Chapter 2

Economic Conditions and Election Results

In Chapter 1, I introduced the concept of standard and conditional economic voting hypotheses. The purpose of this chapter is to lay out the specific standard and conditional hypotheses tested in the book and to present the theoretical arguments underlying each of them. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I briefly address some of the characteristics that differentiate elections in post-communist countries from elections in more established democracies. In the second section, I introduce the standard economic voting models and their associated hypotheses: the Referendum Model, which produces the Incumbency hypothesis; and the Transitional Identity Model, which yields the New Regime and Old Regime hypotheses. This section also includes a discussion of how these hypotheses relate to some of the larger themes in the existing economic voting literature. The final section of the chapter introduces a number of different frameworks for thinking about conditional economic voting hypotheses, as well as the specific conditional economic voting hypotheses associated with each of these frameworks.

Distinguishing Characteristics of Elections in Transition Countries

Before turning to models of regional economic voting in transition countries, it is important to consider the ways in which elections in these countries differ from elections in advanced industrialized democracies. Considering the differences between elections in established democracies and transition countries can help inform the manner in which we ought to build off of — but also depart from — the existing economic voting literature in designing a study appropriate for the postcommunist context. Although the potential list of differences is endless, three of the most important factors
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are the number of political parties competing in elections, the familiarity that voters have with political parties, and the fact that elections in transition countries occur against a backdrop of fundamental economic changes.

The first of these is a relatively simple concept: elections in transition countries tend to be contested by a greater number of parties than in more established democracies, especially early in the transition. A quick glance at Appendix I reveals a larger number of parties contesting, and receiving significant numbers of votes in, the twenty elections analyzed here than one is accustomed to seeing in established democracies. Indeed, elections with at least ten to twenty parties competing were the norm for this period of time, with individual elections exceeding forty or even one hundred parties (Russia in 1995 and Poland in 1991, respectively). The difference in the number of political parties is particularly striking in comparison with the two-party system of the United States, but it is also true in comparison to most stable established democracies.

More fundamentally, voters in transitional elections are less familiar with the parties competing in elections than their counterparts are in more established democracies. In particular, voters have significantly less experience on which to base their expectations about how parties will perform as part of a government formed following a competitive election. In elections in established democracies, voters usually have already had an opportunity to see most of the major parties – and indeed many of their smaller coalition partners – perform as governing parties. In fact, in many cases voters will have had multiple opportunities to watch the parties move in and out of government. Indeed, the assumption that voters are familiar enough with parties to have developed either attachment to or identification with a party is a fundamental component of most voting models in established democracies, even if the strength of these attachments remains a source of debate.

The same can not be said for voters in transition countries. Especially in the earliest elections, voters will be confronted with a wide array of political parties that have never been represented in the parliament, let alone formed a democratic government. As time passes, voters will have the opportunity to watch some of these parties participate in government, but even this learning process is hampered by the fluidity of postcommunist party systems, in which parties split, merge, appear and disappear between electoral cycles.1 This is not to suggest that voters are not capable of developing

1 See, for example, Millard 1994c; Kostelecky 1995; Mesežnikov 1997; Rose, Munro and White 2001; Marsh 2002, and especially Zielinski, Słomczynski, and Shabad 2004. See as
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nascent attachments to political parties in this time period; indeed, this has been a subject of scholarly inquiry in the literature. But no matter how one conceptualizes this developing attachment, the prerequisite conditions for full-scale partisan identification were unlikely to be present in the first elections in postcommunist countries. Although there is no reason to assume that partisan identification will not develop in the future, it clearly was not present in the beginning of the transition period in the same form as is found in advanced democracies.

In addition to the fact that there is generally less information about political parties in transitional countries than in established democracies, there is also significant variation in the amount of information that voters possess about different parties. In the United States, for example, it is usually safe to assume that voters will possess roughly similar amounts of information about both political parties. In postcommunist countries, by contrast, voters can confront an election in which some parties are completely new, some have clear ties to the nondemocratic regime that ruled for forty or more years, and others have participated in a government that ushered in dramatic political and economic changes. While this logic suggests that as time passes these disparities should decrease, even elections held later in the decade were contested by parties that had never participated in the government, never had representatives in parliament, and, in some cases, had never even contested a previous election.

A final factor that distinguishes transition countries from established industrialized democracies is the presence of fundamental changes in the nature of the economy that occur concurrently with the development of

well the background information on the paired case studies presented in the second half of Chapter 3.

2 See, for example, Rose 1998; Whitefield and Evans 1999; Colton 2000a; Miller and Klobucar 2000; Brader and Tucker 2001.

3 To greatly simplify a large literature, there are two broad ways to think about partisan identification. The classic conception of partisan identification, put forth in The American Voter, characterizes partisan identification as a stable inclination toward one particular party that is transmitted through a socialization process (Campbell, Converse et al. 1960). Following in the footsteps of V. O. Key, recent rational choice analysts have thought of partisan identification as more of a running tally of one’s opinions about political parties that is constantly being updated based on one’s own experiences (Key 1966; Fiorina 1981; Lohmann, Brady, and Rivers 1997). As most political parties in postcommunist transition countries did not exist before the postcommunist era, neither the opportunity to be socialized into supporting a particular party nor the chance to build up a reservoir of experiences about that party was present, especially in the earlier part of the transition; the notable exception to this rule of communist successor parties is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.
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competitive elections. On the one hand, voters are presented with exciting new economic opportunities. They have the opportunity to earn higher salaries and to buy goods with those salaries without waiting on long lines. Businesses gain access to foreign trade and foreign investment, and consumers are able to purchase foreign goods. Entrepreneurs can start their own businesses. On the other hand, transitions can also bring all sorts of new economic problems that can provide a sharp contrast to economic conditions before the transition. Unemployment becomes a reality and often skyrockets to high levels early in the transition. Inflation, also often nonexistent in planned economies with price controls, is almost always present from the inception of the transition. Poverty can spread dramatically in short periods of time. Another problem is that wages and pensions are sometimes not paid, as was the case in many of the states of the former Soviet Union. Such problems are especially compelling in postcommunist societies where the prior regime staked its most basic claim to legitimacy on the mantle of not only classifying certain economic benefits as the rights of all citizens (e.g., a job, pension, housing subsidies, free education, and health care, etc.), but even – at least in theory – on the idea that these benefits ought to be distributed relatively equally. As economic benefits were equated with fundamental rights, an economic crisis in these societies has the potential to become a crisis in values as well as just material wealth.

Taken together, voters in postcommunist transition countries faced an electoral environment with large numbers of parties about which they would have known little – although with a subset of parties about which they likely knew a great deal more – competing for office against a backdrop of a serious, fundamental reorganization of economic life.

Standard Economic Voting Hypotheses

The primary empirical goal of this book is to test the relative support for the two regional economic voting models introduced in Chapter 1: the Referendum Model and the Transitional Identity Model. Both models take into account the defining features of the postcommunist electoral environment described in the previous section by building off of the inherent uncertainty of transitions. While both models reflect the overall lack of familiarity that voters have about parties, they weight this information differently, with the Referendum Model placing a stronger emphasis on the uncertainty of
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the transitional environment and the Transitional Identity Model placing a higher premium on the nature of the information that voters are likely to possess about parties. And while the models are firmly grounded in the logic of explaining cross-regional variation in election results within a given election, the hypotheses produced by these models are in fact similar to those found in the wider economic voting literature.

In the following sections, I detail the theoretical arguments underlying both the Referendum and the Transitional Identity Models. In doing so, I follow a familiar pattern from the economic voting literature in attempting to underlie aggregate level hypotheses with plausible assumptions about individual level behavior. This relies on what is essentially a three-step process. The first step involves assumptions about the types of parties that are likely to be preferred by individuals with certain opinions about the economy (e.g., people who are upset with the state of the economy are less likely to vote for incumbent parties). The second step involves assumptions about the likelihood of finding fewer or more voters with these types of opinions about the economy in certain geographic areas at certain times (e.g., there will be more voters dissatisfied with the state of the economy in a country during elections when the economy is performing worse than when it is performing better, or, in the case of this study, within a given election, there will be more dissatisfied voters in parts of the country where economic conditions are worse than where they are better). The final step is then to produce aggregate level hypotheses based on the first two assumptions (e.g., incumbent parties will enjoy more electoral support where (or when) economic conditions are stronger). Providing plausible microlevel foundations for aggregate level hypotheses greatly enhances the internal consistency of one’s theoretical arguments, but, as will be emphasized throughout this book, it does not mean that the aggregate level hypothesis can function as a test of the microlevel propositions. Thus, the empirical analysis in the following chapters tests the aggregate level implications of these microlevel assumptions about individual behavior presented in the following section, but not the individual level behavior itself.4

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4 This is not to say, however, that the findings are any less “real” for this reason. Even if evidence is found to falsify some of the microlevel assumptions about individual level behavior, it does not make the aggregate level findings any less significant. It would, however, provide an impetus for additional theorizing about the type of individual-level behavior underlying the aggregate hypotheses.
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A Referendum Model

The Referendum Model produces a single hypothesis, the Incumbency hypothesis, which predicts that incumbent parties should receive more electoral support in areas of the country where economic conditions are better and less electoral support in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse. In this section, I present the theoretical arguments underlying this hypothesis. As discussed in the preceding paragraph, it is important to note that although these arguments rely on microlevel assumptions about individual level behavior, this is a not a study of individual behavior and as such does not attempt to directly test any of these microlevel propositions.

Setting aside the peculiarities of the postcommunist world for a moment, consider an electoral environment in which voters possessed no information about how parties were likely to behave vis-à-vis the economy once elected to office. Although such a claim may seem far-fetched, there are numerous reasons why voters could have no information in this regard: the election could be contested by parties that had never held office before, either because the election is taking place in a new democracy or following a major shake-up of the party system in a more established democracy; voters could lack the will or the ability to make judgments about the relationship between a victory for certain parties and the likely effect on economic conditions; or there could be so much uncertainty about the current economic situation that even the most informed citizens would be hard-pressed to predict future economic developments.5

Even in such a low information environment, however, we would expect voters to be aware of the parties that make up the government.6 And in the absence of information about differences between the political parties contesting the election, the only way we could expect the economy to have an effect on election results would be through the vote for or against incumbent parties. To generate this prediction, we need to make two additional assumptions, neither of which ought to be particularly controversial. First, we assume that people concerned with the state of the economy are more

5 See Aidt (2000) for a theoretical argument concerning the question of whether we ought to expect citizens even in established democracies to expend effort to acquire enough information about the state of the economy to judge the competence of the government.

6 The distinction between the lead party in the government and other coalition members is discussed later in this chapter in the responsibility subsection of the conditional hypotheses section.
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likely to want to vote the government out of office than people who think the economy is performing well. Note that this assumption is different from a retrospective evaluation of government performance or competence based on evaluating the impact of the current government on economic conditions during its tenure in office (a point that I return to in more detail later in this section). Instead, it simply proposes that the more dissatisfied an individual is with the state of the economy, the more likely he or she will be to choose to cast a vote for a party that is not currently in power. Similarly, the more satisfied an individual is with the state of the economy, the more likely he or she will be to cast a vote in favor of an incumbent party as opposed to an unknown “other” option.

The second assumption is that the worse economic conditions are in a particular area of the country, the more likely we should be to find more people dissatisfied with the state of the economy in that area. This effect can work both directly and indirectly. Consider unemployment as an example. If I have lost my job and cannot find work, then I am likely to think that the economy is performing poorly. The higher the unemployment rate, the more people there are who are likely to be unemployed and share these beliefs. Thus, the higher the unemployment rate, the more people there are who are likely to be dissatisfied with the state of the economy because they are out of work. However, the effect also works indirectly. Even if I am not unemployed, higher unemployment rates may mean that more people I know are unemployed. Indeed, Paldam and Nannestad (2000) argue that for every person who is unemployed, an estimated one to three hundred people will know that person and “will notice and be concerned” (373). I also may see more unemployed people loitering on the streets, and I may be more afraid that I will become unemployed. All of these factors could lead me to the same conclusion as someone who is unemployed: the economy is not performing well. Now it is doubtful that everyone who is employed will feel this way, and perhaps it is just a small minority that will come to this conclusion. Nevertheless, the higher the unemployment rate, the more people we are likely to find sharing this belief.7

7 It is important to note that this argument sets aside the debate about whether citizens actually perceive economic conditions correctly. A number of scholars have noted variation in the perception of similar economic circumstances across different voters – see, for example, Goidel and Langley 1994; Holbrook and Garand 1996; Duch 2000 – although in the Danish (Paldam and Nannestad 2000) and British cases (Sanders 2000), authors have found that perceptions of the economy at the micro level actually match well to conditions at the macro.
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With these assumptions in hand, the following aggregate level prediction falls out nicely. In areas of the country where economic conditions are stronger, incumbent parties should enjoy more electoral success than in areas of the country where economic conditions are weaker. This holds because we expect worse economic conditions to lead to a greater concentration of voters dissatisfied with the state of the economy and consequently fewer voters inclined to support incumbent parties than in areas of the country where economic conditions are better. Where the economy is better, we expect to find more voters who are likely to be satisfied with the state of the economy and, thus, more voters likely to support the incumbent parties.

It is important to note that this is not a relative deprivation argument. Voters are not posited to be voting against the government because they perceive that their region is being treated poorly in comparison to other regions. Nor is it dependent on any form of regional identity per se. (e.g., see Herrera 2005). Instead, the logic is simply that in the absence of information about different parties, voters who are more concerned about the state of the economy will be more likely to want to see a change in the government than voters who are less concerned about the state of the economy, and, on the aggregate-level, there should be more voters concerned about the state of the economy in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse.

Moreover, the same aggregate level hypothesis emerges even if the assumption that voters have no information about political parties is relaxed. Consider instead an environment in which voters do have some information about political parties, but which is also characterized by great uncertainty on the part of voters. This uncertainty could take many forms, including uncertainty about the future economic plans of parties, the likelihood that parties will actually try to carry through on these plans if elected, the chance that parties will actually prove successful in implementing these level. In some ways, however, the cross-regional approach insulates the analysis from these kinds of concerns. Even if there are systematic misperceptions by voters of the state of the economy, as long as these misperceptions are randomly distributed across geographic regions the analysis should not be affected even if, as Hetherington (1996) found in the United States, perceptions are more important in affecting vote choice than actual macroeconomic conditions. We should still expect more voters to have a negative perception of the state of the economy in areas of the country where actual economic conditions are worse than in areas of the country where economic conditions are better even if the assessment of the economy does not map perfectly from actual conditions to perceptions.
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plans even if they attempt to do so, and the question of whether the plans, even if implemented, would have the intended effect on economic conditions. Regardless of the source of the uncertainty, if the level of uncertainty is high enough and voters can not trust their evaluations of the political parties, then the logic is essentially the same as in the no-information-about-political-parties world. Voters may have a sense of what parties stand for, but they are too uncertain about this information to use it in guiding their voting behavior. As these voters still know who the parties are in the government, we can make the same general arguments as were made above to arrive at the prediction that incumbent parties should perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are stronger.

Furthermore, the same aggregate level hypothesis also can be arrived at if it is believed that voters use a two-step process in making their vote choice whereby they first decide whether or not to support an incumbent party and only then make the decision of which opposition party to support (if the decision is not to support an incumbent party). If this is the case, then regardless of the level of information voters possess about political parties, voters who are more satisfied with the state of the economy should still be more likely to support incumbent parties than voters who are dissatisfied with the state of the economy, and, consequently, based on the same assumptions described earlier, incumbent parties should perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are stronger than in areas where economic conditions are weaker. Moreover, such an approach does look somewhat similar to the traditional “angry at the incumbent” approach to voting during periods of economic reform, whereby all that voters who are angry about the state of the economy are presumed to care about is venting their frustration at the party currently in power. This interpretation also presumes that voters will focus first and foremost on whether to punish or reward the incumbent party for the current state of the economy irrespective of their level of information or beliefs about alternative vote choices. And even if their preference for some alternatives are stronger than others, there should still be a pattern of more support for incumbent parties in areas of the country where economic conditions are better and less support where they are worse.

While this particular formulation of the voting choice process stands in marked contrast to traditional spatial models of voting, the logic is not

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8 See, in particular, Downs 1957.
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that far off from the theories underlining most cross-national models of the
effect of economic conditions on national election results, which inevitably
focus on the vote for incumbent parties independent of the options
presented by other parties.9 Moreover, the idea of voters first making up
their minds about whether or not to vote for incumbent parties is attractive
in the transitional context because it emphasizes the only concrete informa-
tion voters have: the knowledge of which parties are currently incumbents.
If voters have beliefs about what other parties are likely to do when they are
in office but are at all uncertain about these beliefs, one could imagine that
voters who are pleased with the state of the economy might not want to
take the risk of being wrong about the economic consequences of electing
a different party to office. Conversely, voters who are unhappy about the
state of the economy might be much more willing to risk replacing the cur-
cent governing parties with other parties, even if they run the risk of being
wrong about their assessment of these other parties. While such a calculus
is not necessarily peculiar to transition countries, the levels of uncertainty
that force voters to fall back on a yes/no assessment of the incumbent par-
ties are probably more likely to be found in transitional countries than in
established democracies.

Thus, we have three different variants of what is largely the same the-
oretical question – how economic conditions might affect the distribution
of votes in an electoral environment characterized by a lack of information
about political parties – that result in the same aggregate level hypoth-
thesis, which I have labeled the Incumbency hypothesis. The Incumbency
hypothesis predicts that incumbent parties should perform better in areas of
the country where economic conditions are stronger and worse in areas of
the country where economic conditions are weaker. To reiterate, the goal
of the empirical analysis that follows is to ascertain the degree of support
for this aggregate level hypothesis and not to attempt to distinguish between
the different microlevel foundations presented in the previous paragraphs.
To do the latter would at the very least require microlevel data, and in a
larger sense would not even be a particularly interesting enterprise, as the
three explanations are to a large extent all variants on the same argument:
how uncertainty elevates the importance of incumbency in determining the
manner in which cross-regional variation in economic conditions affects
election results.

9 Although see Anderson (2000) for an example of a cross-national study that considers the
availability of alternative options.
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Before turning to an alternate set of hypotheses, I want to emphasize that although the hypothesis looks very similar to standard economic voting hypotheses insofar as it predicts that better economic conditions will lead to more votes for incumbent parties, the argument is theoretically distinct from the standard retrospective economic voting models discussed later in this chapter. The argument presented here is not one in which voters use changes in the economy since the previous government took office as a way to measure the competence of the existing government, but, rather, one in which uncertainty about parties and policy-making leads economically satisfied citizens to be more likely than economically dissatisfied citizens to want the current government to remain in office. Thus, the prediction is that incumbent parties ought to enjoy greater electoral success in areas of the country where the economy is stronger, as opposed to hypotheses that focus on either change in vote totals or changes in economic conditions since the previous election. While the distinction may be subtle, it has important connotations for how the empirical analysis is structured, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Moreover, it also helps emphasize the point that a lack of empirical support for the Referendum Model in this study should not be interpreted as conflicting with evidence that has been found in support of incumbency-based hypotheses in established democracies by studies that do not employ a cross-regional framework.

At the same time, it is also useful to be aware of the similarities between the Incumbency hypothesis proposed in this chapter and arguments common to the economic voting literature. Although the focus here is not on using economic conditions to assess the competence of the current government, both approaches do rely on the basic argument that dissatisfaction with economic conditions can lead voters to be more likely to want to “throw the bums out.” At the end of the day, both approaches suggest that the worse economic conditions are, the less likely incumbent parties are be favored by voters. Furthermore, in some ways such an approach is a direct descendent of what Fiorina (1981) calls the “pure” retrospective approach of V. O. Key, based on “retrospective voters – unaffected by party ties, ideologies, and future issue expectations – who regard elections as referenda on the state of the country” (p. 36). If ever there was an opportunity to locate such pure retrospective voters, it would seem to be in the uncertain environment of postcommunist elections.

As the Incumbency hypothesis suggests that economic conditions affect election results solely by increasing or decreasing the likelihood that voters will support incumbent parties, the model has the feel of a referendum on
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the current government. For this reason, I have labeled this approach the Referendum Model. The obvious shortcoming of the Referendum Model is that it offers analysts no leverage over the question of where voters who are dissatisfied with incumbent parties are likely to turn in casting their vote. This is not a large concern in the context of a two-party system, where a vote against the incumbent by definition means a vote for the opposition party. As the number of parties contesting an election increases, however, models that make predictions solely based on incumbency status are likely to suffer from an increasingly narrow scope and an inability to comment on the relationship between economic conditions and the vote for large numbers of parties. So the next question to consider is how to motivate a model of the effect of economic conditions on election results that can move beyond this limitation.

A Transitional Identity Model

The simplest way to create a model with a wider degree of predictive power is to relax our assumptions about the magnitude of uncertainty in transitional elections and allow voters to have some beliefs about the political parties competing for office. The standard way in which to do so would be to introduce the idea of partisanship, which, as will be explained momentarily, does have some precedence in the existing economic voting literature. I argue in this section, however, that simply transporting a left-right based model to the post-communist context is problematic, and that instead we should think about voters’ knowledge of parties in terms of parties’ “Transitional Identities,” as either Old Regime parties, New Regime parties, or neither. Old Regime parties are those that are clearly linked to the ruling party from the pretransition communist era, whereas New Regime parties are those whose primary identity lies with the political and economic transformations undertaken since the start of the transition era; both categories are defined in much greater detail below. Allowing voters to possess some information about these types of parties leads to hypotheses that predict that New Regime parties should enjoy greater electoral success in areas of the country where the economy is performing better, whereas Old Regime parties should perform better in parts of the country where the economy is performing worse.10 In the

10 Because of the lack of a specific prediction about the effect of economic conditions on the vote for non-New Regime or non-Old Regime parties, I do not systematically assess
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rest of this section, I draw out the theoretical arguments to support these propositions.

The Partisan Approach to Economic Voting in Established Democracies

Although almost all studies of economic voting in established democracies tend to concentrate on how economic conditions affect the vote for incumbent parties, a much smaller and secondary strand of the literature either conditions these effects on partisan orientation or makes explicit predictions about the effect of economic conditions on the vote for parties based on their partisan alignment. The basic thrust of the argument is that certain economic conditions – generally unemployment – are likely to have a particular effect on left-wing parties, whereas other economic conditions – generally inflation – are likely to have a distinct effect on right-wing parties. The logic underlying the argument is that voters are concerned with specific economic problems and have a belief about which parties would be better suited to solving those particular problems (or ought to be held particularly responsible for failing to solve these problems). In the context of advanced industrialized democracies, it is generally assumed that right-wing parties are more likely to favor control of inflation at the expense of rising unemployment, while left-wing parties are more likely to take the opposite approach. Thus, an electorate faced with high inflation might be more likely to turn to right-wing parties, while an electorate scarred by unemployment might turn toward left-wing parties. For example, Kiewiet (1983) examines whether American voters that were concerned with unemployment were more likely to vote for the Democratic Party and, conversely, if voters that were concerned with inflation were more likely to vote for the Republican Party. Although Kiewiet refers to this as a “policy-oriented” economic

the effect of the economy on these “other” parties while testing the Transitional Identity Model. However, as part of this study the effects of the economy on fifty-six of these “other” parties were estimated. (These estimates were generated either as part of the process of testing the Referendum Model or during robustness tests of both models; see Chapter 8 for details.) Had these estimates been used to test a hypothetical “Other Transitional Identity” hypothesis, the findings would have been very supportive of the prediction that there should be no systematic evidence of a link between regional variation in economic conditions and election results for these “other” parties; see note in Chapter 9 for details.

For examples of work claiming greater likelihood of punishment, see Powell and Whitten 1993; Palmer and Whitten 2000. For examples or work testing whether higher levels of a particular economic ill lead to greater support for the appropriate type of party, see Rosa and Amson 1976; Lewis-Beck and Bellucci 1982; Bellucci 1984; Host and Paldam 1990. For microlevel research in the American context, see Kiewiet 1983.
voting hypothesis, the basic idea – that there is relationship between particular economic conditions and the vote for particular types of parties irrespective of governing status – is the same as what I have labeled here as a partisan approach to economic voting.

There are numerous concerns with directly employing this kind of a partisan-based approach in transition countries. First, it is very difficult to apply a simple left-right classification to parties in transition countries.\(^\text{(12)}\) Alignments along political spectra can be difficult to classify, as it is often unclear where new parties stand on the relevant issues.\(^\text{(13)}\) Moreover, even if parties declare themselves to stand on one end of the political spectrum, voters lack the years of experience with the parties necessary to build up confidence that the parties will behave in the manner they promise. Additionally, new parties have an opportunity to shift their political alignment during the early years of the transition. An interesting example of such a shift is the Party of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) in Hungary. In the 1990 parliamentary elections, it presented itself as a liberal party led by radical young students. By the 1998 parliamentary election, it was not only portraying itself as a right-of-center political party but also claiming that it was the only legitimate center-right party in Hungarian politics.\(^\text{(14)}\) Such experiences highlight the question of what exactly words such as right, left, liberal, or conservative mean in a transitional context, and especially whether such concepts mean the same thing across different countries or time periods.

The second problem with simply importing partisan models to transition countries is that it is doubtful that voters will be able to associate parties of a certain partisan persuasion with specific policies as closely as voters can in established democracies. When voters in an established democracy turn to the left out of a concern over rising unemployment, they believe that left-wing parties will actively fight unemployment not only because they claim they will but often in part because these parties have actually pursued similar policies in the past. Thus, the claims these parties make of being on the left are reinforced by voters’ memories of how these parties behaved.

\(^{12}\) See, for example, Kitschelt, Manfieldova et al. 1999; Pettai and Kreuzer 1999; Pop-Eleches 2004.

\(^{13}\) See, for example, Kitschelt 1992; Fish 1995a; White, Rose, and McAllister 1997; Colton 1998a.

\(^{14}\) Interview by the author with FIDESZ International Secretary Andras Kiraly in Budapest, Hungary on May 5, 1998.
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when last in power. Additionally, voters can assess the competency of the left in carrying out these programs in the past. If the leftist parties did, in fact, pursue policies that successfully lowered unemployment rates in the past, then voters would have another assurance that their decision to turn to these parties in the face of rising unemployment was justified. In transition countries, such conditions are not present. Especially in the case of elections that take place early in the transition, voters are not likely to have enough experience in observing the behavior of parties to be confident that left-wing parties will pursue policies to reduce unemployment once in office, as well as whether left-wing parties will actually prove competent at reducing unemployment even if they do choose to pursue it as a goal.

Third, because of the enormity of the economic transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, it is unlikely that voters would be motivated by concerns over specific economic conditions as opposed to the state of the overall economy. Voters in advanced industrialized democracies are more likely to have the confidence to believe that the system works but that specific macroeconomic concerns need to be addressed. In transition countries, one would not expect this level of specification of concern to be present. Voters lack the experience with capitalism to understand which particular economic conditions they can afford to see worsen and which ones need to be improved. They are likely to be more concerned with assessing whether the new system works at all and if it is possible to survive and eventually prosper in view of all these new changes. With so many economic changes occurring at once, it is doubtful that voters would focus on one particular economic ill as the source of all their problems and instead are more likely to be motivated by a general concern to see the economy do “better” and avoid having it do “worse.”

Finally, as scholars we are also faced with a lack of clearly defined categories for political parties. Certainly, most studies of elections in transition countries attempt to put political parties into different categories or camps as a way of addressing the vast number of political parties. But these categories tend to vary from article to article, depending on the inclination of the researcher. This is not so much of a problem for single case studies, but it does make comparison inherently more difficult; it also points to the

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15 This idea of voters building up a set of expectations regarding the likely behavior of parties in office through past experience plays a fundamental role in Fiorina’s conception of the retrospective voter; see Fiorina 1981, especially Chapter 4.
16 For an illustration of this phenomenon, see Tucker 2002, 294.
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importance of getting some consistency in the field. The problem becomes especially acute when one attempts to compare categories across countries.

Despite these problems, the partisan approach—defined loosely as thinking about the effect of economic conditions on election results based on what a party stands for as opposed to whether or not it is in the government—is attractive because it offers an alternative to the incumbency approach in two important ways. First, the incumbency approach is limited in the number of parties about which it can make predictions, as it only predicts the effect of economic conditions on incumbent parties and makes no useful predictions for the remaining parties. Second, the incumbency approach assumes that the only information voters have to help them assess economic prospects for the country under the leadership of different parties is whether or not they are incumbents, as was posited in the previous section.

Given all of the problems with a partisan approach discussed earlier, it still seems likely that voters would have a different conception of the economic prospects for the country under the leadership of a party that is led by young Western-trained reformers as opposed to one that is composed of nomenklatura bureaucrats from the previous regime. Clearly, voters do possess some information about parties, even if it is not of the specific nature found in advanced industrialized democracies. And if voters do possess some information, then there is no reason not to use the knowledge of this information to gain leverage over our understanding of the relationship between economic conditions and election results in transition countries.

Applying the Partisan Approach to Transition Countries

In the previous discussion of the Referendum Model, I began from the assumption that voters possessed little relevant information about political parties generally—and in particular about the likely impact of their electoral success on economic developments—or chose to ignore or downgrade in importance whatever information in this regard they might possess. Here, I relax this assumption, and allow voters to have more developed beliefs about political parties. As the information required to motivate a full-fledged partisan based model of the type discussed earlier seems unlikely, I instead assume merely that voters have information regarding a party’s “core identity.”

17 Numerous other studies have taken a similar approach by focusing analyses of either voting or attitudes toward political parties not on the party itself but, rather, on the general “party family” to which the party belongs. See, for example, Lewis 1994; Clem and Craumer 1995a; Belin and Orttung 1997; Clem and Craumer 1997; Shabad and Slomczynski 1999; Colton
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party identity can be thought of as the fundamental idea on which the party is based, or, alternatively, as the simplest category into which voters would be likely to put parties. No matter how chaotic the initial transition period, the assumption here is that voters will still have some understanding of parties’ core identities.

Another way of thinking about the distinction between a partisan approach and a core identity approach is that the partisan approach assumes that the different parties can be organized in an ordinal manner: there is a clear spectrum on which all of the parties can be placed. A core identity approach instead argues that the relationship is categorical; parties can be organized into categories, but there is no clear linear relationship among the categories. There are different reasons why this linear relationship may not exist: parties themselves may not be clear where they stand in relation to one another; voters may not know where the parties stand in relation to one another; and outside analysts may not be able to consistently place parties on a single left-right dimension. In the case of transition countries, all three types of uncertainty are often present, as was described in the previous section.

A partisan-inspired model for transition countries could thus proceed by substituting the core identities of parties for the partisan (right-left) position of parties in the model. Instead of predicting how economic conditions are likely to affect the vote for right-wing and left-wing parties, this transition-appropriate model would predict how economic conditions are likely to affect the vote for parties based on their core identities.

Not all core party identities, however, can be used to generate viable regional economic voting predictions. Parties that are characterized by agrarian, religious, or ethnic core party identities are examples of such parties. In these cases, there is no clear theoretical reason why these types of parties should be expected to perform either better or worse in areas of the country where economic conditions are better or worse, as their primary appeal to voters is independent of an economic identity.

However, it is possible to predict a relationship between the state of the economy and the vote for political parties whose primary identities in the mind of voters are likely to be directly linked to the transition itself. These parties can be broken down into two categories: the parties most closely associated with the prior, single-party and non-capitalist regime, which I

2000b. For a Herculean effort to classify all parties in twenty postcommunist countries into party families, see Bugajski 2002.
label Old Regime parties; and the parties most closely linked to the newly emerging post-transition multi-party and capitalist world, which I label New Regime parties.

Old Regime parties are defined as those parties that are most clearly linked to the ruling party from the previous nondemocratic regime. This description is deliberately intended to be as general as possible in an effort to provide a framework for moving the analysis outside of the postcommunist context.\(^\text{18}\) That being said, it is possible to provide a more focused definition of Old Regime parties within the postcommunist context of this particular book. More specifically, there are two sets of parties that are coded as Old Regime parties. The first are the official successors to the old ruling Communist parties.\(^\text{19}\) The second group includes all alternative/spin-off communist successor parties that were established during the postcommunist period in an effort to remain closer to the old communist ideology; in the language of the field, these parties profess to be more orthodox than the official successor parties. In some cases, these parties are never a part of the legal successor, refusing to join it and immediately seeking a more orthodox alternative; in other cases they emerge as splinter parties that split from the legal successor party after some period of time. The key to the definition is that an Old Regime party is visibly linked to the previous regime, either through the people that make up the party, the ideology it continues to publicly embrace, or its legal obligations.

By contrast, New Regime parties are those that are most likely to appeal to voters primarily through their connection to, association with, and

\(^{18}\) For example, in the case of nondemocratic regimes that are not ruled by a political party – such as a military regime – the definition of an Old Regime party could be defined so as to include the party or parties that clearly have the support of the military.

\(^{19}\) Not surprisingly, scholars have been intrigued by the evolution of these postcommunist parties, and a small literature has sprung up around the topic. Five recommended books in this regard are Grzymala-Busse 2002, which compares the evolution of communist successor parties in Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, Urban and Solovei, which explores the development of Russia’s communist successor parties, and Ishiyama 1999, Bozóki and Ishiyama 2002, and Carry and Urban 2003, three edited volumes that include both single-case study chapters and comparative analyses. Article-length comparative assessments of communist successor parties include Mahr and Nagle 1995; Ishiyama 1997; Grzymala-Busse 1998; and Orenstein 1998. Significant attention as well is often paid to communist successor parties in studies of emerging cleavages in postcommunist countries; see, for example, Evans and Whitefield 1998; Miller and White 1998; Kitschelt, Manfledova et al. 1999; Lawson, Römmle, and Karasimeonov 1999; Bauer 2002; Whitefield 2002. Finally, Bugajs 2002 is an invaluable resource for charting the evolution of communist successor parties in all East European countries. See as well the discussion of this topic in Chapter 9.
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general support for the transition itself. I employ a two-step process to code these parties. The first step is to trace out the descendents of the people or movements that initiated the transition away from communism in each of the countries. In practice, this usually means identifying the descendents of either round table negotiations or initial umbrella movements that formed to oppose the old communist regime; how this plays out on a country-by-country basis is addressed in Chapter 6. The second step is to then eliminate any parties that attempt to appeal to voters on grounds that are separate and distinct from the transition. In practice, this primarily means excluding parties that attempt to appeal to voters on the basis of their identity or profession, which excludes religious, ethnic, nationalist, agrarian, or trade union parties from the category of New Regime parties. This is not to say that any of these other types of parties would not share some identification in the minds of voters with either the struggle against communism or the new system that emerged to replace it, but only that their primary attraction to voters would likely be on another basis. The purpose of excluding these parties is therefore to make the category as “pure” as possible by limiting it to parties whose primary association in the mind of voters is likely to be to the transition away from the communist political and economic systems.

This approach maintains a low threshold of required knowledge about political parties, as all that is required of voters by this model is knowledge of whether a party is an Old Regime party, New Regime party, or neither. Voters are not required to have knowledge of the specifics of parties’ economic platforms, the likelihood of the parties keeping promises regarding these platforms, or the ability of parties to implement such policies if elected. They are only required to be able to identify the parties most closely connected to the transition. For this reason, I label the model a Transitional Identity Model, as it is based on the idea that a voter is aware of a party’s Transitional Identity and can use that identity to help inform his or her vote choice. The model yields two hypotheses. The New Regime hypothesis predicts that New Regime parties will perform better in parts of the country where economic conditions are better than where economic conditions are worse. Conversely, the Old Regime hypothesis predicts that Old Regime parties will enjoy more electoral success in parts of the country where economic conditions are worse than where economic conditions are better.

Both predictions stem from a conception of the transition as representing a sharp break from the past, complete with new opportunities and dangers. The New Regime hypothesis is based on a fairly straightforward
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logic. Following the massive economic upheaval associated with the transition, voters who have suffered the most from this transition are likely to want to avoid putting parties into power whose primary identity is with the transition. Based on a similar logic, voters who are enjoying more benefits from economic reforms and have avoided more of the pain from economic reforms are likely to prefer to have precisely these types of parties in power.

If we continue to assume that there are more people satisfied with the state of the economy in areas of the country where economic conditions are better and more people dissatisfied with the state of the economy in parts of the country where economic conditions are worse, we arrive at the prediction of the New Regime hypothesis, which is that New Regime parties ought to enjoy more electoral success in areas of the country where economic conditions are better than in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse.

If a voter is dissatisfied with the state of the economy, we expect that she will be unlikely to cast a vote for a New Regime party. But in a multiparty system, this still leaves her with many choices. Although she may not posses much information about the likely effects on the economy of having most of these parties in power, she does know something about the Old Regime parties. When their predecessors were in power, the economic landscape looked very different from the present one. Thus, if the voter is particularly concerned about the current state of the economy, then she knows at least one type of party that in the past – at least on the surface – ruled in a period of time without the current economic difficulties. Even if a return to the past is not explicitly desired, the voter may still be more likely to have confidence in Old Regime parties to address the current economic ills than any of the other parties, with which she has no such association of a different type of economic circumstances. And the worse economic conditions are, the more likely she is to act on these concerns when she casts her ballot. As was described earlier, these effects can be both direct (e.g., actually being unemployed) and indirect (e.g., seeing others unemployed, more fear of becoming unemployed in the future). By no means should we expect everyone to vote for Old Regime parties if they are unhappy with the current path of reforms, but from a probabilistic sense we could expect voters dissatisfied with the state of the economy to be more likely to vote for an Old Regime party than any other particular option. If we maintain the assumption from the previous section that there are likely to be more people dissatisfied with the state of the economy in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse, then at the aggregate level
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we should expect to see more support for Old Regime parties in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse, and less support for Old Regime parties in areas of the country where economic conditions are better.

Although the flavor of the Transitional Identity Model is similar to a partisan model, it is important to note that it is not the same thing. There are Old Regime parties in the sample that clearly moved to the center in embracing market oriented principles during the 1990s (e.g., the Democratic Left Alliance [SLD] in Poland and the Hungarian Socialist Party [MSzP] in Hungary), social democratic parties that had no connection to the previous ruling regime and thus are not classified as Old Regime parties (e.g., the Czech Social Democratic Party [CSSD] in the Czech Republic), and New Regime parties with increasingly dubious liberal reformist credentials (e.g., Our Home is Russia [NDR] in Russia and Solidarity Electoral Action [AWS] in Poland). This highlights the point that the basic motivation for the Transitional Identity Model is voters’ knowledge about a party’s relationship to the transition itself, as opposed to nuances about the types of policies the party may currently be advocating.

Summary of and Observations on Standard Economic Voting Models and Hypotheses

To summarize, the preceding theoretical discussion focuses on two standard economic voting models, the Referendum Model and the Transitional Identity Model. Based on a low information and high uncertainty framework, the Referendum Model yields one hypothesis, the Incumbency hypothesis, which predicts that incumbent parties should receive more electoral support in parts of the country where economic conditions are better than in parts of the country where economic conditions are worse. The Transitional Identity Model, which assumes slightly lower levels of uncertainty and modest levels of information about political parties, and in particular the relationship of parties to the transition itself, generates two hypotheses. The New Regime hypothesis predicts that New Regime parties ought to perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are stronger, whereas the Old Regime hypothesis predicts that Old Regime parties ought to perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse. Thus, the primary empirical question of this book is to ascertain whether there is stronger empirical support for one of these models than the other. And as was noted in Chapter 1 and will be made clear
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in Chapters 5 through 8, there is indeed a clear answer to this question: there is consistently stronger empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model than there is for the Referendum Model.

It is also important to note that neither the Referendum Model nor the Transitional Identity Model offer predictions for the effect of economic conditions on all parties that contest elections. As will become clear in the later chapters, the Transitional Identity Model makes predictions for a larger number of parties than the Referendum Model, and as such enjoys greater scope in the postcommunist context. But there are certainly parties for which the Transitional Identity Model can not account as well. In some ways, this can be seen as a shortcoming of the model, as it is always desirable for models to have larger scope. At the same time, it may be the case that there are certain types of parties for which we should not expect variation in economic conditions to have a significant explanatory effect on election results, or at the very least not nearly as consistently as the effect of economic conditions on election results for New Regime and Old Regime parties. But in the interest of parsimony, I leave the topic of the systematic effect of economic conditions on the vote for parties outside of the incumbent, New Regime, and Old Regime classifications for future research.20

Before moving on to the topic of conditional economic voting hypotheses in the final section of this chapter, I pause briefly to consider the relationship between the standard economic voting models and hypotheses presented above and some of the overarching questions facing the economic voting literature. Specifically, I address the pocketbook versus sociotropic and prospective versus retrospective voting debates, both of which have figured prominently in the academic literature. In doing so, it is important to that these are both essentially microlevel arguments about motivation for individual level behavior, whereas the models presented in this chapter yield aggregate level hypotheses about the relationship between election results and macroeconomic conditions. Thus, any link between the standard economic voting models presented in this book and these microlevel debates is going to be of a more speculative nature than anything else.

The pocketbook versus sociotropic debate concerns the question of whether or not voters are more likely to respond to their own personal

20 The only exceptions here are nationalist parties, which I address briefly in Chapter 7 and in greater detail elsewhere (Tucker 2004), and the short description of the findings regarding the fifty-six non-New Regime and non-Old Regime parties (mentioned earlier in note 10 of this chapter) presented in note 11 of Chapter 9.
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economic situation or to their perception of the overall economic health of society. The models discussed in the preceding section are not dependent on having a position on this debate, as they are consistent with both pocketbook and sociotropic approaches. If the pocketbook approach is correct, then both models can rest on the belief that in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse, there are likely to be more people that are disenchanted with their own particular economic situation. This is especially apparent with a variable such as unemployment, which almost directly measures the percentage of people in a given region that we might expect to be most concerned with their personal economic situation. Likewise, if voters have more sociotropic concerns, then both models are consistent with the idea that voters living in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse are likely to have a worse impression of the state of the economy than voters living in areas where economic conditions are better. In a sense, this is just another reflection of the direct and indirect effects of economic conditions argument that I made earlier in this chapter. Given that the hypotheses are consistent with both sociotropic and pocketbook voting arguments, we can not hope to distinguish between them from the statistical tests employed in this book; indeed, to do so would require extensive use of microlevel data. Conversely, though, those who are convinced that either (or both) effects are important in understanding the effect of economics conditions on election results should be reassured that neither is inconsistent with the hypotheses tested here.

The other large standing debate in the literature concerns questions regarding whether voters are more likely to vote retrospectively, in relation to what has happened with the economy before the election, or prospectively, in terms of expectations about economic developments in the future. Overall, the study in this book has little to say about this debate as well because the emphasis in the hypotheses is on cross-regional variation in economic conditions at the time of the election. Consequently, as will

21 For advocates of the sociotropic approach, see Kinder and Kiewiet 1979; MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1992; Lanoue 1994; Mughan and Lacy 2002. Empirical evidence of the pocketbook approach can be found in Palmer and Whitten 1999, which examines the effect of the economy on election results in twelve OECD countries, and Paldam 1986, which looks at Danish voters. For a related approach, see the argument regarding conditional pocketbook voting in Gomez 2001.

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be discussed in the next chapter, the variables used to test the hypotheses described in this chapter are intended to measure variation in macroeconomic conditions at the time of the election, and thus do not fall squarely in either the retrospective or prospective camp. That being said, empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model is at the very least consistent with the idea that voters can be forward-looking, as voters are posited to be choosing parties based on how they will approach the economy (or whose economic interests they will represent) in the period of time after the election. Of course, this is not inconsistent with some of the more nuanced versions of retrospective voting (see especially Fiorina 1981) that view the voting calculus as an attempt to predict future behavior when in office based on a running tally of past performance. But overall, readers should be quite cautious about extrapolating any significant contribution to the retrospective versus prospective debate from this or any other study that employs exclusively aggregate level data from the period of time leading up to the election in question.

One final observation about the relationship between traditional models of retrospective voting and the models I have put forth in this section is in order. In an important sense, my approach takes account of a concern with all retrospective economic voting models, which is why citizens might ever expect a political party to have an effect on economic conditions, especially in an increasingly globalized world in which macroeconomic developments are more and more beyond the control of national governments. The models I have put forward in this chapter do so by stripping the retrospective blame/reward component out of the theoretical calculus by focusing on the state of the economy at the time of the election – in an effort to identify where there are greater concentrations of voters who are satisfied or dissatisfied with economic conditions generally – as opposed to changes in the state of the economy since the previous election. In the Referendum Model, voters are not holding the government accountable (or rewarding it) for changes in the economy since the government took office but, rather, are merely reflecting the fact that the worse one thinks current economic conditions are, the more likely one might be to want to see someone else in power. Thus, there is no threshold beyond which the government either performed well or poorly but, instead, the simple assumption that those

23 Moreover, it questionable whether aggregate level analysis that does not take into account public opinion could ever hope to sort out prospective versus retrospective questions in the manner that a study employing survey data could (Kramer 1983; Markus 1988).
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who are worse off are more likely to prefer change than those who are better off. Similarly, voters are not rewarding or punishing parties in the Transitional Identity Model but, rather, acting on the idea that a particular type of party is more likely to look out for the interest of economic winners (New Regime parties) or economic losers (Old Regime parties). This is not to argue that voters never try to reward or punish incumbent parties for changes in the state of the economy since the previous election, but, rather, that we can develop hypotheses about aggregate level relationships between economic conditions and election results that are not dependent on voters believing in the efficacy of a reward or punishment strategy.

This leads to another important topic, which is the question of the relationship between the microlevel arguments I have made above and the macrolevel hypotheses I test in the remainder of this book. To reiterate, the empirical component of this book tests the relationship between regional aggregate level economic conditions and election results. In the preceding section of this chapter, I have attempted to generate these aggregate level hypotheses through plausible microlevel arguments about how citizens might behave during transitional elections in postcommunist countries. But we can not test microlevel hypotheses about motivations for individual level behavior using aggregate level data, nor do I claim to do so.24 So although it is possible to say, for example, that evidence in support of the Transitional Identity Model is consistent with the idea that voters may be forward-looking, it should not in any way be interpreted as an empirical test of a prospective model of voting.

Similarly, the fact that I have put forward a set of microlevel arguments to justify the choice of aggregate level hypotheses I test in the following chapters should not in any way detract from the importance of testing aggregate level hypotheses as a research strategy. Political scientists have a clear interest in explaining macrolevel phenomena. Certainly we should be concerned with understanding how people vote, but we also want to know why parties receive the vote totals that they do. Indeed, if one of our main reasons for being interested in elections in the first place is the fact that they determine who makes up the government and the legislature, then the argument can be made that understanding why parties receive the votes that they do is just as important as understanding why any one individual

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24 The exception here is ecological inference analysis, but even these types of analyses only allow us to estimate relationships at the micro level for which we have data at the aggregate level. For more, see King 1997.
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voted the way she did. Aggregate-level phenomena are real phenomena that demand our understanding just as microlevel phenomena do.

This study is an aggregate-level study in so far as it attempts to understand the link between regional variation in macroeconomic conditions and variation in election results for particular categories of political parties. It is not the only way one could hope to study the relationship between economic conditions and election results, but it is a valid way to do so, and, as will be explained in the next chapter, one that is particularly appropriate for comparative analysis given the nature of the available data. Moreover, in focusing this aggregate-level analysis at the regional level, the study highlights a relationship between economic conditions and election results that has been left largely unexplored by the existing literature on economic voting in established democracies.

Conditional Economic Voting Hypotheses

As described in Chapter 1, I distinguish between hypotheses that attempt to answer the questions in the first and second rows of Table 1.1 by using the terms standard and conditional economic voting hypotheses. To reiterate, standard economic voting hypotheses make predictions about the type of party affected by economic conditions and the direction in which the effect pushes the vote for that type of party. Conditional economic voting hypotheses, on the other hand, predict the conditions in which there should be more or less empirical support for a standard hypothesis, or, more generally, the context in which economic conditions should have a more or less consistent effect on election results. The best-known conditional hypothesis from the literature on economic voting in established democracies can be found in G. Bingham Powell and Guy Whitten’s 1993 *American Journal of Political Science* article “A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context”.25 The authors were primarily concerned with testing a standard economic voting hypothesis: whether or not incumbent parties performed better when economic conditions were better across a cross-national time-series of OECD elections. However, one of their hypotheses was that they expected to find more support for this incumbency hypothesis when the “clarity of responsibility” of the government for policy was stronger than when it was weaker. To test this

25 Note that Powell and Whitten did not use the terminology of standard and conditional hypotheses, which are original to this book.
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hypothesis, they split their sample into two groups – high responsibility countries and low responsibility countries – and then ran their analysis separately on each subgroup. According to my terminology, this is a perfect example of a conditional economic voting hypothesis. It predicts the conditions (high responsibility elections) under which we ought to find more empirical support for a standard hypothesis (that incumbents [type] benefit from better [direction] economic conditions). Powell and Whitten did indeed find support for their conditional clarity of responsibility hypothesis, and, in doing so, provided the impetus for a variety of work that has attempted to either refine or refute the clarity of responsibility argument.26

While Powell and Whitten introduced one useful conditional hypothesis, the universe of conditional hypotheses can expand well beyond the clarity of responsibility argument. In the remainder of this section, I introduce a range of conditional hypotheses, a number of which build off of the clarity of responsibility argument. Others, however, build off different theoretical arguments that I present later in this section. It is important to note that although most of the conditional hypotheses I discuss can be applied to any standard hypothesis (e.g., we might expect to find more support for the Incumbency, New Regime, and Old Regime hypotheses in high responsibility elections), some will apply to only particular standard hypotheses; I will note specifically when this is the case.

There are two important reasons for including conditional hypotheses in the study. First and foremost, the conditional hypotheses present theoretically defined (or intuitively interesting) alternative subsets of data for retesting the standard hypotheses. As has been repeatedly noted, the overall conclusion of this book is that there is more empirical support for the Transitional Identity Model than for the Referendum Model. One way to conceptualize the conditional economic voting hypotheses, therefore, are as a series of robustness tests that allow us to examine whether this empirical conclusion continues to hold when we introduce a second layer of theory to predict contexts in which economic conditions ought to be more or less important. For example, is there still more support for the Transitional Identity Model than the Referendum Model in high responsibility elections? Or if we consider only elections in which the personality of candidates is particularly important?

26 See, for example, Whitten and Palmer 1999; Anderson 2000; Chappell and Veiga 2000; Royed, Leyden, and Borrelli 2000; Tucker 2000b, 2001; Nadeau, Niemi, and Yoshinaka 2002.
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But the other reason for examining conditional hypotheses is because they are interesting unto themselves. In some ways, these types of arguments represent the cutting edge of research in the economic voting literature generally, especially if we are to judge by the flurry of recent activity that attempts to test the clarity of responsibility argument. In this vein, my work offers three new contributions. First, I present a number of ways of testing the clarity of responsibility argument in the context of new democracies. Second, I offer a set of other theoretical justifications for conditional hypotheses that move beyond responsibility-based arguments. Finally, I present some preliminary assessment of these hypotheses from the post-communist case studies I examine in the book.27

In the rest of this chapter, I present a number of conditional economic voting hypotheses. They are broken down into two general categories: theoretically motivated hypotheses and intuitively interesting hypotheses; I explain the distinction between the two in the following section. The theoretically based hypotheses are then grouped together around a number of common themes; for example, the hypotheses that build off of the clarity of responsibility concept are presented together. I turn first to the intuitive conditional economic voting hypotheses.

Intuitive Conditional Hypotheses

Most of the conditional hypotheses tested in the study are generated from theoretical arguments. However, in the years that I have been presenting this research, I have always been asked about the effect of including both parliamentary and presidential elections and both East-Central European and Russian elections in the same study. Although not based on any particular theoretical argument, many people seem to be at least curious as to whether the results are consistent across these divides. I also have been asked

27 It is important to stress the preliminary nature of these conclusions. My research design is focused on providing as thorough a testing as possible of the three standard hypotheses presented in the previous section, and as such is not explicitly designed to test the conditional hypotheses. That being said, the manner in which I test the conditional hypotheses – by splitting my sample into the different categories proposed by the hypotheses and comparing the degree of support for the relevant standard hypothesis within each category – is fairly similar to the approach used by Powell and Whitten. But ultimately all I can really do is look for patterns across these cases, and not definitely reject or prove any of the hypotheses. But there are a number of interesting patterns to report, and as such the study can provide directions for future research that are more directly focused on tests of the more promising conditional hypotheses.
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on numerous occasions for country-by-country breakdowns of the results. For this reason, I include these three “intuitive” conditional hypotheses in the analysis: presidential versus parliamentary elections; East-Central European versus Russian elections; and a country-by-country breakdown of results. It is almost a stretch to call these hypotheses, as there is no real prediction of the category in which we should expect to see more support for the relevant standard economic voting hypothesis. This is an informative point, because it distinguishes the intuitive conditional hypotheses from the theoretical conditional hypotheses that follow in the next section; the theoretical conditional hypotheses produce a prediction about the category in which there is expected to be greater support for standard hypotheses (e.g., Powell and Whitten expected to find more support for their incumbency hypothesis in the high responsibility category than in the low responsibility category), whereas for the intuitive conditional hypotheses, there is no particular expectation for (or no good reason to expect) more support in one case than the other, just the belief that they may be different. Another way of putting this is that the null for the intuitive hypotheses is that there is no difference across categories, while the null for the theoretical hypotheses is that there is either no difference across the categories or that there is a difference in the wrong direction (e.g., more support in the low responsibility than in the high responsibility category).

The categories for these intuitive conditional hypotheses require little explanation, other than to note that they are not equally balanced. There are five Russian elections in the study, as compared to a total of fifteen elections from the four East-Central European cases. Similarly, there are five presidential elections and fifteen parliamentary elections in the sample, because in both Hungary and the Czech Republic the president is selected by the parliament; the Slovak parliament also elected the president until 1999, when the first direct elections for Slovak president were held. The country-by-country analysis is more evenly distributed with five Polish and Russian elections, four Slovak elections, and three Czech and Hungarian elections; this includes three parliamentary elections for each country plus the applicable presidential elections.

Theoretically Based Conditional Economic Voting Hypotheses

In this book, I consider five different types of theoretically based conditional hypotheses: Responsibility based conditional hypotheses that build directly off of the Powell and Whitten (1993) approach to predict more support for
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standard economic voting hypotheses in contexts in which we expect parties to have more responsibility for government policy; *Supply-side* conditional hypotheses that predict more support for standard economic voting hypotheses when non-economic factors matter less; *Party orientation* conditional hypotheses that predict different effects for subsets of the New Regime and Old Regime parties; *Time-based* conditional hypotheses that predict changing support for standard hypotheses as time progresses; and, finally, *Interactive* conditional hypotheses that are generated by examining the interaction of the standard hypotheses (e.g., the effect of the economy on incumbent-New Regime parties vs. opposition-New Regime parties). In the rest of this section, I draw out the specific hypotheses in each of these categories.

**Responsibility Hypotheses** As has been mentioned earlier, responsibility based conditional hypotheses are the one form of conditional hypotheses that have already taken hold in the literature thanks to a number of articles cited earlier that have attempted to test Powell and Whitten’s original clarity of responsibility hypothesis. Simply put, the argument proposed that the relative importance of economic conditions in determining election results (or the extent to which we ought to find empirical support for standard economic voting hypotheses) is dependent on how responsible those being elected are perceived to be for government policy. The more responsible they are, the more economic conditions should matter.28

Although this is clearly a macrolevel theory in so far as it pertains to the relationship between economic conditions and election results, it is grounded in plausible microlevel foundations. In its most general form, it is based on the simple idea that, before voters decide to look to the economy to influence their vote choice, they first consider how much control over government policy the people for whom they are voting actually have. The more control those being elected have, the more voters are likely to factor macroeconomic conditions into their voting behavior. The less control, the less economic conditions should matter.

28 Although not focused on the topic of voting, Javeline’s recent work on whether Russian citizens responded in the 1990s to unpaid wages by protesting focuses heavily on the degree to which Russians can attribute blame for wage arrears to specific actors. She finds empirical support on the micro level for this variant of a clarity of responsibility hypothesis, as Russians who did attribute blame to specific actors were in fact more likely to participate in protest activities. See Javeline 2003a, 2003b.
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Powell and Whitten operationalize the level of responsibility for policy by looking at a variety of institutional factors that speak to how likely the ruling party should be to be able to implement its preferred policies at will. Specifically, these factors are voting cohesion on the part of the governing party or parties, the nature of the committee system in the parliament, the presence of bicameral opposition, and whether the government was a minority or coalition government.\(^{29}\)

Replicating the components of this index in postcommunist countries presents a theoretical problem. In constructing an index, the authors assume these factors are both known and relevant to voters. Although it seems plausible that many voters would be aware of whether parties were participating in a coalition government or not, it becomes more of a stretch to suggest that voters are aware of how committee chairmanships are assigned in the parliament, even in a well-established democracy. When we consider the case of new democracies where voters are constantly confronted with new and changing institutions everywhere they turn, these types of assumptions become even more difficult to sustain.

To replicate the spirit of this hypothesis in the postcommunist context, I rely on a more blunt measure of responsibility, something of which more voters are likely to be aware. At this point, the rich institutional variation found in postcommunist countries becomes useful. Looking across the postcommunist political landscape, one finds presidential systems, parliamentary systems, and variants of mixed systems of government.\(^{30}\) Moreover, there are both presidential and parliamentary elections that take place in these systems. On the basis of this simple interaction between the type of election and the type of governing system, we can create an alternative index of responsibility that requires voters to have a much lower threshold of understanding about the political system than the Powell and Whitten index. Indeed, all such a responsibility hypothesis requires is that voters be aware of the office for which the parties/candidates are competing (president or parliament) and whether the country primarily has a parliamentary, presidential, or mixed system of government.\(^{31}\)

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30 See, for example, Remington 1994; Hellman, Tucker, and Frye 1996; Taras 1997; Fish 2000.
31 Note that this does not assume that voters know the classical textbook definitions of presidentialism versus parliamentarism, but rather that more generally they understand whether the president or the prime minister is the functional head of the executive. As this is perhaps the most basic of information to possess about one’s government, it is not unrealistic to
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The hypothesis is based on the following simple assumption. If a country has both a parliament and a president, then voters should attach more responsibility for government policy to the “dominant” body (e.g., the presidency in a presidential system and the parliament in a parliamentary system). This assumption seems relatively uncontroversial, although it does lead to the question of how one classifies countries as presidential, parliamentary, or mixed systems. Fortunately, there is a wide range of literature that addresses exactly this topic.32 There also exists a gray area between parliamentary and presidential systems, which has led scholars to come up with different hybrid categories such as premier-presidential and president-parliamentary,33 moderate presidentialism,34 or semipresidentialism.35 For the sake of simplicity, I refer to cases that are not clearly presidential or parliamentary systems as “mixed” systems. Because a mixed system by definition does not have a dominant president or parliament, the level of responsibility for government policy for either type of election in a mixed system will be less than the level of responsibility for a dominant institution and clearly more responsible than the “dominated” institution (e.g., the parliament in a presidential system or president in a parliamentary system).

The classification of the five countries used in this study as either presidential, parliamentary, or mixed systems is especially straightforward. There is little doubt in the literature that Russia is a presidential system or that Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic are parliamentary systems.36 Poland, by contrast, falls nicely into the category of a mixed system. Although the Polish law on the presidency has changed throughout the 1990s, the governing system has always been characterized by the fact that both the parliament and the president play a role in selecting the government and dismissing the government, both bodies are elected by the people,

suggestion postcommunist voters will know this. For example, in an article written between the 1995 Russian Parliamentary elections and the 1996 Russian Presidential election, Colton notes that no matter what Russian voters had done in the 1995 parliamentary elections, “Boris Yeltsin was still going to be in the Kremlin after the votes were tallied and the parliamentary benches filled.” However, the impending presidential election was not going to be for “legislators who can make fiery speeches about this or that, but the next thing to an elected monarch.” This is a clear illustration of the fact that Colton expected voters to realize they were living in a presidential system (Colton 1996b, both quotes from p. 373).

32 For good reviews, see Lijphart 1992; Shugart and Carey 1992.
34 Fish 2000.
35 Linz 1994; Sartori 1994; Bernhard 1997.
36 See, for example, Shugart 1993; Holmes 1994; Lucky 1994; Remington 1994.
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and both the president and prime minister have veto power over legislation. While the government is headed by the prime minister, the president has always enjoyed a great deal of influence.37

Because the predicted variation in support for standard economic voting hypotheses in this regard is dependent on institutional characteristics of elections and governing systems, I label this the institutional responsibility hypothesis. To reiterate, it predicts that we should find the most support for the three standard hypotheses in elections for dominant institutions (presidential elections in Russia, parliamentary elections in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic), the least support in elections for dominated institutions (parliamentary elections in Russia and presidential elections in Slovakia), and an intermediary level of support for either parliamentary or presidential elections in mixed systems (all Polish elections).

The original Powell and Whitten hypothesis applied only to the vote for incumbent parties, but the logic holds equally well for the predictions made by the Transitional Identity Model regarding New Regime and Old Regime parties. Recall that both of these hypotheses were based on the idea that certain economic conditions would prompt voters to be more or less likely to want either New Regime or Old Regime parties in power because of what they might do vis-à-vis the economy once in power. Similar to the original Powell and Whitten logic, it should be the case that if voters are less likely to believe that the contested institution has control over the state of the economy, they will also be less likely to care whether the institution is controlled by a New Regime or Old Regime party. Consequently, we should find less support for both the New Regime and Old Regime hypotheses in elections for low responsibility institutions as well.

The responsibility based approach also can be used to generate hypotheses about other sources for variation in support for standard economic voting hypotheses that move beyond institutional environments. Perhaps the simplest measure to consider is the size of the political party. If voters suspect that smaller parties are less likely to be able to affect government policy, then it seems reasonable to at least test to see if there is more support for standard economic voting hypotheses amongst parties that receive a larger percentage of the overall vote. Therefore, the size of vote hypothesis predicts specifically that we ought to find more support for the standard economic hypotheses.

37 In comparative studies of presidentialism versus parliamentarism in postcommunist countries, Poland is almost always given one of the hybrid classification labels; see, for example, Remington 1994; Fish 2000.
voting hypotheses among parties that received larger percentages of the overall national vote; such a hypothesis fits nicely with the more general proposition that the role of economic conditions in influencing the vote for political parties ought to increase as parties are considered to be more relevant to the political process. Of course, voters must decide for which party to cast their vote before they know what percentage of the overall vote these parties have received in the election. So this hypothesis rests on the assumption that voters have some rudimentary understanding about the popularity of different parties before the election date. While it seems a stretch to assume that voters could accurately predict vote totals for parties before the election – especially earlier in the decade – the assumption that voters would be able to differentiate between parties likely to receive a larger percentage of the vote (greater than 20 percent) and a relatively small percentage of the vote (less than 5 percent) seems more reasonable. In the actual empirical tests of the models, I will explicitly compare parties in these two categories, but I also will examine other intermediary thresholds as well.\(^{38}\)

One other direction in which to push the responsibility based approach is to consider the distinction between the lead member of a coalition and its junior partners.\(^{39}\) If economic conditions have more of an effect on a party’s electoral fortune the more responsible the party is for the economy, then we would expect the vote for the primary coalition partner to be more affected by the economy than supplementary or minor coalition partners. The logic here is based on the assumption that voters will be more likely to ascribe responsibility for government policy to the lead party of the coalition. Such a coalition hypothesis only can be applied to incumbent parties in parliamentary elections; it makes no sense to speak of distinctions within a coalition when discussing a unitary presidential candidate.\(^{40}\) Additionally,

\(^{38}\) For a similar idea, see the discussion of governing party target size in Anderson (2000).

\(^{39}\) See Wilkin, Haller, and Norpoth 1997 and Tucker 2001 for direct applications of this type of hypothesis. The idea is also tangentially related to studies that examine whether there is more of an effect for economic conditions on the vote for single-party or coalition governments; see, for example, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; and Royed, Leyden, and Borrelli 2000.

\(^{40}\) It is possible, however, to think of primary and junior presidential candidates in a presidential election in a parliamentary system, if the different coalition members nominated different candidates for president. As there is only one such election in this study – the 1999 Slovak presidential election – and there was one clear candidate representing the coalition government – Rudolf Schuster – I have elected not to muddy the conceptual waters by including this specific scenario in the theoretical discussion. However, future research using this hypothesis may require addressing this possibility more explicitly.
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an analysis of the support for the Transitional Identity Model would make no sense in this context, so the hypothesis can only be tested in conjunction with the Referendum Model. Nevertheless, there are still forty-three parties in the sample that are classified as incumbent parties (see Chapter 5) that competed in parliamentary elections. As the specific criteria used to code incumbent parties are discussed in Chapter 5, I will hold off the discussion of the coding rules for primary incumbent parties until that chapter as well.

Thus, the responsibility based approach yields three empirically testable conditional economic voting hypotheses: the institutional responsibility hypothesis, the size of vote hypothesis, and the coalition hypothesis. Table 2.1 concisely summarizes their predictions and the standard hypotheses on which they will be tested in the following chapters.

Supply-Side Hypotheses  In recent years, it has become fashionable in political science to turn to market metaphors as a way of organizing one’s thinking about political phenomena. Terms such as exit and voice, collective action problems, and transaction costs have become commonplace in the literature.41 In this spirit, consider the voting decision as creating a marketplace for information. Voters demand reasons to make a voting decision with which they feel comfortable. One potential source of a voter’s choice is the state of the economy. But of course macroeconomic conditions are not the only factors that voters take into account in making their vote choices. In this sense, the state of the economy must “compete” with other factors to supply the voter with her reason for casting her vote in the manner she does.

One way to conceptualize this marketplace is to assume that in the absence of any other compelling reason to make a vote choice, voters will base their decisions on economic conditions in the manner suggested by a standard economic voting model such as the Transitional Identity Model or the Referendum Model. However, when other noneconomic factors are important, voters may be less likely to base their voting decisions purely on economic conditions. And the more important the noneconomic factors are, the less important economic conditions will be in determining election results. As this type of theory is based on the competition between different factors to supply a voter’s demand for a reason to vote for a political party, I label it a supply-side approach.

41 See, for example, Hirshman 1970; Olson 1971; Williamson 1987.
Regional Economic Voting

Table 2.1. Responsibility-Based Conditional Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Support for Standard Hypotheses</th>
<th>Type of Variation</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Applicability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>Parliamentary or Presidential Elections in Mixed system</td>
<td>Polish Presidential and Parliamentary elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Dominated Elections (Presidential election in Parliamentary system, Parliamentary election in Presidential system)</td>
<td>Russian Parliamentary and Slovak Presidential elections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Panel 2: Size of Vote Hypothesis**

| More | Higher National Vote Total | By individual party vote totals | New Regime, Old Regime, and Incumbency Hypotheses |
|↓ | ↓ |
| Less | Lower National Vote Total |

**Panel 3: Coalition Hypothesis**

| More | Primary Coalition Member | See Table 5.7 |
| Less | Other Coalition Member |

As has been noted throughout this book, the last forty years have resulted in a rich literature on the subject of economic effects on electoral outcomes. Although it is difficult to give credit to any one person in particular for starting the debate, almost all scholars point at least somewhat to Gerald Kramer’s 1971 *American Political Science Review* article “Short-Term
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Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior.”42 In this article, Kramer mentions the fact that the model of the effect of economic conditions on elections that he has proposed is based on a system “in which a voter must decide only between two candidates, who are running primarily as anonymous members of opposing party ‘teams’” (Kramer 1971, 135). Kramer goes on to suggest that if the United States deviated too far from this pattern, the economic voting model would probably not work. However, he concludes this should not be a problem because “Congressional candidates appear to most voters simply as Democrats or Republicans, and not as clearly defined personalities” (Kramer 1971, 135).

In the parlance of this book, however, what Kramer was proposing was a conditional economic voting hypothesis, with candidate personality taking the role of the “noneconomic” factor that competes with economic conditions to supply a reason for a voter to cast her vote. Simply put, Kramer has suggested that the more important a role personality plays in affecting the voting decision, the less important economic conditions ought to be in affecting the outcome. Conversely, we can assume that the less important candidate personality is, or the more anonymous the candidate, the more important economic conditions ought to be in affecting election results.

Kramer leaves unstated how one would operationalize the importance of candidate personality, but he points us in the direction of electoral institutions, as he implicitly compares the anonymity of U.S. congressional candidates against candidates from a “quasi-parliamentary electoral system” (Kramer 1971, 135). Electoral institutions in turn can be used to create a personality index, spanning from electoral rules that create the most anonymous candidates (and therefore allow the smallest impact for candidate personality) to the least anonymous candidates (largest impact for candidate personality). Moreover, an index based on electoral institutions is particularly attractive in the context of postcommunist countries, as it fits the criteria of being a blunt measure of the information available to voters.

Again, the rich institutional variation in the postcommunist context helps in examining support for this hypothesis. Clearly, presidential candidates are the least anonymous, and presidential elections are when we would

42 Indeed, Kiewet and Udell refer to this article as “one of the most influential empirical studies in the history of political science” (Kiewiet and Udell 1998, 219).
most expect candidate personality to play a role in voters’ decision-making processes.\(^{43}\) Next would be single member districts (SMD), where voters are also voting for a single person to represent them, although one that they are likely to know less about than a presidential candidate. At the other end of the spectrum is closed-list proportional representation (PR), where voters are most clearly voting for a party. In between is the category of open-list proportional representation. Here voters have the opportunity to cast their ballots for an individual on a party list, and while seats are allocated to parties based on the total number of votes received by all individuals on their list combined, the actual individuals that receive the seats can be determined by preferences of voters from that district.\(^{44}\)

Therefore, the personality hypothesis predicts that we ought to find the most support for standard economic voting hypotheses in closed-list PR elections, followed by open-list PR, single member districts, and, finally presidential elections. Unfortunately, although there are examples of all four types of elections in this study (see Table 2.3), I did not include analyses of the SMD voting in Hungary or Russia as part of my study because of my inability to locate commensurate economic data. Therefore, the actual empirical tests of this hypothesis focus on variation in the three remaining categories. Table 2.2 lists the electoral rules for the twenty elections included in the study.

Of course, candidate personality is not the only factor that could compete in with the economy to supply a reason for people to vote for a particular candidate or party. For example, there may be elections that occur under political circumstances that are so important in the eyes of the voter that they could crowd out economic considerations entirely. Given the large body of existing evidence on the importance of economic conditions on election results, we should probably expect the threshold for conditions at which political crises completely crowd out economic conditions to be quite high. One type of issue likely to meet this threshold would be “regime

\(^{43}\) See, for example, the discussion of Lech Wałęsa’s run for reelection in the 1995 Polish presidential election in Jasiewicz (1997).

\(^{44}\) One could make the argument that regardless of voting rules in a parliamentary election, parties are always associated with their leader and, thus, the whole question of distinguishing the role of personality by electoral laws is pointless. If one finds this argument convincing, then consider it as a null hypothesis that predicts that there should be no relationship between the importance of economic conditions in determining election results and the proposed role of personality under different electoral institutions.
Economic Conditions and Election Results

Table 2.2. *Electoral Rules by Election*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Electoral Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>Regional PR* (8 regions). Party List + 4 preferential votes for individual candidates. 5% threshold (7% and 10% for coalitions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>Regional PR (8 regions). Party List + 4 preferential votes for individual candidates. 5% threshold (7% and 11% for coalitions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>Regional PR (8 Regions). Party List + 4 preferential votes for individual candidates. 5% Threshold (7% and 11% for coalitions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>176 SMD*, two rounds. 152 Regional PR (20 regions), 5% threshold. 58 “compensation” list. Closed list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>176 SMD, two rounds. 152 Regional PR (20 regions), 5% threshold. 58 “compensation” list. Closed list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>176 SMD, two rounds. 152 Regional PR (20 regions), 5% threshold. 58 “compensation” list. Closed list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2 Round Majoritarian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>69 National PR, 391 Regional PR (37 regions), No thresholds for regional lists, 5% threshold (or winning seats in 5 regions) for national list . Open list voting regional lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>69 National PR, 391 Regional PR (52 regions), 5% threshold for regional lists (8% for coalitions), 7% threshold for national lists. Open list voting regional lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2 Round Majoritarian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>69 National PR, 391 Regional PR (52 regions), 5% threshold for regional lists (8% for coalitions), 7% threshold for national lists. Open list voting regional lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2 Round Majoritarian (Only 1 round conducted).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>225 SMD, simple majority. 225 National PR (closed), 5% threshold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>225 SMD, simple majority. 225 National PR (closed), 5% threshold.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(continued)*
Regional Economic Voting

Table 2.2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Electoral Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2 Round Majoritarian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>225 SMD, simple majority. 225 National PR (closed), 5% threshold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>Regional PR (4 regions), Party list + 4 preferential votes for individual candidates. 5% Threshold (7% and 10% for coalitions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>Regional PR (4 regions), Party list + 4 preferential votes for individual candidates. 5% Threshold (7% and 10% for coalitions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>National PR, Party list + 4 preferential votes for individual candidates. 5% Threshold for all parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>2 Round Majoritarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* PR = Proportional Representation, SMD = Single Member District.


future” considerations, where the very essence of the country’s political future is at stake in the election. Although such circumstances are unlikely in established democracies, they do occur with some degree of frequency in transition countries, making this potentially an empirically testable proposition.

However, only two elections in the entire dataset – the 1991 Russian presidential election and the 1992 Slovak parliamentary election – meet the criteria for being considered serious regime future elections.45 So with

45 The 1991 Russian presidential election can be considered a regime future election because it featured a direct confrontation between communist and anticomunist/pro-democracy candidates with the future of both communist rule and the USSR at stake. Fish writes that the referendum establishing the directly elected presidency “amounted to a vote against the Communist Party system of domination” (Fish 2000, 179). The election itself featured “the unique personality associated with reform and opposition to the existing regime [Boris Yeltsin and]…Nikolay Ryzhkov, the former USSR prime minister, who…was widely viewed as a representative of the status quo” (Myagkov, Ordeshook, and Sobyanin 1997b, 139). The success of Yeltsin in this election undoubtedly “contributed to the breakup of the USSR itself” (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997, 39). Recall as well that this election took place before the coup attempt of August 1991, and it is conceivable that a defeat for Yeltsin could have drastically altered the pace of democratization; in fact,
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eighteen elections in one category and two elections in the other category, the dataset does not really present a suitable opportunity for testing this regime future hypothesis. For this reason, I omit the discussion of the limited evidence that can be brought to bear on the hypothesis in Chapters 5–7, but I will return to it briefly in Chapter 8 to assess the overall evidence from across the entire study.

Colton argues that “without these elections, Yeltsin could not have stared down the reactionary putsch of August 1991” (Colton 1999b). The 1992 Slovak election is included as one of the paired case studies, and as such is discussed in great detail in the next chapter.

Two elections excluded from the category warrant further discussion. At first glance, the decision not to consider the 1990 Hungarian parliamentary election – the first Hungarian election of the postcommunist era – as a regime future election might appear strange, as first elections in democratic transitions normally are contested between pro- and antidemocratization forces. However, this election was not contested by an umbrella anticommunist movement, but, rather, by a number of competing pro-democracy parties, including the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz), the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP), and the League of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) (Schopflin 1991; Körösényi 1993; Tokes 1996). The communist successor party had already also split into separate hard line (the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party [MSzMP]) and moderate (the Hungarian Socialist Party [MSzP]) parties. Moreover, the election followed a period of roundtable discussions that had already provided a blueprint for the shape of the postelection democratic institutions. And unlike the Polish roundtable negotiations of the previous year, the Hungarian roundtable negotiations provided for free elections (Osiatynski 1996; Sajo 1996; Tokes 1996; Benoit and Schiemann 2001). Overall, the election was far from a competition between pro- and antidemocracy forces; instead, it was a competition between different varieties of pro-democracy and postcommunist forces that had already assumed the form of competing political parties. Thus, the same characteristics that led me to include the 1990 Hungarian Parliamentary elections in the study in the first place (while excluding the 1989 Czech, Slovak, and Polish elections) reflect the fact that it more closely resembles a normal transition election than it does a regime future election. And although it is possible that a victory by the hardline MSzMP would have had a significant outcome on the future of the regime, it was well known before the election that this would not happened (see especially Benoit and Schiemann 2001), and the party ultimately received only 3.7 percent of the vote in the election.

Furthermore, if the 1992 Slovak parliamentary election is a Regime Future election, then the obvious next question is why the 1992 Czech election is not in this category. After all, the two elections took place simultaneously, and both countries ended up going their separate ways following the breakup of the Czechoslovakian federation. The answer is that although Slovak autonomy played a large role in the Slovak half of the elections (see Chapter 4 for details), the Czech election was not fought over the future of Slovakia’s relation to the rest of the country. Instead, this was clearly an election where the future of economic reform and the path of the transition was at the forefront; if this included continued commitment to a strong federation, that was because such an arrangement was necessary for economic reform (see, for example, Obrman 1992a; Bugge 1994; Innes 1997; Leff 1997). As this election is also included in one of the paired case studies, I refer interested readers to the discussion of this election in Chapter 4 for more information.
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Table 2.3. Supply-Side–Based Conditional Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Support for Standard Hypotheses</th>
<th>Type of Variation</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Applicability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel 1: Personality Hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>Parliamentary elections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>Slovak Parliamentary elections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single Member</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>New Regime, Old Regime, and Incumbency Hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Districts in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel 2: Regime Future Hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>Normal Transition Elections</td>
<td>All elections other than those listed below</td>
<td>New Regime, Old Regime, and Incumbency Hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** The Russian and Hungarian parliamentary elections both had single member district components of the election as part of mixed electoral systems but are excluded from this study because of the lack of commensurate economic data.

Thus, the supply-side approach produces two hypotheses, the personality hypothesis and the regime future hypothesis, although only the former can be seriously assessed with the data at hand. Both predict variation in support for all three standard hypotheses to be a function of election by election (as opposed to party by party) characteristics; Table 2.3 concisely summarizes the predictions of both hypotheses.

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**Party Orientation Hypotheses** In a previous section of this chapter, I defined Old Regime parties in terms of their relationship to the regime that ruled before the transition. I deliberately avoided any reference to whether or not these parties had attempted to reinvent themselves in a social-democratic framework or whether they had continued to identify themselves as communist, or even hard-line communist, parties. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, some Old Regime parties clearly did try to reestablish themselves as social democratic parties in more of a West European mold, whereas other Old Regime parties stayed much closer to their communist roots. In the literature, these parties are often called reformed and unreformed (or unrepentant), respectively. If we think that the decision of some Old Regime parties to attempt to reinvent themselves as more modern social democratic parties might somehow “taint” their Old Regime status, then an *Old Regime orientation hypothesis* would predict less support for the Old Regime hypothesis among these reformed Old Regime parties and, conversely, more consistent empirical support for the Old Regime hypothesis among unreformed Old Regime parties.\(^{46}\) This type of prediction fits the typology of a conditional economic voting hypothesis, as it predicts the circumstances in which we would expect to find more support for a standard hypothesis. It is important to note, however, that similarly to the coalition hypothesis, the Old Regime orientation hypothesis only predicts variation in support for one particular standard economic voting hypothesis, which is the Old Regime hypothesis.

It is also possible to present a similar hypothesis for two types of New Regime parties. Here the most relevant contrast appears to be between New Regime parties that stayed closer to their original pro-reform and pro-democracy roots, and those that strayed from this path to embrace more populist rhetoric or policies. While the distinction between the two types of New Regime parties is clearly not as sharp (nor as commonly discussed in the literature) as it is for the two types of Old Regime parties, it is at least theoretically possible to come up with predictions for the type of variation we might expect to find in the degree of empirical support for the New Regime hypothesis across these two types. Specifically, the logic of

\(^{46}\) These two categories are very common in the literature on communist successor parties, although different scholars use different terminology (e.g., pragmatic, social democratic, unrepentant, orthodox). It is also of course possible to come up with more nuanced categories—see, for example, the three by three table in Bozóki and Ishiyama (2002, 8)—but the dichotomous categorization is quite common and ensures enough examples of both cases to test the hypothesis.
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Table 2.4. Party Orientation Conditional Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Support for Standard Hypotheses</th>
<th>Type of Variation</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Applicability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panel 1: Old Regime Orientation Hypothesis</strong></td>
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<td>More</td>
<td>Unreformed Old Regime Parties</td>
<td>See Table 7.A1</td>
<td>Old Regime Hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Reformed Old Regime Parties</td>
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<td><strong>Panel 2: New Regime Orientation Hypothesis</strong></td>
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<td>More</td>
<td>Consistent Liberalizing New Regime Parties</td>
<td>See Table 6.7</td>
<td>New Regime Hypothesis</td>
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<td>Less</td>
<td>Populist Leaning New Regime Parties</td>
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the New Regime hypothesis that predicts support from economic winners and opposition from economic losers ought to apply more directly to those parties that continue to be closely associated with both the democratic and economic aspects of the transition, and might be mitigated a bit in the case of the parties that have moved in more populist directions. Thus, the *New Regime orientation hypothesis* predicts that there should be less empirical support for the New Regime hypothesis among more populist leaning New Regime parties than among New Regime parties that have stayed on a more consistently liberal path.

Table 2.4 concisely summarizes the prediction of both Party Orientation hypotheses. The specific rules employed to code these variants of New Regime and Old Regime parties are presented in Chapters 6 and 7, respectively; tables listing the parties coded in each category also can be found in those chapters.

**Time-Based Hypotheses**  The next category of conditional hypotheses focuses on the passage of time as a predictor of where we ought to find more or less empirical support for the different standard economic voting hypotheses. It is distinguished from the previous categories in two important ways. First, two of the hypotheses yield the exact opposite prediction from one another, which was not the case with any of the other categories.
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Second, the entire approach is complicated by the fact that the means of distinguishing between categories is itself a fluid concept: how long should a “period” of time actually be? In the empirical tests that follow, I test the time-based hypotheses by breaking the twenty elections included in the study into three waves: those that took place between 1990 and 1992, 1993 and 1996, and 1997 and 1999. I use these periods because, with one exception, each country has at least one election in each wave, no country has more than a single presidential election in each wave, and four out of the five countries have one and only one parliamentary election in each wave.\(^47\) Although this is certainly a defensible way in which to break up the time period between 1990 and 1999 to test support for time-based hypotheses, it may be that the true time frame for any (or some) of these hypotheses to find support is over decades or even lifetimes. Thus, the time-based hypotheses, while extremely interesting, must be introduced with the caveat that although it is possible to find evidence in support of these hypotheses, it is impossible to falsify them because the future may someday provide support over different types of time frames. For this reason, the strongest legitimate claim we can make is that within this particular time frame, there either is or is not empirical support for any of these hypotheses.

The first time-based conditional hypothesis is applicable to all three of the standard hypotheses. Based on the arguments regarding uncertainty presented earlier in this chapter, the ultimate expression of uncertainty might be that we should not expect to find any clear patterns of association between economic conditions and election results because voters are just too new to the democratic process to make any sense of it in the manner that voters in established democracies normally tend to do so. While the preceding statement is almost certainly overstated – and, indeed, functions as a sort of underlying null hypothesis for all three of the standard economic voting hypotheses tested in this book – we can derive a slightly milder conditional economic voting hypothesis from the argument by proposing that any reasonable standard hypothesis should generate more consistent empirical results as citizens become more familiar with democracy.

Another way to arrive at a similar hypothesis is to take the argument seriously that voters were primed by political leaders to expect economic failures in the first part of the decade as part of the costs of a transition to a market economy, and therefore politicians and parties were initially to have

\(^{47}\) The one exception is Russia, which has two parliamentary elections (1993 and 1995) in the second wave but none in the first wave.
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been given a free pass by voters in regard to the state of the economy.48 If voters did indeed ignore the economy in the first round of elections, then we would expect to see a similar pattern to the one proposed in the preceding paragraph. Regardless of which scenario is at work, both provide justification for an increasing support over time hypothesis, whereby as the decade progresses and voters become more familiar with democratic participation or stop ignoring concerns with the state of the economy in making their vote choices, all three of the standard hypotheses should enjoy increasing empirical support. Perhaps one distinction between the two approaches is that the “free pass” scenario would predict practically no support for the standard hypotheses in the earliest elections, while the increasing familiarity with democracy scenario would just predict an increase in support over time without requiring an absence of support in the earliest time period, although this may be making too much out of a minor difference.49

However, it is also possible to arrive at a plausible theoretical story that predicts exactly the opposite effect for the passage of time. The arguments

48 I want to thank Adam Przeworski for raising this point. Stokes (1996) takes this point even further, suggesting that in periods of economic reform voters might even reward incumbent parties for poor economic conditions (in particular, higher levels of unemployment) as a sign that reform is proceeding well. In particular, she cites a Czechoslovak finance minister (Vladimir Dlouhy) who stated that “Unless the unemployment rate grows to 8% to 10% this year, we will not be doing our job” (p. 505). Although I do not think that this hypothesis translates particularly well to the cross-regional level – it seems a bit of a stretch to assume that people in areas of the country that are particularly hard hit by the consequences of economic reform would be more enthusiastic about the current government than people in areas of the country that are not as hard hit – there is also no evidence produced by this study to show that there was any empirical support for such a hypothesis at the cross-regional level. As an aside, it is interesting to note that the unemployment rate in the Czech Republic did not approach the 8 – 10% level in either 1992 (2.6%) or 1996 (3.9%), both years in which elections were held and the ruling party was returned to power, so apparently voters were not too bothered by the fact that unemployment had not increased as much as Dlouhy had hoped. It is also interesting to note that in the same Financial Times article where I found a version of Dlouhy’s quote – the reporter cited him as saying that “it would be a sign that the reforms were not working” – the reporter also noted that Vaclav Klaus, who would go on to serve as the Czech Republic’s Prime Minister for much of the 1990s, predicted much lower unemployment rates (4 – 6%) than Dlouhy (Colitt 1991; Przeworski 1992 also cites this article in note 1).

49 The “free pass” scenario has a clearer link to the Incumbency hypothesis, as it is incumbents who are supposedly not being blamed for the state of the economy. But the logic holds for the New Regime and Old Regime hypotheses as well, albeit in a weaker form. If the earliest elections were held in a special environment in which economic conditions were somehow not as much of a factor as they would be later in the decade, then it should still hold that we would find less empirical support for the New Regime and Old Regime hypotheses in these periods as well.
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presented earlier in this chapter to justify both the Referendum and the Transitional Identity Models were predicated on taking uncertainty over the relationship between electing parties to office and resulting government policy seriously. Therefore, it holds that if the uncertainty used to motivate the standard economic voting hypotheses diminished significantly during the 1990s, there could be less empirical support for models that are explicitly designed to reflect the inherent uncertainty of the transitional context. So perhaps these models would be very useful for first- and second-wave elections, but much less useful by the time we arrive at the third wave of elections. In this case, a decreasing support over time hypothesis would predict diminished support for all three transition-based standard economic voting hypotheses as the decade progressed.

A more nuanced test of this proposition can be conducted by combining the idea that the passage of time might lead to more information about the distinctions between the different types of New Regime and Old Regime parties presented in the previous section. Consider first Old Regime parties. Perhaps early in the decade – when we would expect uncertainty to be higher – the distinction between reformed and unrepentant Old Regime parties might not be as apparent to voters as later in the decade, when they might have enough information to realize that the reformed Old Regime parties really had changed. Therefore, we could hypothesize that there should be the same level of support for the Old Regime hypothesis throughout the decade among unreformed Old Regime parties, but diminishing support for the Old Regime hypothesis as the decade progressed among reformed Old Regime parties. By a similar logic, there could be consistent support during the decade for the New Regime hypothesis among the liberal New Regime parties, but diminishing support for the New Regime hypothesis among the more populist New Regime parties as the decade progressed.

With the caveat that it is impossible to know a priori the appropriate time frame for testing these hypotheses, Table 2.5 concisely presents the different time-based hypotheses as they are tested in this book.

Interactive Hypotheses A final source for conditional economic voting hypotheses is to use each of the standard economic voting models as conditional hypotheses for explaining variation in the other. To do so, I take advantage of the fact that the two models make predictions for different classifications of parties that overlap in some, but crucially not all, cases. For example, for New Regime parties that are also incumbents, the Referendum


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Table 2.5. *Time-Based Conditional Hypotheses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Support for Standard Hypotheses</th>
<th>Type of Variation Coding</th>
<th>Applicability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel 1: Increasing Support over Time Hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>Late Elections</td>
<td>Elections in 1997–1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>↓ ↓</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Regime, Old Regime, and Incumbency Hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel 2: Decreasing Support over Time Hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>↓ ↓</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Regime, Old Regime, and Incumbency Hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Late Elections</td>
<td>Elections in 1997–1999</td>
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<td>Panel 3: Time and Party Orientation Hypothesis</td>
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<td>↓ ↓</td>
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<td>Old Regime-Reformed and New Regime – Populist parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Late Elections</td>
<td>Elections in 1997–1999</td>
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</table>

and Transitional Identity models make the same predictions; both models predict that these parties should benefit where economic conditions are better. By contrast, the two models generate opposite predictions for Old Regime parties that are also incumbents; here, the Old Regime hypothesis predicts that the party should do better where economic conditions are worse, whereas the Incumbency hypothesis predicts that the party should do better where economic conditions are better.

We can therefore use the Referendum Model as a conditional hypothesis to predict where we ought to find more empirical support for the two
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standard hypotheses of the Transitional Identity Model. The interactive conditional hypothesis generated in this manner predicts that there should be more support for the New Regime hypothesis among New Regime incumbent parties than New Regime opposition parties, and, conversely, more support for the Old Regime hypothesis among Old Regime opposition parties than Old Regime incumbents.

Similarly, we can use the Transitional Identity Model as a conditional hypothesis to predict variation in support for the Incumbency hypothesis. To do so, I break down incumbents into three categories: New Regime-incumbent parties, Old Regime-incumbent parties, and other (defined as neither New Regime nor Old Regime) incumbent parties. We should then expect to find the most support for the Incumbency hypothesis among New Regime-incumbent parties (as the New Regime hypothesis predicts the same effect as the Incumbency hypothesis), the least support among Old Regime-incumbent parties (as the Old Regime hypothesis predicts the opposite effect from the Incumbency hypothesis), and something in between these two extremes for the other-incumbent parties. Table 2.6 concisely presents the different interactive hypotheses as they are tested in this book.  

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented two standard economic voting models that predict the effect of cross-regional variation in election results on the distribution of votes for parties in post-communist countries. The Referendum Model produces the Incumbency hypothesis, which predicts that incumbent parties should perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are stronger. The Transitional Identity Model produces two hypotheses: the New Regime hypothesis, which predicts that parties closely associated with the transition away from communism ought to perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are

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50 One final word about the interactive hypotheses is in order. While all of the other conditional hypotheses presented in this chapter are assessed in terms of the variation they can explain for each appropriate standard economic voting hypothesis in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 before being assessed comparatively in Chapter 8, all empirical assessments of the degree of support for the interactive conditional hypotheses are held off until Chapter 8. I am presenting the results in this fashion because the interactive hypotheses by definition involve the simultaneous consideration of multiple standard hypotheses, which is a task left to Chapter 8.
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Table 2.6. Interactive Conditional Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Support for Standard Hypotheses</th>
<th>Type of Variation</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Applicability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panel 1: Interactive Old Regime Hypothesis</strong></td>
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<td>Opposition – Old Regime Parties</td>
<td>See Chapters 4 and 6</td>
<td>Old Regime Hypothesis</td>
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<td>Incumbent – Old Regime Parties</td>
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<td><strong>Panel 2: Interactive New Regime Hypothesis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>Incumbent – New Regime Parties</td>
<td>See Chapters 4 and 5</td>
<td>New Regime Hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Opposition – New Regime Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Panel 3: Interactive Incumbency Hypothesis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>New Regime – Incumbent Parties</td>
<td>See Chapters 4, 5, and 6</td>
<td>Incumbent Hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>↓</td>
<td>Other – Incumbent Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Old Regime – Incumbent Parties</td>
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better; and the Old Regime hypothesis, which predicts that parties closely associated with the prior ruling communist parties ought to perform better in areas of the country where economic conditions are worse.

I have supplemented these standard hypotheses with a number of conditional economic voting hypotheses that predict the circumstances in which we ought to find more empirical support for the standard hypotheses, or, more generally, the conditions in which economic conditions are more likely to have an impact on election results in the manner predicted by the standard hypotheses. Although there are too many of these conditional hypotheses to recount individually, most are based on one of five general approaches that reflect either anticipated responsibility for government policy, the importance of other noneconomic factors, distinctions between different New Regime and Old Regime parties, the passage of time,
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or the interaction of the two standard models. The remaining conditional hypotheses explore whether there is any basis for “intuitively” important distinctions, including parliamentary versus presidential elections and elections in East-Central Europe versus elections in Russia.

The goal for the remainder of this book is to test these hypotheses with empirical data from the twenty different elections included in the study. To do so, however, requires a method of comparative analysis, and it is to this task that I turn in the following chapter.