fought against the Soviet army during WWII), became one of such issues. Before the beginning of the armed conflict, this topic was not discussed because of high level of sensitivity, in particular relatively to veterans of the Red Army. However, as the agenda-setting power of the general public increased during the period of the armed conflict, the discussion of status recognition for former nationalists became possible.

Before the conflict the issues related to the national identity were discussed, but always held pro-Russian character. For example, the bill on the celebration of the end of the Great

Patriotic War (similarly to Russia) was supported by both the legislators and the electorate. At the same time the abolition of the law bill of 2012, which made the Russian language the second state language in Ukraine, was supported only by 58% of the legislators and by 56% of the sociological poll respondents (Ukrainska Pravda 2014). These observations allow arguing that before the beginning of the territorial conflict in Eastern Ukraine the legislators were not prone to voting in support of legislation which had a potential of differentiation between the Ukrainian and Russian national identity, including language issues.

Overall, prior to the beginning of the territorial armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the nationalistic ideology in the Ukrainian parliament was represented only by the minority of right-wing parties, which were not successful in gaining the majority of votes in support of their bills. The only language bill (which was related to national identity issues) became the official reason for the launch of conflict in Donbas region (Tyshchenko 2014, 13-14). According to Taras Kuzio (2015), nationalist parties in Ukraine has never been popular, even during the armed conflict in 2014. Moreover, the Russian and Soviet nationalisms have proved to be much popular than their Ukrainian analogue (Kuzio 2015, 41). These findings support the aforementioned assumption that if nationalistic bills were supported during the conflict period, the legislators were more extreme in their pro-Ukrainian preferences than their constituents. However, taking into consideration the fact that the legislative support for pro-Russian bills in the peace period was much larger than among the general public, the change in national orientation (support of pro-Ukrainian bills) in fact managed to improve congruence between the Parliament and the electorate.

In conclusion, nationalist ideology did not gain considerable support during the armed conflict period, but provided a simple framework of preferences and statements, which met the requirements of defense-related legislation and assisted the parliamentarians in translating the war-related preferences of the general public into the bills. While being poorly explained, the raise of nationalism provides credible explanation for the emergence of common interests

among the legislators and the electorate, and thus helps explaining the improved congruence between these two veto players.

Alternative Explanations

The argumentation that the shift in congruence between the legislators and the voters occurred as a result of agenda-setting power of the territorial conflict and the raise of nationalistic ideology which accompanied the war in Donbass provides only one possible explanation of the observed change in distance between the preferences of the Ukrainian Parliament and the citizenry. There are three possible alternative explanations to why the congruence between the legislators and their constituents improved. Constitutional amendments, parliamentary elections, and the Euromaidan revolution each provide argumentation to why the parliamentarians started voting in accordance with public preferences. However, as will be shown further, these alternative explanations fail to offer argumentation capable of providing logical explanation to all aforementioned evidence.

Government tends to control power in parliamentary regimes and parliament controls the legislative agenda in presidential systems (Tsebelis, p. 13). It means that the change in congruence and the position of the key agenda-setter should have changed as a result of constitutional amendments of February 2014 (Viche 2014), when Ukraine shifted from presidential to parliamentary-presidential regime. However, the actual change was the opposite to what the institutional theory argues. After the Constitutional amendments, which were supposed to improve agenda-setting power of the government, the parliament continued to set agenda, keeping it in accordance with the public preferences. Thus, the change of regime as a result of constitutional amendments cannot explain the observed change in congruence.

Another possible explanation is the change of parliament. The parliamentary elections of 2014 brought into power new political parties, thus improving the representation of pro-

Ukrainian forces in the legislature (Pravda 2014). However, the previous research has shown that the nationalist parties did not become more popular in 2014 than they were before (Kuzio 2015) and, thus, it is difficult to argue that the raise of nationalism was the result of elections. In addition, the majority of previously existing parties remained in the Parliament (except of the Communist Party of Ukraine) (Boiko & Sverdau 2014), thus, the elections could not considerably affect the congruence.

The congruence might also have been improved by the mass protest, also known as Euromaidan, since protests are believed to be an effective tool in shrinking the ideological distance between the parliamentarians and their constituents (Young 2000). While this is the strongest argument and the most difficult to undermine, it cannot explain why the major changes in the congruence took place in the issue areas of defense and nationalism, which were not the central demands of the Euromaidan protestors. Even more important, the major improvement of congruence took place not after the end of Euromaidan (end of February 2014), but after the beginning of the armed conflict (end of March 2014). Thus, the aforementioned alternative lines of argumentation fail to provide credible explanations for the observed evidence.

Conclusion

The research was focused on the investigation of the changes in congruence between the legislators and citizens in periods of peace in contrast to periods of armed conflict. The changes in congruence give evidence of the parliamentarians' willingness to respond to the requirements of the electorate by setting relevant agenda and voting in accordance with public preferences under the threat of forced removal. Research looks specifically at the armed conflict in nondemocratic state, which is believed to be characterized by low accountability of incumbents to their voters.

The research was based on the assumption that due to the significant agenda-setting power of the government in nondemocratic regimes, in stability periods the legislators deviate from their pre-electoral promises and vote in compliance with the governmental position, whereas during the armed conflict, as the agenda-setting power of the citizenry increases, they move closer to the electorate. Thus, under circumstances of armed conflict the absolute policy distance between the legislators and voters should have been smaller than in time of stability. The hypotheses of this research was verified by calculating the differences between the approval rates of the same bills among legislators and voters within the same issue areas.

As the analysis of the legislators' and electorate's support of the bills in the peace and armed conflict periods showed, the congruence between two key veto players significantly improved in the second time period. The difference between the percentage of the parliamentarians and the percentage of the sociological poll respondents who answered "yes" to bill-related questions was smaller in war period than in peace period. In addition, the congruence improved significantly in such issue areas as defense, EU integration and fight with corruption.

Thus, the hypotheses were supported by the evidence. The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine made defense-related agenda salient, and thus, created the common sphere of interests and preferences for both the legislators and the electorate. As a result, being focused on the same set of issues, two analyzed groups shared common beliefs with regard to voted bills. The public, being threatened by the armed conflict, and the parliament, being threatened with the possibility of the forced removal as a result of war-related expenses and casualties, moved closer to each other. Another reason why the improvement of congruence became possible was the spread of nationalism, which provided the legislators with the explicitly stated set of ideas and interests to be used for populist agenda-setting.

The further research would require testing the hypotheses at the individual legislator level. As it was mentioned above, the members of the Ukrainian parliament are elected in accordance with mixed electoral rules and, thus, congruence between voters and legislators elected by

proportional representation system through party lists and between voters and legislators from majoritarian single-member districts should be different. The individual level research will require more detailed data on the voters' preferences.

The research also raises question of identification of ideal points of voters and bridging them with those of legislators. In case of analysis of the past public preferences the roll call voting data might be unavailable. Thus, the alternative methods of common space ideal point estimation for legislators and citizens should be developed. The latter could considerably stimulate the research on congruence between parliament and electorate in nondemocratic countries.

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