What Drives the Vote for the Extreme Right?
Absolute vs. Relative Deprivation

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In recent decades we have witnessed the rise of extreme right-wing[1] parties in many polities across Eastern and Western Europe. The two regions are very different in terms of economic, social, and institutional development, as well as their latest historical experiences and types of political regime. That being the case, it raises the question of whether the emergence of extreme rightist parties in the two halves of Europe is connected in some way, or these are, in fact, two separate regional trends, with distinct causes and their simultaneous occurrence is simply coincidental? To answer this question is tantamount to asking the question(s), who are the voters of these parties, and what motivates them?

We argue that this it is not a mere coincidence. Notwithstanding all the substantial differences between Eastern and Western Europe, we can trace similar processes of economic change, that have had analogous social consequences, which are reflected in a similar profile of the core partisan constituencies of the extreme right-wing parties. We demonstrate this by analyzing the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the constituencies of two of the most successful right wing parties in Europe – the Greater Romania Party and the French National Front. Thinking about the motivations behind the electoral support for the two parties, it appears that in both cases, the extreme right vote was initially driven by relative deprivation – i.e., the objective social and economic conditions of the extreme right electorates were not the worst. Later on, though, this position has shifted from relative to absolute deprivation, an evolution which suggests the notion of a life cycle of the extreme right-wing parties.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the next section we discuss the theories contrasting the concepts of relative and absolute deprivation, and linking these to political action. We then present a brief history of the social and economic evolution of France and Romania since the Second World War, and we present some hypotheses about how these developments are consequential for the demand-side of party competition in the two countries, most notably, for the emergence of a constituency for the extreme right. We also discuss how subsequent social and economic, as well as political, developments in the two countries transformed the profile of extreme right constituencies. We argue that both the National Front and the Greater Romania Party started with electorates in a position of relative deprivation, but ended up with electorates in a position of absolute deprivation. Then we analyze survey data from the past twenty years (for France) or ten years (for Romania), to highlight the changes that occurred in the profile of the constituencies of the two parties, backing our argument about the shift from relative to absolute deprivation as the driving force behind the extreme right voting. The last section concludes with a discussion of the findings and their theoretical relevance.

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[1] As we will see later on in this paper, calling these parties extreme *right*-wing is, in some important ways, somewhat inappropriate. Typically, political parties are defined as leftist, centrist or rightist based primarily on the economic policies they endorse. Both the French National Front (one of the two parties analyzed in this paper) and its electorate are rather centrist with respect to economic policies, while the Greater Romania Party (the second party we discuss) and its voters are unambiguously leftist on this dimension.

Structural roots of right-wing extremism: absolute vs. relative deprivation

Relative deprivation is a concept employed by students of political and social life in explanations of individuals' frustration toward their condition, especially when such dissatisfaction translates into radical action. Even though Alexis de Tocqueville and Karl Marx advanced accounts akin to this concept, Samuel Stouffer is the scholar who, in his book *American Soldier*, first discussed this concept in a comprehensive and systematic fashion (Stouffer et al. 1949). In a nutshell, the idea of relative deprivation is that, quite often, those who are most dissatisfied with their condition are not those who are worst off in objective terms (in which case we would talk about absolute deprivation). Rather, it is those who see the largest gap between what they expect and what they actually get (for an illustration, see Figure 1):

Figure 1. Relative deprivation and revolutions
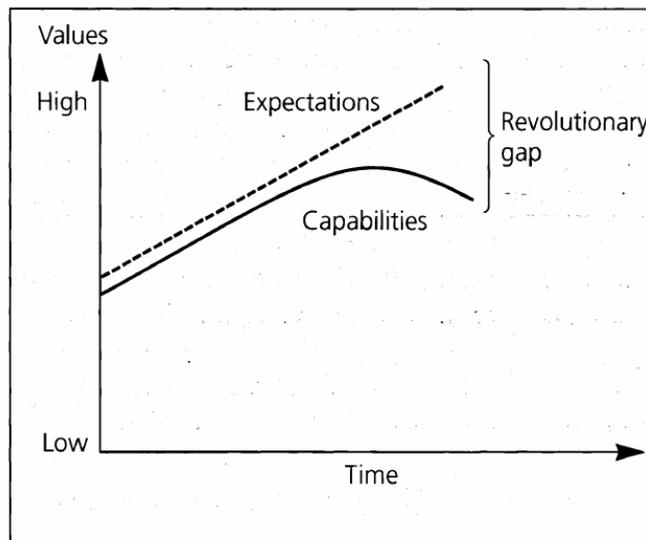
Source: Figure 8.2, "The J-curve theory of revolutions" in Hague and Harrop (2004: 128).

The concept was used to explain a wide range of phenomena, from dissatisfaction with promotions in the American army (Stouffer 1949) to social revolutions (Davies 1962; Gurr 1970). We see it as equally useful for explaining support for extreme right-wing parties. According to Apter,

> In both [less economically developed countries] and advanced industrial countries, the productive system and the world economy are changing in ways that generates polarization, marginalization, functional displacement, dispossession, and with them a growing predisposition to violence […] There is a growing discrepancy between the declining industrial labor force and its absorption into an expanding service industry. Reemployment of the displaced worker becomes more and more difficult […] Such problems have […] political consequences […] There have been marked increases in primordialism, racism, and discrimination (1987: 35-37).

Apter's account offers us reasons to expect a radicalization of blue-collar industrial workers in countries affected by a radical restructuring of industry, whether we talk about an advanced postindustrial country such as France, or a relatively backward post-socialist

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country such as Romania. Industrial blue-collar workers constitute an important part of the workforce in both countries, and they find themselves increasingly marginalized and incapable of coping with recent economic transformations. An important contrast between the two cases is the result of their differences in social and economic development, which places industrial workers closer to the bottom of the social ladder in a post-industrial country such as France, but in a much better position in a post-socialist country like Romania.

(Post)-modernization and the rise of extreme right-wing support in France

When the Second World War ended, France was "the most rural of all western nations: 45 percent of the population lived in rural communes and one-quarter of the labor force worked in agriculture" (Cole 1998: 210). Then followed three decades of industrialization, urbanization, and social modernization, a period that the French call "*Les Trente Glorieuses*" (Fourastié 1979), and France "became a predominantly urban country, with a modern economy" (Cole 1998: 19). Industrial workers represented a respectable 40 percent of the total workforce in the 1960s and early 1970s, but then their number started to decline:

Table 1. The evolution of the French workforce, 1936-2006

	1936	1964	1975	2006
Agriculture (%)	37	18	8	4
Industry (%)	30	42	37	23
Services (%)	33	40	55	73

Sources: Brown 1969: 35; Cole 1998: 208 (Table 13.1); INSEE (the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies), "Actifs occupés selon le secteur d'activité et l'âge" (electronic document), <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/figure/NATCCJ03107.XLS>. Accessed April 9, 2008.

Like other developed countries, France has entered in a post-industrial phase, characterized by fundamental changes in employment, lifestyle and political values (Inglehart 1997; Dalton 2006). Three-fourths of the workforce is now employed in services, and the shrinking of the industrial proletariat is aggravated by the "enfeebling of class solidarity, the rise of unemployment and the breakdown of a specifically proletarian lifestyle and identity [that] have all contributed to weakening the Communist subculture" (Cole 1998: 52). As a result of the aforementioned factors, aggravated by the loss of legitimacy and eventual collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the French Communist Party is but a shadow of what it was. These economic and social developments were politically consequential, leading to realignment in the 1980s. Urban industrial workers started to desert the Communist Party, turning into a natural constituency for the National Front (Grunberg and Schweisguth 1993: 59; Mayer 1999: 87-89; Schain 2000: 71-72).

Post-socialism and the rise of welfare chauvinism in Romania

Moore (1966) described Communism as a process of rapid, forced modernization imposed from above. Romania was no exception – as a matter of fact, Romanian Communism is an extreme illustration of this process. Developmental policies in Romania, as in the Soviet Union, had a manifest urban bias. They were a conscious attempt to overcome social and especially economic underdevelopment (Mungiu 2002: 9-16). Urban areas and the working class were the beneficiaries of these policies; rural areas and the peasants were the losers. In the Soviet Union, "the regime's policy was ultimately based on the impoverishment of the peasant as the means for securing those forced savings in consumption which provided the capital for industrial expansion" (Inkeles and Bauer 1959: 71). Similarly, in Romania the development of urban areas was paramount and rural areas were ignored. Agriculture was constantly sacrificed in favor of industry (Masson 1985: 258-62). The share of urban population in Romania increased from just 23.4 percent in 1948 to 54.1 percent in 1992 (INSSE 2006).

Such policies were not universal across the Communist region. They would have been redundant in Czechoslovakia, one of the most urbanized and industrialized areas of Europe (especially the Czech part). Therefore, if we want to assess their impact, it is most appropriate to compare the social well-being of Romanians with that of the inhabitants of another post-Communist country with a similar level of development. Table 2 presents some indicators of social development for Romania and its southern neighbor Bulgaria, a country with a comparable GDP per capita than Romania:

Table 2. Social development in Romania and Bulgaria (2001)

	Population using adequate sanitation facilities (%)	Population using improved water sources (%)	Physicians per 100,000 people
Bulgaria	100	100	345
Romania	53	58	184

Source: UNDP 2001 (Table 6, "Commitment to health: access, services and resources", p. 169).

Clearly, Romania has a long way to go before catching up not just with the postindustrial West, but even with some of its neighbors. Moreover, this lagging behind is primarily a reflection of extremely poor social conditions in rural Romania, in a country where 45 percent of the population continue to live in villages (UNDP 2003: 100), and urban-rural disparities are comparable to those found in many Third World countries. In one analysis of social underdevelopment in the Third World, Handelman noticed the gap between urban centers, where "at the close of past century, 72 percent of the population had access to proper home sanitation – and rural areas, where that figure fell to 20 percent" (Handelman 2006: 8). That means a 52 percent gap between urban and rural. Although we do not have disaggregated figures for Romania, we do have a good proxy, the

proportion of the population without access to running water. The numbers were 12.3 percent for urban and 84.3 percent for rural – a 72 percent gap (UNDP 2003: 108).

If urban industrial workers were the main beneficiaries of forced modernization in Romania, they became the main victims of the transition to post-socialism. A core feature of the former regime was "the 'social contract' between the regime and society, of which industrial workers were among the main beneficiaries" (Crowley 1994: 592). In addition to free health care and education, subsidized housing and a host of other benefits, workers "put a premium on increased material rewards and job security" (Bahry 1993: 515). After the fall of Communism, governments were both unable and unwilling to pursue such policies, which had become untenable. Since urban workers benefited from those policies far more than rural inhabitants working in agriculture, they also felt more heavily the impact of these changes. According to Bahry, in recent times "the meaning of 'social injustice' seems to have shifted from absolute to relative deprivation" (1993: 537). The theory of relative deprivation tells us that it is not necessarily those who are objectively worst off (in this case, rural inhabitants employed in agriculture), who would become politically the most radical segment of the electorate. Rather, the most likely candidates for such radicalization are urban industrial workers, for whom there is a large gap between what they believed they were entitled to and what they actually received after the transition (see Figure 1).

The restructuring of the Romanian economy, and the changes in governmental social policies after 1989 had some remarkable consequences. As the data in Table 3 indicate, during the decade following the transition there was a substantial decline of the workforce employed in industry, paralleled by an *increase* of the workforce employed in agriculture. Moreover, "starting from the mid-nineties, […] the domestic migration flows have for the first time in more than a century and a half of official Romanian statistics reversed themselves and started to go mostly from the urban areas, affected by industrial restructuring towards the rural areas, turned into last resort shelter for the huddled masses of dislocated workers" (UNDP 2007: 88). The 1992 census data indicate that, in that year, 45.7 percent of Romanians lived in villages; by 2002, the share of rural population rose to 47.3 percent (INSSE 2006).

Table 3. The evolution of the Romanian workforce, 1992-2000

	1992	1996	2000
Agriculture (%)	33.0	35.5	41.4
Industry (%)	37.1	34.3	23.2
Services (%)	29.9	30.2	35.3

Source: UNDP 2001 (Table 10, p. 107).

Obviously, we would expect such developments to have an impact on electoral politics. We argue that political life in post-Communist Romania was, until recently, dominated by three major blocs: left, right, and 'extreme right', and the constituencies of each of these blocs are, in one way or another, a product of modernization3. The left is representing mostly rural Romania, one that has yet to modernize. The (moderate) right is a product of successful modernization – an urban, young, well-educated, dynamic constituency. The extreme right constituency, the voters of Greater Romania Party (PRM), emerged after the transition from the prior regime as the side effect of a kind of 'defective modernity,' the process of rapid urbanization and industrialization imposed from above during Communism. Finally, as new generations of voters come of age, voters who were socialized under very different conditions from previous generations, conditions became ripe for the emergence of a new type of radical party, one that can be more accurately than the PRM labeled as extreme right, namely, the Party of the New Generation (PNG).

In this paper we present a demand-side, structural account of the emergence of extreme right-wing parties in Romania and France. The cross-regional element of our analysis highlights the fact that, in spite of all the major differences between the two cases, we can identify a common causal variable (economic transition) which leads to a similar outcome (the emergence of extreme right constituencies). Additionally, the longitudinal analysis highlights a similar trend in the lifecycle of these constituencies, a shift from support for the extreme right coming primarily from voters who are relatively deprived to support for the extreme right coming especially from voters who are absolutely deprived. However, in this latter case, we think that the explanations for the shift in each case are more idiosyncratic; the explanation is largely political in the case of France, while in Romania the shift has more to do with the sweeping economic and social changes that occurred in the last twenty years, coupled with generational change.

Testing the effects of relative vs. absolute deprivation on voting

What follows is an analysis of survey and exit poll data from 1988 and 2006 (for France), and 2000 and 2007 (for Romania). In each case, we use logistic regression to assess the relative impact of socioeconomic and demographic variables (education, residence, "class," gender and age) on French and Romanian voters' partisan preferences. We consider education and "class" (measured by wealth) as the two unambiguous measures of higher SES, and we include age and gender as control variables. Urban residence may be considered another measure of well-being, especially in the Romanian context.

Logistic regression is used when the dependent variable takes only a handful (typically, two or three) of unordered values – in this paper, left, right, and 'extreme right.' The dependent variable is vote in the first round of the 1988 French presidential election and partisanship in the first wave of the French Political Barometer, March 2006 (Table 4), actual (or at least declared) vote in the INSOMAR exit poll conducted on the day of the parliamentary and the first round of the 2000 presidential election in Romania, and vote intention in the October 2007 wave of the Soros Barometer for Public Opinion (Table 5).

In logistic regression, one of the values of the dependent variable is the reference group. The most logical choice for the reference group in our case is the extreme right vote.

Table 4. Socioeconomics, demographics, and vote/partisanship:
First round of the 1988 French presidential election & 2006 French survey data

	1988[i]						2006[ii]					
	Left[1] v. extreme right[2]			Right[3] v. extreme right			Left[1] v. extreme right[2]			Right[3] v. extreme right		
	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.
Elementary[4]	.087	.141		.019	.150		−.414	.181	.05	−.399	.185	.05
High s.[4]	.688	.203	.01	.813	.211	.001	.897	.227	.001	.861	.232	.001
Higher ed.[4]	1.011	.299	.01	1.033	.307	.001	.950	.337	.01	1.208	.341	.001
Poor[5]	.382	.132	.01	−.022	.141		−.499	.207	.05	−.757	.220	.01
Well-off[5]	−.105	.195		.335	.199		.137	.167		.555	.169	.01
Rural[6]	.550	.139	.001	.798	.151	.001	.187	.278		.175	.282	
Paris[6]	.078	.185		.220	.199		−.240	.171		−.164	.175	
Age[7]	−.004	.004		.012	.004	.01	.017	.005	.01	.035	.005	.001
Female[8]	.460	.120	.001	.510	.127	.001	.539	.152	.001	.326	.155	.05

[i]N = 3,289 ('left' 54.7%; 'right' 34.8%; 'extreme right'/Le Pen 10.9%)
[ii]N = 5,063 (left' 59.9%; 'right' 36.1%; 'extreme right'/National Front 4%)

[1]In 1988, 'left' is defined as a vote for Lajoinie (Communist), Boussel (Workers' Party), Laguiller (Workers' Struggle), Juquin (Communist dissidence), Mitterrand (Socialists) or Waechter (Green); in 2006, we defined as leftists the respondents whom, in the original dataset, were identified as partisans of 'extreme left' and 'left' (recoding of variable rc40, 'partisanship').
[2]For 1988, voters of Le Pen; for 2006, voters of the National Front.
[3]For 1988, voters of Chirac (RPR) or Barre (UDF); for 2006, 'right' for variable rc40 ('partisanship') in the original dataset.
[4]Education ('vocational' as the reference group)
[5]In 1988, respondents answered a question about their income. I coded as 'poor' those with an income of less than 7,500 francs, 'average' those with an income between 7,501-15,000 francs, and 'well-off' those with an income greater than 15,000 francs. Unlike in the 1988 survey, there was no objective measure of wealth (income) in 2006. Instead, we used question q49, which asked respondents whether, considering their financial situation, they find it very difficult (we labeled these as 'poor'), rather difficult ('average'), not difficult, or not difficult at all to manage everyday life (I collapsed these last two categories into one, 'well-off'). In both 1988 and 2007, 'average' is the reference category.
[6]Place of residence – three categories: 'rural/small towns', 'large cities' (over 100,000) and 'Paris.' In both 1988 and 2006, 'cities' is the reference category.
[7]Continuous variable, range 18 to 98 in 1998, and 18 to 95 in 2006.
[8]'Gender' (dichotomous variable, 'male' as the reference group).

The coefficients in the second column of Table 4 come from a model that predicts the likelihood of voting[2] a left-wing candidate rather than Le Pen, the leader of the National Front, in the first round of the 1988 French presidential election, as a function of background variables. For categorical variables, a positive coefficient[3] means that, when faced with a choice between the leftist candidates and Le Pen, after controlling or the effect of other variables in the model (e.g., age, education, wealth and residence), the chance of a leftist vote[4] in the group in question (in this case, female voters) is higher than the chance of a leftist vote in the reference group (male voters). For continuous variables such as age, the interpretation is similar: a positive coefficient signifies that an increase in the independent variable increases the chance of a leftist vote (i.e., after controlling for the effect of gender, education, wealth and residence, as the age of respondents increases, so is the chance that they will choose one of the leftist candidates).

The results from the 1988 survey indicate that, compared to the leftist constituency, Le Pen's electorate was more masculine and urban. The impact of socioeconomic status on extreme right support was ambiguous: on the one hand, Len Pen's voters were less educated; yet on the other hand, they were underrepresented among the poorest segment of the electorate. This last result echoes Nonna Mayer's comment, that "in 1988, Le Pen's vote was anything but a vote of the deprived" (1999: 81), explaining this vote as a result of relative deprivation. As the National Front's electorate became increasingly working-class in subsequent elections, the support for the party appeared to be driven increasingly by absolute rather than relative deprivation (Mayer 1999: 81-91). When we compare support for the moderate right (vote for Raymond Barre or Jacques Chirac) with support for Le Pen (the fifth column in Table 4), we see a number of similarities with the previous model (left versus extreme right). Older voters, rural inhabitants, those with better education (high school or higher education degrees) and females are less likely to support Le Pen. The comparison of these results with those from 2006 reveals an extreme right electorate that is now younger, poorer, less urban, and less educated than in 1988 (voters with elementary education are now more likely than voters with vocational education to vote for the extreme right, unlike in the first survey, when there were no significant differences between the two groups).

In the past, youth, low education, being male and having a precarious material situation were all strong predictors of an 'Old Left' position and a Communist vote. Now they have become predictors of preference for the National Front. The current socioeconomic and demographic profile of the National Front's constituency is consistent with an explanation of the vote grounded on absolute deprivation theory – those who support a political party that is radical, authoritarian, and outside of the mainstream, do so because they are themselves marginalized, economically, socially, and politically.

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[2] "In essence, logistic regression does not directly model on the value of the response variable, but on the probability that a particular value occurs" (Yang 2007: 551).

[3] Unlike the coefficients of an ordinary least squares regression, the coefficients of a logistic regression are not directly interpretable. Nonetheless, the sign and the statistical significance of the coefficients provide sufficient information about the direction in which each independent variable affects the response variable.

[4] Technically, the coefficients in Tables 4 and 5 represent the change in the natural log of the odds that the respondent will choose a leftist candidate, corresponding to a one unit change of the independent variable.

Table 5. Socioeconomics, demographics, and vote in Romania:
Senate vote in the 2000 parliamentary election (exit poll) & 2007 vote intention for parliament (Soros BOP survey)

	2000[i]						2007[ii]											
	Left[1] v. PRM[2]			Right[3] v. PRM			Left[1] v. PRM[2]			Right[3] v. PRM			Left v. PNG[4]			Right v. PNG		
	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.	B	SE	Sig.
Elementary[5]	.344	.031	.001	.021	.037		.132	.366		-.054	.347		-.171	.339		-.364	.312	
High school[5]	-.050	.030		.484	.033	.001	-.106	.372		-.073	.346		.718	.345	.05	.758	.311	.05
Higher ed.[5]	.203	.042	.001	1.437	.042	.001	.755	.819		1.113	.785		1.587	.694	.05	1.927	.646	.01
Urban[6]	-.267	.023	.001	.159	.026	.001	-.374	.297		.068	.280		-.920	.287	.01	-.496	.265	
Age[7]	.020	.001	.001	.003	.001	.001	.000	.009		-.014	.008		.042	.008	.001	.029	.008	.001
Female[8]	.244	.022	.001	.361	.023	.001	.944	.288	.01	.794	.274	.01	.089	.258		-.049	.237	
Poor							.022	.335		-.086	.320		.238	.377		.143	.361	
Well-off							.694	.407		.931	.383	.05	-.459	.318		-.208	.286	
(Restroom[10])	(−)			(+)														

[i]N = 61,199 ('Left' 37.9%, 'right' 31.9%, PRM 30.2%).
[ii]N = 2,000 ('left'/PSD 13.8%, 'right' 31.8%, PRM 3.6%, PNG 4.3%)

[1]Vote for the PSD (actual Senate vote in the 2000 exit poll, vote intention for parliamentary elections in 2007).
[2]Vote for the PRM (actual Senate vote in the 2000 exit poll, vote intention for parliamentary elections in 2007).
[3]Vote for the moderate right (actual Senate vote for the PNL, Democratic Convention, PD or ApR in the 2000 exit poll, vote intention for the PD, PNL or PLD in 2007).
[4]Vote intention for the PNG in parliamentary elections.
[5]Respondent's education (four categories, 'elementary' – 8 years or less, 'vocational' – less than high school, or *şcoală profesională*, 'high school', and 'higher education.' 'Vocational' is the reference group).
[6]Dummy variable, urban or rural residence ('rural' is the reference group).
[7]Continous variable, range 18 to 98 (in 2000), 18 to 93 (in 2007).
[8]Dummy variable ('male' as the reference group).
[9]A rough proxy for wealth/material well-being. In the 2000 exit poll, we did not have any usable question for this variable. In 2007, there were seven questions asking respondents whether they have/own various items (car, land phone, mobile phone, TV set, cable, computer, Internet access). We used these questions to compute an index ranging from zero ('none') to seven ('all'). We coded/labeled respondents who had two items or less as being 'poor', those who had three or four items as having 'average' wealth, and those who had five items or more as 'well-off.' The category 'average' is the reference group.
[10]See footnote #5.

If we now move on to a similar analysis for Romania (Table 5), where we have a model that predicts the likelihood of voting for the left-wing PSD or a moderate right-wing party rather than the 'extreme right' PRM, the comparison between the 2000 and 2007 models of the vote indicate an even more dramatic shift from relative deprivation to absolute deprivation as the driving force for 'extreme right' voting. On the one hand, the electorate of the moderate right (PNL, the Democratic Convention, PD and ApR) is, in 2000, much better educated and more urban than the electorate of the PRM (unfortunately, the large N of the 2000 exit poll comes at the expense of data quality; there is no measure or proxy for wealth[5]). Yet on the other hand, the objective measures of well-being (education, urban residence, but also having an indoor restroom – see footnote 5) shows an electorate of the PRM that is, overall, better off than the electorate of the PSD. One notable exception here are voters with higher education, who are less likely than the reference group, the voters with vocational education, to vote for the PRM, even when the alternative is the PSD. But so are voters with elementary education, and they do so to a larger extent than voters with higher education.

The sample size in the October 2007 Barometer is about 30 times smaller than in the 2000 exit poll. Thus, it is no surprise that in 2007, we have very few statistically significant coefficients, unlike in 2000. Nonetheless, the sign and magnitude of some coefficients offer us some additional information about the change in the structure of PRM's electorate – and consequently, at least indirectly, about the motivations of these voters. If we compare the 2007 results to those from 2000, we can conclude that, in just seven years, PRM's electorate has become significantly older, less educated, and even more masculine. It seems that it has also become poorer, although we can only infer this indirectly, seeing that in 2007 voters who are better-off are less likely to prefer the PRM to the PSD, compared to voters with an average or less-than-average material situation. This is contrast to 2000, when we saw the opposite (see footnote 5).

Superficially, it appears that the 'Romanian' scenario resembles the French, with the 'extreme right' electorate moving from a position of relative deprivation into a position of absolute deprivation. However, if we take into account a relatively recent development in Romanian politics, the emergence of the Party of New Generation (PNG), we can identify four major blocs: left (PSD), right (PNL, maybe PDL as well), an 'extreme right' which would be more appropriately called extreme left (PRM), and a genuine extreme right (PNG). Data from a very recent survey lends support to this interpretation (see Appendix B).

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[5] However, we do have an aggregate dataset for 1998-2004 (the Soros Barometers for Public Opinion conducted during this time span). In this dataset, in addition to the independent variables from Table 5, we have what we see as an excellent proxy for social well-being/household quality, namely, 'restroom location' (inside or outside the home). The coefficients in the model for the 1998-2004 vote that includes all the independent variables from Table 5, plus a dummy variable for restroom location, indicates that having the restroom located inside the house decreases the chance of a vote for the PRM when the alternative is the moderate right, but increases it when the alternative is the PSD (Fesnic 2008: 74).

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Conclusion

Our goal in this paper was to offer a cross-regional account of the emergence and evolution of 'extreme right' constituencies in Western and Eastern Europe, trying to understand what drives the voters of these parties to support them. To this end, we focused on the voters of two representative parties, the French national Front and the Greater Romania Party. Using survey data, we highlighted some important similarities in the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the constituents of these parties. We argued that a similar independent variable, economic transition – be it a transition from an advanced industrial economy to a post-industrial economy in the case of France, or from a socialist to a post-socialist economy in the case of Romania, has marginalized the same type of voters – young, urban blue-collar males with little education (in France) or average education (in Romania). Moreover, at a first glance, it appears that we have a similar lifecycle in the life of these parties – or, rather, there is a similar lifecycle of their constituencies. Initially, both parties started with constituencies whose support for the extreme right appeared to be driven by relative, rather than absolute deprivation (the National Front in the 1980s, the PRM in the 1990s, up until very recently). However, the constituencies of both parties have subsequently moved into a position of absolute deprivation (earlier in the case of the FN, more recently in the case of the PRM).

Nonetheless, we believe that, in some important ways, the partisan journey of the extreme right electorate in Romania is the mirror image of that of the French extreme right electorate. Initially, the petty bourgeoisie constituted a greater share of the National Front's electorate. This is illustrated, for instance, by the apparent contradiction that in 1988, better education decreased the chance of a vote for the FN at the expense of the left, while higher income increased it. Subsequently, the electorate of the National Front has become more working-class, and so has the motivation of their vote, from relative to absolute deprivation – this electorate is now younger, less educated, poorer and more rural than it used to be.

In the initial phase of Romania's transition from a socialist economy to a post-socialist economy, the natural electoral electorate of the PRM was the winners of the old system: young, urban blue-collar males with vocational training. These people were still better off in objective terms, compared to rural inhabitants employed in agriculture. Thus, their vote appears to have been driven more by relative, rather than absolute deprivation. The two decades that passed from the fall of Communism have changed significantly the Romanian economy, society, and politics. The values and interests of the new generations of voters, socialized under these new conditions, differ significantly from those who had the same age 20 years ago. The natural constituency of the PRM, nostalgic of the old regime, is getting older, poorer, less educated and more rural than it used to be, and their vote also looks increasingly driven by absolute, rather than relative deprivation. The new generations of extreme right-wing constituents are equally extremists, but more genuinely right-wing. They are not nostalgic about a past that they know and remember very little. Instead, they vote for the Party of New Generation, whose leader is, in many ways, a mirror of the PNG's electorate: young, urban, with little education, but with a decent material situation.

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Appendix A. Technical aspects of survey data

In this Appendix we describe the most important technical aspects of the data collection process for the surveys used in this thesis. For France, the data come from an electoral survey conducted in 1988, when France held both presidential and parliamentary elections, and from the first wave of the French Political Barometer, conducted in March 2006, one year before the last presidential and legislative elections in that country. For Romania, the first dataset comes from an INSOMAR exit poll conducted on the day of the 2000 parliamentary election, and the second from the October 2007 wave of the Soros Barometer for Public Opinion.

France 1988 (SOFRES): "The field work for the questionnaire was performed by SOFRES immediately following the second ballot of the presidential election, from May 9 to 20, 1988, on a nationwide sample of 4,032 people representative of the French population age 18 and over selected using the quota method (gender, age, occupation of the head of household) and stratified by region and urban size. It was financed jointly by grants from the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), and the Ministry of Research and Technology (MRES)" (Boy and Mayer 1993: 203).

France 2006 (IFOP-CEVIPOF): The interviews for the first wave of the French Political Barometer (Spring 2006) were conducted through telephone at the respondents' residences between March 20 and April 3, 2006. A sample of 5,650 respondents, representative for the eligible adult population (18 years and older), was selected using quota sampling. "The representative nature of the samples was ensured via the quota method (sex cross-tabulated with age, occupation or former occupation of the head of household and level of educational qualifications) after stratification by administrative region and size of town. For the Ile-de-France, stratification was applied by department and size of town" (CSDP, "French Surveys", <http://cdsp.sciencespo.fr/enquetes.php?lang=ANG&idRubrique=enquetesFR&idTheme=15>. Accessed November 11, 2008).

Romania 2000 (INSOMAR exit poll): no further details available. N = 61,199.

Romania 2007 (Soros Barometer for Public Opinion, October 2007 wave)
Dataset available at <http://www.osf.ro/en/program_articol.php?articol=105>.
Accessed July 1, 2008. This wave of the Soros Barometer used a representative sample at national level and at historical cultural region level. The sample [was] designed based on the electoral lists, ensuring that population from marginal rural areas [was] also taken into account […]
The research [had] the following methodological features:
• **Sample** [size]: 2,000 persons aged 18 and above
• **Sample type**: layered, probabilistic, three-stage sample
• **Layering criteria**: 18 cultural areas, grouped by historical provinces, residential area (urban- rural), size of urban settlements (4 types), rural development degree (3 categories).

• **Sampling**: probabilistic selection of settlements, sampling points (voting sections) and [individuals]. For [the] selection [of individual respondents], the primary source were electoral lists. The sample maintain[ed] the design principles of the [Public Opinion Barometer] of the previous years (1995-2002):

    ○ layering according to cultural area and settlement type (18*7= 126 theoretically possible layers);

    ○ defining three types of sampling units: settlements, voting sections, adult persons;

    ○ random selection in all sampling stages,

    ○ using electoral lists as sampling framework in the final stage.

• **Representative sample:** the sample is representative for the adult non-institutionalized population of Romania, with a tolerated [margin of error of] ± 2.3 %.

• **Validation:** the sample was validated based on NSI data and the population census of 1992 and 2002.

• Interviews took place at the respondents' homes.

• **Field research:** October 10-22, 2007

Appendix B.

Economic and political policy positions and party preference in Romania (2009 survey data)