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This research is based on theories of federalized party systems, second-order elections and nationalization of party system comparing long-established democratic federations in terms of actual autonomy of their subnational party systems. The study shows that despite obvious prerequisites for subnational autonomy (such as federal institutions, different timing of elections, freedom to establish regional parties and blocs) most federations have created solidly nationalized party systems. Nevertheless, we explore striking differences among the federations in terms of presence and strength of regional parties, while our thorough comparative analysis of electoral turnout and parties support at federal and regional levels of elections reveals that federations are very different and sometimes unique. Also, we see that the theory of second-order elections does not work consistently which in our point of view means the decisive role of regional agenda and emphasizes the presence of national parties consistently inclined to local politics. We conclude that the development of partially autonomous subnational party systems and biases of electoral outcomes in federal and regional elections depend on the historical evolution of political institutions in the state rather than create similar patterns across the federations.

JEL Classification: D72.

Key words: second-order elections, nationalization of party system, federalism, subnational elections, federalized party system.

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Introduction

When studying party systems most researchers focus on national elections. In particular, we can say so about international comparative studies. This is due to the current scientific tradition to consider party systems at the national level. Furthermore, regional elections are usually seen as minor compared with the federal ones, which is fair in one respect. However, excluding regional structure of the election process and political party development provides an incomplete picture of the structure and dynamics of party systems.

Existing studies focus mainly on the results that parties obtained in national elections. The works of foreign researchers (Sartori, 1976; Ware, 1996) acknowledge subnational party systems and their differences from national systems but they do not consider them as a key element to understanding national party systems. In particular, Sartori criticizes one of Key's main works that examines the regional structure of party system in the US. He notes that US states are not sovereign therefore their powers are limited and they cannot be seen as autonomous units. From the outset, Sartori, drawing on formal characteristics, rejects the idea of any party system other than the national one. He believes that by acknowledging the autonomy of US states, the authors thereby equate them with sovereign states, which is actually unfair.

However, American political science acknowledges subnational party systems (Key, 1949; Ranney, Kendall, 1956; Mayhew, 1986; Schlesinger, 1991) but this phenomenon has not become a theoretical concept widely applied to other countries. In Sartori's logic, Eaton notes that subnational governments are not considered as independent actors even in Brazil, the most decentralised country in Latin America (Eaton, 2010). Gibson and Suarez-Cao note that subnational party systems have become «unwelcome members of the club», as they are either completely ignored or acknowledged but are not studied systematically (Gibson, Suarez-Cao, 2010, p. 23).

Nevertheless, we believe that examining party systems at the regional level is key to a deeper understanding of current party systems, including their national level. This is not a matter of autonomy level of subnational governments; this is a matter of organisational structure, political agenda of parties and the phenomenon of split voting. Gibson and Suarez-Cao think that studying subnational party systems is important due to the fact that it is impossible to separate one level of a party system from the other one (Gibson, Suarez-Cao, 2010). The impact of regional party systems on the national ones is strong and needs further studies (Jones, 1997; Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997; Samuels, 2000). Furthermore, regional elections are often closer to common voters than the national ones, and, therefore, they are of particular importance for them. However, regional party systems are important not only at their level, they also influence the outcome of

federal elections. For example, Bechtel examines in his paper the extent to which regional elections affect national elections (Bechtel, 2012). The author concludes that regional elections reduce uncertainty for voters.

Subnational party systems in federations

Studying subnational party systems is especially important for the countries that are the subject of our study. These countries are federations that imply relative autonomy of the territorial units. We can assume that it is the federations where subnational party systems have significantly developed and have achieved a great level of autonomy. Current national legislation also plays an important role in the formation of subnational party systems, in the particular the extent to which it favours the emergence and development of regional parties.

In their paper «Federalized Party Systems and Subnational Party Competition: Theory and an Empirical Application to Argentina» Gibson and Suarez-Cao bring up their concept of studying subnational party systems and they single out the federalized party systems. Such systems refer to national party systems that evolve under federalism, which implies the existence of regional party systems along with the national one (Gibson, Suarez-Cao, 2010). Gibson and Suarez-Cao identify 6 features of such systems:

1. The components of national and subnational party systems are political parties, and limits are set by the pattern of interaction between them.
2. National and subnational party systems operate within different territorial levels. An important requirement for the development of subnational systems is the existence of local legislative bodies, which are the subjects to competition among political parties. Such competition should be regulated by special local laws. An important autonomy indicator of a subnational system is its right to create such a legal framework.
3. One party can operate within party systems of different levels.
4. The interaction patterns among parties at different levels are based on institutional, material and non-material links. Political parties themselves are the primary institutional links between the national and subnational party subsystems.
5. Transformations of subnational party systems follow, first, changes within their own political system and second, when interacting with other party systems.

Jones and Mainwaring also think that understanding a large number of party systems in the world, especially in such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the US, Russia and others, is impossible without studying parties and party systems that operate in the regions (Jones, Mainwaring, 2003).

The analysis of subnational political systems and elections was extensively promulgated in the papers of North American authors, which is logical considering the special role and power of federalism in the US. The classic work by Key concentrated on the formation of one-party system in the southern states of the US, which had authoritarian features in the country with a democratic structure (Key, 1949). However, in the US regional elections are “embedded” in the federal ones following a similar logic due to the presidential form of government and the understanding by all actors of the importance of the struggle for federal power. For the same reason, regional parties are few and not independent, or they are allies of one of major parties.

The criteria of federalized party systems tend to differ even within the same continent. For example, the autonomy of subnational party systems varies across Europe. It reaches its peak in Switzerland. According to the study by Caramani, Switzerland is one of the countries with a low level of nationalization of the party system (Caramani, 2004). Both support for the parties and electoral turnout vary considerably from region to region. Therefore, regional politics, including parties, candidates and political agenda, is prior to federal politics for a Swiss voter. This situation is primarily due to cultural differences, such as language and religion. It is indicated that the language barrier between German speakers and people who speak the Roman languages influences electoral behavior: the latter are more liberal in their views and have better feelings about the idea of a welfare state than the former (Linder, 1999). The regionalized nature of the party system is also a direct consequence of cultural differences between the cantons (Klöti, 1998). The fact that none of the 15 parties with representation in the federal parliament nominated candidates or presented their list in all the electoral districts in the 2003 parliamentary elections was its striking example (Bühlmann, Nicolet, Selb, 2006). Moreover, almost all the parties have their “backbone” electoral districts (most notably the Ticino League, which nominates candidates only in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino). Even Switzerland's major parties, such as FDP - The Liberals, The Social Democratic Party of Switzerland, The Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland and The Swiss People's Party, do not have the features of centralized national parties. Vatter explicitly refers to the existence of 26 regional party systems within a single country in Switzerland (Vatter, 2002).

Concerning Germany and Austria, we can say that most regions have historically developed a steady pattern of single-party dominance, although today this is not entirely true. This is primarily due to demographics and institutional features (Abedi, Schneider, 2006). Countries that use the proportional representation are thought to be more likely to form single-party dominated regimes (with or without coalition with the others) over the long term. A similar situation is found in Australia and Canada. As for Canada, the eastern regions, characterized by a greater focus on regional politics (New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince

Edward Island, Quebec), stand out. In general, the situation with the formation of a single-party majority at the regional level is a common practice in the federations. However, it also remains poorly studied, although Dunleavy and Weaver think that members of regional governments directly influence the national agenda (Dunleavy, 2005; Weaver, 2004). Also, the regional agenda plays a more prominent role in Canada than in the United States. All of Canada's federal parties have regional counterparts, but they are often not connected in any way other than by the same name. We can talk about the use of a recognizable party name, but a significantly different positioning from the federal one.

Let us highlight the Latin American federations in a separate way, where subnational party systems have traditionally attracted much interest of scholars. Jones argues that the existence of competitive “the-winner-takes-it-all” gubernatorial elections in Argentina leads to a decrease in the number of competing parties in the elections to the lower chamber of parliament (Jones, 1997). This idea was also confirmed by the example of Brazil, a country with a long history of federalism and subnational elections. Samuels argues that the effective number of candidates in gubernatorial elections is a significant predictor of the lists formation to participate in federal elections, in particular, the number of candidates included in the lists (Samuels, 2000). The author also speaks about the coattail effect which often leads to parties shift from the regional level to the federal level. Thus, regional elections in Latin America become a springboard for many politicians and their parties to compete for federal power (Moreno, 2003). The same work brings up a relatively low impact of national factors such as the timing of elections, on forming candidate lists in national elections. Both authors who have studied Latin American countries agree on the importance and influence of gubernatorial elections. The US researchers have the same opinion.

In Argentina's federal system, provincial politics is considered a mainstay for national politicians. Control over regional politics determines which politicians become influential within the national party, gives them membership in coalitions of governors, who in the future often become presidential candidates. From 1989 until the 2007 elections, every president of Argentina was formerly the head of the executive power at the subnational level. Although federalism in Argentina is seen as rather weak (Duchacek, 1986; Elazar, 1987), subnational elections have a significant impact on national elections. Election timing also plays an important role. For example, conducting gubernatorial elections on the same day as federal elections for the lower chamber reduces the level of party competition in the latter (Jones, 1997). In Brazil, when presidential elections are held on the same day as gubernatorial elections, it is advantageous for the president to associate his/her candidacy with that of the governor if the latter is popular in the region and has a large local clientele. In addition, Argentina is more often seen as an example of a country with subnational authoritarianism in individual regions.

The situation is different in Mexico, for historical reasons. After the defeat of the former dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 2000 and the delegation of some authority to the regions, Mexico ceased to be centralized. Since then, subnational actors in Mexico have increased their influence on the national agenda and on federal politicians. Party ideology has declined in importance, and resource allocation along with struggle for influence in the regions have become increasingly important (Francisco, Scott, 2012). However, in Mexico the quality of democracy at the regional level is indicated as low. Therefore, as in Argentina, subnational authoritarian regimes emerge in some provinces (e.g., the state of Oaxaca). Benton believes that authoritarian regimes at the subnational level were the result of the regions' adoption of the “*usos y costumbres*” system (traditions and customs), a form of self-government used in regions where the indigenous population lives: Oaxaca, Sonora, Chiapas (Benton, 2012). This state of affairs leads even national parties of a democratic character to become authoritarian at the regional level. The Institutional Revolutionary Party is such an example. The authoritarian model in this case is understood by the authors as maintaining low turnout and a wide vote margin for the winner over the rest (Benton, 2012).

Based on these controversial findings we can conclude that the development of subnational party systems (which we cannot deny *per se*) depends greatly on unique historical context of the state, and its formal and informal institutions. In this study we compare federations in order to evaluate the degree of such development as defined by the differences in voting ballots composition and in the electoral behavior proper. Besides we find it important to revise those points in the literature considering subnational party systems as less competitive and more stable since it contradicts the findings of the second-order elections theory (see below).

Nationalization as a key component of party systems

In our study, along with identifying the autonomy level of subnational party systems in different federations, the subject of nationalization, which is not usually included in papers about subnational party systems, will be important. This is due to the fact that nationalization of party systems is traditionally seen as a national phenomenon and a general feature of the party system, while taking into account its regional diversity. However, in this paper, based on the definition of federalized party systems, which embrace subnational party systems, we will apply the concept of nationalization in terms of coherence of federal and regional party systems.

Nationalization is a long-term trend of forming a nationalized electorate, developing national parties, replacing the local agendas with the federal one. Regional political particularities gradually disappear, and social cleavages, which exist in society, have become crucial almost anywhere and in the same manner (Caramani, 2011). The nationalization of electoral behavior and

political parties is generally believed to lead not only to a unified political field in the country, but also, in general, to a more democratic system. In one of his main works concerning nationalization, Caramani confirms this idea by arguing that because of the national factors enhancing, the party field is less fragmented and subject to patron-client relationship, and candidates are more and more perceived as “part of the party” rather than representatives of local interests (Caramani, 2011). In the context of evolving democracy, this leads to citizens gaining more influence over decision-making at the country level, not just within their region (Rokkan, 1970a).

The study of nationalization is very useful for understanding the country's party system. For example, if a ruling party has a high level of nationalization, receiving evenly distributed support across regions, then we can say that it meets the demands of the electorate in different regions and appeals to national issues. While parties with a low level of nationalization often have a strictly regional agenda and are incapable to hold the power in the federation.

The level of nationalization of the party system is both an important explanatory factor and predictor. Party systems can be similar to each other in terms of the number of parties, the level of voters' polarization and other characteristics. But if the level of nationalization is markedly different, the dynamics of party competition can follow completely different trajectories. In countries with a high level of nationalization, electoral confrontation among parties is characterized by approximately the same pattern among all regions. Whereas in countries with a low level of nationalization, parties that are successful in one region are often unsuccessful in the rest, leading to a variety of regional patterns. Such observations allow for cross-national comparisons too.

Moreover, in countries with a high level of nationalization, legislators are predominantly concerned with national issues, as this makes them more likely to be reelected. Therefore, state policy takes a more universal form. In countries with a low level of nationalization, on the contrary, decisions have markedly local implications, and the legislative process is more sensitive to regional interests. In the meantime, party leadership has fewer opportunities to influence other party members, and the head of state has to negotiate with them in order to consider the interests of voters in the regions and receive local support.

It may seem a surprise that many researchers (Kasuya, Moenius, 2007; Turovsky, Sukhova, Luizidis, 2020) who have studied nationalization in Western countries emphasize the relatively high or above average level of nationalization in countries with a federal system compared to unitary states. In particular, the US, Canada, Austria, and Germany are such examples. Therefore, federalism does not imply a permanent predominance of local interests in politics. As time passes, federal systems may be spatially consolidated, without, of course, excluding deep social cleavages. We observe the opposite in Belgium and Switzerland only. In both countries regional and ethnic

parties with an extremely low level of nationalization are common (Turovsky, Sukhova, Luizidis, 2020).

However, such works focus mainly on federal elections, which are, in our opinion, only one of the components in considering the subject of nationalization. Regional elections remain in the shadows, and the connection between the former and the latter has been the subject mainly in studies based on the US experience and has not been noticed in the works of other foreign researchers for a long time.

Most papers confirm the growth of nationalization in the long term considering the US (Schattschneider, 1960; Stokes, 1967; Sundquist, 1973) and Europe (Turovsky, Sukhova, Luizidis, 2020). Nevertheless, the growth of nationalization is not an unambiguous trend. Although in the long run this growth in old democracies has so far been obvious and logical, in the short term we see a number of factors that may lead to growth weakening or even nationalization decrease. In particular, this is appropriate for federations as well.

There are several trends that may hinder the nationalization process at the current stage. The first trend is decentralization of power. The process of decentralization, which implies the transition of power to the localities, has become of interest to researchers in the last decade. According to Levi, Hechter and Meguid, in Western Europe the request for decentralization came from below rather than from above, and the ruling party was interested in such a reform in order to attract local votes (Levi, Hechter and Meguid, 1985). It is interesting that in a later study Meguid concludes that ruling parties in Western Europe that initiated the decentralization process still gain some advantage in national elections, but not in the regional ones (Meguid, 2015). On the contrary, ethno-territorial parties turn out to be the main beneficiaries of regional elections, but not the national ones.

In general, the impact of the decentralization depends on how thorough the reforms were: the more radical the reforms, the greater the influence. Consequently, with the loss of votes at the subnational level resulting from decentralization, the major national parties have a lower nationalization rate. Decentralization also leads to greater differences between national and subnational elections, especially if they are conducted separately and have divergent voting ballots.

Another trend is the regional fragmentation of politics. On the basis of regional differences emerging for the first time or reappearing, the corresponding party associations emerge. Striking examples are the parties created in Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Canada, and other countries, which appeal to people living in a particular region. Despite their relatively narrow agenda, such parties are successful and get into regional and even national legislatures. However, this leads to a decrease in the nationalization of the party system, as the parties take votes from the national

parties and thus reduce the overall result of nationalization, which makes the electoral space more diverse.

As a third trend, especially noticeable in European countries, we can distinguish the formation of parties with a unique new agenda. Such parties appeal to minority groups with a relatively narrow agenda, such as environmental issues, protection of certain ethno-religious and social groups, etc. Nevertheless, these parties in any event blur the current political field, including the regional level. That is, against the background of a turbulent political agenda, entire political parties are created, challenging the old major parties, which also leads to decrease in the nationalization of the party system.

We believe that despite the overall success of nationalization in most federations, coherence of subnational elections has to be considered as its another powerful feature. Therefore, high levels of autonomy of regional party systems lead to lower nationalization even in countries with sustainable party systems, thereby challenging the successful nationalization of “old” democracies. That is why in this study we test the coherence of federal and regional elections in terms of their different (or sometimes very similar) electoral outcomes in order to reveal the federal/regional electoral gaps in different federations, and evaluating their magnitude and “threat” to seemingly successful nationalization.

Second-order elections revisited

In our view an important indicator for identifying the autonomy of regional party systems, in addition to the obvious fact of the existence of their own regional actors, is the difference between support for the same parties in elections on different levels. We assume that an insignificant difference in support for parties, as well as the existence at the regional level of the same actors as at the federal level would indicate a purely formal regional party system, firmly embedded in a single political landscape with the federal one.

To assess regional elections, we will use the approach proposed by European researchers, such as the concept of second-order elections. The founders of the theory were Reif and Schmitt, who proposed comparing national elections in the European Union and elections to the European Parliament through the prism of second-order elections. Second-order elections are understood as elections to which voters come and vote with the understanding that these elections have no special influence on the country's future (will not affect members of the national government or the country's further development course) and are therefore of secondary importance in relation to national elections. In most cases, the issues raised in second-order elections are minor, and the powers of elected bodies or individuals are limited (Reif, Schmitt, 1980).

This theory has been extended to countries not participating in international associations, which involve elections to supranational bodies, as well as to elections within European Union. Regional elections, which are secondary to national elections, are also regarded as second-order elections. Elections of the first order differ from those of the second order in that in the first kind of elections a voter has to vote strategically, because, on the one side, he cannot predict the outcome of elections, but, on the other side, this person directly influences government formation. What kind of government is elected will directly affect the state of affairs in the country as a whole and the situation of each individual citizen in particular. In the example of elections to the European Parliament, researchers note that, unlike the elections of the first order, voters are ready to give preference to “weaker” and politically insignificant players in these elections. That is, it refers to sincere, or expressive voting. In other words, voters here tend to vote for those political forces they really sympathize with. This method of decision-making is difficult in first-order elections where voters act strategically assuming that the party for which they vote is more likely to form the country's government.

Reif and Schmitt identify four criteria that allow us to view the interconnection of elections through the prism of second-order elections:

1. The turnout rate in second-order elections is lower than in first-order elections.
2. The ruling party loses support in second-order elections and in midterm elections (in the case of supranational elections, there is a link between the results and the popularity of participating parties at the national level). It is believed that second-order elections are an instrument for expressing dissatisfaction with the policies of the ruling party.
3. New and small parties gain some advantage in second-order elections.
4. A higher percentage of spoiled ballots cast to demonstrate voter dissatisfaction with the entire political system.

Supporting this theory have been works on the United States (Jacobson, 1991), Canada, and the United Kingdom (Cutler, 2008; Johns et al., 2009).

Although the division into first-order and second-order elections has become key to examining the dependence of national and other elections, some researchers have drawn attention to the simplicity of the concept. By this they meant the dichotomous nature of the concept, within which there are very important elections and all others (Jeffery, Hough, 2003). Researchers have suggested a smoother transition from elections that are purely autonomous, i.e., not dependent on any other elections but only on factors inherent in those elections, to those that are entirely dependent on national election outcomes (Ejick, Franklin, 1996).

An alternative to this theory was the idea of viewing the autonomy of elections through the prism of different political agendas. That is, not to rank the agenda by importance, but simply to consider that there is one agenda in national elections and another one in regional elections. This view has gained popularity in the work of American researchers on congressional elections (Shafer, Claggett, 1995; Petrocik, Doherty, 1996) and gubernatorial elections (Stein, 1990; Atkeson, Partin, 1995), and has also been applied to European Parliament elections (Curtice, Steed, 2000). Nevertheless, second-order election theory has retained its dominance.

It seems to us that second-order election theory can be a good tool for examining the nature of the link between national and regional elections, which would help come to more accurate conclusions about the autonomy of subnational party systems. Therefore, if second-order theory is correct, then regional elections are highly dependent on the logic and outcomes of first-order elections, and thus lose their autonomy.

Consequently, in this study, taking countries with federal system as seemingly good examples, we will see whether such countries establish federalized party systems and what is the nature of interdependence among party systems at different spatial levels. The focus of this study will be on long-established Western and Latin American federations, such as the United States, Canada, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, and Australia. We hypothesize that in more autonomous subnational party systems the theory of second-order elections should not work properly since it links regional elections to the federal ones. In federalized party systems the simple logic of punishment of the party ruling in the federation in the subnational elections probably gives way to the logic of regional agenda-setting. In other words, the federalized party system usually reproduces two types of actors, those more popular in the federal and in the regional elections. And this logic may be resistant to the change of ruling parties at the federal level.

For our analysis, we used the electoral data of the countries in our sample across their federated subjects. For most countries, we used data from federal and regional parliamentary elections, but for the United States, Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil we used data from gubernatorial and presidential elections, which in their case can be interpreted in a simpler way. Overlapping and separate federal and regional elections were compared separately. For overlapping elections, the average percentage results of parties (or party candidates, or alliances, where applicable) for the regional elections held on the election day and the federal elections within the same sample of regions were compared. Separate elections were similarly compared to previous and subsequent federal campaigns, and each time strictly for identical regional samples. Average turnout was also compared in a similar way. For all countries, we tried to study at least the last two federal campaigns and all regional elections that took place immediately before, after, and between them.

This analysis allows us to understand how much and to what side the level of support for one or another party differs in the elections at the federal and regional levels (see Appendix).

Elections schedule analysis

An analysis of the election calendar in each of the countries is the first subject of our empirical study, since the election date and the overlapping factor of different campaigns can play a significant role in the creation of federalized party systems.

Reif and Schmitt's paper on the European Parliament elections states that the middle of the electoral cycle is the most unfavorable time for the ruling party. Midterm elections are viewed through the prism of strengthening the opposition, or the reorientation of people with a low level of party identification and the activation of voters disappointed by the results of previous elections. According to Oppenhuis, other elections (e.g. to the European Parliament) conducted at the same time or immediately after national elections are seen as "lost" because they have no special importance (Oppenhuis, 1995). One of their results is an increased vote for small parties. If European elections are conducted before national elections, since the popularity of the ruling party has undergone changes, the probability of voting for the opposition increases, that is, such elections are of a protest nature. In general, we can assume that choosing different dates for elections leads to an increase in the autonomy of some of them from the others.

In our sample of countries, we see completely different approaches to choosing time for federal and regional elections. The diversity, even within the same continent, is of interest.

Thus, most European federations deliberately choose different dates for elections, which emphasizes the autonomous nature of regional elections. A striking example is Switzerland, where cantonal elections are separated from federal elections and also from each other. In some regions, elections are conducted in the same year as federal elections, but on different days. In Germany, federal and regional elections are also conducted on different days. The only exception was the elections in Hesse, which were conducted on the same day as the federal ones in 2013. Also, in Germany, the dates of regional elections in different regions may overlap. The situation in Austria is similar to Germany. There we can see the examples of overlapping regional elections from time to time, but regional and federal elections do not overlap.

On the contrary, on the American continent we see more examples of elections overlapping at different levels. The main examples of conducting all types of elections on the same day are in the United States and Brazil (in the U.S. there are exceptions for gubernatorial campaigns in only a few regions). In Mexico, most regional-level campaigns are held on the same day as federal campaigns. However, there are examples of elections conducted in the previous or subsequent year, depending on the end of regional government's term of office (regional campaigns taking

place in another year tend to be held on the same day). Argentina is also an example of a mixed model. About half of the regions hold regional elections in conjunction with federal elections, while the other half hold elections in the same year or every other year (elections in Argentina are conducted in odd-numbered years). Finally, in Canada, as in the European federations, elections are conducted almost entirely separately. Regional elections there may overlap with the federal ones, but this is the exception to the rule and is rare.

Finally, in Australia, elections are always held separately for federal and regional campaigns and, in most cases, separately for regional elections in the different federated states. Examples of elections held on the same day are extremely rare (for example, the last ones were held in 2014 in the regions of South Australia and Tasmania).

Thus, in most of the studied federations we see a willingness to conduct subnational elections separately from the federal elections, which initially emphasizes their autonomy and special agenda. Nevertheless, there are meaningful exceptions, and the main ones among them are the US and Brazil. Partial overlap between federal and regional elections is typical for Argentina and Mexico. We can conclude that most federations deliberately create the potential for more autonomous subnational party systems unlinking regional elections from the federal ones. However, implementing this potential depends on other reasons.

Comparing the voting ballot composition

Practices of voting ballots formation reveal the nature of regionalization of the party system, which increases when regional parties are present, or there are significant differences in the participation of national parties in federal and regional elections. As in the case of the election calendar, different principles of formation of the party list in regional elections and the results of its compliance with the federal list are observed in the federations. In Europe and North America, the simpler model of participation of the same parties in regional and federal elections dominates. In Latin America, it is common practice to form alliances, members of which may vary greatly in the elections at different levels, which creates its own autonomy effect of subnational party systems. Australia also has the practice of ad hoc alliance forming, but it is not as common as in Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina.

As for the first group of countries, federal parties dominate their regional electoral systems. It particularly relates to the US. Two parties, Democratic Party and Republican Party, remain a constant pattern. The development of “third” national parties or strong regional players is close to impossible due to the established plurality voting, or the first-past-the-post system (“the-winner-takes-it-all”) and the crucial importance of presidential elections, where a “third” party candidate simply cannot win.

The Canadian provinces have predominantly federal parties at the regional level, but the differences from the U.S. are quite large. The reason is that not all of the parties operating in the provinces are directly linked to the federal ones, which shows the partial regionalization of the party system. The Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) is a striking example. It has no regional branches, and none of the parties operating in the regions under the CPC name are formally affiliated with the federal CPC. The second largest party in the country, the Liberal Party of Canada, has regional branches, but this does not apply to a number of large regions (Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec). But the third most popular party, the New Democratic Party (NDP) recognizes regional branches as full members of its party structure. The Green Party of Canada also recognizes a direct relationship with regional branches but does not extend to them its organizational structure or direct support. However, it is important to note that ideologically, the regional structures or counterparts fully support the course of their federal counterparts. At the same time, Canada also has regional parties proper. For example, the Yukon Party and the Saskatchewan Party are not represented at the federal level but are ideologically similar to the CPC. The most successful example of a regional and at the same time ethnic party is the Bloc Québécois, which is represented in the federal parliament of Canada. However, at the level of its region, there is competition between local actors - the Bloc Québécois, the Coalition Avenir Québec and the Québec Solidaire party.

In a more compact Austria, federal parties predictably dominate at the regional level. These are the largest parties - the Austrian People's Party, the Social Democratic Party of Austria, the Austrian Green Party, the Freedom Party of Austria, NEOS – the New Austria and Liberal Forum, etc. The above-mentioned parties are key players in shaping Austria's regional landscape as well. At the same time, there are also purely regional parties in Austria. In Tyrol, there are three such parties such as the Forward Tyrol party, the Citizens' Forum of Tyrol and the Citizens' Club of Tyrol. Regional parties directly appealing to the local agenda also exist in Carinthia (“Team of Carinthia”), Burgenland (“the List of Burgenland”) and Salzburg (“Free Party of Salzburg”). But these parties are not very popular and do not get more than 10% of the votes, giving way to strong federal players at the regional level as well. It is noteworthy that regional parties in the historical heartland of Austria, such as Vienna, Lower and Upper Austria, are absent.

In Germany, the party pattern in the regions is influenced by the large federal parties even more than in Austria, although with its exceptions. Only the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU) form an alliance in the federal elections. This is dictated by the specificity of Bavaria, where the CSU historically dominates, which makes the party system in Bavaria isolated. The Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Left, the Greens, the Free Democratic Party, and the relatively new “Alternative for Germany”

party are also major players at both levels of the party system. There are parties that operate only at a regional level and do not have a purely regional or separatist orientation such as the Free Voters party, the National Democratic Party of Germany, the “Citizens in Rage” party. As regional parties proper, we will identify the very weak South Schleswig Voters' Association (Schleswig-Holstein) and Brandenburg United Civic Movements/Free Voters (Brandenburg).

Against the background of European federations, Switzerland stands out, where the weight of regional parties is greater. But here, too, the federal parties, as in other European countries, have the most influence. The four parties from the permanent ruling coalition such as the Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland, FDP - The Liberals, the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland and the Swiss People's Party as well as the Green Party of Switzerland and the Green Liberal Party of Switzerland, are the strongest and most represented in most cantons. Only one regional party, the Ticino League, is a significant player not only at the regional level, but also at the federal level. In addition to this we can name the Geneva Citizens' Movement.

In Australia, too, federal parties are active at the regional level. In most cases, they operate independently. However, one of the strongest players in Australia is the alliance of the Liberal Party of Australia and the National Party of Australia, which involves the separately existing the Liberal National Party of Queensland and the Country Liberal Party, operating in the Northern Territory. The other major party, the Australian Labor Party, operates independently at both levels and has no such regional partners. There are also many local parties in Australia that are relatively successful at the regional level and either do not run at the federal level or do not win many votes there. These include One Nation Party (Queensland), Katter's Australian Party (Queensland), Centre Alliance (South Australia) and Territory Alliance (Northern Territory).

Latin American countries, as noted above, are examples of active coalition politics. It is also important to note that alliances are unstable and depending on the region or the time of elections, and the same party often enters different alliances. At the same time, alliances form separately at both the regional and federal levels, reinforcing regionalization.

In Mexico, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party and the Party of the Democratic Revolution are the strongest players most often leading coalitions. The newer National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) has so far been more likely to operate on its own. Regional parties in Mexico have no significant influence, a legacy of the PRI-dominated simple party system of the past.

In Brazil, coalition politics is even more active, and the number of coalition members can exceed 10. A common practice is the union of the president and governor of one party with the vice-president and vice-governor, respectively, of the other. The largest leading coalition parties are the Workers' Party (PT), the Social Liberal Party (PSL), the Brazilian Democratic Movement

(MDB), the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB), the Democratic Labour Party (PDT), Democrats (DEM) and Progressives (PP). Occasionally, parties operate alone (e.g., the Workers' Party). However, this is rather the exception to the rule.

Argentina can also be an example of alliance interaction between parties. The key players in alliances are the Justicialist Party (PJ), the Republican Proposal Party (PRO) and the Radical Civic Union (UCR). A distinctive feature of Argentina is a significant role of regional parties. In contrast to its continental neighbors, in Argentina we see an increased activity of such parties in most regions of the country (Chubut, Rio Negro, Neuquén, Corrientes, Córdoba, Santa Cruz, Tierra del Fuego, Santa Fe, Mendoza, Salta, San Juan). Sometimes the number of regional parties is quite significant, as in the Corrientes region.

It is noteworthy that despite the federal structure common to all the selected countries, the tactics of parties in elections and the role of regional parties differ greatly. We can divide our sample into countries where parties operate independently and those where they are united in alliances, as well as into those where the dominant role is played by federal level parties with little or no involvement of regional players and those where regional parties are more prominent. As a result, Argentina has the highest level of regionalization of the party system, which should be explained by the historical features of this country and its federalism. In the cases of Switzerland, Canada, Australia, and Germany, regionalization is certainly present, but it characterizes individual regions that are in the minority and tend to have a unique history and ethnic groups.

In other cases, by contrast, we see a low level of regionalization of the party system (if understood, according to the theory, only by the activity of purely regional parties) or its complete absence. Moreover, in the US and Brazil, this could be explained by the practice of overlapping elections. In Argentina, however, regionalization is maintained even with a significant overlap of election calendars (facilitated by flexible coalition practices), while in Mexico, with its different institutional heritage, it is not. At the same time, choosing different dates for federal and regional elections is typical for most of the studied federations, but it does not necessarily stimulate regionalization, which again depends on other reasons, rather related to the origin and evolution of the party system.

Comparing electoral turnout

Assuming that regional elections are second-order elections relative to federal elections, we can expect a lower turnout than in federal elections. Overall, our study confirms these expectations, but the turnout gap differs significantly, which is also a sign of the varying degree of regional voting specificity (see Appendix).

The U.S. stands out strongly against the general background, where the turnout in the 2013-15 gubernatorial elections fell by more than 20 percentage points on average, and the turnout in the 2017-2019 gubernatorial elections fell by more than 10 p.p. on average. Thus, in the U.S., we see the most significant variations in turnout, demonstrating high interest in federal elections and declining interest and engagement in regional campaigns if they do not overlap with federal ones. Since the latter happens very rarely, such gubernatorial elections generate little public interest, which means that only election overlapping stimulates the turnout.

An example of a less significant, but also noticeable drop in turnout is Germany. In Germany, turnout in regional elections is on average 10 p.p. or lower than in federal elections if the elections do not overlap. Of particular interest is the fact that turnout rises from year to year as federal elections approach, then falls in the year following the federal elections and rises again in the run-up to the next elections. Therefore, voter activity in Germany is significantly related to upcoming federal campaigns, which, as in the US, indicates the strong embedding of regional elections in the federal ones.

In Austria, too, turnout in regional elections is on average lower than in federal elections, approximately with the same differences. It is interesting that the lowest numbers are reached in the year following the federal elections, which is similar to the trends we noted in Germany. In Austria, however, the range differs significantly from period to period, this is why we cannot call it a country with persistently and significantly lower turnout in regional elections. The difference exceeded 10 p.p. in the 2018 regional elections, but the turnout was comparable to the federal elections in 2013, when the regional elections came before the federal ones.

In the example of another group of countries, we do not see so clear differences in turnout between the different levels of elections, which indicates a more active voter engagement in regional elections. Thus, in regional elections in Switzerland the turnout is also, on average, lower than in federal elections. However, the difference is not as great as in Germany and Austria, amounting to 6-9 p.p. in different periods. In the group of countries with small differences in turnout, we shall also include Canada, where in some periods the difference was only 2-4 p.p. In the 2020 elections, the difference rose sharply to 12.4 p.p., but it is difficult to apply this trend to the whole country, since the campaigns were held only in three federated states.

Australia is another example of a country where turnout in regional elections differs little from turnout in federal elections. But it is important to note that voting in Australia is compulsory, and the turnout rarely falls below 85%. However, between 2016 and 2018, the turnout in regional elections was still about 3 p.p. lower than in federal elections. Nevertheless, in other periods the difference was insignificant.

To summarize, we note that in the vast majority of cases, the turnout in regional elections is inferior to the same rate in federal elections, which is generally consistent with the findings of second-order election theory. However, the differences vary greatly from country to country, being explained by institutional practices and the significance of regional authorities. Thus, the practice of combining federal and regional elections in the United States results in the fact that few separate campaigns attract little attention from voters, which overlaps with any other factors, including even the undoubted importance of the governor's institution in the state. The relatively small drop in turnout in Switzerland and Canada can be explained by the historical development of the regional level of politics in a highly decentralized environment and by the great importance of local political life (especially in Switzerland). In contrast, in Germany and Austria, the importance of regional elections is rated less highly by the population. However, the rule has rare exceptions where some regional elections attract more voter interest than federal elections in the same region. We found such examples in Austria.

Overall, we cannot say that the turnout in regional elections in the federations under study falls dramatically. For example, our previous studies of Russia and other post-communist countries showed a much more significant turnout gaps (Turovsky, Korneeva, Vaselenko, 2020). Therefore, the regional level of elections, despite all the differences among countries, is still of great interest to voters in democratic federations, and its inferiority looks questionable. However, the voting patterns still have to be explored.

Empirical explanation of subnational party systems' autonomy

The autonomy of subnational party systems needs to be clarified by examining regional voting differences in federal and subnational elections (see Appendix). In this regard, we proceed directly to the examination of party results and to an analysis of the difference between voting at the federal and regional levels of the party system. The goal is to identify not just the differences, but also those parties that are more popular at the federal and regional levels of elections. In doing so, we will take into account whether the party is ruling and what ideology it adheres to. In accordance with the theory of second-order elections the ruling party should always lose votes in the mid-term subnational elections. But if this does not happen, we need to pay more attention towards regional agenda and party ideology considering these factors important for creation of consistent bias towards federal or regional support.

Studying elections in Germany shows that at the regional level, the Social Democratic Party and the Greens consistently get better results. However, the Greens are not part of the ruling coalition. The matter is more complicated with the Social Democrats, because since 2013 they joined the government headed by the CDU, although from the ideological point of view they are

historical opponents of this party. This makes it difficult to correctly assess the higher popularity of the Social Democrats in the regions from the perspective of second-order election theory (since this party is neither ruling nor opposition in its true sense), but the difference was the same before they entered the government. In the past, the liberals from the FDP also had a higher level of support in the regions, but recently the situation for them has changed to the opposite.

On the contrary, at the federal level of elections the CDU, which is associated with Angela Merkel, the long-time chancellor of Germany, is steadily stronger. But along with the main ruling party, the federal level of elections turns out to be more favorable for radical opposition groups, represented both by the Left and the right-wing Alternative for Germany party. In recent years, the regional level of elections has also been less successful for the liberals in opposition.

Thus, we see that at the regional level, voters in Germany are more likely to vote for the opposition (if we count the Social Democrats as such with reservations), which is consistent with second-order electoral theory. At the same time, not all oppositional (or ideologically opposing the CDU) parties have increased support in the regions. On the contrary, all ideological radicals perform better in federal elections than the ruling party. At the same time, regional elections favor center-left parties and the Greens, which can be explained not only by their ideological differences with the CDU, but also by their more successful work with the regional agenda.

Austria partly confirms the second-order election theory, as evidenced by the fact that during the period when Austrian chancellors belonged to the Social Democrats, the party gained more support in federal elections, and after switching to opposition, has recently become better performer in regional elections. The Austrian People's Party showed the opposite dynamic, clearly being the more successful party in regional elections (although it was then part of an alliance with the Social Democrats as a junior partner), but with a change in trend in 2018, shortly after the party member became the chancellor. The liberals of the New Austria, while in opposition, have always performed worse in the regions. Similarly, the right-wing radicals of the Freedom Party of Austria often, but not always, performed better in federal elections. On the contrary, the Greens performed better in regional elections, but in recent years this situation has changed (while the Greens themselves have become a junior member of the governing coalition). As a result, Austria shows similar trends as Germany, but they are weaker, more volatile, and there are more frequent multidirectional fluctuations in party support when comparing the two levels of elections.

Special attention should be paid to the Austrian regional parties. Despite the relatively large number of such players, their influence is limited. One of the most successful examples is the performance of the Forward Tyrol party in the 2013 regional elections when the party received 9.5% of the vote. In general, the parties of Tyrol, the large mountainous region with the most pronounced identity, are the most successful among the others. The results of the other regional

parties rarely exceed 5-6%. Austria's regional parties are not influential players, having narrowly focused agendas and not gaining significant numbers of votes even in regional parliamentary elections.

Switzerland allows for other natural experiment, since the same four-party governing coalition is constantly in place. But at the same time we see a clear division of the members of this alliance into those who are more successful at the federal or regional level of elections. The right-wing Swiss People's Party has clearly weaker support in the regions, and despite the fact that it has recently become the most popular party in the country, its support in regional elections is significantly lower. The Social Democratic Party of Switzerland is in the same position, but having smaller gaps. In contrast, the other two members of the government coalition, the FDP - The Liberals (consistently) and The Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland (with exceptions), are more popular in regional elections. As a result, we cannot say that Swiss voters in regional elections treat all government parties worse. Instead, they choose those that work best in the regions.

Concerning regional parties, first of all we bring the Ticino League to the attention. Since the party only runs in one region, we shall see the results it got within its canton. In the 2015 federal election the Ticino League party received 21.7% of the vote and 24.2% in the regional elections of the same year. In the 2019 federal election, it received 16.9%, and in the 2020 regional election it received 19.9%. Consequently, although the differences are not very significant, the party is stronger at the regional level. Another regional party represented in the Swiss parliament, the Geneva Citizens' Movement, has a more modest performance. The party is losing support in both the cantonal and federal parliamentary elections. Its result in the 2013 regional election was 19.2% compared to 9.43% in 2018. Its results in the federal elections were as follows: 7.88% in 2015 and 5.37% in 2019. The party is only fifth in the number of seats in the regional parliament, behind the regional branches of major Swiss parties, including the Green Party, which has big influence in Geneva.

In general, the regional level of elections in Switzerland is very diverse, which is not surprising given the wider spread of regional political movements. But it is important that these movements receive greater support in subnational elections, while in federal elections their supporters prefer to vote for national parties. In addition to them, following the same logic, some small parties like the Evangelical People's Party of Switzerland enjoy higher support in the regions. However, a non-obvious situation is with the Greens, which, as in many other countries, initially had greater support in regional elections. In recent years, however, this situation has begun to change with the growing popularity of both players - the Greens and the Green Liberal Party, which began to be perceived as an alternative to the ruling coalition parties at the federal level.

This resulted in an increase in their support in federal elections (up to the Greens coming in fourth place, which was a historic breakthrough in the Swiss party system), but in regional elections these same parties began to lag behind. In such circumstances, it is too early to say whether the trend for the Greens has changed, or this is the issue of an ad hoc support ratio.

Overall, in contrast to Germany and Austria, we cannot conclude that the regional level of elections in Switzerland is more oppositional. More autonomous party systems with a greater number of significant actors are rather formed there, while some national parties do better with a federal agenda and others with a local one, which is explained by their ideological characteristics and local organization network.

On the contrary, US elections demonstrate an almost complete dependence of regional elections on national political cycles. It is noticeable that in gubernatorial elections there is a shift of support in favor of the candidates of the party which is in opposition to the president. After Obama's victory in the 2012 presidential election, the Democratic gubernatorial candidates began to receive fewer votes in the same regions than the president-elect, while the oppositional Republicans, on the contrary, received more votes. After 2016, the situation reversed, and the Democratic candidates started to get higher percentages of voters. On this basis, we cannot conclude that either of the two leading US parties has a firmer foothold at the regional level of politics, except that the Democrats have more noticeable differences in fluctuations while support for Republican candidates for governors varies slightly less.

However, in an overlapping U.S. presidential election, the Democratic gubernatorial candidates seemed stronger and received more votes than their presidential candidate both times, in 2012 and 2016. Republican gubernatorial candidates also received more votes in 2016, reflecting the fact that Trump got fewer popular votes than Clinton. Also following the “red wave”, the Republican gubernatorial candidates in 2016 received a higher percentage of the vote on average than their Democratic competitors.

As for gubernatorial elections overlapping with midterm congressional elections, they follow the logic of the electoral pendulum. In 2014, for example, the Democratic candidates received fewer votes than their presidential candidate in both 2012 and 2016. By contrast, in 2018, after losing the presidency, their result was better. The opposite is also true for Republicans. However, it is interesting that some things changed in 2018 because, while the Republican president being in office, his party's gubernatorial candidates won on average more votes than the Democrats and performed better results than Trump did in the 2016 presidential election. Thus, we can see that while Trump being in office, the Republican Party has become noticeably stronger at the regional level, partially neglecting the logic of the electoral pendulum and second-order elections theory. Perhaps this allows us to conclude that, despite the extremely low autonomy of

subnational elections in the US, it is the Republican Party that has demonstrated the ability to work more effectively with the regional agenda in the most recent years.

Canada differs from the United States in the higher autonomy of its subnational party systems. Similarly to the elections in European federations, the regional level there looks more competitive and diverse. At the federal level, the confrontation between two sides of Canadian politics, the Liberals and the Conservatives, is more pronounced but, unlike in the US, one of the key parties, the Conservatives, is also significantly stronger in the regions. In contrast, the Liberals tend to win more support in federal elections. This was the case both during their time in opposition before 2015 and after their formation of the federal government. On the contrary, the Conservatives were more popular in the regions both when they were in power and afterwards. However, in the 2020 elections, they experienced a sharp deterioration in the regions, but the elections were conducted only in three regions, which is not enough for final conclusions.

In any case, in Canada, we cannot argue that the regional vote is clearly more oppositional, directed against the current federal government. At least this is not confirmed by the case of the two main parties. However, it is at the regional level that the other parties, while not part of the government, enjoy greater support. This is clearly demonstrated by the results of the New Democratic Party and the Green Party of Canada, not to mention the regional parties of Quebec. In the latter case, it is important to mention that the split between the various local movements in Quebec became bigger, resulting in greater support for the main player, the Bloc Québécois, in the federal elections, as this electorate was divided in the regional parliamentary elections.

The dynamics of support for Canada's main regional party, the Bloc Québécois, are mixed. Compared to the 2015 federal election (19.3%), its result in the region was expectedly higher, by 6 p.p., and amounted to 25.38%. However, after the 2019 election, when the Bloc Québécois significantly increased its support, due to the great losses of the New Democratic Party in the region, its regional result was lower than the federal result, at only 17.06% compared to 32.5%. However, it still does not mean an increase in support for the federal parties. The fact is that a number of regional parties have emerged in Quebec to compete with the Bloc Québécois, most notably the Coalition Avenir Québec. The party is relatively young (established in the early 2010s) and was the leader in the last regional elections in Quebec but does not take part in the federal elections, where regional votes remain consolidated in support of the Bloc Québécois. A third important political party in Quebec, championing provincial sovereignty, was Québec Solidaire. The party significantly increased its support in the 2018 regional election compared to the 2014 election, gaining 16.1% compared to 7.63% the cycle before. As a result, we can say that Bloc Québécois being more successful at the federal level is no longer a major political force in regional elections.

A comparative study of elections in Australia shows that at the federal level the ruling coalition of the Liberal and National parties is more successful. On the contrary, the Australian Labor Party, having lost power, has gradually improved its performance at the regional level, enjoying opposition there. Unlike their European counterparts, however, the Australian Greens performed better in federal elections while still being in opposition. As a result, the theory of second-order elections does not fully apply here either. However, in regional elections in Australia there are often local political movements, which occasionally get a lot of votes, creating the effect of more autonomous subnational party systems.

There is a significant number of small parties in Australia that do not have a regional agenda, but rather reflect the needs of the local population in a socio-economic context. The most successful party is the populist One Nation Party (Queensland). This party raises the problems of migrants and the flaws of the multiculturalism policy. In the Northern Territory, the Territory Alliance party (12.9% in the 2020 regional elections) is popular. The party struggles with the existing problems in the region, but its initial strategy was to stand against the major parties popular in the region: the Country Liberal Party and the Labor Party. The other local parties are not as popular and have a very narrow agenda, which does not allow them to gain a large share of votes, and much less to qualify for seats in the federal parliament. Among them are “Family First” (6.25% in the 2014 regional elections), “Shooters, Fishers and Farmers” (2.87% in the 2018-2019 regional elections), “No Land Tax” (2.02% in the 2015 regional elections) and a number of others.

The study of federal and regional elections in Latin America is complicated by the problem of data comparability due to the mismatch of alliances, even if elections are held on the same day. The case of Brazil seems simpler due to the elections that overlapped, but the results of the presidential and gubernatorial elections still differ significantly. In the 2018 election, for example, the alliance of the Social Liberal Party, which won the presidential election, expectedly performed much worse in the gubernatorial elections, given that this party has not been as successful and has not had a stable position in the regions so far. At the same time, the alliance of the formerly ruling Workers' Party also had weaker results in regional elections, both in 2014, when it retained the presidency, and in 2018, when it lost. It is interesting that the alliance of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party, whose candidate took the second place in the 2014 presidential election, also performed weaker, though not significantly, in the overlapping gubernatorial elections. In the 2018 elections, however, when that party nominated a weak presidential candidate, its gubernatorial candidates performed much better than him.

Thus, we see that despite the fact that the elections overlapped and there were almost no parties with a purely regional agenda, Brazilian federalism and the institutional features of the Brazilian party system do not form a strong link between federal and regional elections, which is

fundamentally different from the U.S. example. We can see that presidential elections, with their limited number of candidates, contribute to the consolidation of fragmented electorates, while subnational elections are more competitive and characterized by the success of those players who have a stronger position in some of the regions. The autonomy of subnational party systems emerges de facto in Brazil because of the localization of political life and its own party dynamics in each region. For example, the Communist Party of Brazil participated in the 2014 and 2018 gubernatorial elections, but only in one region (Maranhão), and its winning candidate gained 63.52% and 59.3%, respectively.

Current political processes in Mexico resemble Brazil with the emergence of a new strong player, the left-wing movement MORENA, which won the 2018 presidential elections with a much weaker regional position. This is evidenced by the humble results of this party's gubernatorial candidates compared to the more experienced players. Against MORENA, by contrast, the “old” parties look stronger in the regions. At the same time, regional support is more in favor of the center-right National Action Party, which once interrupted the time when the PRI was in office for a long time. In recent years, this party's governors in separate elections have always performed better than its own presidential candidates. The same is usually true of overlapping elections, with the exception of the 2012 campaign.

The position of the PRI, which once dominated the country and the regions, has become less clear with its declining support, but the party also tends to nominate strong candidates for governor compared to the presidential candidates. In overlapping elections, PRI candidates in the regions were stronger during the 2012 and 2018 general election, as well as the 2009 parliamentary election (during the 2015 parliamentary elections, PRI gubernatorial candidates performed much better than the 2018 presidential candidate, but about the same as the 2012 presidential candidate).

As a result, key “old” national parties with an established party network compete in Mexico's gubernatorial elections. New players, such as MORENA, may win more sympathy in federal elections, but in contrast, their position in the regions are still not so strong. In addition, there is the erratic support for major party candidates in presidential elections, where the electorate has become more volatile since the collapse of the PRI-dominated system. This can be interpreted in such a way that subnational party systems in Mexico are simpler and more homogeneous than in Brazil, but also solidly institutionalized, while the federal level of politics appears more turbulent.

In Argentina, as in Mexico, alliances are more stable than in Brazil. The Justicialist Party is the leader of the Everyone's Front alliance (formerly known as “Front for Victory”). The party also leads other alliances in regional elections, and sometimes stands on its own (for example, in the 2019 elections in the regions of São Luiz and Tucumán). Overall, support for the party remains

high in both levels of elections and does not show dramatic fluctuations. As for the 2015 election, the party's result in the overlapping campaigns was slightly lower (40.13%) than in the separate elections (41.98%). In the federal elections, the coalition received 42.4% of the vote. The situation changed by 2019: the party's average result in overlapping campaigns was higher than in separate ones: 48.2% vs. 41.9%. However, the average result of the Everyone's Front alliance in the federal elections remains higher than in the regional elections.

Another alliance, "Together for Change", is led by the Republican Proposal party in the federal elections, while in the regional elections it is sometimes led by the Radical Civic Union. In the 2015 regional election, the alliance led by the Radical Civic Union was on average more successful (34.9%) than the one led by the Republican Proposal Party (26.7%). In 2019, the situation changed dramatically, with the average level of support for the alliance led by the Radical Civic Union dropping to 28.5%, while the Republican Proposal received 47.1%. The situation in the federal elections was similar: there was an increase in support for the alliance led by the Republican Proposal from 29.14% to 37.6%. At the same time, the overlapping gubernatorial campaigns in 2019 were characterized by a simpler scenario and a high level of polarization, due to which the gubernatorial candidates from both opposing alliances on average received more votes than the respective presidential candidates. In contrast, in 2015, the trends for both coalitions were reversed, indicating a greater diversity of voting options in regional elections.

Argentina also differs from other Latin American states in the prominent role of regional parties. Regional parties are strong players, defeating representatives of large federal alliances in elections. For example, in Chubut, "We are all Chubut" is a strong actor. The results of this party's candidates have remained steady, receiving 41.87% and 41.34% in the 2015 and 2019 gubernatorial elections, respectively. "Neuquén People's Movement" is another strong regional player. Like the party in Chubut, the party in Neuquén leads in both the 2015 and 2019 gubernatorial elections with results of 40.57% and 40.12%, respectively. "Together we are Rio Negro", a political alliance in the region of the same name, won the regional elections of both cycles with 52.8% in 2015 and 52.64% in 2019. There are less popular, but also participating in regional politics, parties in Santa Cruz ("Santa Cruz Somos Todos") and in Tierra del Fuego (the Patagonian Socialist Party). The latter, however, ran independently only in the 2015 gubernatorial election, receiving just 5.79%. In the 2019 elections it joined the left-wing alliance FORJA (affiliated with the Front for Victory), which received 55.03%.

Conclusion

Summarizing the practices and electoral results of party participation in regional and federal elections, we should mention a high level of dependence of regional party systems on the federal ones. The vast majority of federal parties participate in regional elections, adapting their agenda to regional demand. Regional parties, with the rare exception of those entering the federal level, participate only in regional politics. However, even at the regional level, the number of successful parties with a simple local or ethnic agenda is small. As a result, the federations, despite the seemingly existing institutional prerequisites, do not form fully autonomous regional party systems.

At the same time, a careful study shows different autonomy levels of subnational party systems in the federations. In some cases, it is related to the influence of regional parties themselves, but they are few. With the exception of Argentina, where such parties operate in a large number of federated states and sometimes win, obvious party regionalism develops rather in certain regions with the most developed cultural identity like Quebec, Bavaria, Ticino, or to a lesser extent Tyrol, Geneva, etc.

No less interesting and more difficult to analyze and interpret is the autonomization of regional party systems, caused by different political and historical development logic of federal and regional election levels. It can manifest itself in the parties, existing in the regions, with more or less stable positions in the regional government or popularity among the regional electorate, which at the same time do not advocate the ideas of regional independence, but are rooted in the local elites or social activism. They can be either some large national parties with deep local roots (as in Mexico), including those capable of creating regional semi-authoritarian regimes, or small local players with a variety of ideologies (as in Brazil). Flexible institutional frameworks and informal practices that allow forming alliances, which include different members in different elections, under federalism lead to forming two levels of party system evolution that do not coincide with each other, as seen in Latin America. Or the historically high decentralization level of political life becomes the key factor in the partial autonomization of subnational party systems, as in Switzerland, Canada and Australia, which entails both the natural activity of regional movements and the existence of national parties with higher levels of support in regional elections. As a result, even with similar actors we can get significant differences of voting results. And from this point of view, the U.S. looks more like an outlier, which can be explained by the institutionalized electoral hierarchy, reinforced by the widespread practice of overlapping all election campaigns.

In terms of quantitative differences, the autonomy of regional elections is most noticeable in the Latin American federations, where there is also a problem of correct quantitative comparison

of election results, which makes such analysis difficult. In other cases, differences in voting for the same parties rarely exceed 10 p.p., that is, they can be considered moderate. The most serious gaps in our study were demonstrated by the CDU in Germany, the Swiss People's Party and the Canadian Liberals towards support in the federal elections, and the Austrian People's Party towards support in regional elections. In these cases, we can talk about the most significant split voting when supporters of these parties have other favorites in elections at a different level. Mostly, in fact, these are right and center-right parties, but there are also exceptions.

Meanwhile, the hypotheses associated with the classical second-order election theory are only partially confirmed, which, in our view, supports the conclusions that there is a limited autonomy of subnational party systems, rather than a strict logic firmly linking federal and regional elections. Thus, preferential support for opposition parties in regional elections is common, but not widespread. It is pronounced only in the USA, but it does not work 100% either. Such tendencies can be observed in Germany, Austria, Canada, and Australia, but they do not apply to all ruling or all opposition parties. In Switzerland, the different members of the ruling coalition simply have different biases, some in favor of federal elections and the others in favor of regional elections. The fact that voters vote in regional elections not only because of the desire to “punish” the party ruling at the federal level makes it possible to identify parties that, for one reason or another, are consistently more popular at the regional or federal level of elections. Intuitively, we can assume that they are more active with the regional agenda, while at the federal level a voter is more inclined to vote strategically for the most likely winners, or for those parties which promote a clear vision of the political development of the state of one kind or another.

However, our study does not show that parties with any particular ideology are more often the favorites in regional elections, with the exception, of course, of the regionalist parties. The closest to this status are the Greens, as the parties more actively appealing to the issues of concern to the local electorate. But in their case, too, different federations show opposite trends. There is also a very weak trend in favor of regional support for conservative parties rather than liberals and center-lefts. Perhaps the conservative part of the electorate is more inclined to participate in elections at all levels. On the other side, it is noticeable that parties with more pronounced ideologies and a radical political agenda are better at mobilizing voters in federal elections. Such examples are right-wing radicals, taking advantage of anti-migrant sentiment, as well as radical left-wing parties. Their agenda is connected to the problems of the country as a whole and usually does not involve any special interaction with local communities. Similarly, but not so obviously, classical liberal parties gravitate more often to the federal level of elections. Thus, we can still see that party agendas and ideology can influence the autonomization of subnational party systems, since not all parties seek to work with local issues, which leads to a conventional division of parties

into federal-biased and regional-biased, even if this does not remain stable in all countries throughout history. It means that regional agenda factors can outweigh the importance of second-order electoral factors.

Overall, our study has demonstrated the importance of analyzing the elements of autonomy of subnational party systems, even when they are not too pronounced and in the context of the overall success of the political nationalization in all of the federations studied. It is notable that the comparative analysis of different countries allowed us to clarify in these comparisons the place of Russia as well, which we have previously studied from this point of view (Turovsky, Sukhova, 2020). The high level of centralization, as well as the institutional restrictions on regional parties and the practice of increasingly frequent overlapping elections, as we found, contribute to the integration of Russian regional campaigns into national electoral cycles, demonstrating, as a rule, a gradual increase or decrease in the results of key parties in the inter-election period within the general dynamic process. But the regional level of elections in Russia is characterized by a higher level of opposition voting, which brings our country closer to other federations and allows us to say that the theory of the second order elections is applicable to Russia. However, it is impossible to conclude that in Russia there are parties which have developed a stable and effective local agenda, which would help to get sustainable support in the regions. Finally, Russia is also characterized by a much more significant decline in turnout in subnational elections, which emphasizes the fact that people consider them as elections of little importance in the context of the power vertical. Overall, Russia finds itself closer to cases of low autonomy of subnational party systems, which is to be expected, of course.

Prospects for international studies, in our view, may be linked to a more detailed study of the reasons for a more or less stable “regionalization” or “federalization” of different national parties in different countries, related to the peculiarities of both party building and the local election context. From this point of view, this work is of a preliminary nature, given the relatively small time span we have covered, and the identified lack of general trends even in a small sample of relatively similar federations lays the groundwork for new research in the given direction.

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Appendix

Table 1. Difference between results of combined regional and federal elections

Country (Party)	Federal elections year	Regional elections year	Difference in p.p. (federal value subtracted from the regional one)
Germany (1 campaign⁴)			
turnout	2013	2013	0
CDU/CSU** ⁵	2013	2013	-0.9
SPD	2013	2013	1.9
Left	2013	2013	-0.8
Green	2013	2013	1.2
FDP* ⁶	2013	2013	-0.6
AfD	2013	2013	-1.5
Switzerland (1 campaign)			
turnout	2015	2015	-0.17
FDP. The Liberals**	2015	2015	-1.35
Christian Democratic People's Party**	2015	2015	-0.85
Social Democratic Party**	2015	2015	-3.66
Swiss People's Party**	2015	2015	-0.87
Green Party	2015	2015	0.43
USA⁷			
turnout	2012	2014	-20.83
	2016	2018	-1.45
Democratic Party	2012**	2012 (13)	2.27
	2016**	2016 (12)	3.61
	2012**	2014 (36)	-6.42
	2016**	2018 (33)	2.94
Republican Party	2012	2012	-3.8
	2016	2016	1.88
	2012	2014	3.93
	2016	2018	1.03
Mexico			
RPI	2012	2012 (6)	4.1
Todos por Mexico (RPI)	2018**	2018 (7)	-5.45
	2012	2009 (5)	6.52
	2018	2015 (8)	19.91
PAN	2012**	2012	-3.65
Por Mexico al Frente (PAN)	2018**	2018	9.08

⁴ Number of regions, where elections were held, are in brackets.

⁵ Ruling parties are marked with **.

⁶ Minor ruling alliance members are marked with *.

⁷ For the US (2014, 2018) and Mexico (2009, 2015) we also compare gubernatorial elections combined with the parliamentary ones with those combined with presidential ones held on another year.

	2012	2009	9.1
	2018**	2015	14.42
PDR	2012	2012	-6.55
	2012	2009	-17.86
Juntos Haremos Historia (MORENA)	2018	2018	-16.94
	2018	2015	-48
Argentina			
Front for Victory (JP)	2015**	2015 (11)	-1.49
Everyone's Front (JP)	2019	2019 (4)	0.28
Together for Change (PRO)	2015	2015	-5.35
Together for Change (PRO)	2019**	2019	2.825
Brazil			
PSL	2018	2018	-28.15
Workers' Party (PT)	2014**	2014 (27)	-10.5
	2018**	2018 (27)	-2.23
Democratic Labour Party	2018	2018	6.14
PSDB	2014	2014	-0.76
	2018	2018	20.03

Data source: Countries' Electoral Commissions, calculated by the authors

Table 2. Differences between results of separated regional and federal elections

Germany	2011-2013 (10) ⁸	2014-2017 (13)		2018-2020 (8)
	Compared with the following elections	Compared with the past elections	Compared with the following elections	Compared with the past elections
Turnout	-10.8	-11.49	-16.1	-9.96
CDU/CSU	-5.32** ⁹	-11.23**	-3.06**	0.73**
SPD	4.97	2.66*	7.6*	8.34*
Left	-3.26	-1.49	-0.54	-4.4
Green	3.91	2.08	1.74	7.23
FDP	1.17* ¹⁰	1.78	-3.69	-3.39
AfD	n/a	3.82	-5.16	-3.64

Austria	2014-2015 (5)	2018 (4)		2019-2020 (4)
	next	past	next	past
Turnout	-9.2	-15.05	-10.27	-7.7
Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ)	-7.05**	3.01	8.42	8.80
Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)	4.15*	2.155**	-5.57**	-1.95**
Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)	-0.84	-8.7275*	1.88*	-3.75
The Greens	9.38	4.055	-4.57	-1.85*

Canada	2011-2015 (12)	2015-2019 (16)		2020 (2)
	next	past	next	past
Turnout	-2.04	-7.72	-3.88	-12.44
Liberal Party	-9.84	-11.13**	1.89**	-1.84**
Conservative Party	1.51**	6.51	-0.74	-29.17
Green	3.38	6.1	1.12	0.39

⁸ Number of regions, where elections were held, are in brackets.

⁹ Ruling parties are marked with **.

¹⁰ Minor party alliance members are marked with *.

New Democratic Party	11.22	1.06	2.5	8.13
Bloc Québécois	6.08 (2014)		-15.44 (2018)	

Switzerland	2011-2014 (23)	2015-2018 (20)		2019 (2)
	next	next	past	past
Turnout	-6.28	-9.11	-5.00	-7.46
FDP. The Liberals	2.43**	4.41**	7.08**	0.45**
Christian Democratic People's Party	-0.01**	1.33**	0.53**	-8.49**
Social Democratic Party	-4.2**	-3.83**	-0.55**	-1.06**
Swiss People's Party	-10.31**	-11.38**	-6.53**	-3.38**
Evangelical People's Party	1.88	0.77	1.09	-0.39
Green Party	0.64	1.2	-3.27	-3.14
Conservative Democratic Party	-2.22	1.09	-5.14	0.49 ¹¹
Green Liberal Party	0.48	0.24	-2.58	-0.75
Ticino League	-	-	2.56 (2015)	2.94 (2020)
Geneva Citizens' Movement	-	11.32 (2013)	4.06 (2018)	

Australia	2013-2015 (6)	2016-2018 (8)		2019-2020 (3)
	next	past	next	past
Turnout	-0.32	-2.62	-3.34	-0.73
Liberal/National Coalition	1.03**	-2.03**	-8.63**	-5.02**
Labor Party	-0.57	0.88	2.08	2.23
Greens	0.11	-1.73	-1.68	-3.33

USA	2013-2015 (5)		2017-2019 (5)
	past	next	past
Turnout	-22.84	-23.29	-11.15
Democratic Party	-5.78**	-1.57**	6.02

¹¹ Conservative Democratic Party merged with Christian Democratic People's Party into new alliance "The Center".

Republican Party	4.44	4.8	-2.45**
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Mexico	2010-2011 (14)	2016-2017 (15)
	next	next
RPI	6.09	
Todos por Mexico (RPI)		16.64**
PAN	5.34**	
Por Mexico al Frente (PAN)		6.62
PDR	-14.34	
Juntos Haremos Historia (MORENA)		-42.03

Argentina	2013 (2)	2015 (12)	2017 (2)	2019 (19)
	next	past	next	past
Front for Victory (JP)	16.47**	3.15	7.76	-7.11**
Together for Change (PRO)	-	-3.64**	¹²	-11.00

Data source: Countries' Electoral Commissions, calculated by the authors

¹² Together for Change alliance under the leadership of Republican Proposal (PRO) did not participate in the 2017 elections.

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