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VOTING BEHAVIOR IN UKRAINE. A GENDER PERSPECTIVE*

This article examines differences in voter turnout and voting preferences between men and women in Ukraine. Using the United States Information Agency (USIA) data set we argue that the opportunity to influence government by voting (external political efficacy) and interest in political affairs have a direct influence on voting behavior. Education, evaluation of the current economic situation in Ukraine (economic performance), and the population's perception of government effectiveness influence voting behavior indirectly through afore-mentioned constructs. We find that there are no substantial differences between men and women in both voting behavior and the influences of political attitudes on it. In our model we focus on one dimension of voting behavior - voting and participation in the electoral campaign. On the other hand, we find slight differences between the genders in their preferences for political forces and in interest in political affairs.

Introduction

The fact that politics is a male domain is a usual phenomenon even in the highly developed western societies. The majority of politicians and policymakers at the every level of the legislative and executive powers are men. Women are much more rarely seen as political leaders, political actors and political candidates. Women's access to decision-making roles is much narrower due to the positions in the social structure.

Before the mid-1970s, men were more likely to vote in almost every western society. This was, in large part, due to the fact that women had only comparatively recently won the right to vote in these societies [4]. It was assumed that women knew less about politics, and were less interested and less psychologically involved in it [21].

Since the 1970s the main gender differences in proportions of voters disappeared. Now women and men do not differ as passive political actors in the sense that women do not rule but have a great interest in participating and choosing who will rule in society. Men and women participate to an almost equal degree in all major modes of political activity as voters, campaigners and communicators. Most of the socioeconomic and

social-psychological factors that affect men's participation affect women's participation in the same ways, with slight variations [7].

Several observers have debated the role of men and women in soviet and post-soviet society. A lot of these research studies were based on western findings and assumed women to be less enthusiastic about competitive elections and less interested and less involved in politics. These concerns may in part explain women's relative lack of enthusiasm for competitive elections [23]. A gender gap seems to exist according to some scholars:

"...The position of women in the Soviet Union is sufficiently similar to the position of women in the West that is reasonable to think that the findings in the western literature may have parallels among Soviet women" [5, p.381].

On the other hand, one can find an opinion which contradicts the previous one:

"... women as a whole are well educated, the vast majority work outside the home, and they live in a society in which ideology promotes equality of sexes. Thus, gender-based differences may not be large in the Soviet Union" [10, p.381].

In study of political culture from the perspective of a power relationship between men and women, at least two approaches are possible [15].

- 1) focusing on issues, illustrating the different opinions of men and women about a wide range of topics;
- 2) a search for a fundamental feminist orientation with relevance for a political system in general and democracy in particular.

We are focusing mainly on voting behavior and the political orientations that influence it. We are going to define any substantial differences between men and women in their voting behavior. We also analyze the main causes of voting behavior and the different ways these causes influence for men and women.

Research Methodology

In our research we take into consideration some constructs which are not directly observable. We also are going to construct the system of relations, which has a few dependent variables and compare these relations for two groups - men and women. That is why we apply a *structural equation models* approach. According to Goldberger [9] the core elements of structural equation models are: *hypothetical constructs* or latent variables which, while not directly observed, have operational implications for relationships among observable variables and consideration of relations in the *system;* the models can be built up of several or many equations which interact with each other.

On the basis of two-group (men and women) restricted (models with equal factor loadings in two groups) measurement models [11] we measure the concepts under study. The systems of relations between the said concepts are compared on the basis of regression models by testing the equality of regressions [11]. As a goodness-of-fit measure for our models we use the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)[11].

Voting behavior and its measuring

Contemporary Ukraine is in the process of transforming from totalitarian to democratic rule. The basic principle of democracy assumes delegating authority to elected officials. In other words, elections are the means to make democracy work. In democratic states elections are supposed to provide legitimization, installation of officials, selection and choice, representation, and popular involvement [13]. According to democratic ideals, voting itself is an act of direct participation in public decision making. Participation in elections is a major form, and for many citizens, the only form of political action in democratic states (see Barnes 1990:235).

There is no agreement that a very high voter turnout indicates high legitimacy [13]... Following participaüonists and communitarians, everyone ought to want to vote, therefore, low turnout may indicate that something is wrong. From the point of view of liberals, excessively high turnout would be a danger signal: if many people do not vote, it indicates that they are sufficiently satisfied with the status quo. In our article we argue another point which assumes that the significance of voting varies with the importance of elections in determining who gets elected [4]. Taking into account, that in contemporary Ukraine it is difficult to define beforehand the results of elections*, one can assume that voting behavior and voting turnout are of key importance.

Voting behavior in the existing literature encompasses at least two dimensions: (1) voting and participation in an electoral campaign, (2) continuity of support for a definite party or political force (see, for example [13]). In our article we focus mainly on one dimension of voting behavior - voting and participation in the electoral campaign. On the other hand, we analyze the differences in support for definite political forces between men and women.

^{*} A good example of the difficulty in predicting of election results was connected with the Presidental elections of 1994, when according to the sociological suveys od Kiev International Institute of Sociology the majority of population of Ukraine began to support L.Kuchma only one week before the elections, whereas before the majority supported another candidate, former President L. Kravchuk

Tablet. Voting behavior: People take part in voting in a different ways. Now please tell me whether you engaged in any of the following activities in the past 3 years.

	Persuading to vote, %		Any other activities during electoral campaign, %		Voting election		Voting in presidential elections, %		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
No	80,9	85,5	93,1	95,0	25,7	28,9	20,4	19,6	
DK- HTS	0,4	1,7	-	0,5	2,1	1,9	0,2	0,8	
Yes	18,7	12,8	6,9	4,5	72,2	69,3	79,4	79,7	

In measuring voting behavior we use several indicators, thus, we can take into account different levels of political involvement in an electoral campaign. Table 1 represents indicators that we have take into consideration.

According to this table, the differences in voting behavior in all of the aspects taken into consideration are very slight, or even do not exist. In order to construct an index of voting behavior we use a two-group restricted (equal factor loadings) measurement model (see Appendix A). Our measurement includes not only the usual forms of voting behavior, such as voting in local and presidential elections, but also indicators of active political involvement in electoral campaigns such as persuading to vote and other electoral activities.

As we noted earlier, voting behavior and voter turnout are of key importance in contemporary Ukraine. Therefore, here arises the question about factors which influence voting behavior, or people's intention to vote and participate in electoral campaigns.

Factors which influence voting behavior

A rich body of literature has dealt with factors that influence political participation in general and voting behavior in particular. Milbrath [16] suggests that the most crucial factors about understanding behavior are beliefs about self, about the government, and about the relationship of the self to the government. According to Verba

Nye and Kym [25] Voting behavior in Ukraine. A gender perspective, two types of forces can be defined to influence political activity. First, attitudes and characteristics that an individual brings to the participatory arena. Participation is influenced by greater socioeconomic resources and by general levels of political awareness and self-confidence. Second, participation is also facilitated by the institutional context within which individuals act - legal rules, social and political structures. Miller [17] considers factors, which influence voting behavior in at lest two categories flawed. On the one hand, there is the argument that disenchantment and disinterest lead to a rejection of a party system and a lack of enthusiasm for participation in electoral politics. On the other hand, the influence of a sustained health of the electoral process is considered. Abramson and Aldrich [1] link voter turnout with the strength of partisanship and external political efficacy. Shaffer [22] explains turnout on the basis of such factors as age, following the campaign in the newspapers, partisanship, and efficacy. Kleppner [14] consider partisanship, efficacy, and age as main sources of voter turnout. Powell [20] considers several attitudes which facilitate voting behavior, namely, efficacy, trust, interest, and partisanship. Cassel and analysis other three variables: education, concern (people who care which party wins the election are more likely to vote), and interest (people who are more interested in a campaign are more likely to vote). Casil and Luskin do not agree with the preceding models. However, they also claim, that "precisely what variables we are obligated to include depends on the level of abstraction ... and on the level of analysis" [6,p. 1326].

Following the afore-mentioned definitions we limit our analysis to several factors which influence voting behavior:

- 1. Education as a social factor.
- 2. *Economic performance* (evaluation of the current economic situation) as an economic factor.
- 3. Beliefs about government: population's perception of government effectiveness (government perceived performance).
- 4. Beliefs about the relationship of the self to the government: feeling that voting can influence government (external political efficacy).
- 5. Another (besides voting behavior) indicator of political involvement*: subjective political interest.

Education is considered as a basic social characteristic which influences political involvement.

"Nearly all studies seeking to explain sex differences in political participation stress the role of education. They find not only that women's participation increases with the level of their educational achievement, but that often among the most highly educated sex differences narrow to insignificance"[21,p.88].

Table 2 presents educational levels of men and women in Ukraine in 1997 according to the USIA data set.

According to this table, differences in educational levels of women and men in Ukraine are not substantial. We assume that individuals with higher education are more likely to be interested in politics since education may inherently instill the understanding of state politics and their influence on everyday life of citizens. Another of our assumption is connected with the influence of political interest on voting behavior. Therefore, education effects voting behavior indirectly through political interest.

Subjective political interest can be measured in two ways[8]. The first way is to measure subjective political interest by asking people directly how interested they are in politics. The second way to measure political interest is to look for some statement, which embodies a behavioral component. We are measuring political interest directly by asking how interested the respondents are in politics. The levels of interest in politics by women and men are presented in Table 3.

Table 2.

Educational level

	Male,%	Female, %
7 grades or less	10,3	14,3
Incomplete secondary	7,8	13,2
Complete general secondary (including PTU)	37,5	29,2
Complete specialized secondary	23,6	25,8
Incomplete higher (at least 3 years)	3,6	3,2
Higher (complete)	17,3	14,3

^{*} Political involvement includes (1) political interest, (2) conventional political participation or eleatoral and non-electoral participation that corresponds to the norms of society, (3) protest or support for protest, (4) social participation or membership in an organization [24].

Table 3. **Subjective Political Interest**

 Men,%
 Women, %

 A great deal
 10,3
 3,6

 A fair amount
 21,8
 14,0

 Not very much
 49,5
 48,3

 No interested
 18,4
 34,1

This table shows that men are more likely to be interested in politics than women. Such a finding corresponds to findings in gender studies in western societies. We assume that political interest influence not only voting behavior but also external political efficacy.

Another factor we are going to consider is economic performance or people's evaluation of the economic situation in Ukraine.

"Political action is motivated most effectively by issues that touch people in immediate and tangible way ... when it comes to economic - inspired analysis of politics, where "pocketbook voters" cast their support for candidates and parties that further their own political interest" [12,p. 495].

Kinder and Kiwiet [12] call general perceptions collective economic judgements. They state that in reaching political decisions voters draw not on their recent personal economic experience but on information about aggregate economic conditions. These collective economic judgements seem surprisingly independent of privately experienced discontent. That is why we take into consideration evaluation of the economic situation in Ukraine but not an economic perception of individuals.

According to Tedin [23] "Soviet women can hardly be avoided hearing commentary about possible economic costs of the reform program notably, economic uncertainty and unemployment. These concerns, usually more salient to women and men..."

Does the evaluation of economic performance differ for men and women in Ukraine? Table 4 presents the answer.

Table 4. Current economic situation in Ukraine is...

	Very good, %	Very good,%
Very good	-	0,1
Fairly good	4,7	2,8
Fairly bad	47,9	43,1 ;
Very bad	47,5	54,0 :

There is a slight difference between men and women in their evaluation of the current economic situation in Ukraine. Women are more pessimistic. It has to be connected with the leading position of the majority of Ukrainian women in the economic survival of their households. We assume that economic performance influences government perceived performance.

Another factor taken into consideration is government perceived performance*. We are analyzing several dimensions of government perceived performance. We consider several areas of government action and public policy. People expect their government to protect them against violence from both inside and outside of the country. We consider two indicators of security issues: evaluations of government effectiveness in (1) fighting organized crime; and (2) providing defense needs. Another significant issue to consider is economic growth of the country. For Ukraine this issue is vital since the last few years have been marked by stagnation, inflation, and decreasing living standards. Taking into account serious economic difficulties in the country and the lack of resources for some people to buy enough food we add to these issues ensuring food supply. Successful social protection of the population helps to win the support of people who are alienated from the market economy and sometimes from democracy as a result of the harshness of early capitalism (Wilson: 189). Environmental protection is another important issue in the politics of Ukraine. We also consider government effectiveness in protection of civil rights an

Government reference reflormance.														
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,	orga	nized	a fo	od	u	р [!]	econ	omic	civ	vil '	defe	ense	protec	ction,
	cri	me,	sup	ply,	envi	ron-	grov	vth,	righ	nts,	nee	ds,	9/	o 0
	%		%		mental		%		%		%			
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	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem
Very				·										
good job	0.2	0.7	7.5	7.6	1.0	-	0.2	0.2	1.3	0.3	5.2	3.8	0.4	0.3
Fairly														
good job	7.7	6.4	38.1	37.8	5.9	5.9	8.1	8.0	6.9	6.8	38.4	40.5	2.8	2.4
Fairly														
poorjob	32.6	30.9	28.4	28.1	29.9	29.0	37.4	34.1	34.7	28.1	28.2	24.0	16.9	13.9
Very													,	
poorjob	59.5	62.0	26.0	26.5	63.2	65.1	54.4	57.7	57.1	64.8	28.2	31.7	79.9	83.4

Table 5. Government Perceived Performance.

important issue in a democratic state. Table. 5 represents evaluations of government effectiveness on the afore-mentioned issues. Please idicate how satisfactory the government following tasks.

As this table shows, there are no differences in men and women's evaluations of government perceived performance in Ukraine. In order to construct an index of government perceived performance we use two-group restricted (equal factor loadings) measurement model (see Appendix B). Government perceived performance, according to our assumption, has an effect on political efficacy.

Different models for measuring *political efficacy* are proposed in existing literature [2,3]. Acock and Clark [2] propose a political efficacy model based on two constructs (external and internal efficacy) with four indicators and a measurement error. External efficacy is represented by such indicators as: "How much

do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what people think...?" and "Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do?". We are going to analyze a single indicator of political efficacy: "Voting is an opportunity to influence government". While it limits my analysis, it can be seen as an extreme indicator of political inefficacy: if even voting can not influence government, than how to influence it? Moreover, it has a direct relation to voting behavior itself.

According to Table 6 men and women in Ukraine have no differences in their evaluations of external efficacy, or better to say inefficacy. We assume that if people believe they can influence the government by voting, they will vote.

In summary, let us list the relations we are going to consider in our final model. Education influences political interest that influences voting

Tableó. External Political Efficacy. Voting is an opportunity to influence government...

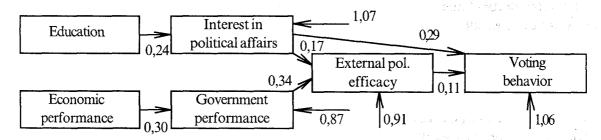
	Male,%	Female, %
Completely agree	13,8	10,4
Agree more than disagree	21,3	21,2
Disagree more than agree	23,6	25,1
Completely disagree	41,2	43,3

behavior and external political efficacy. Economie efficacy influences voting behavior. These performance influences government perceived relations are presented in a path diagram of the performance that cause external efficacy. External regression models of voting behavior.

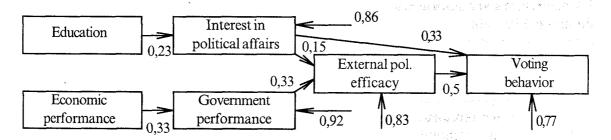
Path diagram.

Regression models of voting behavior

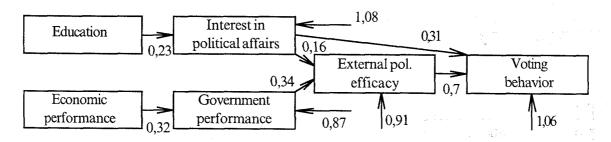
Men - unrestricted solution (RMSEA=0,048, chi-square=51,61, df=16)



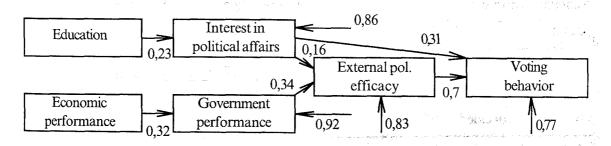
Women - unrestricted solution (RMSEA=0,048, chi-square=51,61, df=16)



Men - restricted solution (RMSEA=0,033, chi-square=52,58, df=22)



Women - restricted solution (RMSEA=0,033, chi-square=52,58, df=22)



Our analysis was conducted in two stages. First, we constructed a two-group unrestricted model (regression coefficients for men and women are not equal). On the basis of differences the between chi-squares for an unrestricted solution and solutions with restricted parameters, we came to the conclusion that there are no significant differences in each of the regression coefficients taken into consideration in our model. That is why a restricted solution fits the data better.

Consequently, differences in relations between the said concepts are not found in our research. Both women and men's voting behavior is influenced to the same extent and similarly by education, economic performance, interest in political affairs, government perceived performance and external efficacy.

At the same time there is some evidence that political attitudes and political preferences of Ukrainian men and women tend to be somewhat different. The table 7 presents some gender differences in understanding and supporting political movements in Ukraine.

Within the political arena more or less independent movements exist. Please choose the one that the closest represent you.

Except for the communist and socialist movements any other political trend has appeared

during the last decade. Political parties which represented these political trends have changed several times. It is not surprising that almost one half of the respondents do not have any political preferences. Women more often than men do not understand any political trends. Such lack of understanding is not dependent on of women's age. In every age groups (18-29, 30-44,45-54 and older than 55 years) different political trends are incomprehensible for approximately the same number of women. Another tendency is observed among men. Among every older age group of men it is less men to whom political movements remain incomprehensible.

As a whole the same number of men and women answered that they prefer communist and socialist political trends. Men tend more often to support national-democratic and social-democratic movements. Gender differences in political preferences are more evident in the answers to more general questions about attitudes towards political forces, defending a socialist or capitalist way of development (see the table 8). Political forces today are divided into those which want to return to socialism and those, which want to develop capitalism. What is your personal attitude toward such forces?

Table 7.

Political preferences.

Political preferences.					
	Male,%	Female, %			
Communist	21,8	22,1			
Socialist	6,0	5,3			
Gocial-democratic	8,5	5,8			
Nationalist	3,3	2,6			
National-democratic	8,2	4,8			
Liberal	1,1	1,4			
Christian democratic	1,8	2,5			
None at all	12,4	11,1			
I have not yet decided	17,9	15,7			
I do not understand any of these trends	14,8	25,5			

Table 8.

I support the I support both of I support I support the neither proponents them to avoid proponents of socialism of capitalism conflict Male 20,0% 22,4% 15.6% 20.3 % 25,7% 24,3 % Female 19,0% 7,5 %

Socialist-capitalist orientations.

As we can see men more often support political movements which want to develop a capitalist society in Ukraine and relatively more rarely support the proponents of socialism. These differences are statistically significant. The age of the respondents does not have any influence. Different attitudes toward political forces among men and women are the same within every age group.

The level of education has stronger influence on personal attitudes. We found that men and women tended to support prosocialist and procapitalist political trends at the same rate at higher levels of education. Men and women at lower levels of education expressed different degrees of loyalty to political trends. Such men tended relatively often support procapitalist political movements whereas women tended relatively often to support prosocialist political movements. Therefore, female commitment toward political forces that support a capitalist way of development is more constrained than male commitment by the level of education.

Conclusions

The question of gender differences in voting behavior in Ukraine has no definitive answer. Following western findings some observers suppose that men are more likely to vote in Ukraine. From another point of view, women in post-Soviet countries are well educated, and have for a long time experienced equality, promoted by the communist regime. Consequently, their voting behavior should not differ much from men.

Our analysis focused on the comparison of voting behavior and the factors, which influence this behavior for Ukrainian men and women in 1997. We took into consideration five factors that influence voter turnout: education, economic

performance, government perceived performance, interest in political affairs, and external efficacy. Only two of those factors taken into consideration influence voting behavior directly: interest in political affairs and efficacy. All the other factors influence voting behavior indirectly: education - through interest; and government perceived performance - through external efficacy; and economic performance - through government perceived performance and efficacy.

While we focused mainly on voter turnout another aspect of voting behavior was also taken into consideration. We found slight differences in support for different political forces between men and women.

We did not find significant differences in men and women's voting behavior. Percentages of those, who vote, persuade to vote, participate in other electoral activities are similar for men and women. There were also no differences in the influences of considered factors on voting behavior. All the factors seem to have similar influences.

Very slight differences were found in interest in political affairs (men are more likely to be interested) and in economic performance (women are more likely to be more pessimistic in their evaluation of the current economic situation in Ukraine).

Consequently, we came to the basic conclusion that women in Ukraine participate in voting the same way as men. The same factors and to the same extent influence both men and women's voter turnout. However, we have to note that our approach does not take into account other factors which may change both influences on voter turnout and the

differentiation between men and women*. We need further investigation to involve a larger variety of factors and groups in our analysis.

Acknowledgments

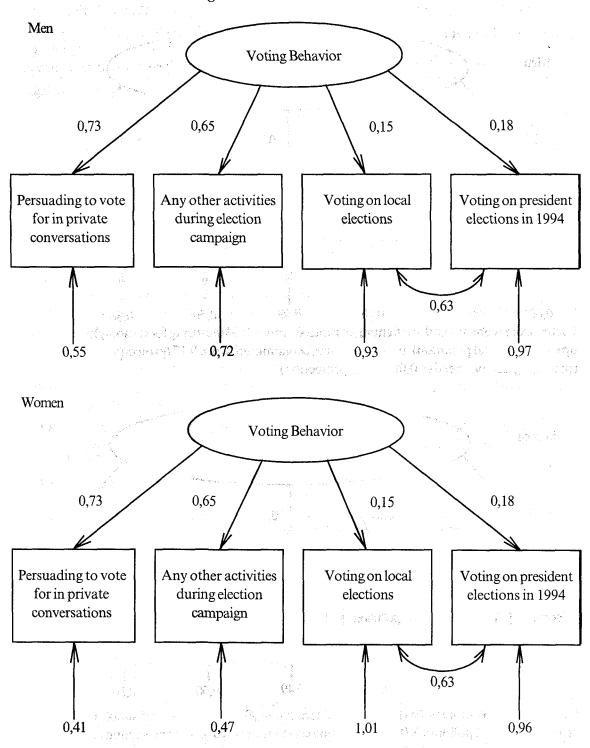
We want to thank the Kiev International Institute of Sociology and the United States

Information Agency (USIA) for having given us the opportunity to work with their data sets. We are also grateful to Prof. G.Perlin and Prof. M.Mendelson (Queen's University, Kingston, Canada) for valuable suggestions and discussions that helped us to conceptualize our ideas.

^{*} Geographic factor can be considered as one such differential factor. Substantial differences in voting behavior between eastern and western Ukraine were found in earlier publications f 19].

Appendix A

Voting behavior measurement model



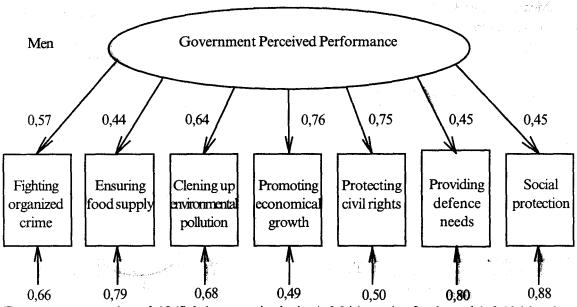
RMSEA=0,033

Factor score regressions

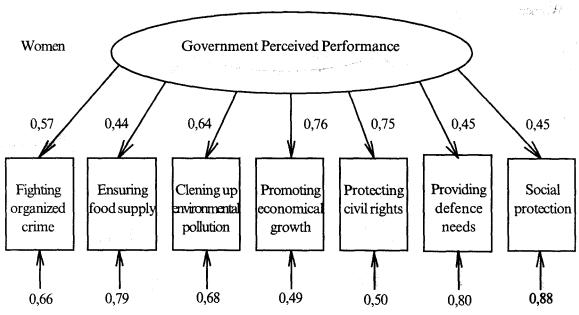
<u>For men:</u> Voting behavior = 0.40* persuading to vote + 0.43* other activities + 0.02* voting (local) +0.04* voting (presidental)

<u>For women:</u> Voting behavior = 0.39* persuading to vote + 0.47* other activities + 0.01* voting (local) +0.03* voting (presidental)

Appendix B
Government Perceived Performance Measurement Model



Factor score regressions: 0,10 (fighting organized crime); 0,04 (ensuring food suooly); 0,11 (cleaning up environmental pollution); 0,17 (promoting economic growth); 0,17 (protecting civil rights); 0,04 (providing defence needs); 0,08 (social protection).



Factor score regressions: 0,08 (fighting organized crime); 0,04 (ensuring food suooly); 0,12 (cleaning up environmental pollution); 0,19 (promoting economic growth); 0,18 (protecting civil rights); 0,04 (providing defence needs); 0,08 (social protection).

त्रास्त्रात्ता । या क्षानु आयुक्तान्त्रात्ताः विकासकाराः । स्त्रात्तानुस्त्रात्तान्त्रात्ताः

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ПОВЕДІНКА ВИБОРУ В УКРАЇНІ. ТЕНДЕРНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА

У статті аналізуються відмінності в електоральній поведінці чоловіків і жінок в Україні. Використовуючи дані соціологічних досліджень, насамперед проведених на замовлення Інформаційної Служби Сполучених Штатів Америки, розглядається прямий та непрямий вплив на електоральну поведінку чоловіків і жінок таких чинників, як рівень освіти, інтерес до політики, оцінка ефективності діяльності органів влади та ін. Аналіз даних шляхом побудови моделей структурних рівнянь не виявив суттєвих тендерних відмінностей в електоральній поведінці та впливі на неї різноманітних чинників. Проте стать впливає на інтерес до політики і вибір політичних течій.