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ELECTORAL POLITICS AND TRANSITION IN ROMANIA

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SUMMARY: ELECTORAL POLITICS AND TRANSITION IN ROMANIA

The Romanian national elections of May 1990 and September 1992 were defining events in that country's post-communist political transition. The first free elections in over half a century provided clear indications of the prospects for post communist politics. Neither electoral campaign was unblemished and some of the behavior that occurred, particularly during the first contest, appeared all too familiar to those acquainted with interwar Romanian politics. While the comportment of the population during the first campaign was taken by many as a decisive test of the governability of the country, a second national vote held in September 1992, following two years of post totalitarian politics in reality provides a much better sounding on the long term outlook for democratization in Romania.

After outlining conditions at the close of the communist period, the following account interprets these crucial elections, and seeks to clarify the political forces that are shaping the current transition process. The argument is advanced that, contrary to popular perception in the West, substantial progress has been made in the direction of democratization. Survey data provide clear evidence of a process of ideological and policy differentiation at the level of popular opinion in Romanian political life. In the interval between the two post communist national elections political forces coalesced into two broad groupings that can be accurately characterized as collectivist-nationalist and liberal-universalist. Key dimensions of differentiation between these groupings appear to be attitudes toward reform (privatization and income differentiation) and attitudes toward nationalism. The data also indicate that popular attitudes on these key issues correlates with preference for political parties whose positions on these same issues is known. Finally, popular attitude toward political parties indicates cohesive sets of preferences, with support for one "collectivist-nationalist" party correlating highly with support for a similar party, and conversely support for one party at the "individualist-universalist" pole correlating with similar political formations.

Taken together these data indicate both the emergence of clear policy preferences within the general population, and the initiation of linkages between popular preferences and political party platforms on the national level. This process represents an important step forward. While the transition to stable democratic competition is far from complete, progress in the direction of "normalization," at least in the realm of electoral politics, is unmistakable and should be recognized.

ROMANIA IN THE WAKE OF CEAUSESCU

After decades of dictatorial rule that was even more oppressive than elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Romania was arguably less prepared than any other country in the region to conduct democratic elections in 1990. The distinctive nature of the Romanian communist regime, its distortion, and its progressive internal collapse have been widely commented upon in recent years.¹ Several elements of this regime acted against the potential for a smooth transition to democratic politics. Up to the very end of its existence the Ceausescu leadership consciously and systematically fostered political alienation. Repression and periodic scape-goating were used to force large numbers of intellectuals into immigration, and to drive a deep wedge between those that remained and the Romanian working class. Ethnic hostility was actively encouraged in order to persuade Romanians that sinister forces threatened them, and that these could only be restrained by a strong unified national state. Given the intensely repressive nature of Romania's regime, little organized opposition to the communist party was able to develop, and within the party moderate forces were marginalized.

The impact of these traits of Ceausescu's rule (and many more could be added to the list) upon the Romanian body politic was catastrophic. Genuine political dialogue outside of very narrow circles of intimates was smothered. The regime's divisive tactics effectively fragmented potential opposition along class and ethnic lines. Institutionalized alternatives to the communist party and its ancillary bodies simply did not develop, and intra-party reformist opposition remained until the very end disorganized and ineffectual.

In addition to this legacy of long term political abuse, a series of short term circumstances also worked against efforts to carry out open and fair elections in 1990. Romania's revolution was even more abrupt than elsewhere in Eastern Europe, allowing no substantial period of negotiation preceding the withdrawal of the communist regime. There was simply no interval in which a stable opposition could consolidate itself and come to terms on power sharing or on an electoral mechanism to be used as part of the transition process. While Romania's revolution broke out with breathtaking rapidity, it ended with equal swiftness. As soon as it became clear that the communist regime was collapsing, even before Ceausescu's

execution on December 25, 1989, substantial elements of the communist regime passed piecemeal into the camp of the "revolutionaries." This transfer of allegiance provided the leaders who grappled to secure a hold on power during the revolution with tremendous political assets. But at the same time, in the eyes of many the acceptance of RCP cadres discredited the revolution and poisoned Romania's political environment as the first national election approached.

Taken together these factors created an extremely unfavorable environment in which to carry out the country's "founding" democratic elections. The months leading up to the elections were marked by distrust and misinformation, a high level of popular volatility, and sporadic violence. The milieu was not conducive to reasoned discourse, or for that matter to equitable electoral competition. Even if, as will be suggested below, the May 1990 election itself was generally unbiased, the same cannot be said of the broader political transition in which the election was embedded.

PREPARATION FOR THE TRANSITION ELECTIONS

Following the spontaneous outbreak of the Romanian revolution on December 16, 1989 a diverse coalition formed with the intent of guiding events to a successful outcome.² Its main components were the leaders of the spontaneous uprising, reform communists who had been marginalized by the Ceausescu dictatorship, and elements of the military leadership who abandoned the regime for the side of revolutionaries. Organized as the National Salvation Front (FSN) these forces announced their assumption of provisional control of the country on December 22, and began at once to take steps to stabilize their position.

On coming to power the FSN immediately announced a program of reform, including a call for elections to be held in April 1990.³ FSN spokesmen asserted a non-partisan position for their organization. The Front was described as a non-political umbrella organization that would act in the interest of all those who fought to bring down the Ceausescu dictatorship. Almost immediately, however, both the character of the FSN and its electoral intentions changed. In essence, the two best positioned elements of the original makeshift coalition (reform communists and representatives of the military) banded together at the expense of the less politically experienced leaders of mass uprising. A dominant core formed within the ruling council of the FSN around the figure of Ion Iliescu (a former

The UDMR removed itself from the Democratic Convention's electoral compact as well, but for quite different reasons. As the date of the second national elections approached, nationalist rhetoric became progressively more intense. Given the probable negative electoral impact of increasingly hostile attitudes toward Hungarians by a significant part of the Romanian electorate, the UDMR decided to campaign independently in order to avoid hampering the Democratic Convention's electoral chances. But Hungarian political leaders continued to support the DC candidate in the Presidential race, and pledged continued cooperation with the Convention in Parliament.

In comparison to the hastily called 1990 elections, the 1992 campaign (while far from perfect) was significantly less violent and accompanied by fraud. Access to the print media for opposition parties was much improved, though complaints continued concerning the government's abuse of its control over national television. After weeks of contention the date for elections was set for September 22. In general, electoral rules remained unchanged. Voting for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies took place on the basis of proportional representation in territorial constituencies. In the Presidential contest the previous rules also once again pertained. Victory in the first round required more than 50% of the vote. Otherwise, the two candidates with the most support were to face each other in a second round runoff.

The 1992 campaign gave clear evidence of a process of ideological and policy differentiation in Romanian political life. In the period leading up to the elections political forces coalesced into two broad groupings that can be accurately characterized as collectivist-nationalist and liberal-universalist. Key dimensions of differentiation between these groupings appear to be attitudes toward reform (privatization and income differentiation) and attitudes toward nationalism (see Table Three).

Table six indicates that Romanian political parties are also grouped according to coherent ideological criteria by the population. This grouping of parties by the respondents' attitudes toward them conforms closely with their categorization along collectivist-nationalist vs. individualist-universalist lines. At the focal point of the collectivist-nationalist cluster of parties is the FDSN (see Table Four). Following its rupture from the FSN, President Iliescu's FDSN became at least implicitly the party of the status quo, arguing for continua-

pace of change, factional disputes broke out within the National Salvation Front. By the Fall of 1992 demonstrations against the government threatened public order in Bucharest for a second time. Workers massed in the streets demanding the resignation of President Iliescu and Prime Minister Petre Roman. But Iliescu once again proved his political skill, shielding himself while engineering Roman's resignation. Intra-party factionalism, however, was not to be so easily quelled. Rather than retiring from the field Petre Roman remained in the FSN, becoming the chief spokesman for those who favored more radical reform. In March 1992 Roman managed to win reelection as chairman of the party. President Iliescu's supporters then broke off in May 1992 to form their own organization, the Democratic National Salvation Front.

1992 NATIONAL ELECTIONS: DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Romania's second national election, in September 1992, was held under circumstances that differed markedly from the country's first political contest. Following two years of sporadic reform and intense political conflict, the political landscape of the country had changed significantly. On the side of the government, the disarray seen in other East European successor regimes was evident. Ousted Prime Minister Roman emerged at the helm of a rump organization retaining the title of the National Salvation Front. President Iliescu, rebuffed by his own party's congress, determined to contest the elections under the banner of the splinter Democratic Front for National Salvation (FDSN).

The opponents of Romania's first post-communist government were beset by discord of an almost equal degree. Temporary cooperation during the February 1992 local elections was a remarkable success. The opposition (PNL, PNT-CD, Civic Alliance, and UDMR, with 10 additional parties) entered into an alliance, forming the Democratic Convention, and succeeded in wresting control of most urban centers from the ruling party. This achievement raised expectations that regime opponents would be able to collaborate successfully against the Iliescu government in upcoming national elections. These hopes, however, were soon dashed. Tensions within the opposition coalition led to intensely critical public exchanges between its leaders. Liberal Party leaders then determined that their party could more successfully pursue its goals independently, and withdrew from the Convention.

must have voted almost unanimously in support of the UDMR in order to give it its 7.23% of the total vote. Support for the UDMR was intensely concentrated in counties populated by Hungarians. In 25 out of 41 counties the UDMR received less than 1.0% of the vote. In Harghita, with its large Hungarian population, it received 85.23%. The historical parties, on the other hand, did worse than expected. The third ranked party nationally was the PNL, slightly behind the UDMR with 6.41% of the vote. The fourth place was not taken by the National Peasants (2.56% of the vote), but by one of the ecological parties, the Romanian Ecological Movement (MER), which attracted 2.62% of the vote.

Romania's first post-communist elections revealed a society in a state of profound change. Analysts who contend that the elections were simply "false," or argue that Iliescu regime represented a simple reincarnation of its communist predecessor badly misapprehended the situation. The elections were, no doubt, subject to limited fraud. But on the basis of independent polling before and at the time of the election, it appears that the results mirrored popular opinion in the country quite closely. The National Salvation Front was clearly a dominant force, and opposition to it was divided and ineffectual. President Iliescu seized the advantage of his early postrevolutionary popularity, and used the elections to consolidate its control over the successor regime.

With the elections at an end the National Salvation Front government initiated a program of limited reform. Its economic initiatives included legislation on land and privatization, and financial reform.¹⁶ Price controls were removed in stages until market values were reached on most commodities. In keeping with its commitments, the government supported efforts to enact a new constitution, which was approved in November 1991 and submitted to a referendum.¹⁷ This established a mixed presidential/parliamentary system, which placed some limitations on executive power. The new constitution also provided formal guarantees with respect to the provision of basic human rights and minority rights.

Once the new government began to formulate concrete policies however, consensus broke down within the National Salvation Front. As the year after the election wore on strike activity increased and demonstrations by opposition groups became an almost daily sight in the country's capital. In response to growing pressure and dissatisfaction with the

them through the government's postal network. At key points in the campaign both the FSN and the opposition mobilized mass demonstrations in their efforts to dominate the situation.¹² During the weeks leading up to the elections opposition campaign offices were ransacked, and their candidates were harassed and in some cases attacked.¹³

Critical elements in the campaign environment thus worked strongly to the advantage of the FSN. Clearly, the timing of elections disadvantaged the opposition parties. The Front's control over the means of mass communication, its control over the government, and its acquisition of large parts of the RCP political machine gave its leaders electoral resources that could hardly have been matched by any competitor. Finally, a ruthless political struggle in the cities and villages of Romania during the spring of 1990 was used to block the opposition from impeding the FSN's self-interested orchestration of the electoral process.

FSN HEGEMONY: THE 1990 ELECTION RESULTS

Elections were held on schedule on May 20, 1990, despite increasingly frequent charges of fraud or intended fraud, and threats of a boycott by the opposition as the date approached. Voting took place under the scrutiny of over 300 foreign observers who were distributed to polling stations around the country. Due to the complexity of the ballot and unfamiliarity with the new procedures, voting was slow, taking individuals up to several hours in some locations. Clearly some irregularities did occur during the election. The consensus among observers, however, is that by and large the returns did reflect the popular attitudes.¹⁴

The results of the election provide unmistakable evidence of the political dominance of the Ion Iliescu and the FSN. In the presidential race Iliescu won 85.07% of the vote. Radu Campeanu of the National Liberal Party took 10.16% and Ion Ratiu followed with 4.29%. Clearly, no individual political figure could match Iliescu. While not as lopsided, returns for the legislature also indicate the FSN's strength. The Front capture 68% of Assembly seats, and 76% of those in the Senate races (See Table One, page 15).¹⁵

Several factors concerning the nature of party support at the time of the initial transition emerge from examination of the voting returns. Among the most striking results of the initial national vote in Romania was the strength of support for the UDMR. With a population of around 2 million out of over 24 million in Romania as a whole, the Hungarians

a list of concerns, and the population, already living with extreme deprivation, proved risk averse.

The second level of competition, that of ideological stereotyping worked even more decisively against the opposition parties. The National Salvation Front's strategy was manifest. Iliescu and his colleagues assumed the mantle of the December revolution. They claimed to represent all of the popular forces that rejected the old order. The FSN also asserted that it represented security, and stood alone between the population and collapse into anarchy and violence. In stark contrast to this image, opponents painted the FSN as the hijacker of the revolution rather than its legitimate inheritor. Front leaders were branded "camouflaged communists" working to save the old system rather than destroy it.¹⁰ They characterized themselves as the representatives of true anti-communism, legitimated through forced exile and imprisonment.

A final factor in the ideological campaign was manipulation of mass perception of the political environment. Minimally, the FSN used its public statements and control over the mass media to heighten the perception that the country was on the verge of anarchy. In addition there is substantial, though unconfirmable, evidence that the Front employed provocation as a means to achieve this end. In particular this pertains to the question of inter-ethnic relations.¹¹ Tactically, fostering tension was of obvious benefit to the Front. Less sophisticated elements of the Romanian population clearly turned to the FSN as the established authority in the belief that it would safeguard Romanians' interests. While both Vatra Romaneasca and the National Peasant Party, were more nationalist than the Front, neither of these were as well positioned to take advantage of the situation, due to their limited resources and exclusion from participation in state power.

Finally, as noted above, the first Romanian national election was shaped by an unofficial and often illegal struggle for power. The FSN seized control over and made use of the former regime's political assets, prominently including the national communications and media network. Opposition figures protested frequently and with justification that the national television, in particular, was manipulated to benefit FSN. While a new law permitting freedom of the press allowed opposition parties to print their own newspapers and journals, there was little time to develop these, and difficulty was encountered in distributing

activists, to gain control over channels of communication, and to disrupt the activities of opponents.

The FSN platform emerged early, and was quite clear. The Front stood in the first place for the abolition of the most repressive and irrational aspects of the previous personalistic dictatorship. While calling for reform, however, the Front reassured the population that instability would be avoided. The FSN economic program called for the retention of state industry, and maintenance of state support to agriculture.⁷ It called for a slow transition, and the avoidance of "major divergences in the accumulation of wealth." The FSN also resisted opposition pressure to ban former party activists from political life. This position was no doubt comforting to many in Romania, which had very high levels of party membership.

The National Liberal and National Peasant-Christian Democrat parties, the FSN's two main contenders in the elections, called for more fundamental reform of the totalitarian system. In contrast to the FSN, both of the traditional parties supported more rapid economic restructuring, and failed to provide the population with as firm assurance that they would be protected during the transition.⁸ The PNT-CD program, not surprisingly, contained elements designed to reclaim the loyalty of the peasantry, which the party's leaders clearly identified as their natural constituency. The Peasantists' program called for redirecting investment to the countryside, for decollectivizing within three years, and for promoting traditional Christian values. The Liberals, on the other hand, directed their efforts more to the urban political milieu. Its economic program called for rapid transition to private property and a market economy.⁹ It committed itself to the promotion of individual civil, economic, and political rights, and sought to present itself as a classical European liberal party.

These divergent policy platforms provide one element of an explanation of the FSN's electoral success. The historical parties offered programs calling for more rapid change than the Front, but introduced a greater degree of risk into the environment. The FSN program promised reform, but accompanied its proposals with strong assurances of social protection. The Front was able to identify itself with maintenance of at least existing levels of predictability. Opinion polls carried out in Romania in April 1990 placed the economy at the top of

division into a large number of small parties, confronting the much larger consolidated force of the FSN. Contests were to be held in territorial districts to select candidates from party lists drawn up prior to the elections in each district by the parties. The law mandated automatic inclusion of at least one representative of each ethnic minority group in the Deputies Assembly. The post of President was to be chosen by direct national election. First round victory required more than 50% of the eligible votes to be cast for a single candidate. If no victor emerged in round one a runoff round was to follow between the two most successful candidates.

THE TRANSITION CAMPAIGN PROCESS

The first round of national elections can only be understood adequately if they are evaluated within this polarized and highly fluid political context. While the Romanian electoral campaign opened officially only on March 19, 1990, unofficial competition began almost simultaneously with the downfall of Ceausescu. The number of small parties registering for the elections multiplied dramatically as the date of the contest approached. On January 18, 1990 some 13 parties were registered in Bucharest.⁶ By mid-February 30 Parties had registered, and more than eighty ultimately did so. According to opposition politicians the sharp increase in the number of parties was the consequence of an intentional FSN strategy designed to create a plethora of small parties, many with similar names and programs, in order confuse voters. Maneuverings of this sort complicated the electoral process (the ballot required 37 pages), and almost without doubt favored of the FSN.

The electoral campaign was contested on at least three different levels. First, opponents confronted one another in a struggle over policy formulation. Competing parties struggled to attract voters on the basis of what they hoped would be distinctive policy platforms, tailoring their programs to the constituent blocks that they thought would be most responsive to their appeals. Second, competitors engaged in a vicious ideological contest designed to shape popular perception of themselves (positively) and of their opponents (negatively). Taking place as it did in an environment in which political dialogue had been petrified for more than four decades, ideological stereotyping proved crucial to the election's outcome. Third, an ill-defined and often extra-legal struggle was fought between partisans of rival political organizations throughout the country as they maneuvered to coopt local

member of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) Political Executive Committee). Thus transformed, the leadership of the FSN reversed its position on running candidates for office in a successor government.

Even as the FSN consolidated its control over the government, adversary groups took shape and contested its right to rule. Already in December the FSN's major rivals had begun to organize in Bucharest. The first of these were the so called "historic parties," the National Liberal Party (PNL), the National Peasant-Christian Democratic Party (PNT-CD), and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). By early January another major force, the Democratic Hungarian Union of Romania (UDMR) had begun to function in Transylvania as well.⁴ Other less formal organizations, like the student movement, while not explicitly aspiring to power, also brought substantial pressure on the government.

The National Salvation Front's decision to take part in national elections instantly destabilized an already volatile situation, touching off a series of anti-regime demonstrations by the student movement and anti-FSN political parties. Protests staged in the capital posed a serious threat to Iliescu, whose hold on the military and police forces was not always clear. Street demonstrations in Bucharest demanding resignation of the FSN were only brought to an end through the use of force. Unable to call on the military to contain the protesters, Iliescu mobilized supportive workers, who responded by rampaging in the capitol, physically attacking presumed opponents of the new regime. Coupled with the extension of compromises to the opposition political parties (whose representatives were brought together for round table talks with the FSN on February 1, 1990), the obvious threat of further violence by the workers served to pressure opponents into compliance.

Because of the intense pressure that it faced in late January, the FSN accepted a series of compromises concerning organization of the May 20, 1990 elections.⁵ The final version of the law, completed in mid-March 1990 after extensive negotiations, provided for simultaneous elections for the national Presidency and for both houses of a new bicameral parliament (119 Senate seats, and 387 seats in the Deputies Assembly). In a major concession it was agreed that elections for the legislative branch were to be held on the basis of proportional representation rather than single member districts. Opposition politicians considered that their prospects would be significantly improved under this provision, given their own

tion of reform at a cautious pace, for a strong government sector, and for strong social protection. The remainder of the collectivist-nationalist grouping consists of five parties that occupy the political space with or to the right of the of FDSN on the dimension of nationalism and close to the FDSN or to its left on the reform continuum. These include the Party of Romanian national Unity (PUNR), the Greater Romania Party (RM) and the Socialist Workers Party (PSM), the FSN, and the Democratic Agrarian Party (PDAR).

While sharing some common characteristics each of these parties has unique attributes that distinguish it from the others and make close cooperation difficult to achieve. PUNR, for example is primarily a regional party of Transylvania (though its national following is increasing) It has increasingly come under the sway of its presidential candidate, George Funar, the radical nationalist mayor of Cluj. The second main component of the original ruling party, ex-Prime Minister Roman's FSN, moved in the direction of a more reformist policy than the FDSN following the party's break up, contending that Iliescu had failed to pursue reform and had "sold out" the 1989 revolution. The PSM, led by Ceausescu lieutenant Ilie Verdet, is the successor the RCP and thus not surprisingly is staunchly collectivist. The PDAR, staffed largely by cadre of the former regime's agricultural bureaucracy, is closely associated with the FDSN.

The second major locus of political power, the liberal-universalist grouping is located on the opposite extreme of these ideological dimensions. It consists of parties that are often identified as the "democratic opposition," most of which participate in the Democratic Convention. These include most prominently the Civic Alliance Party (PAC), the National Peasant Party-Christian Democrat (PNT-CD), the Liberal (PNL), and the Hungarian Democratic Union (UDMR) (see Table Three). These parties, in general, are much more favorably inclined to rapid reform and privatization. They are also much less driven by Romanian nationalism than the former grouping (see Table Five).

Three other parties that played significant roles in the 1992 elections are not firmly attached to either of these groupings. Led by ex-student activist Marin Munteanu, the Movement for Romania (MR) is the newest addition to the parties of the radical right, and has ties to the prewar Legionary Movement. It can thus clearly be description as nationalist, but is at the same time economically liberal, placing it in an equivocal position between the

two opposed blocs. Support for the Romanian Ecological Movement (MER) and the Republican Party (PR), on the other hand, does not appear to be determined adequately by the ideological dimensions identified above. Confidence in them does not correlate significantly with attitudes that distinguish supporters of the two main blocs, and their supporters were not consistent in their attitudes toward the parties that participate in the main competing coalitions (see Tables Three, Four and Five).

The outcome of voting in September 1992 confirmed that a considerable evolution had occurred in Romanian politics since the 1990 contest. In the presidential race support for Ion Iliescu was substantiated as a cardinal fact in Romanian political life. With 47.2% of the first round vote and 61.4% in the final contest Iliescu again dominated the field of candidates (see Table Five). The Democratic Convention's candidate, Emil Constantinescu was able to attract 31.2% in the first round, but garnered only an additional 7% in the second round, bringing his total vote to 38.6%. While a credible showing, this outcome clearly did not allow the opposition to threaten President Iliescu. On the other hand, a decline in support of 23.7% suffered between 1990 and 1992 could not have been comforting to the President.¹⁸

Voting in the legislative elections reflected even greater change (see Table Six). While still capturing a plurality of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies, FDSN support fell to 27.7% in comparison to the unified FSN's 66.3% in the previous contest. Roman's rump FSN accounted for only another 10.2% of the vote leaving a drop of more than 28% to be accounted for. While no absolute answer to the destination of these votes is possible, it appears likely that they were distributed across the ideological spectrum. PUNR, for example, won only slightly more than 2% of the 1990 vote, but more than 8% in 1992. Support for the parties that constitute the Democratic Convention also increased dramatically. From a collective vote of less than 5% in 1990 the combined forces captured more than 20% of the legislative vote in 1992; a remarkable feat by any standards. Other parties that enjoyed slight increases include Romania Mare and the Verdets' successor Socialist Workers Party, while support for the Hungarian Democratic Union remained approximately constant, as one would expect given the nature of its constituency.

If one considers the differential support for political parties and presidential candidates by various social strata, the continued strength of the governing party and the difficulties

facing the opposition become even more clear (see Table Seven). The 15% of workers expressing very much confidence' in the FDSN in late June 1992 is nearly double the level of support expressed in any other single party; 8.5% for the FSN. Among peasants strong support for the FDSN was even more secure, at 24.6%. Only among professionals with higher education did the FDSN fail to capture the highest level of support, with 11.5% expressing a high level of confidence. Within this group it trailed behind the Civic Alliance Party, with 18.5% and the PNT-CD with 16.3%. Questions concerning support for potential Presidential candidates produced even more disproportionate results. 46.2% of peasants and 31.9% of workers expressed support for Ion Iliescu. In each of these categories the only other candidate to attract more than 10% support was Prime Minister Stolojan. Among professionals Stolojan gained the most support, with 26.2%, followed by Nicolae Manolescu (14.3%) and Iliescu (13.1%). These data confirm one of the fundamental facts that has emerged in post-communist Romanian politics; support for Ion Iliescu and policies that he represents by a very large part of the population, particularly among workers and peasants. Just as clear is intelligentsia dissatisfaction with the government and strong support for the opposition. Given the country's demographics, however, intellectual opposition in itself cannot lead to a change in regime through electoral means.

CONCLUSION

The direction of Romania's political life in the post-communist period as reflected in the elections examined above has been, on the whole, positive. Romanians inherited an enormous burden of adversity inflicted by the previous regime. Their country's development under communism placed it at an even more disadvantageous position than that of its East European neighbors for contending with the task of constructing a democratic political order. This legacy has not by any means been entirely overcome in the three years since the revolution, but unmistakable indications of movement in a constructive direction are visible.

The initial 1990 elections represented a partial transition from the old order that left much to be desired from the standpoint of democratic norms. In particular a proclivity toward violent confrontation within particular sectors of the population gave cause for serious concern. Equally disturbing was the willingness of political elites to manipulate this proclivity in the pursuit of their own goals. Yet while recognizing the shortcomings of the

1990 electoral process, it is perhaps as important to keep in mind the fundamental progress that it exemplified relative to the pre-1990 period. It was, after all, possible for opposition parties to organize, and to articulate their criticisms of the FSN regime. For those familiar with Romania during the Ceausescu period nothing could be more symbolic of the changes that had occurred than the number of opposition newspapers that appeared on the streets, or the open vituperation with which they attacked Ion Iliescu and his government. It is clear that at the time of the 1990 elections the National Salvation Front dominated Romanian politics. But it is just as clear that organized opposition was allowed to develop and to participate in the political life of the country into the post election period. This set the groundwork in place for a second set of elections under much more stable circumstances.

In comparison to the obvious manipulation of the transition elections, the second national vote was a decisive step forward. First, the quality of the election with respect for rules allowing the opposition to organize and compete effectively was significantly improved. Second, significant differentiation occurred within both the elite and the electorate in the years intervening between the first and second elections, and the level of political dialogue rose substantially over that of the ill prepared transition elections.

Thus after three years and two national electoral campaigns the shape of the new post-communist Romanian political landscape is beginning to emerge. The pretense of complete national unity beneath the banner of the National Salvation Front, countered only by an ineffective and fragmented opposition, has been replaced by competition between several parties representing distinct political positions. While the process of party formation is far from complete, and while personality and faction continue to play a strong role in political life, progress in the direction of "normalization," at least in the realm of electoral politics, is unmistakable. Open competition on the national level has become an accepted fact of political life. If the transition toward a stable democratic political system is to continue the next steps must include the strengthening of representative national political parties, equitable accommodation of opposition interests in newly established legislative institutions, and the improvement of norms concerning the partisan use of public resources.

TABLE ONE

Romanian 1990 Legislative Election Results

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

<u>Party</u>	<u>% of vote</u>	<u>Number of Seats</u>
FSN	66.31	263
UDMR	7.23	29
PNL	6.41	29
PNT	2.56	12
MER	2.62	12
AUR	2.12	9
Other	12.75	33
Total	100.00	387

SENATE

<u>Party</u>	<u>% of vote</u>	<u>Number of Seats</u>
FSN	67.02	91
UDMR	7.20	12
PNL	7.06	10
PNT	2.50	1
MER	2.45	1
AUR	2.15	2
Other	11.62	2
Total	100.00	119

TABLE TWO

1990 Presidential Vote by Region

	Ion Iliescu	Radu Campeanu	Ion Ratiu
Banat	77	17	6
Moldavia	94	4	2
Muntenia	93	4	3
Oltenia	93	5	2
Transylvania	72	23	5
Bucharest	77	12	11
National	85.1%	10.1%	4.3%

TABLE THREE*

Political attitudes and Party Confidence

Attitude toward Pace of Privatization by Confidence in Party

	R ²	B	Significance of F
FDSN	.051	.229	.000
FSN	.030	.178	.000
RM	.027	.167	.000
PSM	.016	.133	.000
PDAR	.004	.075	.012
PNT-CD	.058	-.242	.000
CAP	.053	-.233	.000
UDMR	.023	-.155	.000
PNL-AT	.029	-.172	.000
PNL	.021	-.148	.000

TABLE FOUR*

Attitude toward Equality Scale by Confidence in Party

	R ²	Beta	F
FDSN	.023	-.154	.000
PSM	.016	-.132	.000
FSN	.014	-.124	.000
PDAR	.003	-.066	.024
RM	.003	-.066	.028
PNT-CD	.043	.210	.000
CAP	.027	.167	.000
UDMR	.007	.090	.001
PNL-AT	.008	.095	.001
PNL	.007	.092	.001

*Data taken from a random national sample of 1608 respondents taken in late June and early July 1992.

TABLE FIVE'

Attitude toward Minority Rights scale by confidence in Party

	R ²	Beta	Significance of F
RM	.018	-.138	.000
FDSN	.015	-.129	.000
PUNR	.014	-.122	.000
FSN	.009	-.100	.0005
PDAR	.009	-.100	.0008
PSM	.005	-.080	.0077
UDMR	.143	.379	.000
CAP	.054	.234	.000
PNT-CD	.036	.192	.000
PNL-AT	.015	.127	.000

'Data taken from a random national sample of 1608 respondents taken in late June and early July 1992.

TABLE SIX*

PROXIMITY OF PARTY SUPPORT

		R ²	Beta			R ²	Beta
FSN	FDSN	.143	.37	RM	PUNR	.297	.54
					PDAR	.193	.44
FDSN	RM	.152	.39		FDSN	.152	.39
	PDAR	.145	.38		PSM	.142	.38
	FSN	.143	.37		PR	.116	.34
	PUNR	.142	.37	MER	MR	.248	.49
	PSM	.114	.34		PNL-AT	.223	.47
					PDAR	.211	.46
PNT-CD	CAP	.427	.65		PNL	.163	.40
	UDMR	.239	.49		PR	.162	.40
	PNL-AT	.161	.40		PUNR	.150	.38
	PNL	.140	.34				
	MR	.137	.54	PNL	PNL-AT	.364	.60
					MER	.163	.40
UDMR	CAP	.289	.53		PR	.145	.38
	PNT-CD	.239	.48		MR	.145	.38
					PNT-CT	.139	.37
CAP	PNT-CD	.427	.65		CA	.106	.32
	UDMR	.289	.53				
	PNL-AT	.178	.42	PNL-AT	PNL	.364	.60
	MR	.165	.40		MR	.306	.48
	PNL	.106	.32		MER	.223	.47
					PR	.215	.46
PDAR	MER	.211	.46		CA	.178	.42
	RM	.193	.44		PNT-CD	.161	.40
	PR	.193	.44	PR	PUNR	.220	.47
	FDSN	.145	.38		PNL-AT	.215	.46
					PDAR	.193	.44
PUNR	PDAR	.347	.59		MER	.162	.40
	RM	.297	.54		PNL	.145	.38
	FDSN	.142	.37		RM	.116	.34
				MR	PNL-AT	.306	.55
PSM	RM	.145	.38		MER	.249	.49
	FDSN	.114	.34		PR	.229	.47
					PDAR	.193	.44
					CA	.165	.40
					FDSN	.152	.39
					PNL	.145	.38
					PNT-CD	.137	.37

*Data taken from a random national sample of 1608 respondents taken in late June and early July 1992.

TABLE SEVEN

Presidential Election 1992: Total Vote

	September 27	October 11
Ion Illiescu	47.2%	61.4%
Emil Constantinescu	31.2%	38.6
Gheorghe Funar	11.0%	
Caius Dragomir	4.8	
Ion Manzatu	3.1%	
Mircea Druc	2.8%	

TABLE EIGHT

1992 Presidential Vote by Region

	Iliescu	Constantinescu	Funar	Dragomir	Manzatu	Druc
Banat	29.2%	45.9%	11.6%	5.4%	5.0%	2.9%
Moldova	6.51%	21.1%	5.2%	5.1%	3.1%	4.0%
Muntenia	62.5%	21.2%	5.7%	5.3%	2.6%	2.7%
Oltenia	62%	22.9%	5.9%	4.5%	2.0%	2.5%
Transyl vania	23%	42.7%	25.0%	3.9%	3.3%	2.2%

TABLE NINE

Parliamentary Elections September 1992

	Chamber of Deputies		Senate	
	Vote	Seats	Vote	Seats
FSDN	27.7%	117	28.3%	49
DCR	20.0%	82	20.2%	34
FSN	10.2%	43	10.4%	18
PUNR	7.9%	30	8.1%	14
UDMR	7.4%	27	7.6%	12
RM	3.8%	16	3.8%	6
PSM	3.0%	13	3.2%	5
PDAR	2.9%		3.3%	3
PNL	2.6%		2.1%	
MER	2.3%		2.1%	
PR	1.6%		1.9%	

TABLE TEN*

Worker's Confidence in Political Parties

	Very Much	Much	Moderate	Little
FSN	8.5%	22.3%	26.7%	42.5%
FSDN	15.0%	21.5%	18.1%	45.4%
PNT-CD	7.1%	10.3%	21.8%	60.9%
UDMR	5.1%	6.9%	15.1%	72.8%
CAP	6.8%	14.5%	19.7%	59.0%
PDAR	4.8%	17.1%	33.7%	44.4%
PUNR	7.9%	18.9%	24.8%	48.3%
PSM	4.2%	9.6%	16.7%	69.6%
RM	6.2%	17.8%	24.0%	52.1%
MER	4.3%	19.1%	29.4%	47.2%
PNL	6.2%	12.6%	25.8%	55.4%
PNL-AT	3.0%	17.5%	22.8%	56.6%
RP	3.6%	11.5%	28.1%	56.9%
MR	2.1%	9.2%	17.6%	71.1%

TABLE ELEVEN*

Peasant's Confidence in Political Parties

	Very Much	Much	Moderate	Little
FSN	18.1%	20.0%	25.0%	36.9%
FSDN	24.6%	17.2%	13.4%	44.8%
PNT-CD	2.0%	9.9%	17.9%	70.2%
UDMR	4.7%	4.8%	7.6%	85.0%
CAP	2.4%	5.7%	12.2%	79.7%
PDAR	8.6%	25.7%	17.1%	48.6%
PUNR	9.6%	13.6%	19.2%	57.6%
PSM	1.7%	3.5%	8.7%	86.1%
RM	2.5%	10.1%	19.3%	68.1%
MER	6.3%	12.5%	22.3%	61.6%
PNL	5.1%	5.1%	12.4%	77.4%
PNL-AT	3.1%	6.3%	14.8%	75.8%
RP	2.0%	9.6%	25.5%	65.7%
MR	2.2%	2.2%	6.5%	89.1%

*Data taken from a random national sample of 1608 respondents taken in late June and early July 1992.

TABLE TWELVEN*

Professionals' Confidence in Political Parties

	Very Much	Much	Moderate	Little
FSN	2.5%	12.5%	27.8%	57.0%
FSDN	11.5%	10.3%	15.4%	62.8%
PNT-CD	16.3%	20.0%	22.5%	41.3%
UDMR	7.6%	8.9%	10.1%	73.4%
CAP	18.5%	19.8%	17.3%	44.4%
PDAR	3.8%	13.9%	20.3%	62.0%
PUNR	11.5%	12.8%	19.2%	56.4%
PSM	1.3%	3.8%	12.7%	82.3%
RM	2.5%	11.4%	8.9%	77.2%
MER	5.1%	17.9%	21.8%	55.1%
PNL	6.3%	17.5%	21.3%	55.0%
PNL-AT	2.5%	22.8%	30.4%	44.3%
RP	5.3%	20.0%	22.7%	52.0%
MR	9.1%	9.1%	12.1%	69.1%

Data taken from a random national sample of 1608 respondents taken in late June and early July 1992.

TABLE THIRTEEN*

Support for President: June 1992

	Professionals	Workers	Peasants
Ratiu	10.7%	9.0%	1.7%
Druc	2.4%	0.3%	1.2%
Iliescu	13.1%	31.9%	46.2%
Manzatu	0.0%	1.9%	1.2%
Manolescu	14.3%	3.1%	2.3%
Stolojan	26.2%	15.8%	11.0%
Roman	1.2%	2.2%	4.0%
Conescu	1.2%	0.6%	0.0%
Campeanu	1.2%	4.6%	3.5%
Nastase	7.1%	5.0%	0.6%

Data taken from a random national sample of 1608 respondents taken in late June and early July 1992.

1. See, for example, Trond Gilberg, Nationalism and Communism in Romania (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990); Mary Ellen Fischer, Nicolae Ceausescu: A Study in Political Leadership, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1989); William Crowther, The Political Economy of Romanian Socialism (New York: Praeger, 1988); Romanian Politics in the Ceausescu Era (Cooper Station, New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1988).

2. The actual course of events leading to Ceausescu's overthrow and execution, and the nature of the leadership that emerged from Romania's December revolution immediately became the subjects of intense speculation. See, for example Vladimir Tismaneanu, "New Masks, Old Faces," The New Republic, February 5, 1990, pp. 17-21; Michael Shafir, "New Revelations of the Military's Role in Ceausescu's Ouster," Report on Eastern Europe, pp. 24-27.

3. For the text of the initial FSN program, announced December 22, 1989, see FBIS-EEU-89-246, December 26, 1989, pp. 65-66.

4. FBIS-EEU-90-008, January 11, 1990, p. 73.

5. In order to ease opposition from the non-governing parties the Council of the National Salvation Front agreed to dissolve itself as a government. In its place, a new body, the Provisional Council of National Unity, was established to govern until elections could be held. The new body retained most of the membership of the old council (half of the positions on it were allocated to the FSN), but it included members from the other political parties as well. See "Iliescu Discusses 1 Feb Roundtable Talks," Bucharest Domestic Service, FBIS-EEU-90-024, February 5, 1990, p. 63.

6. FBIS-EEU-90-013, January 19, 1990, p. 69.

7. "Platform-Program of the National Salvation Front Revealed in Bucharest," FBIS-EEU-90-026, February 7, 1990, p. 55.

8. For summaries of the programs of these parties as well as those of the Social Democratic Party and the Ecological Democrats see Vladimir Socor, "Political Parties Emerging," Report on Eastern Europe, February 16, 1990, pp. 28-35.

9. In a statement typical of the National Liberal's approach, party Executive Secretary Dinu Patriciu commented in an interview with Curierul Comercial on May 20, 1990 that "it is easier to build new structures than to restructure." While possibly true, statements such as this could only raise anxiety among working class voters, and certainly did not help the PNL's

election prospects. "Party Leaders Note Privatization Issues," FBIS-EEU-90-090, May 9, 1990, p. 43.

10. See, for example, the description of the NSF by Tiberiu Popescu in "Fraud in the Elections?" Dreptatea, April 12, 1990, pp. 1-2, (FBIS-EEU-90-088, May 7, 1990, p. 59).

11. During the insurrection against Ceausescu cooperation between Hungarians and Romanians was evident. Soon, however, tensions began to arise, particularly in Transylvania, where the Hungarian community raised a series of demands for the redress of wrongs inflicted by the communist regime. At the same time as, and in part in response to the mobilization of the Hungarian minority, Romanian nationalists joined to form their own organizations, notably Vatra Romaneasca. While officially decrying ethnic hostility, representatives of the government met officially with the leadership of Vitro on several occasions. As tension increased in Transylvania the official mass media broadcast inflammatory statements concerning the Hungarian minority that were later shown to be fabricated. Finally, and most seriously, numerous reports link local officials, presumably under the direction of the FSN to the violence that occurred between Romanians and Hungarians in Tirgu-Mures on March 19th and 20th. These confrontations, the most dangerous ethnic clash that occurred in the weeks leading up to the election, left 8 people dead and approximately 300 injured. For an account of the confrontation in Tirgu-Mures see Vladimir Socor, "Forces of Old Resurface in Romania: The Ethnic clashes in Tirgu-Mures," Report on Eastern Europe, April 13, 1990, pp. 36-40.

12. When the FSN announced its intention to field candidates, for example, mass protest rallies were called by the opposition in central Bucharest. In response the Front leadership incited workers from the capital and from outlying districts to physical violence in order to intimidate the opposition into acquiescence. For the various parties appeals for popular support during this period see FBIS-eeu-90-230, January 29, 1990, pp. 92-95.

13. On the use of violence during the campaign see Dan Ionescu "Violence and Calumny in the Election Campaign," Report on Eastern Europe, May 25, 1990, pp. 37-42.

14. See, for example, the following accounts. Adriane Genillard, "Behind Romania's Vote For Ruling Communists," The Christian Science Monitor, May 23, 1990, p. 4; "Press Comments on fairness, Conduct of the Elections," FBIS-EEU-90-107, June 4, 1990, pp. 53-54; Vladimir Socor, "National Salvation Front Produces Electoral Landslide," Report on Eastern Europe, July 6, 1990, pp. 24-31.

15. Thus even if all of the opposition groups voted as a block, a circumstance that was virtually unimaginable, the Front would still control both of the new legislative bodies. In fact, on most issues the Romanian Unity Alliance (AUR) (the electoral wing of Vatra Romaneasca) and many of the smaller parties could be counted on to act support the FSN on most issues, insuring its control over both executive and legislative branches.

16. For a more detailed discussion of the early post communist economic reforms in Romania see Mugur Isarescu "The Prognosis for Economic Recovery," in Daniel N. Nelson, ed., *Romania After Tyranny* (Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado, 1992), pp. 147-165.

17. See Michael Shafir, "Toward the Rule of Law: Romania," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report, Vol. 1, no. 27, July 3, 1992, pp. 34-40.

18. This loss, while in part explicable by migration to other parties and their candidates, must also be seen in the context of the artificially inflated support for Iliescu registered in the elections of 1990.