

Modernization, Transition, and Voting in Romania

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Abstract

This paper looks at the structural determinants of voting behavior in Romania. I argue that we can identify three core constituencies in this country: leftists, radical nationalists, and right-libertarians. This division is the outcome of two processes, modernization from above during Communism and the subsequent transition to a market economy. Its consequence is a two-dimensional distribution of voters: the electorate comprises blocs falling along a socioeconomic or left-right dimension and along an authoritarian-libertarian dimension. I show this by looking at survey data to map the attitudes of the three constituencies in a two-dimensional space. I then use multinomial logistic regression to show how social differences translate into distinctive patterns of partisan support. The analysis helps to explain a puzzle of electoral politics in Romania, the sudden vanishing of the relationship between regional development and aggregate support for left in the last presidential runoff.

Introduction

Electoral competition in Romania during the 1990-2000 decade illustrates a pattern of one-dimensional competition, with the left as the party of have-nots and the right as the party of the haves. The analysis of aggregate electoral returns in various rounds of presidential and parliamentary elections shows a strong, negative relationship between regional development and the level of support for the left. This relationship was already visible in the first post-Communist election in 1990, and was as strong as ever in the 2000 parliamentary election and the first round of the presidential election of the same year. However, two weeks later, this relationship seemed to vanish completely in the runoff, when there was no relationship between regional development and the leftist candidate's share of the vote.

My paper offers an explanation for this apparent puzzle. I show that it is a consequence of the distribution of voter preferences in Romania, which is two- rather than one-dimensional. This distribution is the joint effect of two processes, modernization from above during Communism and the subsequent transition to a market economy. The policies associated with the former process were biased in favor of urban areas and the working class at the expense of rural areas and the peasantry. The impact of the latter process was widely felt across all social groups, but the urban working class was most affected by the breaking of the social contract between the former regime and its subjects. Subsequently, as the theory of relative deprivation would predict, urban blue-collar workers became the most radical group, even though in absolute terms they are still better off than peasants.

Let me say a word on what this paper is and is not about. I present here a structural argument about voter preference formation in one country; nevertheless, I claim that this argument is generalizable outside Romania. I take elite strategies as endogenous, fully determined by the distribution of voter preferences, which, in turn, I regard as exogenous and fixed. Although this clearly is an oversimplification, a look at the Russian case shows how similar strategies of modernization pursued by the Communist regime and similar experiences with economic transition result in similar political divisions among the voters and party systems in the two polities. That is, we observe cross-country similarities in the inter-group differences in the social and political attitudes of urban blue-collars and rural peasants¹, which in turn translate into similar patterns of partisan alignments.

The comparison between Russia and Romania provide a kind of most-dissimilar cases design: in spite of important cross-case differences², we see how similar “values” on the independent variables (modernization and transition) lead to similar outcomes. In addition to this, there is an extensive literature on modernization, transition, and voting behavior in Russia, and I will rely on it to develop my argument about Romania.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In the next section I discuss the social and economic consequences of the strategy of rapid modernization from above followed by the Communist regime in Romania, how this has changed the social structure of the country and led to massive urban-rural disparities. Then I look at what the impact of

¹ The label “rural peasants” is perhaps redundant, but I decided to keep it in order to signal that *both* residence in rural areas and occupation in agriculture play an important role in my argument.

² These differences include differences in size, population, culture, and political institutions (i.e., a strong presidency in Russia versus a quasi-parliamentary system in Romania, where the direct election of the president notwithstanding, the position gives limited powers).

transition from a command economy to a market economy was on urban blue-collar workers and rural peasants.

The next section talks about the impact of the two variables on voter attitudes.³ This impact is felt directly, in the case of transition, and indirectly in the case of both variables (via changes in the social structure which in turn affects voter attitudes). I rely here on past studies and on analysis of survey data. I show how the voters' social position and experience of economic transition have effects on their economic and political attitudes. In particular, the two-dimensional mapping of the leftist, radical nationalist, and right-libertarian constituencies provides evidence that I further build on to explain the puzzle of the last presidential election.

The subsequent section looks at the electoral consequences of inter-group differences, analyzing aggregate electoral returns first. As long as voters faced essentially a choice between left and right, as was the case until the last presidential runoff, development was a powerful predictor of support for the left. In the 1992 and 1996 presidential runoffs, when the two remaining candidates were a leftist (Iliescu) and a rightist (Constantinescu), leftist and rightist voters voted for their first choice. Radical nationalist voters, who are in-between the other two constituencies in terms of their economic preferences, split their vote between the two candidates.

The 2000 runoff was of a different kind. This time, the same leftist candidate faced the radical nationalist leader Tudor. This match up turned the election largely into a referendum on democracy, with right-libertarian voters allying with leftist voters in supporting the leftist candidate (or, rather, in rejecting his opponent). More developed

³ I do not have a direct test for this part of the theory (outside the dotted area of Figure 1). Nevertheless, the literatures on modernization and transition, as well as empirical studies on Soviet citizens' attitudes offer at least indirect evidence for my claims.

regions saw an increase in the number of former type of voters (rightists) at the expense of the latter (leftists). But the aggregate figures for the 2000 runoff show only the overall level support for the leftist candidate, not the type of voters supporting him. Ecological analysis shows no difference between the vote of the less developed and the more developed regions of Romania.

Yet development *did* have an impact, though this impact was non-linear. I show this by looking at exit poll data, first as a bivariate relationship between education and vote, then analyzing these data via multinomial logistic regression. The latter analysis shows that the relationship between class (education) and vote is non-spurious: education continues to have an important effect even when controlling for the effect of other variables (age, in particular, which has an important effect as well). These analyses highlight the non-linear impact of development on the radical vote, thus offering the solution to the electoral puzzle presented before.

Communism as Modernization From Above

Developmental policies in the Soviet Union and Communist Romania had a manifest urban bias. They were a conscious attempt to overcome economic underdevelopment via forced modernization. Communist regimes did not have a monopoly on such policies, nor were they universal across all Communist polities. As Handelman (2003:168) observes, “government development policies in most [less developed countries] have emphasized industrial growth and urban modernization [...] to the detriment of the rural sector.” Policies directed toward rapid industrialization and urbanization were more of a necessity in a country like Romania, where as late as the 1930s 71 percent of the workforce was employed in agriculture (Mungiu 2002a:46-7).

By contrast, such policies were redundant in more developed Central European Communist polities.⁴

Pro-urban policies may be the rule across the developing world, yet Communist developing countries are distinctive in two important respects. First, Communist regimes had an additional incentive to pursue these policies, since the industrial working class is central to Communist ideology. In places where this class was underdeveloped, it had to be created. Second, mass mobilization was another important feature of Communist ideology and practice. These regimes had both the incentive and the means to carry out such policies.

And, indeed, they were carried out in the Soviet Union and Romania. 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). Cities offered better jobs, better housing, higher incomes, and better schooling for one’s children.

What were the social and economic consequences of those policies? In the developed world, we witness a process of disappearance of urban/rural cleavages, as “the forces of modernization decrease the gap between urban and rural lifestyles”

⁴ The gap between Romania and some of the other, more developed post-socialist countries remains very large. Even today, after decades of sustained efforts towards industrial development, Romania’s share of the workforce employed in agriculture is six times higher than in neighboring Hungary - 41.7 and 7.1 percent, respectively (Mungiu 2002b:75).

(Dalton 2002:162). Such a statement clearly does not apply to Romania, where the gap between urban and rural areas remains massive. The life expectancy in its rural areas is about two years lower than in the urban. Only 12 percent of the urban population does not have access to running water; for rural areas, the figure is 86 percent. Almost all (88 percent) of urban adults have finished at least secondary education; little over half (62 percent) of rural adults did so (UNDP 2000:135).

Finally, how did the citizens themselves assess the results of such economic and social policies? While there are no direct measures of Romanian citizens' attitudes during Communism, we can look at the results of two major studies of Soviet citizens' attitudes, the Harvard Project and the Soviet Interview Project. The Soviet and the Romanian regimes pursued similar social and economic policies, with similar effects. Therefore, we may expect similarities between the attitudes of Soviet citizens and those of Romanians on the outcomes of these policies. In what follows I refer to three issues analyzed by these projects: respondents' opinions on urban/rural differences, their attitudes on private property and their likes and dislikes in terms of central features of the regime.

The respondents expressed the view that the life of peasants was much harder than that of workers, and that life in the cities was much better than life in rural areas (Inkeles and Bauer 1959:244-5; Swafford 1987:292-4). There was widespread support for private property in the agriculture, on the one hand, and keeping the state control of heavy industry and the comprehensive welfare system, on the other (Inkeles and Bauer 1959:236-46; Silver 1987:111-3). Given what we know about Romania, it is plausible to expect that if similar studies had been carried in this country, they would have

reached similar conclusions. The policies of the Communist regime, biased in favor of urban areas and the industry, have created large urban-rural disparities. The living and working conditions of Romanian rural inhabitants were in many respects closer to medieval, rather than modern (Pasti et al. 1996:49). Indeed, the gap between urban and rural areas of the country remains as large as ever even today.

Post-Socialism: Economic and Social Consequences

If urban blue-collars were the main beneficiaries of forced modernization in Romania, they became the main victims of transition. This group was the most severely affected by the social and economic reforms implemented after 1989, and we should not be too surprised to see that they now display the most radical electoral preferences (and have even resorted to violent mass behavior, in a few cases).

One central feature of socialism 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 peasants did, 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). If that is the case, we have all the more reasons to expect urban workers to become more disaffected and frustrated, because they were the social group that was most affected by economic reforms, at least in relative terms.

This is in contrast to the inhabitants of rural areas. Recall that the abolishment of collective farms was one policy that had widespread support among the respondents of the two Soviet surveys (and there is little reason to believe that the opinions of Romanians in this respect were different). This measure was quickly implemented in Romania after the fall of Communism, thus responding to the primary concern of peasants. The measure has recreated the “subsistence rural household” (Pasti et al. 1997:23). There is little room for practicing modern agriculture when 33 percent of the workforce is employed in agriculture. In fact, 33 percent was the figure in 1992, but it actually rose to around 41 percent in 2000 (UNDP 2001:103). As Pasti et al. put it, rural Romania is literally de-developing (1997:47).

Nevertheless, what makes little economic sense in the long run and/or from the perspective of the elites may be perfectly acceptable for people who are living at the limit of subsistence. Rural Romanians continue to be older, poorer, and less educated than their urban counterparts. They had a hard life under the previous regime when, as in the Soviet Union, the peasantry “came to be a vast, exploited lumpenproletariat” (Inkeles and Bauer 1959:71). The “culture of survival” (Mungiu 2002:21) is a permanent feature of village life in the country. The life of Romanian peasants continues to be very difficult, but their expectations were minimal to begin with. They were happy seeing the dismemberment of collective farms and the privatization of land, and they give credit for this to the leftist post-Communist party that governed the country at that time.

If peasants got what they cared about the most, the urban workers lost what they cared about the most. All central components of the old social contract, full

employment, roughly egalitarian wages, the toleration of slack work rules, together with subsidized housing, free health care, and many other benefits were all gone. The members of the working class, and those working in heavy industry in particular, suddenly entered a hostile and uncertain terrain. According to relative deprivation theory, we should not expect the peasantry, preoccupied with physical survival, to be the most radical group (Davies 1962:7). Rather, it is the working class, those who saw a gap developing rapidly between what they expected and what they got. In the next section I use survey data to look at the attitudes of various social groups and show that this is indeed the case.

Economic and Political Attitudes of Romanian Voters

I look here at survey data that illustrate the economic and political preferences of Romanian voters, mapping the leftist, radical nationalist, and right-libertarian constituencies in a two-dimensional ideological space. This mapping is helpful in predicting the patterns of electoral support from each social group, depending on whether the choice is primarily economic (left versus right) or political (a choice between democracy and authoritarianism).

There is nothing new in looking at the space of voter attitudes as bi- rather than one-dimensional. In describing political competition in Western democracies, Dalton (2002:134-143) makes a distinction between “old” and “new” politics; similarly, Kitschelt (1994) identifies an economic or left-right dimension and a political or authoritarian-libertarian dimension. He used a similar template to look at party competition in Eastern Europe. According to Kitschelt, there will be “elective affinities” between dimensions (1992:14). In the case of Romania, he predicted competition along

a main axis opposing a redistributionist authoritarian camp to a pro-market libertarian camp (1992:38-40).

My analysis here shows that the “elective affinities” thesis does not work very well in Romania: voter position on one dimension is not a good predictor of his or her position on the other dimension. This is the key to the electoral puzzle introduced in the beginning of this paper: the social and ideological profile of the voter coalitions formed to support the leftist candidate in the 1992 and 1996 presidential runoffs, when the choice was between left and right, was very different from that of his constituency in the 2000 runoff, when the choice became largely one between democracy and authoritarianism.

One caveat is in order here with respect to the mapping of preferences. Not only that preferences about issues vary across social groups, but the issues themselves may vary. For example, in addition to having different views on minority rights than the Romanian majority, ethnic Hungarians are more interested in this issue than most Romanians are. Similarly, younger, better-off, and well-educated professionals are more likely to be interested in democratization than older and poorer peasants with little education, who are barely making a living. For the former group, this issue may be important, or even seen as a necessity, while for the latter group caring about democracy is an unnecessary luxury. Mapping voters and constituencies in a two-dimensional space suggests that both dimensions are important in describing and explaining electoral outcomes; a given dimension may or may not be important for a specific voter or social group.

Survey data allows one to map the attitudes of the leftist, radical nationalist, and right-libertarian constituencies in Romania. The data comes from the December 1997 wave of the Soros Barometer for Public Opinion survey (more recent surveys did not ask the question about minority rights, which I find particularly illuminating for the second or collective versus individual rights dimension). The leftist constituency is defined as the supporters of the Party Social Democracy (more precisely, those respondents indicating an intention to vote for the PSD); the radical nationalist constituency is the supporters of the Greater Romania Party and the Party of National Unity; finally, the right-libertarian constituency is defined as the supporters of the Democratic Convention.

The two dimensions I am looking at here are similar to those in Brian Silver's "Political beliefs of the soviet citizen" (1987:134-7). Using factor analysis to analyze survey data, he identified a state-private control dimension and a collective-individual rights dimension. For the economic or left-right dimension I use the answer to the question whether the respondent favors rapid privatization as a measure of economic reformism (pro-market attitudes). For the political dimension I use the answer to the question about minority rights (whether the respondent thinks that ethnic minorities have too many, too few, or just about enough rights). Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents in each constituency supporting rapid privatization and the percentage of respondents thinking that ethnic minorities have too many rights.

Figure 2

When we look at the economic or left-right dimension, Romania appears as a good example of class voting: the leftists express comparatively little support for the

market (39 percent support rapid privatization), while the rightists (or liberals) voice strong support for market (seventy percent support rapid privatization). The figures also reveal that radical voters' position on this dimension is in-between the other two constituencies (48 percent support for rapid privatization). They are significantly less supportive of market than rightist voters, but significantly more supportive than leftist voters.⁵

On the political or collective versus individual rights dimension, though, the ordering changes. Rightist voters again appear as the most "reformist" group: just as they were the most supportive of economic reforms, they are the least intolerant vis-à-vis ethnic minorities.⁶ Nevertheless, we see that the "elective affinities" thesis does not work well for the other two constituencies: leftist voters are the least supportive of economic reforms, while radical voters appear to be the least tolerant toward ethnic minorities. In short, there is strong evidence that the two dimensions cannot be collapsed into a single (latent) dimension.

Perhaps neither of these findings is surprising. It may even sound redundant to say that leftist voters oppose pro-market economic reforms or that radical nationalist voters are intolerant. Nevertheless, looking at these results is useful for at least two reasons. First, they suggest that the vote of each group is not accidental, but grounded in

⁵ The question about privatization is asked in each wave of the survey, providing much larger samples and more narrow confidence intervals than the question about minority rights, asked in only one survey. Even at the 99 percent confidence level, the lower bound of the confidence interval for the nationalist estimate is about three points higher than the upper bound of the confidence interval for the leftist estimate, and its upper bound is about fifteen points less than the lower bound for the liberal estimate (see Appendix A).

⁶ The low size of the samples for this question does not give much confidence in distinguishing the attitudes of leftists and liberals on the issue of minority rights. Nevertheless, the point here is the difference between nationalists, on the one hand, and the other two groups, on the other. In this respect, the results are clear-cut: even using a conservative 99 percent confidence level, the lower bound of the nationalist confidence interval is five points higher than the upper bound for the leftist estimate and fifteen points higher than the upper bound of the liberal estimate (see Appendix A for actual values and intervals).

and a reflection of identifiable attitudes on economic and social issues.⁷ Second, they illustrate the magnitude of inter-constituency differences along both dimensions, and also a kind of “division of labor” between the economic anti-reformism of leftist voters and the political radicalism and intolerance of nationalist voters.

Thus far I argued that inter-group attitudinal differences are rooted in the experiences of modernization and transition: the economic anti-reformism of the leftist voters reflects the rejection of economic competition by people who are marginal in absolute terms, while the radical authoritarianism of the other group is the political expression of frustration experienced as the result of the death of the “nanny state.” The following section shows how these attitudes translate into actual electoral choices.

Ideology, Institutions, and Vote in Post-Socialist Romania

I look here at the results of various rounds of parliamentary and presidential elections in Romania during the last decade, up to the last ones (held in the fall of 2000). I analyze aggregate (county-level), as well as individual (exit poll) results, and show that development has a significant impact at both micro and macro levels. The non-linear relationship between development and radical nationalist support accounts for the fact that at the aggregate level we do not observe any relationship between development and vote in the last presidential runoff.

Table 1

Table 1 reports models of aggregate (county-level) support for left in various rounds of presidential and parliamentary elections in Romania as a function of regional

⁷ In narrowly technical terms, they suggest that both attitudes should be significant predictors of vote in a model in which it is regarded as a response variable.

development, measured through the Human Development Index of the county.⁸ In addition to this, I include two control variables, ethnic composition (percent of ethnic Hungarians) and region (a dummy variable for Transylvania). The results show a strong, negative relationship between development and vote for the left in all elections but the last presidential runoff. In the case of presidential elections, for one standard deviation increase in the value of HDI the model predicts a decrease in the leftist vote ranging from .2 standard deviations in 1992 to .23 standard deviations in the first round of the 2000 election.⁹ The effect is similar in parliamentary elections; there is a decrease of about .16 standard deviations in the leftist vote in both 1990 and 2000 Senate elections for one standard deviation increase in the value of human development index.

The presence of ethnic Hungarians, meanwhile, is negatively correlated with support for the left (again, the last presidential runoff is the exception). The Hungarian electorate is very disciplined; they vote for the Hungarian Alliance in parliamentary elections and for the Hungarian presidential candidate, when there is one. In the 1992 and 1996 runoffs, Hungarians chose to support the right libertarian candidate, who was more sympathetic to their cause than his leftist opponent.

This ethnic vote, while not directly related to the issue discussed in the paper (the attitudinal and electoral effects of structural factors), is useful as a barometer of Hungarian evaluation of the leftist candidate's position on ethnic rights issues, relative to his opponent. The sign for the ethnic variable in the model changes from negative in

⁸ A composite index developed by the United Nations Development Program. HDI consists of three basic elements: longevity (life expectancy at birth), educational attainment (calculated as a weighted average of the adult literacy rate, with a weight of 2/3, and the enrollment ratio for all levels, with a weight of 1/3), and standard of living (measured through GDP per capita computed in US dollars on the basis of the purchasing power parity) (Coșea & Radocea 1996:123).

⁹ The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for all the variables in Table 1 are listed in Appendix B.

the 1992 and 1996 runoffs to positive in the 2000 runoff. In the 1996 runoff, the model predicts a .44 standard deviations decrease in Iliescu's vote for one standard deviation increase in the percentage of Hungarians in the county. In the 2000 runoff, the model predicts a full standard deviation *increase* in his vote for each standard deviation increase in the percentage of Hungarians. This has little to do with any absolute change in Iliescu's position vis-à-vis ethnic rights. Rather, it is largely a consequence of the change in his relative position: in the 1992 and 1996, his opponent was a right-libertarian, while in the 2000 runoff it was a radical nationalist. In the former case, Iliescu was the worst choice for Hungarian voters. In the latter case, he became the lesser of two evils.

The third variable in the model is a dummy for Transylvania.¹⁰ Romanian scholars and politicians alike generally acknowledge the existence of a cleavage between this region and the rest of the country.¹¹ There is no consensus on whether the primary cause of this cleavage is structural (Sandu 1999) or cultural (Andreescu & Molnár 1999). Those who argue the latter still disagree on whether this means that Transylvania is more civic or more nationalistic than the rest of the country.¹²

With respect to the consequences of this distinctiveness, the evidence seems to back both views (that Transylvania is more liberal and also more nationalistic). The

¹⁰ Sometimes the label "Transylvania" is used broadly, covering all sixteen Northwestern counties; other times it is used more narrowly, covering only eleven of the sixteen counties (the central region of Romania). I use the broader definition here.

¹¹ A notorious incident of the 1996 campaign involved the use of one of the maps from Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" book. The map shows the cultural line that divides Western and Eastern Christianity in Europe also dividing Transylvania from the rest of Romania. The left argued that a victory of the right in the election might open the door for turning that cultural dividing line into a political one. That is, there was a danger that Transylvania might secede (Molnár 1999:12-3).

¹² Tismăneanu (1997:62) described the 1996 vote of Transylvanians as showing "the persistence of democratic, state-of-law memories and pluralist 'habits of the heart' linked to the legacies of Central Europe." According to Gallagher, the event should be described primarily as the result of nationalist leaders "urg[ing] their constituents to vote the candidate of the Democratic Convention in the hope that the left's electoral defeat will benefit them" (1999:103).

vote of Transylvanian counties for the left was, after controlling for the effect of development and ethnicity, about one standard deviation less than the vote of the rest of the country in the 1992 and 1996 runoffs, when the opponent of the leftist candidate was a liberal, and almost two standard deviations less than the rest of the country in the 2000 runoff, when his opponent was a radical nationalist. Later in this section we see how moving the analysis from aggregate to individual-level data leave these regional effects intact: after controlling for social background characteristics (education, age, gender, and urban residence), Transylvanians are more likely to vote either with the liberals or with the nationalists (and less likely to support the left) than voters from outside Transylvania.

These considerations suggest that leaving region or ethnicity out of the model will bias the results, since all three independent variables are highly correlated and they are also correlated with the dependent variable. To give one example, the coefficient for development in the first round of the 2000 presidential election is minus .72 for the full model. If region is not included as a control variable, the coefficient decreases to minus 1.2, and becomes minus 1.48 if both region and ethnicity are left out of the model. If we leave out the two control variables we overestimate the effect of development, because a large part of the variance in the dependent variable is in fact due to regional and ethnic effects.

The coefficient for development in the last column of Table 1 (the model of the leftist vote in the 2000 presidential runoff) is substantially zero. Why is that the case, when only two weeks earlier the coefficient was large and statistically significant in both parliamentary and presidential elections? The design of Romanian electoral

institutions (majority-runoff direct election of the president), coupled with the idiosyncrasies of the results, which pitted the same leftist candidate (Iliescu) against a right libertarian first (in 1992 and 1996), and then against a radical nationalist (Tudor) in 2000, enables us to observe the results of a natural experiment: how do the results change from the former elections (essentially a choice between left and right) to the latter (more of a referendum for or against democracy?) Recall my claim that there is a linear relationship between social position and support for both left and right. This relationship is negative in the case of the left and positive in the case of the libertarian right. The results of ecological analysis presented in Table 1 confirm this. Furthermore, exit poll data support these claims at the individual level.

Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the share of leftist (Iliescu), radical nationalist (Tudor), and liberal (Stolojan and Isarescu) vote among various social groups in the first round of the 2000 presidential election, using education as a proxy for class¹³. Support for the leftist candidate drops abruptly and roughly linearly from a 70 percent high among voters with no education to a 20 percent low among voters with higher education. Conversely, support for the two liberal candidates is increasing a bit less linearly from a 12 percent low among voters with no education to a high of 60 percent among voters with higher education. Thus, we observe a strong relationship between social position and left-right voting.

¹³ The percentages will add up to 100 for each group; only the results of these four candidates were included in the analysis. The relative inter-group comparison is not biased though, since the total percentage of these four candidates in any given category is no lower than 86 percent or higher than 88 percent. The residual vote won by other candidates is unrelated to education (and about half of it went to the candidate of the Hungarian Alliance, whose electoral support has an ethnic rather than social nature).

If the relationship between education and leftist or rightist vote is monotonic, the relationship between education and radical vote is not. Support for the radical nationalist candidate among voters with vocational training (typical for blue-collar workers) is twice as high as it is among either voters with no education (typical for peasants) or voters with higher education (typical for professionals). These results indicate sharp differences between the social profiles of leftist, radical, and liberal constituencies. Recalling Figure 2, we know that these patterns of support are a reflection of distinctive economic and political attitudes.

The survey and exit poll data show that there is an approximately linear relationship between development and vote for left and right, on the one hand, and a non-monotonic relationship between development and radical vote, on the other. If that is the case, perhaps we can explain the change in the coefficient for development in the 2000 runoff as being a consequence of the different nature of this election. In the 1992 and 1996 runoffs, voters chose between a leftist (Iliescu) and a right-libertarian (Constantinescu); on these two occasions, we observe an important effect of development (a large coefficient for the HDI coefficient). In the 2000 runoff, voters faced a choice between a leftist (Iliescu) and a radical nationalist (Tudor), thus shifting competition from essentially a left-right choice to competition along the political dimension, more of a referendum for or against democracy.

In Figure 2 we see that the radical nationalist constituency is located at the authoritarian end of the political dimension, and right-liberal voters at the libertarian end. It is fairly easy to predict the choice of leftist and radical voters in the 2000 runoff, since the first choice of each was on the ballot. Can we say something about the vote of

the third constituency? Did these voters truly see this election as a referendum on democracy, as the media described it? Two IMAS exit polls show that this seems to be the case.

Figure 4

The results in the upper part of Figure 4 are similar to those in Figure 3. They show the patterns of support for the leftist, the radical nationalist, and the two liberal candidates in the first round. The lower part shows that the votes of the right-libertarian constituency went overwhelmingly in the direction of the leftist candidate. Particularly telling is the vote of people with higher education, the core of liberal constituency. In this group, each of the two leading candidates got a rather unimpressive level of support in the first round, about 20 percent. The share of leftist vote among these voters in the runoff increased fourfold, whereas the radical candidate saw virtually no change in his vote in this group.

The coefficient for development in the last column of Table 1 is zero, suggesting that development did not have an effect in the 2000 presidential runoff. However, development *did* have an effect in this election. Unlike in the 1992 and 1996 runoffs, the effect was non-linear and therefore unobservable in the aggregate results. The highest level of support for the leftist candidate in this election was among the voters with the least education and among voters with the most education. As we move from less to more developed regions, we have fewer voters in the first category and more voters in the second category, but the overall share of the leftist vote stays about the same.¹⁴

¹⁴ The percentage of the adult population in a county having completed at least secondary education ranges from 56.4 to 88.4, with a mean of 74.0 and a standard deviation of 7.2 (UNDP 1996 data). The

One potential problem still exists at this point: what if the correlation between education and vote is spurious? Younger people tend to be better educated than older people, and we may witness here a similar phenomenon to the one observed in Russia in the late Soviet period. One of the main findings of the Harvard Project was to identify a higher level of support for the Soviet regime among younger people than among older people. Thirty years later, this pattern was reversed: younger people tended to be far more critical than older people were. One way to disentangle these effects is through multinomial logistic regression, using both education and age as predictors of the vote.

Table 2

Table 2 presents the models of liberal and radical vote in the first round of the last presidential election, with leftist vote as the baseline. In addition to education and age, three other independent variables are included in the model: gender, residence (urban versus rural), and region (whether the respondent lives in Transylvania or outside it). We see that all variables in the model are significant, not only statistically (not surprisingly, given the size of the sample), but substantively as well. Romanian politics appears characterized by deep lines of cleavage, especially along lines of age and education, but to some extent in terms of gender, region, and urban/rural differences as well. To highlight more what these differences mean substantively, Table 3 presents the maximum effect of each of the independent variables.

Table 3

The parameters in the table give the difference in the predicted probability of a Romanian voter choosing a liberal instead of the leftist candidate (first column) or the

correlation between this variable and the county-level leftist vote in the 2000 presidential election is -.75 for the first round and -.15 for the runoff.

radical instead of the leftist (second column). Each parameter is computed with the explanatory variable shifting from its minimum to its maximum value, holding other variables constant. The “male” and “urban” dummies are held constant at their mode, “region” is held constant as “non-Transylvania” (“region” = 0), “age” is held constant at 43 (the median value), and “education” is held constant as “high school diploma” (again, the median value).

The results in Table 3 are similar to those of Colton’s analysis of voting behavior in Russia. According to Colton, the level of support for left “decreases with urbanization, educational level, and family income and increases with the voter’s age” (2000:78). The liberal vote “is a weak mirror image of [the leftist vote], cresting in the metropolitan areas and among educated, well-heeled, and youthful voters, [while radical nationalism] gets its best support from younger voters, [and] the technically trained” (2000:79). This description fits well the Romanian party system, and this is no accident. The economic and social policies pursued by the Communist regimes in the two countries were similar, and the consequence is that the social structures in the two countries are similar as well. They are reflected in similar distributions of voter attitudes and similar partisan alignments.

Conclusion

I began this paper by presenting a puzzle of electoral politics in Romania, namely, the “evaporation” of development’s impact on the vote in the two weeks separating the first round and the runoff of the 2000 presidential election. The answer to the broader question about the structural roots of partisan divisions in this country and

their electoral consequences offered the solution to the puzzle. I mapped the distribution of Romanian voters in a two-dimensional space, and showed how we can use the Romanian electoral institutions and the particular results of various elections to run a natural experiment and observe the impact of both dimensions.

The focus of the paper has been on Romania, but the analysis is generalizable outside Romania. First, the broad causal theory outlined in Figure 1 ties together strands of literature on Russia and the Soviet Union, and can be useful in returning back to the Russian case for a comprehensive analysis. The comparison between the results presented in Table 3 and the results of Colton's analysis of voting in Russia highlights the applicability of this template to both cases, and its potential use for comparison to other post-Communist cases.

Second, even though the nature of the economic transition currently experienced by Romania is very different from the economic transition experienced by Western European countries like France, the logic of the argument about the losers of transition fits well in both cases. The important differences between the two polities notwithstanding, the social and attitudinal profile of the radical nationalist constituencies in the two countries is remarkably similar. Young males with vocational training are over-represented in the electorates of both Greater Romania Party and the French National Front (as they are in the electorate of the Russian LDP). The attitudes of these voters are a mix of social conservatism and political authoritarianism, on the one hand, with skepticism toward unfettered economic liberalism, on the other.

Finally, I interpreted the last presidential election in Romania using a simple model with three actors (constituencies) and two dimensions of electoral competition.

The presence of the radical nationalist candidate in the runoff has turned the election largely into a referendum for democracy, opening the door for an unusual alliance between the leftist and the right-libertarian constituency. The model can be applied equally well to the last presidential election in France, where the presence of Le Pen in the runoff has altered the usual pattern of left-right competition and made the second, democratic/authoritarian dimension, more salient than the economic dimension. These examples highlight possible directions in which the research presented in this paper can be taken further and expanded to analyze other cases.

**Figure 1. Causal Theory:
Modernization, Transition, and Voting in Romania**

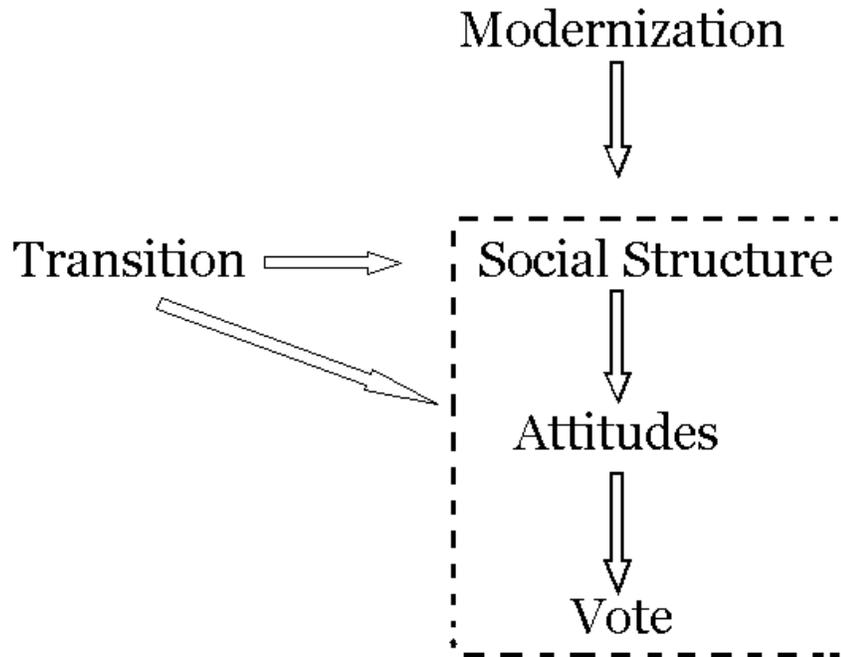
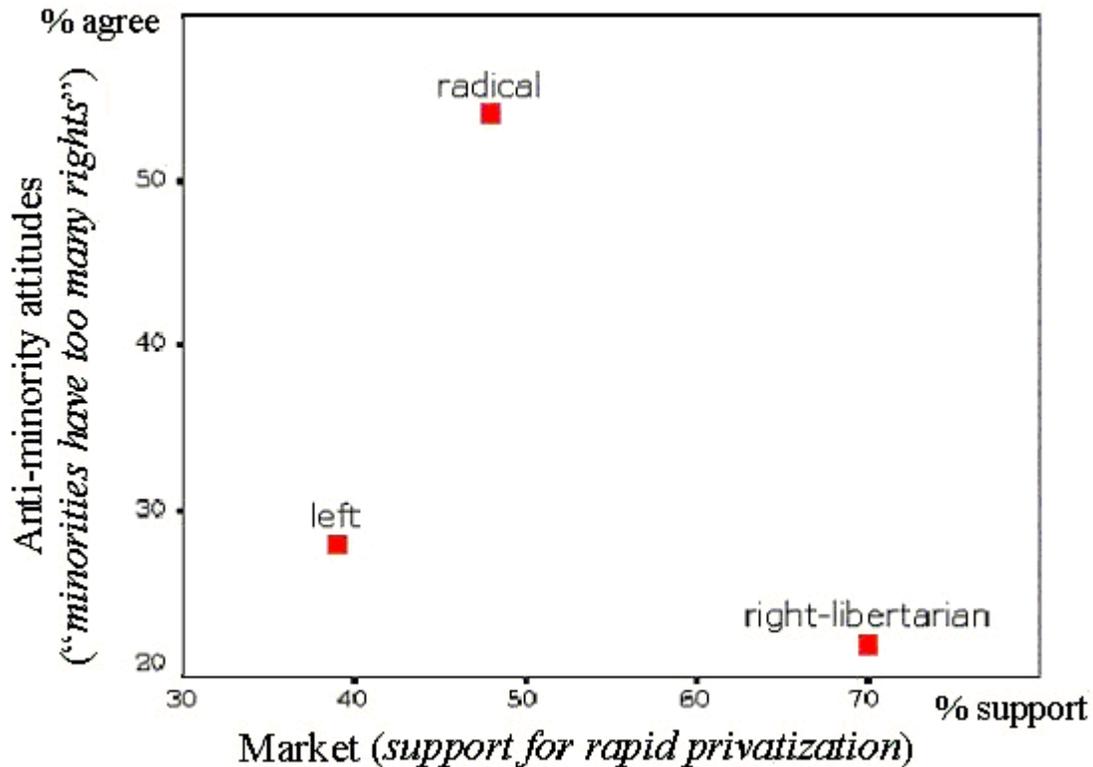


Figure 2. Partisan Constituencies and Attitudes Toward Market and Ethnic Minorities



Each dot represents the mapping of aggregate scores (percentages) for pro-market attitudes and anti-minority attitudes among leftist, radical, and right-libertarian constituents.

The horizontal dimension shows the percentage of constituents endorsing the view that “privatization should be rapid and that state intervention in the economy should decrease substantially.”

The vertical dimension shows the percentage of constituents endorsing the view that “minorities have too many rights.”

“Left” is defined as voters who expressed intention to vote for the Party of Social Democracy (the old label for the Social Democratic as of December 1997, when the survey was carried)

“Radical” is defined as voters who expressed intention to vote for either the Party of National Unity or the Greater Romania Party

“Right-libertarian” is defined as voters who expressed intention to vote for the Democratic Convention

Source: computed by author using the December 1997 wave of the Soros Barometer for Public Opinion data set (available at www.sfos.ro).

Table 1. Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Development, Ethnicity, and Region on Regional Support for the Left in Romanian National Elections, 1990-2000

	1990 ¹ (Senate)	1992 ² (Runoff)	1996 ³ (Runoff)	2000 ⁴ (Senate)	2000 ⁵ (First round)	2000 ⁶ (Runoff)
Constant	157.2*** (19.7)	135.7*** (17.9)	111.0*** (18.7)	86.0*** (14.8)	101.5*** (13.9)	65.0*** (14.2)
Human Development Index ⁷	-.99***	-.80***	-.71**	-.51*	-.72***	.04
Percent Hungarians ⁸	(.26) -.65***	(.23) -.54***	(.24) -.34***	(.19) -.27***	(.18) -.25***	(.19) .44***
Transylvania ⁹	(.07) -15.6***	(.06) -15.5***	(.07) -15.2***	(.05) -17.0***	(.05) -16.9***	(.05) -15.0***
Adjusted R ²	.89	.89	.82	.87	.88	.68

N = 41 (the number of Romanian electoral districts, 40 counties plus the capital city Bucharest)

The figures represent the unstandardized coefficients of linear regression.

Standard errors are given in parentheses.

*** significant at p = .001

** significant at p = .01

* significant at p = .05

¹Vote for the National Salvation Front in the 1990 Senate election

²Vote for Ion Iliescu in the 1992 presidential runoff

³Vote for Ion Iliescu in the 1996 presidential runoff

⁴Vote for the Party of Social Democracy in the 2000 Senate election

⁵Vote for Ion Iliescu in the first round of the 2000 presidential election

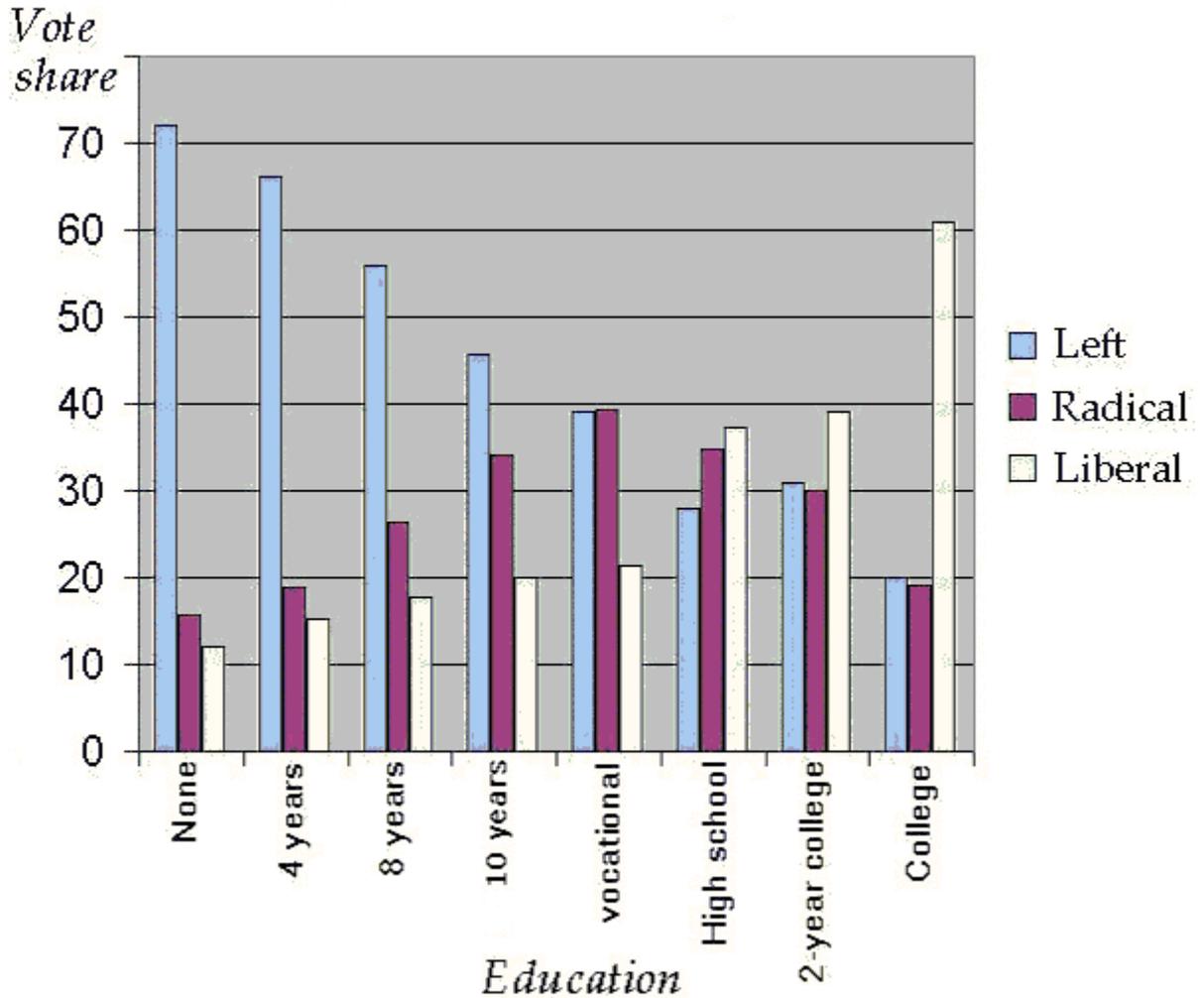
⁶Vote for Ion Iliescu in the 2000 presidential runoff

⁷Human Development Index of the county (1996 UNDP Human Development Report data)

⁸Percent ethnic Hungarians in the county (1992 Census data)

⁹Dummy variable, value "1" if the county is located in Transylvania (16 cases), "0" otherwise (25 cases).

Figure 3. Education and Left, Radical, and Liberal Vote, First Round of the 2000 Presidential Election in Romania



Note: Only the votes for Ion Iliescu (Social Democratic Party), Corneliu Vadim Tudor (Greater Romania Party), Theodor Stolojan (National Liberal Party), and Mugur Isarescu (Democratic Convention) were used to calculate the percentages.

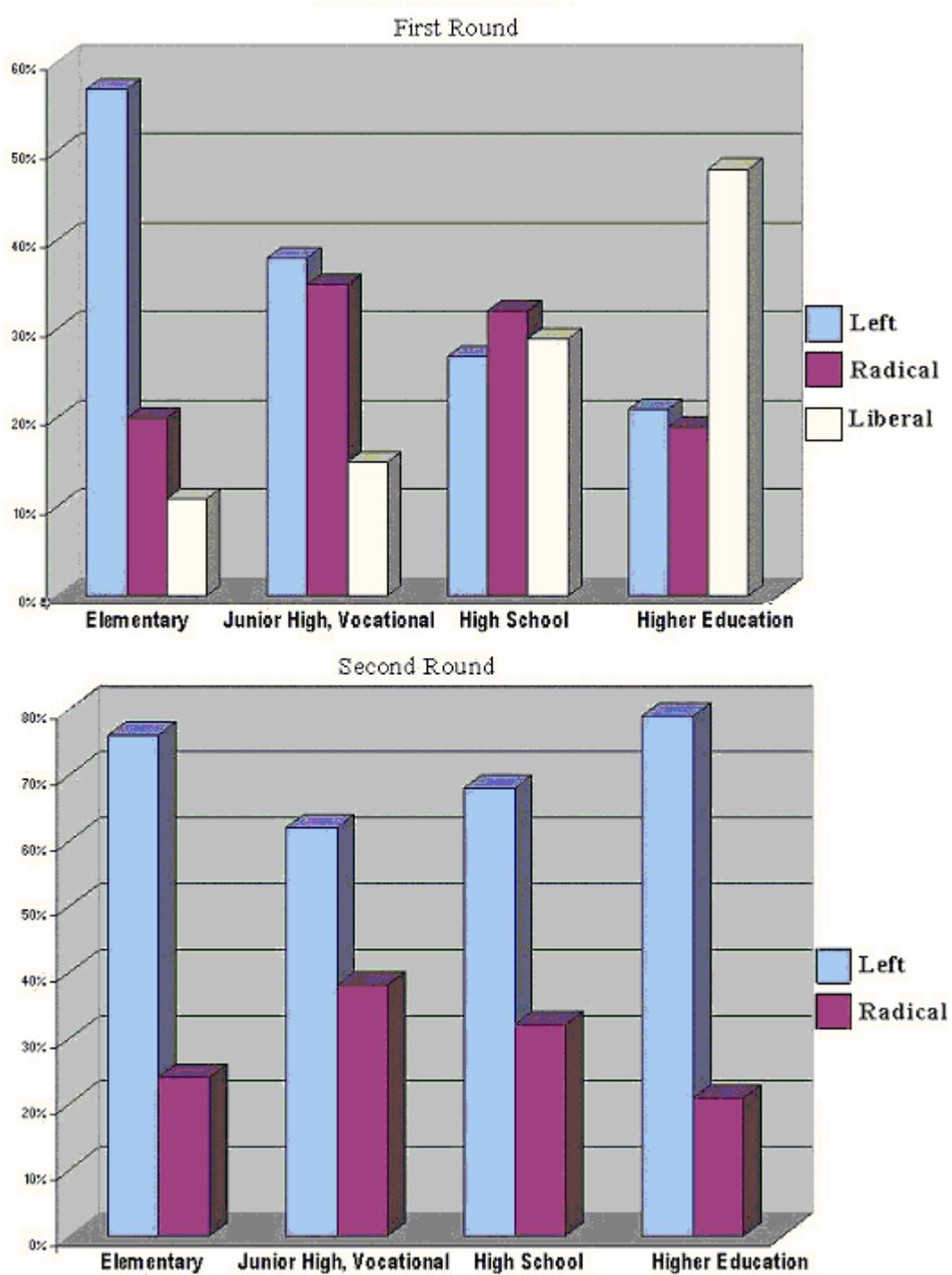
“Left” is Ion Iliescu’s share of the total vote

“Radical” is Vadim Tudor’s share of the total vote

“Liberal” is the sum of Stolojan’s and Isarescu’s shares of the total vote

Source: computed by author using the INSOMAR 2000 exit poll data set (electronic document).

Figure 4. Education and Vote, First and Second Round of the 2000 Presidential Election in Romania



Source: data from the first and second-round IMAS exit polls (<<http://domino.kappa.ro/imas/home.nsf/HomeEng>>.)

Table 2. Multinomial Logistic Regression: Effects of Social Characteristics on First-Round Presidential Vote, 2000

<i>Independent</i>	<i>Liberal^a versus Left^b</i>		<i>Radical^c versus Left</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	2.150***	0.052	1.123***	0.054
<i>Education^d</i>				
Elementary	- 1.945***	0.037	- 0.394***	0.041
Vocational	- 1.598***	0.039	0.055	0.042
High school	- 0.880***	0.034	0.192***	0.040
Two-year college	- 0.802***	0.045	0.107*	0.051
<i>Age^e</i>	- 0.018***	0.001	- 0.025***	0.001
<i>Region^f</i>	0.864***	0.024	0.720***	0.023
<i>Male^g</i>	- 0.147***	0.022	0.308***	0.021
<i>Urban^h</i>	0.523***	0.024	0.295***	0.022
Chi-Square	12013.2*** (16 d.f.)			
Cox and Snell R^2	0.178			
Number of cases	61,199			

* p -value < 0.05.

*** p -value < 0.001.

- a. Vote for Stolojan, Isaescu, Roman, or Melescanu
- b. Vote for Iliescu
- c. Vote for Vadim Tudor
- d. Four dummy variables (“elementary”, “vocational”, “high school”, and “two-year college”; “higher education” is the reference group).
- e. Continuous variable ranging from 18 to 99.
- f. Dummy variable, “1” if the respondent lives in Transylvania, “0” otherwise.
- g. Dummy variable, “1” if the respondent is male, “0” if the respondent is female.
- h. Dummy variable, “1” if the respondent lives in a city, “0” if he/she lives in a village.

Source: computed by author using the INSOMAR 2000 Presidential and Parliamentary Election Exit Poll data set (electronic document).

Table 3. Maximum Effects of Social Characteristics on First-Round Presidential Vote, 2000 (Differences in Predicted Probabilities)^a

Social characteristic	Liberal ^b versus Left ^c	Radical ^d versus Left
Education ^e	+ .45 ^f	+ .14 ^g
Age ^h	- .34	- .46
Region (Transylvania) ⁱ	+ .14	+ .17
Gender (Male) ^j	- .03	+ .08
Urbanization ^k	+ .12	+ .07

- a. Sample N = 61,199
- b. Vote for Stolojan, Isarescu, Roman, or Melescanu
- c. Vote for Iliescu
- d. Vote for Vadim Tudor
- e. Four dummy variables (“elementary”, “vocational”, “high school”, and “two-year college”; “higher education” is the reference group).
- f. The value indicates the difference between the estimated probabilities of voting liberal for voters with higher education and voters with elementary education or less.
- g. The value indicates the difference between the estimated probabilities of voting radical for voters with vocational education and voters with elementary education
- h. Continuous variable ranging from 18 to 99.
- i. Dummy variable, “1” if the respondent lives in Transylvania, “0” otherwise.
- j. Dummy variable, “1” if the respondent is male, “0” if the respondent is female
- k. Dummy variable, “1” if the respondent lives in a city, “0” if he/she lives in a village.

Source: computed by author using the INSOMAR 2000 Presidential and Parliamentary Election Exit Poll data set (electronic document).

Appendix A. Confidence Intervals for the Distribution of Attitudes toward Privatization and Ethnic Minorities in Figure 2

The two questions used on computing the percentages presented in Figure 2 were taken from the December 1997 wave of the Soros Barometer of Public Opinion data set (<www.sfos.ro>). The sample (N = 1,148) was split into four groups, based on the question regarding vote intention (“if elections were held next Sunday, what party would you vote for?”).

Unlike the question about minority rights, asked only once (December 1997 wave), the question about privatization was asked in multiple waves, thus providing a much larger sample (or samples).

The four groups were defined as follows:

“Leftists”: intention to vote for the Social Democratic Party – PDSR at that time, December 1997);

“Radicals”: intention to vote for the Greater Romania Party or the Party of National Unity;

“Liberals”: intention to vote for the Democratic Convention;

“Other”: intention to vote for other party, undecided, or does not intend to vote.

The two percentages computed for each of the three constituencies (I do not look at the fourth group here) are the percentage of respondents agreeing that minorities have too many rights and the percentage of respondents favoring rapid privatization and a substantial decrease of state intervention in the economy within each constituency.

Constituency	“Minorities have too many rights”			Support for rapid privatization		
	N	% Agree	99% C.I.	N	% Support	99% C.I.
Leftists	131	27.5	(17.4, 37.6)	2,818	38.8	(36.5, 41.2)
Radicals	128	53.9	(42.6, 65.3)	1,052	47.7	(43.7, 51.7)
Liberals	233	21.9	(14.9, 28.8)	2,670	69.2	(66.9, 71.5)

Appendix B. Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Table 1

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Left 1990 Senate	67.3	20.8
Left 1992 presidential runoff	62.2	18.4
Left 1996 presidential runoff	46.6	15.2
Left 2000 Senate	37.2	13.9
Left 2000 presidential first round	36.6	14.0
Left 2000 presidential runoff	66.2	8.6
Human development index (1996)	77.9	4.5
Percent ethnic Hungarians	9.3	19.5

Appendix C. Data Sources

Electoral data:

Alegeri in Romania, (Elections in Romania),
<<http://domino.kappa.ro/election/home.nsf>>.

Biroul Electoral Central, (Romanian Central Electoral Bureau),
<<http://www.kappa.ro/guv/bec/ceb96.html>>.

Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe,
<<http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/>>

Social and Economic Data:

Romanian National Commission for Statistics. 1992. *Population and Housing Census, January 1992, Romania. Volume 4, Ethnic and Confessional Structure of the Population* (electronic document).

Coșea, Mircea, and Alexandru Radocea (eds.). 1996. *Romanian National Human Development Report 1996*. Bucharest: National Commission for Statistics.

UNDP Romania. *National Human Development Report 2000*.
<<http://www.undp.ro/publications/nhdr2000>>.

Survey and Exit Poll Data:

IMAS (Romanian Institute for Marketing and Polls).
<<http://domino.kappa.ro/imas/home.nsf/HomeEng>>.

INSOMAR (Romanian Institute for Surveys and Marketing). The 2000 Parliamentary & Presidential Elections in Romania Exit Poll Data Set (electronic document)

Soros Foundation Public Opinion Barometer.
<<http://www.sfos.ro/romana/Programe/Barometru/Public/bop.htm>>.

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