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# Inequalities of Political Influence in New Democracies

ABSTRACT: *We examine two sources of political inequalities that seem inevitable in elections, supposedly the most egalitarian and most fundamental of modern democratic processes. The first stems from the fact that not everyone is equally likely to vote, and the second from unequal political information levels, which may make some groups of citizens better able than others to express their political preferences in the vote. We use survey data from two economically less advanced new democracies to empirically assess the degree to which inequalities of turnout and political information level may influence election outcomes. Our statistical analysis relies on simulation methods developed by Bartels (1996) and Citrin, Schickler, and Sides (2003). For the first time in the literature, we provide separate estimates of how equally large increases in everyone's knowledge and how a complete equalization of knowledge level across social groups may affect election outcomes. Our results show that election outcomes in Romania and Moldova may*

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*be a little different if citizens were much better informed. However, we find no change in the outcomes as a result of an equalization of turnout and information level across social groups. Thus, elections in the two countries aggregate citizen preferences probably imperfectly, but in a definitely egalitarian way.*

Democracies promise equal rights and equal political voice for all, and elections are expected to be the key instrument and terrain of this equality. Yet, this premise can be violated in at least three ways, through: (a) some factors other than voters' preferences determining the policy offering of candidates and officeholders; (b) unequal participation in elections by different social groups, or (b) citizens' unequal individual ability to express their true preferences in the vote. This article examines the latter two ways in contexts where they might be particularly influential. First we review the literature that informs our expectations. Then we proceed to empirically assessing the extent to which unequal turnout and unequal political knowledge may have an impact on election outcomes in the given contexts.

## Theoretical Expectations

Over the past 200 years, a wide variety of procedures and social norms have evolved in the world's democracies, ensuring that social inequalities do not easily convert into political inequality, that is, unequal political influence on state and government. To mention just three, suffrage was extended to previously disenfranchised groups; secret balloting and changing social norms put an end to widespread vote buying; and newly invented proportional electoral systems made all votes almost equally pivotal in determining who is elected. At least three sources of unequal political influence, however, seem to be so deeply built into the fabric of modern societies that it may be hard to imagine democratic elections without them.

First, different groups may influence the formation of the choice alternatives offered to the voters to an unequal extent. For instance, political parties may be formed top–down and dominated by the rich and well-connected, as has often been observed or alleged in postcommunist democracies (Kopecky 1995; Soare 2004). Party platforms and governmental policies may be more strongly influenced by rich campaign contributors than by the voters (Taylor-Robinson 2007), or by vocal interest groups (Binderkrantz 2005), which once again often represent the more resourceful groups in society.

Second, many socioeconomically disadvantaged groups show below average turnout in elections (see, e.g., Blais 2000; Franklin 2004). This directly undermines their political influence, and their predictably low participation rates may also make candidates less likely to appeal to their interests in the first place (Hill and Leighley 1992; Lijphart 1997; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). While the adoption of compulsory voting could probably eliminate this source of political inequality, few countries presently use this instrument (cf. Lijphart 1997). Most recent research has found though that unequal turnout in itself has small (McAllister 1986; Nagel

1988; Radcliff 1994, 1995; Tucker, Vedlitz, and DeNardo 1986) to negligible effects on election outcomes (cf. Bernhagen and Marsh 2007; Citrin, Schickler, and Sides 2003; van der Eijk and van Egmond 2007; Erikson 1995; Fisher 2007; Highton and Wolfinger 2001; Martinez and Gill 2005; McAllister and Mughan 1986; Nagel and McNulty 1996, 2000; Pettersen and Rose 2007; Rubenson et al. 2007; Teixeira 1992; Tóka 2004; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Less developed countries were rarely included in these analyses however, and the few studies that considered them separately found pronounced effects of turnout on election outcomes there (Aguilar and Pacek 2000; Bohrer, Pacek, and Radcliff 2000; Pacek 1994; Pacek and Radcliff 1995).

Third, the very same sociodemographic variables that impact turnout may also determine political knowledge (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Luskin 1990; Tóka 2003). The imbalance between the large number and bewildering complexity of political issues, on the one hand, and the minimal impact of any individual citizen on political outcomes in a mass democracy, on the other, makes "rational ignorance" quite inevitable among citizens (Downs 1957: 240–47). Poor citizen knowledge on matters of public policy, in its turn, assures that issues in elections and referenda are subject to agenda-setting and framing by elites to the point that genuine citizen input in democratic outcomes may seem entirely illusory (Crisp and Rey 2001; Edelman 1964; Popescu and Haţieganu 2007).

Prior research further suggests that the same people may vote rather differently if they became better informed (Bartels 1996; Fishkin and Luskin 1999; Lau and Redlawsk 1997; Sekhon 2004), and use different criteria for decision making (Sniderman. Glaser, and Griffin 1991). Better-informed citizens are most likely to anchor their vote choices in their issue preferences, ideological orientation, and performance evaluations (Andersen, Heath, and Tilley 2005; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996: 256–58; Gomez and Wilson 2001; Goren 1997; Jacoby 2006; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Lupia 1994; Luskin 2003; Sniderman et al. 1991; Sturgis and Tilley 2004). Hence, it is plausible that greater political knowledge gives more influence over elected officeholders.

Since we cannot really see a way of assessing the inequality of influence on the choice set offered in elections, our article focuses on the second and third source of political inequalities in a democracy. The plausibility of these turnout- and knowledge-based political inequalities does not guarantee that they are substantial in size. Should, for instance, the social determinants of turnout and knowledge completely differ from those of vote choice in a particular country, then social differences in turnout and knowledge cannot have any direct effect on election outcomes. Similarly, some argue that political competition generates an abundance of such information shortcuts that allows even the most ignorant citizens to cast the same vote that they would if they were perfectly informed (Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; McKelvey and Ordeshook 1990). Retrospective evaluations of government performance in the light of, say, national trends in crime or unemployment; the ideological labeling of parties into "left" and "right"; endorsements in election campaigns by

specific interest groups; and a potentially infinite variety of other factors can provide very effective cues to what can realistically be expected from one contender and the other (Popkin 1991). Hence, voting behavior may not differ between two individuals with very different knowledge levels but identical preferences.

Thus, how great turnout- and knowledge-based political inequalities really are remains an empirical question. In this article we address this question with data from economically less developed new democracies, because the consequences of turnout and citizen knowledge have been understudied in that context. Prior research suggests though that both turnout and citizens' information level probably have greater influences on election outcomes in less developed countries than in long-established, affluent democracies (Aguilar and Pacek 2000; Sekhon 2004; Tóka 2004). For one, preconditions for low information rationality—such as the abundance of sophisticated interest groups and fine-tuned campaign organizations—may be less obviously present in these countries than in the advanced democracies. Electoral turnout also tends to be lower in less developed countries than in advanced postindustrial societies (Blais 2000; Siaroff and Merer 2002), which should leave more space for turnout inequalities. All in all, affluent and old democracies may just be better supplied with the political experience, organizations, civil society institutions, and established social communication channels that enable the competing political parties to reach out to every potential supporter, mobilize them, and provide them with the most persuasive information shortcuts.

## Data and Measures

Social differences in turnout and knowledge can only affect election outcomes if the social determinants of turnout and knowledge—say education—also influence vote choice. Hence the first step in our empirical analysis must be to test whether individual social characteristics are statistically significant predictors of turnout, political knowledge, and voting preferences, respectively. Once we have estimated such models, we can also tell whether there are substantively large differences between social groups in terms of turnout and political information level. Then, in the final step of the analysis, we can use the same data to simulate the impact of hypothetical changes in turnout and the social distribution of political information level on the aggregate distribution of vote choices in the given populations.

All the data that we need for this analysis is provided by a comparative survey that the Median Research Centre, Bucharest, conducted in Romania in June–July 2007 and the Republic of Moldova in June 2007.[1] The surveys—commissioned to two professional polling organizations, CURS in Romania and IMAS in Moldova—employed a multistage nationally representative random sample, and yielded 1,492 completed face-to-face interviews in Romania and 1,042 in Moldova.

Because of the coding of our dependent variables (turnout, knowledge, and vote choice), we use logistic regression models in the analysis. However, as Peduzzi and colleagues (1996) demonstrated with a Monte Carlo analysis, logistic

regression coefficients often become biased and unreliable when the ratio between the number of cases in the least populated category of the dependent variable, on the one hand, and the number of independent variables, on the other, falls below 10. Thus, since some of the relevant parties only have a few dozen supporters in our samples, we had to make the list of independent variables in these analyses quite parsimonious.

Because of our interest in inequalities, we aimed at selecting variables that are related to relevant dimensions of social differentiation. It is also crucial to assure that the independent variables are exogenous to our dependent variables, and hence we need not worry about the possibility of reversed or reciprocal causation between the variables on the opposite sides of our equations. Therefore, we excluded attitudinal variables from our models and focused on those sociocultural traits that have been commonly found relevant for the explanation of turnout and knowledge across a variety of countries: gender, age, age-squared, rural versus urban residence, ethnic minority status, education, income, and religiosity (for cross-national similarites see Blais 2000; Font and Virós 1995; Franklin 2004; and Lijphart 1997 regarding turnout, and Gronlund and Milner 2006; Milner 2002; Mondak and Canache 2004; and Tóka 2003 regarding knowledge). Appendix 1 gives a technical description of all variables in the analysis.

Turnout in the past national election is a dichotomous variable, and the elections that the respective question referred to were those of November 2004 in Romania and March 2005 in Moldova. Since citizens below age eighteen in the year of the election could not vote, they are excluded from this part of the analysis. In Romania 17.6 percent and in Moldova 7.2 percent or more of the respondents reported to have voted than the actual turnout in these elections.[2] This degree of overreporting turnout is quite common in surveys though, and is better explained as a recall bias motivated by social desirability concerns among the respondents than with reference to sampling problems (Belli et al. 1999; Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001).[3]

We used two knowledge questions. The respondents were first asked to name the party with the greatest number of seats in parliament and then the minister of finance. The ratio of correct responses confirms that levels of political knowledge are indeed low in mass electorates and that cross-country differences reflect, above all, the unequal difficulty of the same questions in different countries. In Moldova the Party of Moldovan Communists (PCRM) has been the single governmental party with a large legislative majority since 2001, and hence the question about the largest party could not be easier. Even this way, only 63 percent answered it correctly. The biggest Romanian party—the Party of Social Democracy (PSD)—lost the 2004 presidential elections and failed to gain an absolute majority in concurrent legislative elections. This allowed the new president to exclude them from the new government and claim full election victory for his political side. Under these circumstances only 38 percent of the citizens could correctly recall that it was actually the PSD that obtained the highest number of votes and seats in the 2004 parliamentary elections.

In contrast, more people in Romania than in Moldova were able to identify the minister of finance, although both figures, at 26 percent and 12 percent, respectively, seem rock-bottom for what, constitutionally speaking, are parliamentary democracies. The differences between the two countries may be related to the more elevated position of the finance minister in Romanian politics, as well as to the possibly higher level of personalization in Romania than Moldova (Popescu and Haţieganu 2007; Ştefuriuc 2003). Just how low both figures are can best be seen considering that Varujan Vosganian, although he was Romanian minister of economy and finance for only six months at the time of our survey, has been a prominent political figure since 1990, who enjoys high visibility in the media and was for some time a leading contender for becoming the Romanian commissioner in the European Commission. Indeed, three months earlier the greatest name recognition for any minister recorded in a commercial poll by the CURS agency was 41 percent.

Although we use only two measures of lexical knowledge to create our additive scale for political information level, we note that previous research found that a surprisingly small number of quizzes to our two can already provide quite reliable measures of this variable (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1993, 1996). The reason is that a wide variety of general political knowledge items form a single underlying dimension, and therefore it makes little difference for subsequent analyses which ones are included in a scale (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1986). Hence, we trust that our scale based on just two knowledge items also captures the same fundamental dimension of cognitions, although it would surely show somewhat stronger linkages to other variables if it were based on a slightly greater number of items.

## Effects of social inequalities on turnout and political knowledge

The first goal of our analysis is to determine whether there is an overlap between the sociodemographic determinants of turnout and knowledge, on the one hand, and vote choice, on the other. Equation (1) shows the turnout model that we estimate.

$$\log \frac{\Pr(Y=1)}{\Pr(Y=0)} = b_0 + b_1 Female + b_2 Age + b_2 AgeSquared + b_2 Rura \quad (1)$$
$$+ b_2 Minority + b_2 Education + b_2 Income + b_2 ChurchAttendance$$

The right-hand side of the equation implies that we estimate as many distinct regression coefficients $b$ as the number of independent variables in the model plus a constant. The left-hand side of the equation, in turn, merely performs a logit transformation of the dependent variable, which is necessary only because a dichotomous variable cannot be linearly related to its determinants (cf. Aldrich and Nelson 1984). Identical logistic regression analyses to the model above were also run for the two dichotomous indicators of political knowledge level.[4] Finally, current vote intention was regressed on the same set of independent variables as above using a multinomial logit equation. These equations are essentially $j - 1$ simultaneously estimated logistic regressions, where $j$ is the number of choice

options distinguished on the vote intention variable. The generic form of the individual equations is shown in equation (2).

$$\log \frac{\Pr(Y = i)}{\Pr(Y = j)} = b_{0i} + b_{1i}X_1 + b_{2i}X_2 + ... + b_{ki}X_k \quad (2)$$

In this notation *j* is a baseline category on the dependent variable, *i* is any one of the other choice options (i.e., other parties), and $i \neq j$. For brevity, the independent variables gender, age, age-squared, education, income, ethnicity, rural-urban residence, and frequency of church attendance are denoted now as the $X_1$, $X_2$ ... $X_k$ variables. The individual equations take as their dependent variables the $j - 1$ dichotomous contrasts between one arbitrarily selected party and the other choice options on the vote intention variable, with the "do not know, would not vote" responses excluded from this part of the analysis.

Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix display the regression coefficients for all of the above models. Because of the logit transformation involved in the model, logistic regression coefficients are hard to interpret beyond their direction and level of significance, especially for a multinomial equation. Therefore, in Table 1 we present chi-squared tests of how likely it is to obtain our observed data, with the given relationships between the variables, via random sampling from a population in which the effect of a given independent variable in equation (1) and—in the case of vote intention—equation (2) is in fact zero on the dependent variable. Table 1 shows the significance level associated with the likelihood ratio chi-squared statistics describing the loss in the explanatory power of the model shown in Equation (1)—and Equation (2) in the case of vote intention—when one (or more) independent variables, listed in the leftmost column, are dropped from the model.

Nearly all effects on turnout and knowledge are in the expected direction, but only some of them are statistically significant, which may also reflect that our sample size is too small to capture relatively weak effects. Women, young people, ethnic minorities, people with low income and lesser education are less likely than others to vote and be knowledgeable, but the gender and income effects are insignificant on turnout. Age and income effects are insignificant on knowledge in Moldova. Church attendance has the expected positive effect on turnout—and should probably not be expected to impact knowledge—but none of its effects are statistically significant. The impact of rural residence on turnout seems to vary from country to country (cf. Font and Virós 1995), and this is what we see here as well, with the effect turning negative and statistically significant in Moldova only. The only result really contradicting previous findings in Tóka's (2003) cross-national comparison is that the impact of rural residence on knowledge is not significant in any of these analyses.

Because logistic regression coefficients reveal so little about the size of the effects, we generated the predicted probability of turnout and of correct responses to the two knowledge questions for a number of hypothetical individuals. For each

Table 1

**Chi-square Tests of the Effects of Sociodemographic Traits on Turnout, Knowledge, and Vote Intention**

| Dependent variable | Turnout | Knowledge 1 | Knowledge 2 | Vote intention |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Romania* | | |
| Female | 0.384 | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.009 |
| Age + Age-squared | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Ethnic minority | 0.002 | 0.005 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Rural | 0.953 | 0.442 | 0.163 | 0.036 |
| Education | 0.160 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.020 |
| Income | 0.396 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.697 |
| Religiosity | 0.053 | 0.755 | 0.516 | 0.904 |
| *N* in the analysis | 1,417 | 1,417 | 1,417 | 812 |
| | | *Moldova* | | |
| Female | 0.391 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.071 |
| Age + Age-squared | 0.000 | 0.054 | 0.081 | 0.001 |
| Ethnic minority | 0.003 | 0.900 | 0.067 | 0.000 |
| Rural | 0.000 | 0.492 | 0.241 | 0.021 |
| Education | 0.031 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.002 |
| Income | 0.336 | 0.531 | 0.129 | 0.789 |
| Religiosity | 0.228 | 0.299 | 0.469 | 0.492 |
| *N* in the analysis | 975 | 975 | 975 | 591 |

age category between twenty-one and eighty, these predicted probabilities were calculated for someone with a very high and someone with a very low socioeconomic status. The extreme values on socioeconomic status were defined as two standard deviations above and below, respectively, the sample mean on the first common factor of the income and education variables. Only about 5 percent of the sample would have even more extreme values on this factor. This gives roughly the same group size on either extremes—2.5 percent at the very bottom and 2.5 percent at the very top of the socioeconomic hierarchy—as if we pooled together people born in two subsequent years, say, the thirty with the thirty-one-year-olds. This rule of thumb makes the estimated differences between age and socioeconomic groups broadly comparable. To help this comparison, these fictitious individuals were assigned the sample mean on all remaining sociodemographic variables in the regression models. Figure 1 shows the predicted probabilities of turnout and of the correct answers for these fictitious individuals under our models.

As the top panels show, for people with low status, turnout changes by about 20 percent as we move between birth cohorts in Romania and by about 40 percent

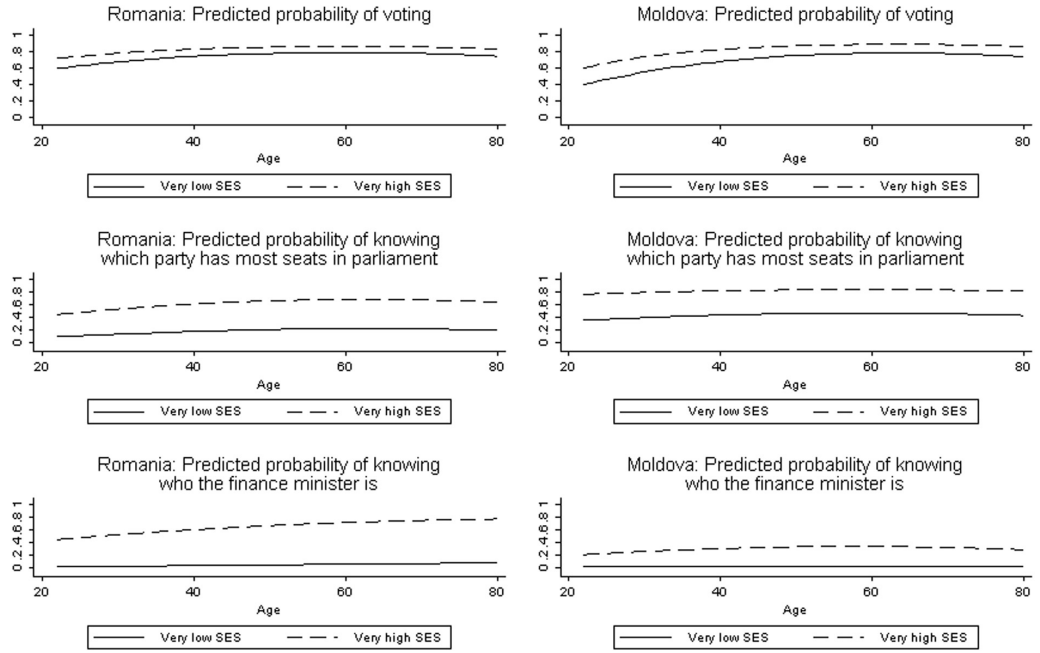


Figure 1. **Turnout and Political Knowledge by Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Age**

in Moldova, while the predicted turnout differences by status tend to be about half that size—around 10 percent and 20 percent, respectively—in either country. In separate computations, we found that as age changes from one standard deviation below the sample mean to one standard deviation above (i.e., from age thirty-three to sixty-six in Moldova and from thirty-four to sixty-seven in Romania), predicted turnout changes by 29 percent in Moldova and by 18 percent in Romania.[5] A comparable change on the first principal component factor of income and education implies a much lower—and indeed statistically significantly lower—7 percent and 4.4 percent change of turnout in the two countries, respectively.[6] Again, these computations assume average values on all other model variables.

As the figures show, the impact of age is also relatively strong for knowledge, but only in Romania and only for high status individuals, while the impact of status is consistently large in both countries and for all ages. In comparison with age and socioeconomic status, gender and minority status have a comparably large direct effect in Romania but only relatively modest effects in Moldova—and, as we saw, the remaining independent variables show no (consistently) significant effects. Holding all other variables at their mean, the predicted probability of turnout for women is not significantly lower than for men. The net knowledge gaps between men and women on the one hand, and between the main ethnic minority and the rest of the population on the other are all below 11 percent in Moldova. In Romania, the net gender gap on the two knowledge variables, with the other sociodemographic held constant at their mean, is 17 (±5) percent and 8 (±4.5) percent. Calculated the same way, the predicted turnout and knowledge levels of ethnic Hungarians are estimated to be about 15 percent lower than the rest of the population on all three dependent variables, with a 7–10 percent margin of error for each estimate.[7]

We can conclude now that in both countries there are some substantially non-negligible differences in electoral turnout and political knowledge by social background. Table 1 also reveals that the sociodemographic determinants of turnout and knowledge do overlap with those of vote choice. With the exception of income and religiosity, all sociodemographic variables have a significant impact on vote choice in both countries. In fact, ethnicity even has too great a deterministic effect for our statistical software, because of which some of the standard error estimates regarding the effect of this variable are excessively inflated.[8]

So far, then, it seems possible that election outcomes are influenced by differences in turnout and knowledge between the supporters of the different parties.[9] Now we have to determine whether these possible effects are substantial in size.

## Simulation of Turnout and Information Effects on Election Outcomes

The estimation of turnout effects on election outcomes is greatly facilitated by adopting Citrin, Schickler, and Sides's (2003) simplifying assumption, namely, that the sociodemographic characteristics of the citizens influence voting intentions the

same way among voters and nonvoters.[10] First, we take vote in the past national election as our dependent variable and estimate a multinomial logit model shown in equation (2) by excluding from the analysis the nonvoters as well as those who could not recall whether and how they voted. From (a) the parameters estimated with the model; and (b) the characteristics of all nonvoters and voters along the independent variables; we can then estimate the mean predicted probability of support for each party among both voters and nonvoters.

These probabilities show the likely vote shares per party under 100 percent turnout provided that Citrin, Schickler, and Sides's assumption holds. Hence, the difference between these mean predicted probabilities and each party's portion of recalled votes among the voters shows how much greater a fraction of the total vote the individual parties would get if everyone were equally likely to vote. Negative differences show that a party would have a smaller share of the vote under equal turnout across social groups.[11]

Of course, these estimates are uncertain to the extent that both the coefficients of the multinomial logit model and the actual population characteristics of the nonvoters are estimated with some sampling error. Therefore, we do a bootstrap calculation of the confidence interval of the estimates. In the first step of this process, we take a 50 percent random sample from our actual sample of respondents. We estimate the multinomial logit model, derive the hypothetical election result that would obtain under full turnout, and calculate the deviation of the latter from the observed outcome for this 50 percent subsample. Then, this whole process is repeated 1,000 times, and the standard deviations of the given estimates across the 1,000 resamplings provide the bootstrap standard errors of the estimated changes in each individual party's share of the vote.[12]

Table 2 presents our final estimates of the impact of equal turnout on the vote share of individual parties in the past national election. The baseline data on the observed vote share of each party in the given election is provided here by the respondents' recall of their vote. Of the respondents who claimed to have voted, a whopping 22.4 percent in Moldova and 9 percent in Romania said that they could not remember which party they voted for, and we had to leave these respondents out of this part of the analysis.

The simulation results shown in Table 2 speak very clearly. Just because of the different sociodemographic composition of the electorates of the different parties, Moldovan and Romanian election results would not have been significantly different for any one of the major contenders in the past national elections if everyone voted with the same probability. The only apparent reason to doubt the validity of this inference is that compared with the actual election results, voting support for the PCRM and the Justice and Truth Alliance (Alianta DA) in Romania is vastly overstated in our survey. We found no reason to suspect that the poor match between the recalled data and the actual election results would reflect problems with our sampling procedures—rather, we believe that the data show a retrospective projection of the current popularity of these parties, on the one hand, and a

Table 2

**Recalled Votes in Past Election and the Simulated Change of Outcome Under Full Turnout**

| Vote in last election | Share of recalled votes (%) | Change (in % of total vote) | Bootstrap s.e. of change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Romania ($n$ = 1,050) | | | |
| PSD – PUR/PC | 26.8 | –0.8 | (0.4) |
| Alianta DA (PNL & PD) | 64.5 | 0.8 | (0.5) |
| PRM | 4.1 | –0.2 | (0.1) |
| UDMR | 4.7 | 0.2 | (0.5) |
| Moldova ($n$ = 582) | | | |
| PCRM | 69.2 | –1.0 | (1.1) |
| PAMN | 13.2 | 0.4 | (0.7) |
| PSL | 4.3 | 0.8 | (0.6) |
| PDM | 5.8 | –0.2 | (0.3) |
| PPCD | 7.4 | 0.0 | (0.5) |

See Appendix for party names.

disproportional item nonresponse among the supporters of the other parties, on the other. This data problem sheds doubt on the validity of recalled data on votes, but the results of the simulation exercises are so unequivocal that we doubt that they can be too far from the reality just because of this problem.

Our next and last task is to estimate the impact of the distribution of political knowledge on election outcomes. Here, the critical assumption is that if a group of respondents with identical characteristics on the sociodemographic variables and an equal initial information level $a$ increase their knowledge level by a factor of $b$, then the distribution of political preferences in this group become approximately identical to the distribution observed among a group with identical characteristics on the sociodemographic variables and an information level of $a + b$.[13] If the assumption holds, and all shared determinants of vote choice and knowledge level are included among the independent variables, then the model depicted in equation (3) can be used to estimate how the mean probability of supporting each party in the sample is likely to change given a particular change in the distribution of the knowledge variable.

$$\log\frac{\Pr(Y=i)}{\Pr(Y=j)} = b_{0i} + b_{1i}X_1 + b_{2i}X_2 + \ldots + b_{ki}X_k + b_{(k+1)i}X_1 Knowledge + \\ + b_{(k+2)i}X_2 Knowledge + \ldots + b_{(2k)i}X_k Knowledge + b_{(2k+1)i} Knowledge \quad (3)$$

The first line of equation (3) is identical to equation (2), while the second line amends the latter along the lines suggested by Bartels (1996) for the purposes of

estimating information effects on election outcomes and individual vote choices.[14] The change from equation (2) is the addition of *Knowledge* and its interactions with the *X* (i.e., sociodemographic) variables. In this way, the model allows the same social groups to vote differently depending on their knowledge level. We assume that greater political knowledge, if it makes any difference in how the same people vote, tends to make their vote choices a better rather than a poorer expression of their unobservable fully informed preferences.[15] A part of this learning process can be that they develop a preference instead of having no party preference at all. It is for this reason that in this analysis the "do not know, would not vote" responses to the question about vote intention form a separate, valid response category on the dependent variable.

No matter how unequal the distribution of political knowledge in society, this social inequality can only influence election outcomes—and thus turn into a specifically political inequality—if knowledge has an effect on vote intentions, either directly or in interactions with sociodemographic variables. Whether this is the case can be tested by comparing the fit of the models depicted in equations (2) and (3), respectively.

In both the Moldovan and the Romanian data, the improvement in the model fit resulting from replacing equation (2) with equation (3) is highly significant (LR $\chi^2$ = 109.41 against 54 degrees of freedom, $p < 0.001$ in Moldova, and LR $\chi^2 = 102.55$ against 62 degrees of freedom, $p = 0.001$ in Romania). Only in Moldova the effect of knowledge seems to be restricted to the probability of "do not know/would not vote" responses. This becomes clear when the test is rerun with this response category excluded from the analysis. Then, the same likelihood ratio chi-squared value drops to a modest 47.78 (against 45 DF) in Moldova, which is not significant at all ($p = 0.361$), but remains as high as 81.70 (against 48 DF) and statistically significant ($p = 0.002$) in Romania.

In any case, both countries show some evidence of information effects on vote intentions, and therefore we undertake to estimate the impact of hypothetical changes in the distribution of political knowledge in society on the distribution of voting intentions. We use an improved version of Bartels's (1996) simulation technique. Our innovation here overcomes important limitations of prior simulation-based research on related topics that followed either of two ways. Berinsky (2004) looked only at the way the unequal incidence of "do not know" responses across sociodemographic groups influences public opinion poll results, and thus avoided the question of how higher levels of political knowledge may shift respondents between valid response categories too. Althaus (1998, 2003), Bartels (1996), Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), in turn, estimated how election results and political opinion could change in society if everyone became fully informed—which does not distinguish between the effects of higher information level, on the one hand, and an equal distribution of information level across social groups, on the other.

Instead, we provide estimates for three different scenarios that address these two issues separately. Scenarios A and B concern how a substantial but equal increase

in everyone's information level can change election results. They differ from each other in how they interpret what "equal change" really means. In scenario A, everyone's *Knowledge* increases by the same amount, which is equal to one standard deviation on the *Knowledge* variable.

Scenario B refers to an alternative conception of an equally large change for all, whereby everyone's *Knowledge* level increases by the same ratio. Thus, if one person scored 0.5 and another person 1.0 on the original knowledge scale, then under scenario B their *Knowledge* level would raise to 0.5 and 1.0 multiplied by the same constant. The precise value of the multiplier was selected so as to assure that the information level of the average person changes exactly the same way under scenarios A and B. Thus, it was calculated separately for Moldova and Romania, although it remains close to two in both countries.

Finally, scenario C models the hypothetical situation in which the mean, scale values, and standard deviation of *Knowledge* remain the same in society, but become randomly distributed across sociodemographic groups. Again, this would be a sea change that is very unlikely to occur in real life. Technically, this change is achieved in the sample by substituting a random variable for the observed values *Knowledge.*

For all three scenarios, we substitute these hypothetical values of *Knowledge* into equation (3), using the $b_{ji}$ parameters estimated with the observed data from the sample to estimate how the mean probability of voting support for each party in the sample would change if everyone's information level changed according to each scenario. Again, we use the same bootstrap procedure with 1,000 replications as described above to estimate the sampling variance of the results under each scenario.

An important property that favorably distinguishes our simulation results from previous works by Bartels (1996) and others is that our estimates do not require making inferences to an information level that we cannot actually observe. In contrast, previous works on this topic simulated outcomes under "full information," operationalized as a very high level of information that only half a percent of the sample would exceed if the knowledge variable had a normal distribution. Such highly counterfactual inferences were recently shown to lead to highly unreliable conclusions (cf. King and Zeng 2006). Therefore, our simulations deliberately refer to knowledge levels that are not far off from our actual survey data.

As Table 3 suggests, both scenarios A and B would lead to a substantial drop in the percentage of people who report no voting intention. Under scenario B, the only statistically significant gains would be recorded by some small parties (collapsed as "other parties" in our analysis due to their individually small *n* in the sample) in Moldova. If such a big information gain would occur in society, these parties could well double their collective share of voting intentions. Even under scenario A, their gains would still be significant and add 2.6 percent to their observed share of 3.9 percent. Under scenario A, the two ex-communist parties—the PCRM in Moldova and the PSD in Romania—would also record statistically significant gains.

Table 3

**The Simulated Impact of Changes in Information Level on Vote Intentions**

| | | Change (in %) under scenario | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A | | B | | C | |
| Vote intention | Observed % | (bootstrap s.e. in parentheses) | | | | | |
| | | | *Romania* | | | | |
| Do not know, would not vote | 45.6 | –7.2** | (2.2) | –7.5** | (2.0) | –0.4 | (1.8) |
| PSD | 11.1 | 3.4* | (1.3) | 2.9 | (1.8) | –0.4 | (0.7) |
| PNL | 6.1 | 0.2 | (1.1) | 0.7 | (1.2) | –0.4 | (0.5) |
| PD | 23.4 | 0.6 | (1.6) | –1.9 | (1.8) | 0.5 | (1.2) |
| PRM | 3.1 | 0.8 | (1.6) | 1.4 | (1.2) | 0.3 | (1.0) |
| UDMR | 3.3 | –0.1 | (3.7) | 0.7 | (5.3) | 0.4 | (3.5) |
| PNG | 3.4 | 1.0 | (0.7) | 1.5 | (1.3) | 0.3 | (0.4) |
| Others | 4.2 | 1.4 | (0.8) | 2.3 | (1.5) | –0.3 | (0.4) |
| | | | *Moldova* | | | | |
| Do not know, would not vote | 43.3 | –12.6** | (1.5) | –11.7** | (1.2) | –0.2 | (0.8) |
| PAMN | 10.6 | 1.8 | (1.4) | 1.2 | (1.7) | 0.1 | (0.5) |
| PCRM | 27.9 | 4.2* | (1.6) | 0.9 | (1.7) | 0.1 | (0.7) |
| PDM | 5.8 | 1.3 | (1.0) | 1.6 | (1.3) | –0.2 | (0.3) |
| PPCD | 2.9 | 1.3 | (0.9) | 2.4 | (1.6) | 0.3 | (0.4) |
| PSL | 5.7 | 1.3 | (1.0) | 1.6 | (1.3) | –0.1 | (0.4) |
| Others | 3.9 | 2.6** | (0.9) | 3.8* | (1.4) | –0.1 | (0.4) |

*$p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

This is less remarkable for the PSD, which only falls narrowly short of recording statistically significant gains under scenario B. But for the Moldovan PCRM, we see a truly major reversal of fortunes between the two scenarios. Scenario A would add 4.2 percent to their share of current vote intentions—the largest gain of all parties from the large drop in the percentage of undecided voters that occurs as knowledge levels increase. Under scenario B, however, they benefit the least of all parties (just a statistically insignificant 0.9 percent) from a similarly large reduction in the percentage of undecided citizens.

To interpret these differences between scenarios A and B, remember that under the latter the information gains would be concentrated especially among those citizens whose observed information level is already above the average. Thus, the

intriguing implication is that in spite of its current popularity, the PCRM has some further reserve of support that would materialize if the information level of citizens increased, but these gains would be disproportionately concentrated among people whose information level would change from low to moderate, and hardly occur at all among those who already have a moderate to high information level to begin with. In contrast, the small parties in Romania would be more likely to benefit from citizens' knowledge gains across the board, and probably even more among those already better informed than the rest.

Yet, we should not overstate these variations across parties under scenarios A and B. The only solid conclusion offered by the data is that somewhat more—but certainly not dramatically more—people would develop a party preference if the information level of the population increased. But an examination of the bootstrap standard errors associated with the estimates shown in Table 3 reveals that the cross-party differences in the table are actually not statistically significant. In other words, contemporary Moldovan and Romanian election outcomes would probably not change that much if everyone's knowledge level increased to the same extent.

Last but not least, consider the results obtained with scenario C. Recall that there is no change in the mean and variance of knowledge in the population in this scenario, but the differences between social groups in their aggregate level of knowledge disappear. Thus, what we ask here is what would happen to voting intentions if all social inequalities of political knowledge disappeared. The answer provided by the simulation is clear: really nothing would change at all—at least not in the distribution of voting intentions. There is not a single party whose share of voting intentions would change statistically significantly under this scenario, and the reason for this is not that the standard errors of the estimates are so high, but rather that the estimated changes in the sample parameters are so small.

## Conclusions

Our findings have mixed implications regarding the health of Moldova's and Romania's fledgling electoral democracies. The percentage of citizens who can correctly identify the largest party in parliament or the finance minister seems to be rather low even by the uninspiring standards set by poll results in older democracies (cf. Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Milner 2002). Together with the probably excessive tendency among citizens to recall their past votes mistakenly, these data should probably raise concerns about how much citizens engage with the political process in contemporary Moldova and Romania.

The rather limited factual knowledge base that our findings reveal seems to be somewhat unequally distributed across relevant social groups, as is electoral turnout. The social groups that differ in their rates of participation and knowledge also show somewhat different party preferences, and their vote intentions are statistically significantly influenced by one's knowledge level. This raises

the possibility that, due to misinformed voting decision and unequal turnout, election results may rather imperfectly reflect the underlying political preferences of Moldovan and Romanian citizens. Yet, in spite of the above, we find no evidence at all that the social inequalities of turnout and political knowledge would really influence election outcomes. Thus, unequal turnout and unequal knowledge do not convert into genuine inequalities of political influence through the electoral arena.

We would not deny that this still leaves open the very real possibility that the alternatives from which citizens choose in elections are unequally influenced by different groups in society. No doubt, interest groups, bureaucracies, money, and a host of other factors may create rather unequal chances for different people to influence government policies and party platforms (cf., e.g., Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Surely our respondents in the two countries believe so, since 93 percent of the Romanian and 85 percent of the Moldovan respondents believe that corruption is "very" or "quite" widespread among politicians.

However, it is exactly against this background of potentially serious political inequalities in other political arenas that our results concerning the highly egalitarian nature of electoral decision making are remarkable. Citizens of different and even opposing interests may have an unequal propensity to vote and to vote as if they were fully informed. But the magnitude of these inequalities is apparently not so large that their total elimination would have a noticeable impact on election outcomes. Thus, our simulation results suggest that the electoral process in Moldova and Romania operates as a highly egalitarian mechanism for aggregating citizens' preferences given the party alternatives on offer. The propensity of citizens to develop no party preference at all would somewhat diminish in both countries if citizens were better informed. But even relatively uninformed Moldovans and Romanians vote probably quite similarly to the way that the same people would if they were far more knowledgeable about politics. The logical way ahead in reducing political inequalities in these new democracies thus seems to be to increase the importance of elections vis-à-vis other influences on what parties and politicians do.

## Notes

1. These surveys were carried out in the context of the project "Social Inequality and Why It Matters for the Economic and Democratic Development of Europe and Its Citizens: Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective" (EUREQUAL), and funded by the European Commission under contract No. 028920 (CIT5), Framework 6.

2. For Romania, where both turnout in the past presidential and the past parliamentary elections were asked about, we chose the least inflated measure, namely, that of voting in the first round of the presidential elections because the two elections were concurrent and thus it was the same people who participated in either.

3. We could not check our own figures against the actual turnout of our respondents because personal data protection regulations in Romania prevent access to the respective records.

4. In dichotomizing the responses to the knowledge questions into "correct" responses and all other responses, we follow the recommendation of Luskin and Bullock (2006) and Sturgis et al. (2005), who comprehensively refuted doubts raised in the previous literature as to whether "do not know" responses and incorrect answers to questions on factual knowledge mask exactly the same degree of ignorance (see, e.g., Mondak 2001; Mondak and Canache 2004).

5. The 95 percent confidence intervals for these figures are 16.9–33.9 percent and 12.8–24.1 percent, respectively.

6. The 95 percent confidence intervals for these figures are from 1.3 percent to 12.9 percent and from –0.5 percent to 9.3 percent, respectively.

7. The relatively low expected turnout of Hungarians may surprise some. Indeed, throughout the 1990s aggregate election statistics—that is, the close correspondence between the population share of this ethnic group and the share of their ethnic party of the vote at both the national and the county level—seemed to suggest a fairly high turnout among them. However, the same aggregate evidence is far less clear regarding trends in the past eight years.

8. In Table 5, the standard error estimates for the Ethnicity variable tend to be very large for all Romanian parties and become unrealistically inflated for the PSD, PRM, and the PNG. The reason for this is the nearly deterministic relationship between Hungarian ethnicity and voting for the UDMR, the Hungarian ethnic party in Romania: not a single one of the fifty-four ethnic Hungarian voters in our Romanian sample were found among the supporters of the Romanian ex-communist PSD and the ultranationalist PRM and PNG. Because of this determinism in the observed relationship, our STATA 9.0 software cannot really estimate the standard error of the enormous logit coefficients that express the—undoubtedly real—reduction in the probability of support for these three parties as ethnicity changes to Hungarian. This estimation problem does not influence our ability to conduct a chi-squared test regarding the impact of the *Ethnicity* variable on vote intention (see Table 1), and largely disappears when, as in the simulation of turnout and information effects on vote choices for Tables 2 and 3, we include the ethnically more heterogeneous "do not know, would not vote" response option in the analysis.

9. Strictly speaking, knowledge inequalities between social groups can have an impact on election outcomes even if the analysis found no difference at all between the voting preferences of the given social groups, but there are significant interactions between the individuals' knowledge level, sociodemographic characteristics, and vote intentions. For the simplicity of discussion, we ignore here this rather remote—and in our empirical cases practically irrelevant—possibility.

10. This assumption is not particularly outlandish but we have no way of testing its validity.

11. Note that the analysis refers to a counterfactual condition that is within the realm of the possible. Full turnout is quite often approximated in real world national elections both in the presence of compulsory voting, as in Australia, and in the absence of it, as in Malta (cf. Pintor and Gratschew 2002).

12. Cf. Mooney and Duval (1993) on bootstrapping.

13. Note that we do not expect that fully informed social groups would be politically homogeneous. Rather, the distribution of preferences in the groups is expected to be expressed by the different degrees of support for the different parties in each group. While the assumption mentioned in the text cannot be tested with our data, previous analyses of experimental and deliberative poll data have already demonstrated that it has a reasonable degree of validity (Gilens 2001; Sturgis 2003).

14. Our model departs from Bartels (1996) in three ways. First, the list of independent variables is adjusted to our different data context. Second, we extend his binary (Republican

versus Democratic vote in U.S. elections) regression model to the multinomal case. Third, we use logit rather than probit analysis to fit our model, because multinomial probit is only feasible and advantageous in rather larger samples and with smaller choice sets than the ones encountered in our study. Moreover, model identification with multinomial probit is often impossible or leads to estimation errors that are hard to uncover with diagnostic tools (see Dow and Endersby 2004). Apart from this, we also use a simpler form to describe Bartels's (1996) model than he himself did; he preferred to place two constants (one of which was really just the equivalent of our *Knowledge* variable) and two sets of interaction terms between *Knowledge* and the *X* variables on the right-hand side of the model.

15. For a successful experimental validation of this assumption see Lau and Redlawsk (1997).

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## Appendix

### *Variables in the Analysis*

AGE: Age in years.

AGE-SQUARED: Age in years squared.

FEMALE: Coded 0 for male and 1 for female.

RURAL: Coded 1 for rural residence and 0 for urban. The coding was based on the administrative status of the locality in Romania and on population size (below or above 4000 inhabitants) in Moldova.

ETHNIC MINORITY: Based on responses to a question about what the respondents' nationality was. Coded 1 for Hungarians in Romania and Slavic ethnic groups in Moldova.

EDUCATION: The number of years of education minimally necessary to obtain the highest educational qualification reported by the respondent; for example, twelve for secondary education completed.

INCOME: Natural logarithm of monthly household income after taxes as reported by the respondents. Missing values substituted with the sample mean.

RELIGIOSITY: Based on responses to a question on "How often do you attend church services connected with your religion?" Recoded as 3 = at least once a week; 2 = less often but at least once a month; 1 = several times a year; 0 = less often than once a year or never. Missing values substituted with the sample mean.

KNOWLEDGE: An additive scale summing up KNOWLEDGE 1 and KNOWLEDGE 2.

KNOWLEDGE 1: Responses to the following question recoded to 1 for correct answers and 0 for wrong answers and no answer: "As far as you know, which political party has the most seats in the . . . [lower or only house of the national parliament]?" See also note 4.

KNOWLEDGE 2: Responses to the following question recoded to 1 for correct answers and 0 for wrong answers and no answer: "Who is now the finance minister of . . . [name of country]?" See also note 4.

TURNOUT: Based on responses to the following question: "Now I want to ask you about the past parliamentary [presidential] elections that were held in . . . [date]. Talking to people about the elections, we have found that a lot of people did not manage to vote. How about you? Did you vote in the last parliamentary [presidential] elections?" The responses were recoded as yes = 1, no = 0, DK,NA = missing. See also notes 2 and 3.

VOTE IN LAST ELECTION: Based on responses to the following question, which directly followed the question on turnout in the last parliamentary election (see above), and used a show card with list of parties on the actual ballot: "Which party or movement did you vote for?" For coding see Table 2. Parties named by less than thirty respondents were collapsed in a single "other parties" category.

VOTE INTENTION: Based on responses to the following question using a show card of parties: "Assuming there was a parliamentary election tomorrow, which of these parties would you be most likely to vote for?" For coding see Table 3. Parties named by less than thirty respondents were collapsed in a single "other parties" category.

Party Acronyms Used in the Text and the Tables

*Romania*

D.A.—Alliance [for] Justice and Truth PNL-PD (Alianţa "Dreptate şi Adevăr PNL- PD")

PD—Democratic Party (Partidul Democrat)

PNG—New Generation Party (Partidul Noua Generaţie)

PNL—National Liberal Party (Partidul Naþional Liberal)

PRM—Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare)

PSD—Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat)

UDMR—Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (Uniunea Democrată a Maghiarilor din România)

*Moldova*

PAMN—Party "Alliance Our Moldova" (Partidul Alianţa Moldova Noastră)

PCRM—Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (Partidul Comuniştilor din Republica Moldova)

PDM—Democratic Party of Moldova (Partidul Democrat din Moldova)

PPCD—Christian Democratic People's Party (Partidul Popular Creştin Democrat)

PSL—Social Liberal Party (Partidul Social Liberal)

Table A1

**The Impact of Sociodemographic Variables on Turnout and Knowledge**
(logistic regression coefficients with standard errors and significance levels)

| | Romania (*n* = 1,417) | | | Moldova (*n* = 975) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | s.e. | P | B | s.e. | P |
| | *Dependent variable: Turnout* | | | | | |
| Female | –0.10 | 0.14 | 0.48 | –0.14 | 0.17 | 0.39 |
| Age | 0.08 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.03 | 0.00 |
| Age-squared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Ethnic minority | –0.75 | 0.23 | 0.00 | –0.57 | 0.19 | 0.00 |
| Rural | –0.01 | 0.14 | 0.94 | 0.97 | 0.17 | 0.00 |
| Education | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.16 | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.03 |
| Income | 0.09 | 0.11 | 0.40 | 0.12 | 0.13 | 0.34 |
| Religiosity | 0.40 | 0.22 | 0.06 | 0.37 | 0.31 | 0.23 |
| Constant | –1.77 | 0.93 | 0.06 | –4.00 | 1.16 | 0.00 |
| | *Dependent variable: Knowledge 1* | | | | | |
| Female | –0.72 | 0.12 | 0.00 | –0.75 | 0.15 | 0.00 |
| Age | 0.08 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.11 |
| Age-squared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.17 |
| Ethnic minority | –0.71 | 0.26 | 0.01 | –0.02 | 0.18 | 0.90 |
| Rural | –0.06 | 0.12 | 0.60 | 0.01 | 0.15 | 0.97 |
| Education | 0.11 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.11 | 0.02 | 0.00 |
| Income | 0.33 | 0.10 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.12 | 0.78 |
| Religiosity | –0.08 | 0.18 | 0.67 | 0.35 | 0.27 | 0.21 |
| Constant | –5.58 | 0.87 | 0.00 | –1.34 | 1.07 | 0.21 |
| | *Dependent variable: Knowledge 2* | | | | | |
| Female | –0.43 | 0.13 | 0.00 | –0.87 | 0.21 | 0.00 |
| Age | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.06 | 0.04 | 0.14 |
| Age-squared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.28 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.22 |
| Ethnic minority | –1.12 | 0.34 | 0.00 | –0.58 | 0.30 | 0.05 |
| Rural | –0.19 | 0.14 | 0.18 | 0.25 | 0.22 | 0.26 |
| Education | 0.24 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.16 | 0.03 | 0.00 |
| Income | 0.39 | 0.11 | 0.00 | 0.28 | 0.17 | 0.11 |
| Religiosity | –0.13 | 0.21 | 0.55 | –0.40 | 0.43 | 0.35 |
| Constant | –7.92 | 1.01 | 0.00 | –6.56 | 1.58 | 0.00 |

Table A2

**Impact of Sociodemographic Variables on Vote Intention with Undecided Voters Excluded from the Analysis** (logistic regression coefficients with standard errors and significance levels)

| | Romania ($n$ = 812, reference category = UDMR) | | | Moldova ($n$ = 591, reference category = PCRM) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | s.e. | p | b | s.e. | P |
| Party: | | *PSD* | | | *PAMN* | |
| Female | 0.41 | 0.66 | 0.53 | –0.34 | 0.24 | 0.16 |
| Age | 0.19 | 0.11 | 0.10 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.59 |
| Age-squared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.21 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.50 |
| Ethnic minority | –43.78+ | 42,700,000+ | 1.00+ | –1.63 | 0.46 | 0.00 |
| Rural | 1.16 | 0.71 | 0.10 | –0.30 | 0.25 | 0.22 |
| Education | 0.01 | 0.13 | 0.97 | 0.09 | 0.03 | 0.00 |
| Income | 0.47 | 0.59 | 0.43 | 0.14 | 0.19 | 0.46 |
| Religiosity | –1.22 | 1.10 | 0.27 | 0.12 | 0.47 | 0.80 |
| Constant | –4.70 | 4.53 | 0.30 | –2.54 | 1.70 | 0.14 |
| Party: | | *PNL* | | | *PDM* | |
| Female | 0.34 | 0.65 | 0.61 | 0.67 | 0.35 | 0.05 |
| Age | 0.20 | 0.11 | 0.08 | –0.03 | 0.05 | 0.47 |
| Age-squareduared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.14 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.87 |
| Ethnic minority | –6.32 | 0.95 | 0.00 | 0.24 | 0.37 | 0.53 |
| Rural | 0.52 | 0.71 | 0.46 | –0.02 | 0.31 | 0.96 |
| Education | 0.12 | 0.13 | 0.36 | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.04 |
| Income | 0.67 | 0.59 | 0.26 | 0.10 | 0.23 | 0.66 |
| Religiosity | –1.31 | 1.10 | 0.23 | 0.70 | 0.57 | 0.22 |
| Constant | –7.58 | 4.54 | 0.10 | –2.33 | 2.01 | 0.25 |
| Party: | | *PD* | | | *PPCD* | |
| Female | 0.64 | 0.64 | 0.32 | –0.57 | 0.41 | 0.16 |
| Age | 0.16 | 0.11 | 0.15 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.51 |
| Age-squared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.22 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.37 |
| Ethnic minority | –8.04 | 0.98 | 0.00 | –2.13 | 1.04 | 0.04 |
| Rural | 0.68 | 0.70 | 0.33 | –0.98 | 0.41 | 0.02 |
| Education | –0.02 | 0.12 | 0.89 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.11 |
| Income | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.32 | 0.02 | 0.31 | 0.96 |
| Religiosity | –1.39 | 1.08 | 0.20 | 0.66 | 0.80 | 0.41 |
| Constant | –3.04 | 4.41 | 0.49 | –2.71 | 2.70 | 0.32 |

| | Romania (*n* = 812, reference category = UDMR) | | | Moldova (*n* = 591, reference category = PCRM) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | s.e. | p | b | s.e. | P |
| Party: | | *PRM* | | | *PSL* | |
| Female | 0.14 | 0.71 | 0.84 | –0.07 | 0.32 | 0.84 |
| Age | 0.22 | 0.12 | 0.07 | –0.09 | 0.05 | 0.05 |
| Age-squared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.16 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.15 |
| Ethnic minority | –43.82+ | 80,500,000+ | 1.00+ | –2.07 | 0.75 | 0.01 |
| Rural | 1.38 | 0.77 | 0.07 | –0.92 | 0.32 | 0.00 |
| Education | 0.01 | 0.13 | 0.95 | 0.11 | 0.04 | 0.00 |
| Income | 0.70 | 0.63 | 0.27 | 0.16 | 0.24 | 0.50 |
| Religiosity | –1.34 | 1.18 | 0.26 | 0.71 | 0.60 | 0.24 |
| Constant | –8.35 | 4.91 | 0.09 | –0.92 | 2.03 | 0.65 |
| Party: | | *PNG* | | | *other parties* | |
| Female | –0.56 | 0.71 | 0.43 | –0.32 | 0.36 | 0.37 |
| Age | 0.16 | 0.12 | 0.20 | –0.01 | 0.06 | 0.87 |
| Age-squared | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.17 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.61 |
| Ethnic minority | –42.94+ | 70,800,000+ | 1.00+ | –0.10 | 0.45 | 0.82 |
| Rural | 0.39 | 0.76 | 0.61 | –0.48 | 0.36 | 0.19 |
| Education | –0.10 | 0.14 | 0.47 | 0.07 | 0.04 | 0.09 |
| Income | 0.58 | 0.63 | 0.36 | 0.38 | 0.26 | 0.15 |
| Religiosity | –1.51 | 1.17 | 0.20 | –0.66 | 0.76 | 0.39 |
| Constant | –2.52 | 4.81 | 0.60 | –3.32 | 2.32 | 0.15 |
| Party: | | *other parties* | | | | |
| Female | 0.11 | 0.67 | 0.87 | | | |
| Age | 0.17 | 0.12 | 0.15 | | | |
| Age-square | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.26 | | | |
| Ethnic minority | –6.73 | 1.08 | 0.00 | | | |
| Rural | 0.81 | 0.73 | 0.27 | | | |
| Education | 0.08 | 0.13 | 0.53 | | | |
| Income | 0.86 | 0.61 | 0.16 | | | |
| Religiosity | –1.46 | 1.13 | 0.20 | | | |
| Constant | –8.09 | 4.67 | 0.08 | | | |

+See note 8 for an explanation of these inordinately high estimates.