Regional Economic Voting

RUSSIA, POLAND, HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA, AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC, 1990–1999

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Regional Economic Voting

This study demonstrates that in a time of massive change characterized by the emergence of entirely new political systems and a fundamental reorganization of economic life, systematic patterns of economic conditions affecting election results at the aggregate level can in fact be identified during the first decade of postcommunist elections in five postcommunist countries: Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Intriguingly, incumbency status is not the best predictor of these effects. Instead, parties that are primarily identified with the “Old Regime” that predated the transition enjoy more electoral success in regions with more economic losers, while “New Regime” parties that are mostly closely identified with the movement away from communism consistently enjoy more electoral support in regions with more economic winners. A variety of theoretical arguments concerning the conditions in which these effects are more or less likely to be present are also proposed and tested. Analysis is conducted using an original data set of regional level economic, demographic, and electoral indicators, and features both broadly based comparative assessments of the findings across all twenty elections as well as more focused case study analyses of pairs of individual elections.

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Introduction

The story of postcommunism is, to a large extent, the story of simultaneous transitions. The speed at which so many countries fundamentally and simultaneously reorganized both their political and economic systems may be unprecedented in human history. To understand the postcommunist experience, therefore, one must understand the interaction between these two different and yet interconnected processes. A great deal of academic energy has been expended in an effort to understand how political factors have affected economic developments in the postcommunist world.\(^1\) Less attention, however, has been paid to systematic studies of the manner in which economic conditions have reverberated back into the political process.

One fundamental way in which economic developments affect political developments is through elections and voting. Political science has a rich literature on the topic of economic voting in established democracies but has only begun to scratch the surface of the topic in newer democracies.\(^2\) The politics of economic reform literature in particular often seems

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\(^1\) See, for example, Przeworski 1991; Sachs 1993; Lavigne 1994; Ashlund 1995; Lavigne 1995; Goldman 1997; Gustafson 1999; Woodruff 1999; Frye 2000; Hancock and Logue 2000; Orenstein 2001; Reddaway and Glinski 2001. The larger literature on the politics of economic reform of course extends beyond the postcommunist context; for reviews, see Haggard and Webb 1993; Bunce 2001.

\(^2\) Elections and voting generally in postcommunist countries have attracted a good deal of attention from the scholarly community. But the vast majority of this work has focused on providing comprehensive explanations for voting behavior in particular elections or particular countries. Much less effort has been expended attempting to test general hypotheses concerning factors affecting election results across multiple countries and multiple elections; for a review of this literature noting this pattern, see Tucker 2002. One exception has been the small number of articles that have appeared in recent years examining economic voting;
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to sidestep the topic entirely, relying on conclusions generated from the economic voting literature in established democracies to assume that voters will turn against incumbent parties when faced with the economic pain that is an inevitable by-product of a transition to a more market oriented economy. The uncertainty paradigm, also applied in discussions of post-communist transitions, takes this one step further by highlighting the many factors working against the likelihood of identifying any systematic effects on political behavior in the wake of the transition’s complete and utter upheaval of citizens’ political and economic worlds.

The study that follows demonstrates that in a time of massive change characterized by the emergence of entirely new political systems and a fundamental reorganization of economic life, systematic patterns of cross-regional variation in economic conditions affecting cross-regional variation in election results at the aggregate level can in fact be identified during the first decade (1990–99) of postcommunist elections in five postcommunist countries: Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. And although these patterns strengthened as time passed, they were present even in the earliest part of the decade. Even more surprisingly, these patterns do

see in particular the sources cited in note 25. Studies of economic voting in new democracies outside the postcommunist world are, if anything, even less frequent. In Latin America, see Remmer 1991, 1993; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; in Africa, see Posner and Simon 2002. For studies spanning multiple regions that include new democracies, see Wilkin, Haller, and Norpoth 1997; Aguilar and Pacek 2000.

3 See, for example, Haggard and Kaufman 1989; Waterbury 1989; Offe 1991; Nelson 1994; Haggard and Kaufman 1995a; Naim 1995; Plattner and Diamond 1995. And when elections are considered, it is usually only in passing to note that they provide a means for reformists to be voted out of office (e.g., Nelson 1994, 9; Roland 1994, 32; Haggard and Kaufman 1995b, 157) or to open the door for antidemocratic parties to be returned to office; see, for example, Offe 1991; Haggard and Kaufman 1992; Pereira, Maravall, and Przeworski 1993; Maravall 1995. Such views also were common in the Western press following the second round of postcommunist elections in the early to mid-1990s. For example, the Montreal Gazette’s editorial page following the 1993 Polish elections contained the headline “Polish Voters Want Less Pain,” and the text read, “Viewed from the receiving end, Poland’s economic "shock therapy" has not been such a roaring success . . . [and] voters used Sunday’s legislative elections to register their disappointment” (Editorial 1993, B2). Writing about the same election, Thomas Eagleton of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch led off his article with the headline “Road to Capitalism Proves Bumpy” and noted that voters “did express their abiding displeasure with the pervasive hardships that accompany an instantaneous conversion to free enterprise” (Eagleton 1993, 3B).

4 In an often-cited essay on the topic, Bunce and Csanadi 1993 claimed early in the 1990s that “the structure of post-communism is the absence of much structure” (241). See as well Colton 2000b, 5–16, for an informative discussion of uncertainty in the postcommunist context.
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not merely take the simplest form envisioned by the politics of economic reform literature with areas more heavily populated by economic losers attempting to “throw the bums out” by turning against incumbent parties in greater numbers than those living in areas of the country with more economic winners. Instead, I find that the presence of economic losers in a region leads more consistently to more votes for particular types of political parties, regardless of who is currently in power. The same is true of economic winners, although the presence of breakmore economic winners of course helps different types of political parties. I identify these types of parties by taking the transition seriously, although not as an event that renders rational political behavior impossible, but, rather, as a focal point that allows voters to make sense of the often chaotic political environment emerging around them by focusing on the “Transitional Identity” of political parties. Thus, it is parties identified primarily with the “Old Regime” that predated the transition that enjoy more electoral success in regions with more economic losers, whereas “New Regime” parties that are mostly closely identified with the movement away from communism consistently enjoy more electoral support in regions with more economic winners. So although postcommunist voters may in part have been motivated by economic conditions to throw the bums out, ultimately economic winners and losers acted in the aggregate as if they were more interested in the type of party they were trying to throw in.

In an effort to provide a systematic test of these claims, I employ a broadly comparative framework in this study that takes two forms. First, the study examines elections results from twenty separate presidential and parliamentary elections that took place over a ten-year period in five different countries. Thus, none of the patterns identified can be said to be a product of a particular set of circumstances peculiar to a given country at a given time, or even in a given country over time. Second, the study looks for concentrations of economic winners and losers and their effects on election results not at the national level – which would have yielded but one observation of economic conditions and election results per election – but, rather, at the regional level. In this manner, I am able to examine on a party-by-party basis whether or not individual parties in each of the twenty elections performed better in areas of the country where economic conditions were better or where economic condition were worse. At the same time, I employ a method of analysis that allows for comparison of these party by party results with one another, allowing me to search for patterns of support for hypotheses across the entire set of cases contained
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in the study. Thus, the use of regional level data facilitates both election-by-election case study analysis and broadly based comparative analysis across all twenty elections. These two types of analyses complement one another: for the case study analyses, the broader analysis presents an opportunity to see how the results fit in a larger comparative format; for the overall comparative analysis, the case studies provide an opportunity to explore the context in which larger patterns do or do not hold. Taken together, the two forms of analyses offer a window into the question of how regional patterns of political support for postcommunist parties and party systems have developed and the role that economic conditions have played in that process.

Overall, this book takes advantage of the fact that enough time has now passed since the onset of the postcommunist transitional experience to begin to explore in a detailed, comparative, and systematic manner this important aspect of the relationship between the two distinguishing facets of that transition: the inception of massive economic change combined with the adaptation of competitive multiparty elections (at least for the time period and countries included in this particular study). Unlike previous work that has considered the effect of economic conditions on election results as one of a handful of factors to explain the results of a particular election or series of elections, the study places this crucial intersection between the postcommunist world’s simultaneous political and economic transitions at the center of its analysis. In doing so, findings are generated that can shed light on multiple facets of both postcommunist politics specifically and mass political behavior more generally.

Economic Voting

Beyond the postcommunist context, the book also offers important contributions to the study of economic voting more generally. Political scientists have long been fascinated by the question of how economic conditions affect election results. Yet despite the wide range of questions one can ask on this topic, most analyses have focused on one particular type of relationship between economic conditions and election results – the effect of

\[^5\] Indeed, one can find an article on the topic in the *American Political Science Review* from more than sixty years ago on the effect of economic conditions on the vote for Franklin Roosevelt; see Ogburn and Coombs 1940.
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Table 1.1. Questions Asked by Economic Voting Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Affected by State of the Economy</th>
<th>Governing Status</th>
<th>Party “Type”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Economic Voting Hypotheses</td>
<td>Do incumbent parties perform better if the economy is better?</td>
<td>Do certain “types” of parties perform better if the economy is better/worse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Economic Voting Hypotheses</td>
<td>Under what conditions do we find more support for the claim that incumbent parties perform better if the economy is better?</td>
<td>Under what conditions do we find more support for the claim that “types” of parties perform better if the economy is better/worse?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

economic conditions on the vote for incumbent parties and candidates – based largely on findings from one country – the United States\(^6\) – and attempts to replicate these findings in other established democracies.\(^7\) Put another way, the vast majority of the literature has attempted to answer some variation of the question found in the upper left-hand corner of Table 1.1.

In addition to shifting the location of the study of economic voting to the more turbulent electoral environment of postcommunist Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic in the 1990s, this study also differs from most that have preceded it by addressing questions found in all four quadrants of Table 1.1. At the most basic level, there are two ways to conceive of economic conditions having a systematic impact on election results. The first is for economic conditions to affect the vote for the parties that comprise the government at the time of the election.\(^8\) This question


\(^7\) Although it should be noted that recent innovations in terms of applying what I will call conditional economic voting hypotheses – and in particular the proposition that economic conditions will be more important when governments are more likely to be held responsible for the state of the economy – have largely emanated from cross-national studies of advanced industrialized democracies. See, for example, the sources cited in note 15.

\(^8\) This continued focus on the relationship between economic conditions and the vote for incumbent parties has long been justified in terms of what it can reveal about the political accountability of governments to their citizens. However, as is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes (1999b) argue that political representation is as much dependent on beliefs about what parties will do in office in the future as it is on sanctioning the current government for past behavior. Thus, understanding how economic
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is almost always phrased in terms of whether or not incumbent parties or candidates (hereafter I use the term parties to refer to both for simplicity) are helped by better economic conditions. As noted earlier, this question has dominated the study of economic voting in established democracies. But there is a second way to think about the systematic effect of economic conditions on election results, which is by focusing on a party’s “type.” In practice, this has involved examining whether or not the economy has different effects on the vote for right-wing or left-wing parties, but, as I will note momentarily (and address in much greater detail in the following chapter), there is no reason why partisan orientation along a traditional left–right spectrum is the only “type” that can be considered.9

Moving our analyses beyond the effect of the economy on the vote for just incumbent parties becomes increasingly important as political systems move farther from the ideal type of a two-party system best exemplified by the United States. Within the confines of a stable two-party system, knowing how the economy affects the vote for the incumbent party tells us almost all we need to know about the effect of the economy on election results; if the incumbent party performs better under certain economic conditions, then the opposition party must perform worse almost by definition when facing these same conditions.10 As we move our analyses to more of a multiparty context, however, the simple dichotomy of an incumbent versus nonincumbent approach disappears as multiple parties can be found both in and out of government (with some parties even moving in and out during a single electoral period). Analyses of the effect of the economy on the vote for parties on the basis of something inherent in the party itself – what I am loosely calling here the party’s type or identity – have the potential to expand the range of our understanding of how the economy can affect election results, both in terms of the parties most likely to benefit from better economic conditions but also, perhaps even more crucially, in terms of the parties that are more likely to benefit when economic conditions are worse.

9 See, for example, Rosa and Anson 1976; Lewis-Beck and Bellucci 1982; Kiewiet 1983; Bellucci 1984; Host and Paldam 1990; Powell and Whitten 1993; Palmer and Whitten 2000.

10 Of course, issues such as turnout and protest votes make this a slightly more complicated picture, but the basic point holds, especially in comparison to a genuine multiparty political system.
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As opposed to most work on the topic that examines only one of these two questions (and, in almost all cases, this is the incumbency question), my study is framed as an explicit comparison between hypotheses drawn from both of these two approaches. Each of the two quadrants in the top row of Table 1.1, therefore, yields a different model. The Referendum Model, based on the upper left-hand quadrant of Table 1.1, predicts simply that incumbent parties ought to perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are stronger. In contrast, the Transitional Identity Model, based on the upper right-hand quadrant of Table 1.1, categorizes parties in terms of their relationship to the transition itself. On the basis of this classification, one type of party – the aforementioned New Regime parties – is predicted to receive more electoral support in areas of the country where economic conditions are better, whereas another type of party – the Old Regime parties – is predicted to receive more electoral support in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse.11

It is possible to compare the empirical support for each of these models with one another because they make predictions about the effects of economic condition on the electoral fortunes of different parties. Across the twenty elections, there are forty-nine parties coded as incumbent parties, forty parties coded as New Regime parties, and twenty-nine parties coded as Old Regime parties.12 As will be explained in much greater detail later in this book, the method of analysis I employ generates an estimate of our confidence that each particular party provides support for the relevant hypothesis, thus allowing comparisons of the number and proportion of parties that generate support for each of the three primary hypotheses across all twenty elections. The result of this comparative analysis is remarkably clear: across a wide variety of empirical tests, there is consistently stronger empirical support for the predictions of the Transitional Identity Model than for the predictions of the Referendum Model. Furthermore, there are

11 These categories are mutually exclusive but they are not exhaustive; there are parties that are not coded as either a New Regime or Old Regime party. The first half of Chapter 2 is dedicated to a thorough explication of both models, and detailed coding rules for New Regime and Old Regime parties can be found in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

12 Although there is some overlap between these groups – there are twenty-one parties coded as New Regime parties and incumbent parties and nine parties coded as Old Regime parties and incumbent parties – there are also nineteen New Regime and twenty Old Regime parties that are not coded as incumbent parties and nineteen incumbent parties that are neither Old Regime nor New Regime parties. This variation is leveraged to provide an additional robustness test of the overall finding of greater empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model than the Referendum Model in Chapter 8; see Table 8.11.
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individual elections in which the two models generate competing hypotheses for the same parties. Strikingly, these head-to-head comparisons also yield the same conclusions as the more general analysis: stronger empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model than the Referendum Model.13

As the empirical tests are conducted at a relatively unexplored level of analysis – the regional level – and the models are based on microlevel arguments developed with the postcommunist political context in mind, these results are not intended in any way to serve as a refutation of existing beliefs about the relationship between economic conditions and election results that have been generated from studies in established democracies. Nevertheless, they do demonstrate clear evidence of a relationship between economic conditions and election results that has a more consistent effect on parties based on their “type” (here, the parties’ Transitional Identity) than on whether or not the party is currently an incumbent, thus providing support for the claim that there are other illuminating ways to examine the effect of the economy on election results besides focusing solely on the vote for incumbent parties.

The second important contribution of the study to the economic voting literature is to focus attention on the possibilities for analyses that move beyond the first row of Table 1.1 into questions raised in the second row. In doing so, I am building off of a small strand of recent work on the effect of economic conditions on election results in OECD14 countries that focuses on what has come to be called the “clarity of responsibility” argument.15 The basic idea of the argument is that economic conditions are more likely to have the predicted effect on the vote for incumbent parties in countries that feature institutional arrangements that could lead voters to believe that the government has more control over economic policy than in countries

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13 One of the paired case studies – the 1997 Polish and 1998 Hungarian parliamentary elections – highlights exactly this type of head-to-head comparison.

14 OECD stands for the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (http://www.oecd.org/home/). Technically, the term “OECD countries” is used to refer to members of the organization, although conventionally it is used as a shorthand for the advanced industrialized democracies of Western Europe plus the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand; it is in this latter format that I employ the term in this book.

15 The “clarity of responsibility” argument was introduced by Powell and Whitten 1993, and provided the impetus for a variety of work that has attempted to either refine or refute it; see, for example, Whitten and Palmer 1999; Anderson 2000; Chappell and Veiga 2000; Royed, Leyden, and Borrelli 2000; and Nadeau, Niemi, and Yoshinaka 2002 in the OECD context, as well as Tucker 2001 in the postcommunist context.
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with institutional arrangements that could lead voters to believe that the
government has less control over these policies. In the terms of this book,
such a hypothesis fits squarely in the lower left-hand corner of Table 1.1,
as it predicts the context (high responsibility institutional arrangements) in
which there ought to be more support for the claim that better economic
conditions help incumbent parties.

I expand this insight in three important directions. First, I adapt and
augment the clarity of responsibility argument for testing in the postcom-
munist context. Second, I move the clarity of responsibility argument out
of just the lower left-hand corner of Table 1.1 and show how responsi-
bility based arguments can also be applied in the lower right-hand corner
as well. In doing so, I test whether the effect of economic conditions on
election results for New Regime and Old Regime parties are also more
consistent when the parties are more likely to be able to affect policy out-
comes than when they are less likely to be able to do so. Third, and perhaps
most importantly, I move beyond the framework of the clarity of responsi-
bility argument and provide a whole set of new theoretical approaches
for generating hypotheses that belong in the second row of Table 1.1, or,
put another way, new arguments about the conditions under which there
should be more empirical support for predictions about the effect of eco-
nomic conditions on election results. These “conditional economic voting”
hypotheses are presented in detail in the second half of Chapter 2, but they
include a supply-side approach (does the economy matter more when other
factors matter less?), a time-based approach (does the effect of the economy
change as time passes?), and a partisan orientation approach (do different
types of political orientations lead to more or less consistent effects for the
economy within the New Regime and Old Regime categories?). Moreover,
the emphasis on exploring questions in the second row of Table 1.1 also
allows me to focus on results disaggregated to intuitively interesting levels
of analysis, such as whether there are differences in the findings across par-
liamentary and presidential elections, while at the same time placing such
analyses within a coherent theoretical framework.

The findings based on these types of questions are too numerous to
address in detail here, but it is worth noting that they offer interesting
observations for both those interested in the general topic of economic vot-
ing and those concerned more specifically with the development of political

16 For details on which institutions are important in this regard, see the discussion of the
institutional responsibility hypothesis in Chapter 2.
behavior in the postcommunist context. In terms of making a contribution to the general economic voting literature, evidence from a variety of tests points toward at least limited support for the “clarity of responsibility” approach, even in the turbulent environment of postcommunist elections. At the same time, analysis of these approaches leads to more focused findings such as the fact that there is little difference between the effect of regional variation in economic conditions on regional variation in the vote for reformed communist successor parties and their unreformed counterparts – and that this relationship changes little over time – a point likely to be of interest to those concerned with postcommunist political behavior.

Examining these conditional economic voting hypotheses also provides an opportunity for retesting the primary conclusion of the study – that there is more empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model than the Referendum Model – across alternative subsets of cases. For example, does this conclusion hold up for elections that took place early in the decade? Or only for political parties that received a particularly large percentage of the overall vote are considered? Each subset of cases therefore provides another opportunity for assessing the comparative empirical support for the Referendum and Transitional Identity Models, but identifying theoretically relevant categories for these subsets of cases requires the types of questions found in the second row of Table 1.1.

Beyond providing additional insight into the effect of economic conditions on the vote in the elections included in this study, the conditional economic voting hypotheses I present here can also hopefully provide a blueprint for a wider incorporation of these types of hypotheses into the general economic voting literature. Most specifically, this book offers a host of new hypotheses – detailed in the following chapter – about the conditions under which there ought to be a more consistent effect for economic conditions on election results. At a more general level, I present a number of new categories of these types of approaches that move beyond the responsibility-based approach. Others who might not want to test the specific hypotheses presented here could still use the basic approaches (e.g., supply-side, time-based) to generate their own (and perhaps more country specific) hypotheses. And at the most general level, the whole idea of generating frameworks for thinking about the context in which economic conditions affect election results hopefully will spur others to identify new theoretical approaches beyond those offered in either this book or in the existing work on the clarity of responsibility argument.
Introduction

A final contribution to the economic voting literature concerns the level of analysis at which the study is conducted. The first modern wave of work on the effect of economic conditions on election results focused almost entirely on time-series analysis of American election results, or, in some cases, presidential approval ratings.\(^{17}\) This work spawned two different types of attempts to replicate its findings in different contexts. Within the field of American politics, numerous scholars turned to survey data to see if they could identify the microlevel links between attitudes toward the economy and voting behavior, leading to debates concerning whether voters were more prospective or retrospective and whether voters cared more about personal economic circumstances (pocketbook voting) or national economic conditions (sociotropic voting).\(^{18}\) At the same time, other scholars attempted to replicate the findings in a comparative context. These studies included cross-national analyses of national election results,\(^{19}\) cross-national time-series analyses,\(^{20}\) survey data in single countries,\(^{21}\) and survey data from multiple countries.\(^{22}\)

Left almost completely unexplored in all of this economic voting scholarship has been the relationship between regional variation in economic conditions and regional variation in the distribution of votes.\(^{23}\) Why this has been the case remains an interesting question, as the relationship between regional economic conditions and regional election results is an equally valid way to test for effects of economy on aggregate election results.\(^{24}\) After all, if we think that when greater numbers of people are dissatisfied


\(^{18}\) See, for example, Kinder and Kiewiet 1979; Fiorina 1981; Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Lockerbie 1991; Lanoue 1994, as well as the discussion of these topics in Chapter 2.

\(^{19}\) See, for example, Wilkin, Haller, and Norpoth 1997.

\(^{20}\) See, for example, Powell and Whitten 1993; Remmer 1993; Palmer and Whitten 1999; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Whitten and Palmer 1999; Chappell and Veiga 2000; Palmer and Whitten 2000.

\(^{21}\) See, for example, Blount 1999; Alvarez, Nagler, and Willette 2000; Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2000; Paldam and Nannestad 2000; Sanders 2003.

\(^{22}\) See, for example, Wlezien, Franklin, and Twigg 1997; Anderson 2000; Nadeau, Niemi, and Yoshinaka 2002.

\(^{23}\) Although see Rattinger 1991 and Posner and Simon 2002 for work of this type on Germany and Zambia, respectively.

\(^{24}\) Interestingly, the earliest work I have found on the topic of economic voting in the American politics literature also uses cross-regional data; see Ogburn and Coombs 1940. Moreover, cross-regional analysis of election results generally in the American context also can be found as early as 1928 in a text on using quantitative methods in the study of politics; see Rice 1928.
with the state of the economy, they are likely to vote for (or against) a particular party, then we should be able to observe the effects of variation in greater numbers of dissatisfied people across different geographic areas at the same time in much the same way that we observe variation in the same geographic area over time. Moreover, it is well known that substantial variation in economic conditions can occur within a country, and yet all analyses that compare national indicators of the state of the economy ignore this variation.

With these observations in mind, this book joins a recent small number of studies in using cross-regional analysis to study the relationship between economic conditions and election results in postcommunist countries.25

One of the first examples of this is Pacek 1994, which uses regional level data to compare the relationship between economic conditions and election results in four elections from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. His study was followed later in the decade by a number of other articles that also presented comparative studies of economic voting in postcommunist countries using cross-regional data, including Bell 1997; Fidrmuc 2000a, 2000c; Tucker 2001; Jackson, Klich, and Poznańska 2003a, 2003b; and Zielinski, Slomczynski, and Shabad 2004. (The two articles by Fidrmuc warrant particular mention, as they are the only other studies of regional economic voting – other than my own work – of which I am aware that attempt to compare results across more than four elections from multiple countries and because a number of the countries in this book overlap with the countries in his articles. In addition, I am pleased to note that despite the fact that we use different cases, variables, categories, and methods of comparison, we both share the central conclusion that hypotheses focused on incumbency have less empirical support than hypotheses focused on a party’s “type.”) See as well Tworzecki 2003, one of the few book-length comparative studies of voting behavior generally in postcommunist countries, which includes a chapter utilizing cross-regional economic data as one of a number of variables to analyze election results (Chapter 8), and Jackson, Klich, and Poznańska 2005, which devotes two chapter to cross-regional analyses of Polish election results. Interestingly, all of these except my own work follow Pacek’s lead in including exclusively East-Central European countries and excluding Russia. In addition, a number of recent methodological articles on modeling election results from multiparty elections have all used regional data from the 1993 Polish parliamentary election. See, for example, Honaker, Katz, and King 2002; Jackson 2002; Mikhailov, Niemi, and Weimer 2002; Tomz, Tucker, and Wittenberg 2002; Mebane and Sekhon 2004. Two of these replicate data originally presented in Gibson and Cielecka 1995. For work on Russia that utilizes regional level data to trace relationships between demographic conditions and election results, see the pioneering studies of Ralph Clem and Peter Craumer (e.g., Clem and Craumer 1995b, 1995a, 1995c, 1997, 2001, 2002). Strikingly, I am aware of only a single published cross-national time-series analysis of economic voting in the postcommunist context relying on national level data (Fidrmuc 2000b) – and even here the primary focus of the working paper is on explaining economic as opposed to political outcomes – although there have been a number of articles on economic voting in postcommunist countries that have analyzed survey data; see, for example, Colton 1996a and Mason and Sidorenko-Stephenson 1997 on Russia, Powers and Cox 1997 on Poland, Duch 2000 on Poland and Hungary, and Harper 2000 on Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Hungary.
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I chose to focus the analysis at the regional level primarily because it facilitated the type of blended case study and general comparative analysis discussed earlier, but equally important was the fact that it presented an appropriate manner to conduct comparative research on the topic of economic voting in the postcommunist context. In particular, by restricting my pooling of data to regional data from within individual elections, I am able to insulate the analysis against the threats of systematic bias in my results caused by the inevitable presence of measurement error in these types of data, a point to which I will return in much greater detail later in this book. Taken together, the use of regional level analysis allows me to conduct a rich comparative study of a relatively unexplored substantive area of interest while doing so in a manner that is most appropriate for the available data. The study also highlights the fact that for a phenomenon in which there has been a great deal of scholarly interest in the political science literature – the relationship among the economy, voting, and elections – there exists an entire dimension of this relationship – that which occurs at the aggregate subnational level – about which very little is currently known.

Case Selection

Any study of postcommunist political developments begins with a potential universe of twenty-seven or so countries. In an effort to focus the study primarily on competitive elections, I eliminated from consideration countries that did not hold meaningful elections throughout the 1990s, countries where elections were dominated by fraud, and countries that had undergone serious violent conflict at some point during the decade. After taking these factors into account, one is still left with approximately a dozen countries that could be included in a study. And although it would have been desirable to include all of these countries in the study, consideration of resources – in particular, the time and money needed to collect, code, and translate into both English and electronic format all of the necessary data – necessitated relying on a sample of these remaining countries.

In selecting cases for analysis, an often recommended strategy is to maximize variation in the independent variables in which one is most interested. In this particular instance, however, this rule provides little guidance in selecting which countries and elections to include in the study, as the variation in the independent variables of interest – measures of macroeconomic conditions at the regional level – are found within each election (e.g., the variation in unemployment across Polish regions in 1997) as opposed
Regional Economic Voting
to across the different elections. Thus in choosing which countries and
elections to include in the study, I was guided by a desire to select cases with
some important underlying similarities – thus, the limiting of the study to
postcommunist countries undergoing political and economic transitions in
the first decade of these transitions – but that also varied along theoretically
interesting political and economic dimensions in an effort to enhance the
generalizability of the findings.

As a guide to selecting countries with important underlying similarities
differences, I chose to rely on a two-pronged strategy of mixing
precedent with innovation. Of all the postcommunist countries of East-
ern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Russia has received by far the
most academic attention. For example, in a survey I conducted of just over
one hundred articles written on elections and voting in sixteen English
language journals between 1990 and 2000, over half of the articles were
written on Russia, and the vast majority of these were on Russia alone.
Only one other country Poland came close to appearing in even a quar-
ter of the articles; most countries appeared in far fewer.26 Within Eastern
Europe, however, there has been a tradition of including certain countries
together in comparative studies. Although there are certainly exceptions,
one often sees studies comparing the Visegrad Four of Poland, Hungary, the
Czech Republic and Slovakia, the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia,
and Lithuania, and, perhaps less frequently, some combination of Bulgaria,
Romania, and Moldova.27 There are many reasons why scholars choose
to group countries for comparison in this manner including important
similarities in both the pre- and postcommunist eras – but for the purpose
of this discussion it is sufficient to note that the precedent exists for com-
parison within each set of countries. Of these three groups of countries,
there has clearly been the most Western interest in the Visegrad Four; to
return to the literature survey, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic
were the second, third, and fourth most popular countries chosen for

26 See Tucker 2002, Figure 2.
27 The term “Visegrad Four” stems from the Visegrad group, which was created in 1991
to coordinate foreign policy among Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, which then
became the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. (Pehe 1998, 40). The five Central Asian
states are also often grouped together, but these were excluded from consideration because
of the lack of meaningful elections in a number of these states, especially as the decade
progressed. Likewise, studies comparing the countries of the former Yugoslavia also can be
found in the literature, but again I excluded these states from consideration as a result of
the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s.
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analysis. This group of countries also had the advantage of providing more cases for analysis than the other two groups. So the precedent component of my case study selection involved selecting a group of countries that had often been compared with one another in scholarly work and in which interest had run high.

The innovative component of the case study selection involved including Russia as a fifth case. Although studying voting behavior in the Russian context is hardly novel, there seems to be an almost unwritten rule in the discipline against including Russia in comparative analyses with Eastern European cases; indeed, of the 101 articles included in literature review noted earlier, only three featured comparative analysis including both Russian and Eastern European elections. And yet, as this study will demonstrate, there is no reason not to compare electoral patterns in Russia with those in Eastern Europe, and there is actually much to be learned from doing so. So by including Russia along with the Visegrad Four, the study is able to present findings regarding the countries that have generated the most interest in the scholarly literature but in a manner that has rarely been employed in the past.

In addition to following a precedent for comparison and reflecting scholarly interest, these five countries enhance the generalizability of the study’s findings by providing useful variation in terms of patterns of both macroeconomic and political development during 1990s. As the data in Table 1.2 demonstrate, all three countries followed the familiar pattern of countries undergoing economic reform: initial declines in gross domestic product as the transition got under way (what Przeworski has labeled the J-Curve), a rise in inflation as prices adapt to market conditions, and the emergence of unemployment. However, the manner in which this overall pattern played out differs significantly across the countries. Although all five suffered serious declines in GDP in the early 1990s, Poland was already enjoying economic growth by 1992, whereas Russia suffered declines in GDP every

28 Slovakia was tied for eighth. See Tucker 2002, Figure 2.
30 In recognition of the fact that studies including both Russia and Eastern European cases are relatively rare in the postcommunist elections and voting literature, results used to assess the standard economic voting hypotheses (e.g., the first row of Table 1.1) are all also reported on a country by country basis so readers can see for themselves exactly how the Russian results do or do not differ from the results from the other four countries; see Chapter 2 for details.
Table 1.2. Percentage Unemployment, Percentage GDP Growth, and Percentage Inflation by Country and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>GDP Growth</th>
<th>Inflation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduction

year through 1996, and then again in 1998. Similarly, all five countries did in fact see an increase in unemployment, but the magnitude of this rise varies across countries. Unemployment in the Czech Republic managed to stay below 5 percent for most of the decade, whereas Poland and Slovakia both were mired in double-digit unemployment rates by the early part of the decade that proved difficult to reverse. It is also worth noting that although unemployment began to decline in the middle of the decade in Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, only in Hungary did this decline continue through the end of decade; Poland and Slovakia (along with the Czech Republic) saw increasing unemployment rates as the decade came to a close. The countries also had different experiences with inflation. Russia and Poland pursued the now well-known “shock therapy” approach to prices, and consequently had very high inflation rates early in the decade that decreased – albeit more quickly in Poland – as time passed. By contrast, Slovakia and the Czech Republic both had only one year (1991) in which inflation was over 50 percent, and both managed to keep inflation in the single digits for most of the second half of the decade. Hungary lies somewhere in between these two experiences, with inflation never exploding as it did in Russia and Poland but at the same time averaging close to 25 percent a year through 1997.

Likewise, these particular five countries provide important variation in patterns of political development. This is especially so with regard to the movement of New Regime and Old Regime parties in and out of government, which facilitates useful comparisons between the predictions of the Transition and Referendum Models. In the Czech Republic and Russia, for example, once voted out of office, Old Regime parties never returned to power. In Poland and Hungary, however, Old Regime parties were elected to office in 1993 and 1994, and consequently ran for reelection as incumbent parties in 1997 and 1998, respectively. Poland, Hungary, and Russia all featured Old Regime parties that were the primary opposition party when they were not in power, whereas the Old Regime parties in Slovakia and the Czech Republic played less important roles. Additionally, Slovakia provides a case in which New Regime parties were marginalized for much of the decade; Slovakia is also the only case where a nationalist party controlled the government for much of the decade. Overall, the five cases provided many different coding arrangements, including Old Regime parties that were also incumbents, New Regime parties that were also incumbents, and incumbent parties that were neither Old Regime nor New Regime parties.
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In addition to patterns of political and economic developments, an analysis of elections from Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic provides a wealth of other useful variation. In particular, these five countries feature variation in terms of the types of elections held (presidential and parliamentary), the timing of elections (all hold elections throughout the decade), the types of governing systems employed (presidential, parliamentary, and mixed systems), macrohistorical backgrounds (leaders of empires, subjects of single empires, and subject of multiple empires), most popular religions (Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and atheist), presence of ethnic minorities, and patterns of political and economic development before the start of the transition. While all of these factors are useful for enhancing the generalizability of the study’s findings, many of them have theoretical value as well, in so far as they facilitate the testing of the types of conditional economic voting hypotheses identified in the second row of Table 1.1; I address this point in much greater detail in the next chapter.

Taken together, these factors all help to ensure that the findings of the study are not dependent on the unique set of political or economic realities in a particular country or at a particular point in time. Although the question of generalizing findings from one set of cases – here, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic – to a larger set of cases – here, the postcommunist world more generally – is always tricky, the fact that these five countries contain variation on all of these dimensions hopefully make the task easier. At the very least, it makes it more difficult to claim that the findings are only peculiar to countries undergoing shock therapy, or only to countries where Old Regime parties played an important political role in the 1990s, or only to countries with parliamentary systems of government, or only to Eastern Orthodox cultures, and so on.

A final, and not trivial, consideration in selecting these particular cases is that all five countries reported their economic and electoral data at the same level of regional disaggregation, thus facilitating cross-regional statistical analysis using primary source data.32

32 The one major exception is the 1991 Polish parliamentary elections, which required reliance on a recoding of the election results by a Polish scholar to match the commensurate unit of economic disaggregation; this point is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 and is explicitly reflected in one of the robustness tests of the overall finding. Additionally, in a very few instances (some economic statistics for Bratislava in Slovakia, election results in Warsaw and Katowice in Poland), results have been aggregated up a level by the author to match the commensurate unit of analysis. But with these very few exceptions, the remaining data included in the analysis are the exact data reported by the relevant statistical agency,
Introduction

Table 1.3. *Elections Included in Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>June 5–6, 1992</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>May 31–June 1, 1996</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>June 19–20, 1998</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>April 8, 1990</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>May 8, 1994</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>May 10, 1998</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>November 25, 1990</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>October 27, 1991</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>September 19, 1993</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>November 5, 1995</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>September 21, 1997</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>June 12, 1991</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>December 12, 1993</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>December 17, 1995</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>June 16, 1996</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>December 19, 1999</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>June 5–6, 1992</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>September 30–October 1, 1994</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>September 25–26, 1998</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>May 15, 1999</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For two-round elections, date refers to first round

Moving from the choice of countries to the choice of actual elections, all elections for national office – parliamentary and presidential – that took place in each of these countries between 1990 and 1999 are included in the study (see Table 1.3). This excludes initial parliamentary elections that were contested largely between two forces, the communists and a broad anticom- munist umbrella coalition; these elections also often included restrictions on participation and competition for certain seats. Thus, the study begins with an examination of the substantive and procedural factors that influence the outcomes of elections.
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with the first true multiparty parliamentary elections that occur in each of the countries, in addition to all directly contested presidential elections. For two-round presidential elections, results from the first round are analyzed; for mixed legislative electoral systems (Hungary and Russia), results from the party list proportional representation vote are analyzed.\(^{34}\)

Terms

Several terms employed in this book warrant additional attention to ensure precision in their interpretation. First and foremost, the use of the term \textit{transition} in this book refers to the simultaneous transitions away from the single-party political systems and command economies employed under communist rule in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.\(^{35}\) It is intended to be unrelated to the current debate over whether the use of such a term implies an inevitably successful transition to a democracy or a market economy or anything else for that matter; I use the term here only to identify the circumstances faced by these countries in the wake of the collapse of communist rule.\(^{36}\) Similarly, I use the term \textit{postcommunist countries} solely to refer to the collection of countries that emerged from the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, as well as because the 1990 elections featured prominent anticommunist umbrella movements. See the case study discussion of these two elections in Chapter 3 for more details.

\(^{34}\) Had the data permitted, it also would have been interesting to examine the vote for individuals in parliamentary elections by examining the vote in the single member district component of the Hungarian and Russian parliamentary elections. Unfortunately, economic data disaggregated to the single member district boundaries were not available in either case. Moreover, this allows me to only have one observation per party to compare in the comparative analysis, thus eliminating what would be an otherwise complex question on how to compare results when some elections generated two sets of results per party and others only one set of results. The same logic holds for only including the first round of presidential elections as opposed to both rounds of presidential elections.

\(^{35}\) For a thorough survey of the relationship between the postcommunist politics literature and both the term and concept of transitions, see Gans–Morse 2004.

\(^{36}\) Of late, the question of whether the postcommunist experience can best be explained as a transition toward capitalist democracy (clearly inappropriate in some of the former Soviet Republics) or just away from Soviet-style central planning and dictatorship and toward a wide variety of different formats has become an important topic of discussion; see, for example, Carothers 2002; Levitsky and Way 2002; and Way 2004. Although interesting, a resolution to this debate is not necessary for any of the points in this book to hold. Regardless of whether the transitional experience is best understood as heading toward a particular outcome or just away from a certain type of rule, the fact remains that competitive multiparty elections held in this context do differ in important ways from those held in established democracies.
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the other former satellite states of Soviet Union in Eastern Europe; there is no hidden claim here that there is any peculiar postcommunist form of political or economic organization common to all of these countries.37 I use the term East European countries to refer to all of the non-former Soviet postcommunist countries, and East-Central European countries to refer more specifically to the four Eastern European countries included in this study. This is not meant to imply that any other East European countries can not legitimately be considered part of East-Central Europe; it is simply employed as a shorthand term to refer to the non-Russian countries in this book.

The Transitional Identity of a party refers simply to whether a party is coded as a New Regime party, an Old Regime party, or neither for the purpose of testing the predictions of the Transitional Identity Model. Coding rules for these categories are discussed in the next chapter and reiterated in Chapters 6 and 7. Similarly, the use of the term incumbent party refers to parties that are coded as incumbent parties for the purpose of this study according to the rules presented in the next chapter and Chapter 5.

The term region refers to a subnational unit at which the country in question has chosen to report disaggregated election results and measures of macroeconomic conditions and demographic variables. There is no implication in the use of this term of any form of subnational government or administration, although regional administration is usually organized along the same lines to at least some degree.

To differentiate between models and hypotheses that attempt to answer the questions in the first and second rows of Table 1.1, the terms standard economic voting hypotheses (or standard hypotheses for short) and conditional economic voting hypotheses (or conditional hypotheses for short) are employed. As illustrated in Table 1.1, standard economic voting hypotheses are hypotheses that make predictions about the type of party (e.g., incumbent, New Regime, or Old Regime) affected by economic conditions and the direction (e.g., better economic conditions help the party) in which the economy pushes the vote for that type of party. In contrast, a conditional economic voting hypothesis is one that predicts the conditions in which we expect to find more or less empirical support for a standard economic voting hypothesis, or, put more generally, the context in which we expect economic conditions to have more or less of an effect on election results.

37 For an informative discussion of the different terms used by scholars to refer to what I have called “postcommunist,” see Roberts 2004.
I also employ the terms *economic winners* and *economic losers* throughout the book. These terms are simply used as a shorthand for people whose economic situations are either better or worse than their fellow citizens (and not necessarily than their own personal situations before the initiation of the transition, although in many cases the two do overlap). By definition, the terms are not intended to be precise; as explained in the next chapter, the only assumption at work here is that there will be a larger proportion of economic winners in areas of the country where the economy is performing better than where it is performing worse, and similarly a larger proportion of economic losers in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse than in areas where the economy is performing well.

The final term worth noting is the phrase at the center of the academic literature to which this book contributes, which is *economic voting*. Over the years, there have been a number of different research topics floating under the rubric of the term “economic voting.” Originally, the term was applied to the idea that voters would select the party with the closest positions to their own on important policy issues.\(^{38}\) The theory was “economic” in so far as it was dependent on voters’ making cost-benefit analyses of the utility they would receive from different parties being in power. Economic issues could be considered by voters, but they were by no means the only issues voters would consider. Indeed, in Fiorina’s pioneering study of retrospective voting, economic concerns were only one of three major issue areas assessed in the study.\(^{39}\) In time, however, the term economic voting also has come to be applied much more generally to encompass both studies that attempt to identify a relationship between economic conditions and election results and studies looking for the influence of economic factors on individual voting behavior. It is in this looser sense that the term is applied in this book, referring to any form of study that looks for links between the state of the economy and aggregate election results or individual voting behavior.

The more detailed term *regional economic voting*, however, is used to refer specifically to analyses of the relationship between variation in macroeconomic conditions and election results at the regional level within a given election, or, put another way, the focus of the empirical analysis contained in this book. I use this new term for two reasons. First, it serves as a convenient shorthand for the more lengthy description contained in the previous sentence. But perhaps more importantly, it reflects the fact that the study

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\(^{38}\) See Downs 1957.

\(^{39}\) The other two were war/peace and civil rights (Fiorina 1981, Chapter 2).
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of the variation in economic conditions and election results at the regional level is indeed an important component of understanding the way in which the economy affects electoral outcomes, albeit one that has received much less attention in the general economic voting literature to date than either microlevel or cross-national studies. Thus, the very newness of the term can hopefully highlight the opportunities afforded by this level of analysis in the future.

Finally, I employ the following procedure regarding party names and acronyms. The first time a party is mentioned in any chapter, the party’s name will be given along with the acronym in parentheses. When the party is mentioned again in the chapter, the acronym is usually although not always employed instead of the party name. The acronyms employed are based on the name of the party in the language of its country (e.g., the acronym for the Hungarian Socialist Party is the MSzP as opposed to the HSP) because this is the convention in much of the literature, although occasional exceptions are made for very commonly used acronyms (e.g., CPSU for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union). In the text, however, I almost always refer to parties by their English names. Tables reporting results of the case study analyses (Tables 5.2, 6.2, and 7.2) use parties’ full names, but the remaining tables use party acronyms; in the case of presidential candidates, their last names are included in the tables. To assist readers unfamiliar with these acronyms, an alphabetized list of acronyms and full party names (both in English and the original language) can be found at the front of the book.

Research Design and Organization of the Book

As has been noted throughout this chapter, the hypotheses assessed in this book are tested using regional level data from the twenty elections listed in Table 1.3. More specifically, a separate dataset is constructed for each election consisting of regional level observations of election results, macroeconomic conditions, and demographic characteristics of the population. These election-specific datasets are then used to estimate the effect of regional variation in economic conditions on the regional distribution of votes for every party identified by one of the standard economic voting

40 As explained in the following chapters, demographic characteristics of the regions are included in the analysis as control variables. It is also important to note that although regional level electoral data is used in the analysis – for example, the amount of the vote received by Party A in Region 1 – these are all results from national elections disaggregated to the regional level.
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hypotheses. In other words, the effect of the economy is estimated for every incumbent, New Regime, and Old Regime party that contested one of the twenty elections. The estimates, in turn, are used to assess the degree of empirical support for the different standard and conditional economic voting hypotheses. The specifics of this process are discussed in great detail in Chapter 3.

The results of these analyses are presented in two different formats. The primary method of presenting results involves a comparative assessment of the degree of support for the different hypotheses across the entire sample of elections; the details of how this is done can be found in Chapter 3. These analyses lie at the heart of the overall empirical conclusions of the study, as they draw on all the evidence from the different parties, elections, and countries.

However, a drawback of comparative analysis of this nature is that it tells us little about the specifics of how economic conditions affected the vote for any one individual party or in one particular election. For this reason, the broad-based comparative analysis across all of the elections is supplemented by an in-depth examination of the results across four “paired” election case studies (although one “pair” actually contains three elections). For each of the nine elections included in these case studies, I present a more in-depth description of the analysis, including background information on the election, discussion of the specific coding decisions for parties contesting that election, and a party-by-party presentation of the degree to which the empirical evidence for that individual party supports the relevant hypotheses. As described earlier, it is the cross-regional nature of the analysis that permits this dual-level approach of examining results both on an election-by-election basis and across the entire set of elections.

Even in the case studies, however, I maintain the comparative nature of the analysis by including two or three elections in each case study. The elections included in the case studies were chosen with two goals in mind. First, I wanted to include examples of as many different types of elections in the case studies as possible. Second, I sought to group the elections in intuitively interesting “pairs” that shared important similarities. Thus, the four case studies are the 1992 Czech and Slovak parliamentary elections; the 1995

41 Indeed, as is addressed in Chapter 3, this is one of the principal drawbacks of studies that compare only national election results, and, conversely, one of the benefits of the cross-regional approach is that it does not sacrifice party-specific findings in an effort to produce comparative findings as well.
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Polish and 1996 Russian presidential elections; the 1993, 1995, and 1999 Russian parliamentary elections, and the 1997 Polish and 1998 Hungarian parliamentary elections. This final case study is particularly important because it features Old Regime parties that are running for reelection as incumbent parties, and thus there are contradictory predictions across the two models. The Transitional Identity Model predicts that as Old Regime parties these parties should perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse, whereas the Referendum Model predicts that as incumbent parties they should perform better in areas of the country where the economic is performing better. Similarly to the larger comparative analysis, there is significantly stronger empirical support in the 1997 Polish-1998 Hungarian parliamentary elections paired case study for the Transitional Identity Model than for the Referendum Model.

In addition, it should be noted that the regional level data analyzed in the study are all part of an original database constructed almost entirely from primary source materials obtained by the author at the national statistical offices, national banks, or election headquarters of the five countries included in the study. In conjunction with the publication of this book, the entire database I constructed for the project will be made publically available over the internet.

In the next two chapters, I flesh out this research design in much greater detail. In Chapter 2, I present both the standard and conditional economic voting hypotheses that will be tested in the remainder of this book, as well as the theoretical arguments underlining these hypotheses. In Chapter 3, I present the method by which I conduct my empirical analysis, including the variables in the datasets, the statistical model used to analyze the data, and the method of comparing results across different elections and countries.

42 In a limited number instances, data was obtained from publications of official government statistics by non-governmental organizations; documentation of the sources for all data used in the statistical analyses can be found in Appendix II.

43 The database now contains over sixty-four thousand regional level observations in electronic format with documentation in English; readers interested in using these data for their own research should check my home page (currently http://www.wws.princeton.edu/tucker) as well as the home page associated with this book on the Cambridge University Press Web site for information on searching the database and downloading desired data. In addition to repeated trips to the region to collect these data, I also was present for at least one election campaign in each of the five countries. During these periods of fieldwork, I conducted numerous interviews with party officials, candidates, political consultants, academics, and journalists, which were invaluable in shaping both my understanding of postcommunist elections and the theoretical approaches of this book.
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Chapter 3 concludes with a section that addresses in great detail the advantages and disadvantages of the method of analysis employed in the book. In Chapter 4, I provide background information on each of the nine elections included in the paired case studies.

As the goal of this book is to test the empirical support for the hypotheses laid out earlier in this chapter (and elaborated upon in Chapter 2) as opposed to providing a narrative of the twenty elections included in this study, the empirical component of the book is not divided into chapters by country or case studies but, rather, by the different standard economic voting hypothesis, resulting in four chapters. Chapter 5 is devoted to testing the empirical support for the Referendum Model. Chapters 6 and 7 test the empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model, with the former focusing on New Regime parties and the latter on the Old Regime parties. Each chapter begins with a brief summary of the overall support for the hypothesis across all twenty elections. The coding rule for the relevant category of parties is then reiterated and is followed by an explanation in the text of the coding decisions in the nine elections included in the paired case studies. I then present the party-by-party results for each of the paired case studies. This includes an assessment of the degree to which that case study provides empirical support for the relevant standard economic voting hypothesis as well as any variation in empirical support across the cases that might suggest support for one of the conditional hypotheses. The remainder of each chapter is then devoted to assessing the degree to which the different conditional hypotheses can explain the variation in support for the standard economic voting hypothesis featured in that chapter across the entire set of twenty elections. (For example, is there more support for the New Regime hypothesis earlier in the decade than later in the decade? Does the incumbency hypothesis have more support in “high responsibility” than “low responsibility” elections?) In Chapter 8, these findings are combined and supplemented with a variety of robustness tests that further demonstrate the stronger empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model as compared to the Referendum Model. Chapter 8 also assesses the overall support for the different conditional economic voting hypotheses. The book concludes with a final chapter that discusses the implications of the findings presented in Chapters 5–8 for our understanding of both the postcommunist political experience and economic voting more generally.