

THE FIRST DECADE OF POST-COMMUNIST ELECTIONS AND VOTING: What Have We Studied, and How Have We Studied It?

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Key Words electoral, vote, election, methodology, data, Russia, Poland

■ **Abstract** This review assesses the state of the newly emerging field of the study of post-communist elections and voting by building and analyzing a database of 101 articles on the topic that have appeared in 16 leading academic journals (8 general political science journals and 8 post-communist area studies journals) between 1990 and 2000. The database is then used to make inferences concerning both what is being studied by scholars and how it is being studied. The review systematically assesses which countries have been analyzed, the types of elections examined, the prevalence of comparative analysis, the division between quantitative and qualitative research, and the types of data used in quantitative studies. It then turns to substantive questions, examining both how scholars have explained post-communist election results and voting decisions, and what they have used these elections to explain.

INTRODUCTION

Political science is filled with examples of ideas, approaches, and paradigms that have ebbed and flowed over the years. Indeed, we have had almost as many “revolutions” as the countries we study. But alongside the many debates in political science lie real political phenomena that we hope to understand. Although we often have the opportunity to observe a mode of study develop, the chance to observe a new political phenomenon is more rare. Yet with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, such an opportunity has arisen. Prior to 1989, the world had little or no practical experience observing democratic behavior in post-communist societies. And although there are undoubtedly some continuities between the communist and post-communist eras in these countries, there are just as many, if not more, sharp discontinuities. Perhaps nowhere is this more clearly evident than in the realm of elections and voting.

As Colton vividly notes (2000b, p. 34), “The sight of Russians streaming into their local precincts to pronounce on who is fit to rule them is as startling a transposition of conventional imagery as a takeover by Maoist guerillas would be in the

United States.” Whereas previously voting had been no more than an act of mass mobilization demanded by a totalitarian (or post-totalitarian) regime to mollify the ruling party, citizens were now faced with choices.¹ Suddenly, votes represented choices between different people, parties, and movements. Moreover, these elections had consequences. How might Russian history have evolved differently had Boris Yeltsin not been elected president of the Russian Federation in 1991 and then been reelected in 1996? And would Slovakia still be on the outside of NATO looking in had the voters rejected the nationalist Vladimir Meciar in the 1994 parliamentary elections after his fellow politicians had twice ousted him from power?

Over a decade after the crucial 1989 Polish parliamentary elections, it is now an appropriate time to pause and survey the literature. What exactly have we been studying for the past decade? What questions have we sought to answer? A crucial task of this article, as a first review of the subject, is to provide a road map to the work in this new field. A retrospective evaluation (no pun intended) of the literature on voting and elections in post-communist countries also holds the tantalizing possibility of telling us something interesting about political science as a discipline. For not only can we assess what have we studied in the first decade of this new field, we can also observe how we have studied it. Unlike earlier waves of democratization, this one has occurred in an age of powerful computers, cheap airfares, leftover funding from the Cold War, and (relatively) easily attainable visas. How have scholars taken advantage of these resources? Have we used quantitative or qualitative research? Employed aggregate or micro-level analysis? Explored one election or multiple ones? Analyzed a single country or many?

In an effort to take advantage of this unique opportunity, this review therefore addresses both the “how” and “what” of the first decade of study of post-communist elections and voting. I examine in detail how the field has studied elections and voting by addressing in turn the countries analyzed, the prevalence of comparative analysis, the types of elections explored, the division between quantitative and qualitative research, and the nature of the data used in quantitative studies. I then turn to the substantive nature of the field’s development, exploring both how scholars have explained post-communist election results and voting and what they have used these elections to explain.

A Database of Journal Articles

In order to address these topics, I constructed a database of 101 articles on elections and voting from 16 leading journals—8 general or comparative political

¹Of course, this was not the case in all of the post-Soviet countries, with Turkmenistan being the most glaring exception. But given the fact that, prior to the late 1980s, arguably none of the communist countries were anything close to democratic, the fact that so many of these countries have had meaningful elections—and in most cases multiple meaningful elections—is quite stunning. Indeed, according to one source, only two of the 27 post-communist countries have failed to have multiple competitive elections (Bunce 2001, p. 43).

science journals and 8 post-communist area studies journals—between 1990 and 2000.² The criteria for inclusion of an article were as follows.

First, the article had to be primarily written about an election or a series of elections. In most cases, the election functioned as the dependent variable of the analysis: The goal of the article was to explain why the election(s) turned out the way it did and/or why voters voted the way they did. I included in this classification studies that asked voters which parties they preferred (and thus were likely to vote for in an election) even if the survey did not occur at the time of an actual election, but only if the article was primarily concerned with voting, as opposed to the development of party systems more generally.³

In some cases, articles were included where an election functioned as an independent variable. I was, however, careful to limit this category to articles in which elections were the primary explanatory variable. I excluded those in which elections were just one of many variables employed to explain some other phenomenon out of fear that such articles would quickly overwhelm the pure elections articles. Had I included any article that mentioned an election as a causal variable, this very quickly would have become a review about democratization as opposed to elections and voting. As it turned out, less than 15% of the articles (13 out of 101) included in the database are there exclusively because an election(s) functioned as an independent variable in the article. Articles were also excluded if elections were a component of a debate on another topic where the focus of the research was not on explaining an election or voting.⁴

The second, perhaps more obvious, criterion was that the article had to be focused on analyzing an election or elections that took place in one or more of

²The political science journals are *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, *Electoral Studies*, *Journal of Politics*, and *World Politics*. A number of area studies journals, not surprisingly, changed their names during this period, so the following list shows the current name of the journal with the previous name in parentheses if necessary. The journals are *Communist and Post Communist Studies* (*Studies in Comparative Communism*), *Demokratizatsiya*, *East European Politics and Society*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Post-Soviet Affairs* (*Soviet Economy*), *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* (*Post-Soviet Geography*), *Problems of Post-Communism* (*Problems of Communism*), and *Slavic Review*. Of these, all published for the entire period with the exception of *Demokratizatsiya*, which appeared in 1993.

³Without this rule, the line would quickly fade between scholarship focused on elections and voting and scholarship devoted to the development of party systems. Although both of these interrelated topics are interesting, the focus of the current article is elections and voting.

⁴A good example is the scholarship concerning the development of partisanship in Russia (Rose 1998, Whitefield & Evans 1999, Colton 2000a, Miller & Klobucar 2000, Brader & Tucker 2001). Clearly, the discussion of voting factors into any consideration of partisan identification, but it is really a separate topic with its own literature and theoretical concerns.

the 27 post-communist countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.⁵ This also excluded any large-*N* studies that included post-communist countries within a much larger universe of cases. Finally, the article had to represent some attempt at an *analysis* of election results or voting. Articles that merely reported results without attempting to add any independent analysis were not included in the database.⁶

The task of compiling the database involved checking literally thousands of articles to determine whether they ought to be included. In order to avoid the vagaries of search engines, each issue of each journal was examined by hand.⁷ Most of the decisions concerning the inclusion of articles were fairly straightforward. Although I doubt that anyone else would have made exactly the same decision I did on every article, I am confident that most other scholars would have made most of the same decisions.

Why Journal Articles?

The composition of the database begs the question of why journal articles. The answer is fourfold. First and foremost, clearly delimiting the universe of cases of writing on the topic is crucial for eliminating selection bias. Selection bias occurs

⁵More specifically, the countries included were: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia (Serbia or Montenegro), Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia. In addition, articles focusing on competitive elections in the former East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union were included.

⁶The primary effect of this rule was to exclude notes that appeared in *Electoral Studies*' "Notes on Recent Elections" section. Although some of these notes were longer and did attempt to provide commentary in addition to details (see for example Krupavicius 1997, Wyman 1997, Chan 1998), many were little more than descriptions of parties and results. Lacking any clear way to differentiate between various notes, I deferred to the editors of *Electoral Studies* and assumed that articles more focused on analysis would be found in the article section of the journal; consequently, I excluded all of the notes. The alternative, to include all of the notes, would have resulted in a substantial portion of the database being based largely on nonanalytical articles.

⁷The initial pass was made by my research assistants, Todd Spiegelman and Sarah Keffer, without whose assistance this project would not have been possible. Final decisions concerning which articles to include were made after two sets of screenings and were mine alone. Undoubtedly, we missed some articles that should have been included in the database. Because such omissions were the result of measurement error, they should not bias any of the inferences made on the basis of the data. Nevertheless, I apologize to anyone whose work was inadvertently omitted. And indeed, after this article had been submitted for publication, I found two additional articles that appeared late in 2000 and should have been included in the database (Bohrer et al. 2000, Colton & McFaul 2000); because these articles are not included in the database, they are not reflected in the summary statistics, but they are referred to in the text.

when the results of a study are influenced by our choice of which cases to include in it. (For example, a study of the effects of repression on some form of political behavior suffers from selection bias if it omits countries that the researcher could not visit because of their severely repressive regimes.) But although selection bias has received the most attention in empirical studies, it also lurks below the surface of any review article. As King et al. (1994, p. 128) note, one of the most obvious manifestations of selection bias occurs when “we, knowing what we want to see as the outcome of the research (the confirmation of a favorite hypothesis), subtly or not so subtly select observations . . . that support the desired conclusion.” Like any empirical study, review articles make conclusions on the basis of available evidence, but in this case the literature itself represents the evidence or data. Because it is up to the individual reviewer to decide which “evidence” (i.e., articles, books, papers, etc.) to include in the survey, the possibility always exists that these decisions will introduce selection bias.

Of course, this risk is normally mitigated by the fact that the reviewer has been selected to write the review precisely because someone thinks he or she will introduce a particular kind of selection bias: quality and importance. After all, a review article is not necessarily intended to survey everything ever written on a topic but instead to report on the most important works.

In this particular review article, though, the issue of selection bias is much more serious. A primary goal of my endeavor is to make inferences about how political scientists have approached the study of elections and voting in post-communist countries. In attempting to comment about how research has been conducted, it is crucial that I not limit my survey to research of any particular type. By including all articles that meet the above criteria from a universe of cases defined a priori, the sample should be relatively free of bias. I have thus taken the decision out of my own hands and turned it over to everyone who has ever written a review for an article on the topic for any of the 16 journals mentioned above.⁸

This brings me to my second point, which is that the analysis of journal articles gives us a first-hand observation of what the discipline values as important research in the field of post-communist elections and voting. In order for an article to appear in any of these journals, an editor or reviewers, and in most cases both, must have thought that the article was worth publishing. Because the purpose of this exercise is to examine how political science has gone about studying a new field, a focus on journal articles allows me to comment on not only what individual authors have chosen to write but also what the field has chosen to regard as quality. In a sense, therefore, I have included the “quality” selection bias, but it is what the discipline (as opposed to just the author of this review article) values as quality.

⁸Even through the selection of journals, bias can creep into the study. Most of these journals are American or British. Although it would of course have been better to include more journals, considerations of time and effort forced me to draw a line at some point. I apologize to those whose work has been published elsewhere; the omission should not be read as a comment on the quality of the work.

The third reason for relying on journal articles is that they represent a comparable unit of analysis. This is a prerequisite for any quantitative assessments regarding the development of the field (e.g., a third of all articles have been written about country X). If the database included books and edited volumes, it would raise sticky questions about how to count cases. By restricting my analysis to journal articles, I avoid this concern.

Finally, because the field is young, not many books purely devoted to elections and voting in post-communist countries have been published, particularly by university presses.⁹ As a result, much of the action, so to speak, in the development of the field has been taking place in journals. For example, in an approximately page-long endnote, Colton (2000b, p. 262) surveys the literature on Russian elections in the 1990s; almost the entire note refers to journal articles.

Figure 1 displays the distribution of the articles across the 16 journals. Not surprisingly, there are more articles on post-communist elections in the area studies journals than there are in the general interest journals. Although there is some variation in the journals' frequency of publication, the relative paucity of articles on post-communist elections and voting in the leading journals of political science is undeniable. The *APSR*, *AJPS*, *BJPS*, *JOP*, *World Politics*, and *Comparative Politics*, combined, averaged one article per year that met the criteria enumerated above. Whether this scarcity is due to a lack of research being submitted to these journals or a low acceptance rate for such work is beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is still a long way to go in moving studies of post-communist elections and voting into the mainstream of political science analysis.¹⁰

⁹However, see Krejčí (1995), Tworzecki (1996), Belin & Orttung (1997), McFaul (1997b), White et al. (1997a), Birch (2000), Colton (2000b), and Moser (2001). In addition, a number of edited volumes have been published, although most appear either to be a part of the *Founding Elections in Eastern Europe* series sponsored by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation in Berlin (Tóka 1995, Gabal 1996, Karasimeonov 1997, Gelman & Golosov 1999, Klingemann et al. 2000), or to be focused exclusively on Russian elections (Lentini 1995, Colton & Hough 1998, Wyman et al. 1998). Moreover, none of the books or edited volumes feature analyses that compare elections from more than one country. Indeed, only one edited volume even addresses elections in more than one country, and this is mainly through a series of chapters on individual countries (Klingemann et al. 2000). Perhaps even more surprising is the lack of doctoral dissertations on elections and voting in post-communist countries. A search of the UMI dissertation abstracts database during the summer of 2001 revealed that of the hundreds of dissertations written on elections and voting generally since 1993, only seven have focused on post-communist countries (Tworzecki 1994, Treisman 1995, Birch 1998, Oates 1998, Perepechko 1999, Stegmaier 2000, Tucker 2000a); two others addressed the development of electoral systems in post-communist countries (Benoit 1998, Jones-Luong 1998). Another source of publications that lie somewhere between articles and books are the University of Strathclyde's Studies in Public Policy (which can be found on the web at <http://www.cspp.strath.ac.uk/>).

¹⁰The point is further emphasized by the fact that of the books and edited volumes listed above, only two (Colton 2000b, Moser 2001) were published by an American or British university press, and both appeared in print only recently.

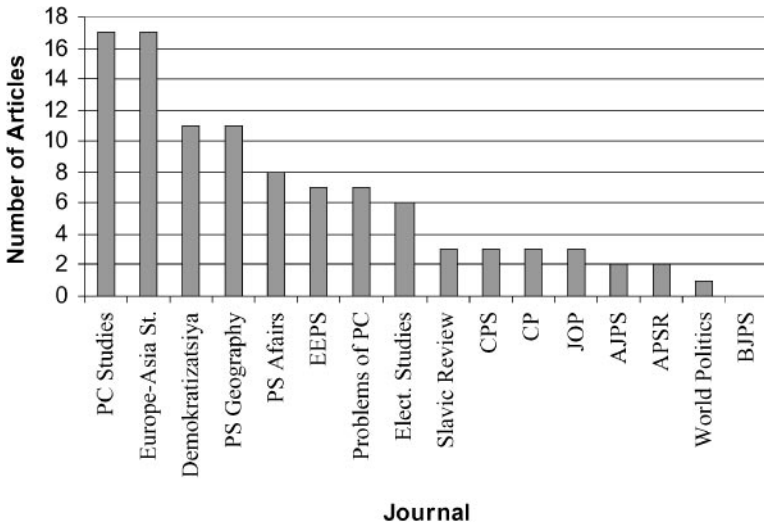


Figure 1 Distribution of articles by journal. Journal listings are based on most recent title and include publications from that journal under previous title. Abbreviations are as follows: PC, post-communist; PS, post-Soviet; EEPS, *East European Politics and Society*; CPS, *Comparative Political Studies*; CP, *Comparative Politics*; JOP, *Journal of Politics*; AJPS, *American Journal of Political Science*; APSR, *American Political Science Review*; BJPS, *British Journal of Political Science*.

HOW ARE WE STUDYING ELECTIONS AND VOTING?

In this section, I focus on how scholars have studied elections and voting in post-communist countries. I explore which countries are being studied, whether they are being studied individually or comparatively, what types of elections have been analyzed, and what methods scholars have chosen to employ in their analyses.

Countries

As Figure 2 demonstrates, the analysis of elections and voting in the post-communist context has been anything but uniformly distributed across countries. Thirteen of the 101 articles in the database analyzed more than one country, ranging generally from two to six countries. Therefore, the bar in Figure 2 for each country is subdivided to show the number of times the country appeared in a single-country article (dark shading) and the number of times it appeared in a multi-country comparative article (no shading). Although there are numerous points of interest in Figure 2, I confine my remarks to four observations.

First, it is clear that the study of elections and voting in post-communist countries is dominated by analyses of Russia. Over half of the articles in the database examine Russian elections, and single-country studies of Russia almost make up a

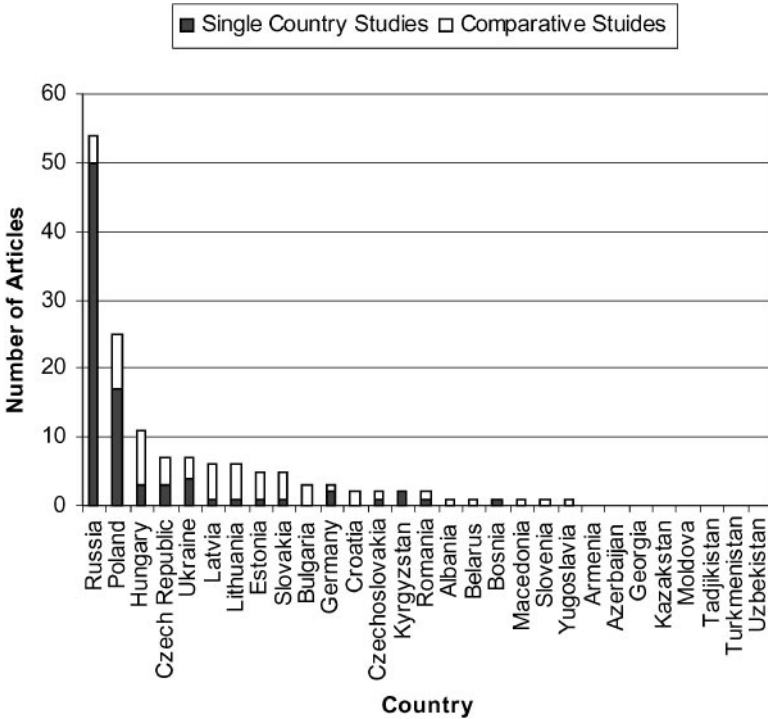


Figure 2 Distribution of articles by country.

majority of the research. (A similar pattern is present in book publication.) This is not entirely surprising, given the legacy of academic attention to the Soviet Union and the importance of Russia in the international sphere relative to most other post-communist countries. Nevertheless, it should raise some red flags. If the field continues to develop in this direction, then there is a realistic danger that much of what we learn about elections and voting in the post-communist context will be based on our understanding of only one country, and one that is hardly representative of the lot. On the other hand, perhaps we should be pleased that even in the immediate post-Cold War era, scholars have devoted considerable attention to countries besides Russia.

This leads to my second observation, which I must confess took me completely by surprise and for which I have no obvious explanation. After Russia, Poland has been by far the most studied of the post-communist countries. It has been the subject of more than twice as many articles as any other country, and four times as many single-country articles have been written about Poland than about any other country. Perhaps most stunningly, there are almost six times as many single country articles about Poland (17) as there are about Hungary (3) or the Czech Republic (3). Because these are the three countries that have joined NATO and are often

considered together (along with Slovakia) as the Visegrad four, I was not surprised that all three would be among the most studied in Eastern Europe. However, there was no reason to expect any one of the three to receive more attention than the others. Although difficulty in learning the language might disadvantage Hungary, this cannot explain the distinction between Poland and the Czech Republic. My best guess was that perhaps particularly good survey data existed in the Polish case, but only three of the articles written exclusively on Poland relied on survey data (Powers & Cox 1997, Szelenyi et al. 1997, Shabad & Slomczynski 1999). And although more studies of Poland use regional-level data than either of the other two, I can confirm from personal experience that it is no more difficult to get similar data in Hungary or the Czech Republic. Another guess was that more articles had been written on Poland because it has had direct elections for president and parliament—the Czech Republic and Hungary both have a president elected by the parliament—and therefore there were more articles written simply because there were more elections to study. However, it turns out that of the 17 single-country articles written on Poland, none focused exclusively on presidential elections and only two (Bell 1997, Shabad & Slomczynski 1999) considered both presidential and parliamentary elections. I remain baffled by this trend and am intrigued to see whether it is limited to elections and voting or extends to other fields.¹¹

More generally, there is a definite link between the relative importance of a country to the West and the number of scholarly articles on elections and voting in that country. Although “importance to the West” is a nebulous concept, there are some clear patterns in the data. As previously noted, the most popular country for study by far is Russia, with the three countries that have been admitted to NATO occupying the next three slots. The next most popular country is Ukraine, followed by the three Baltic States and Slovakia, all four of which have been considered for NATO and European Union membership; no other country has been the subject of more than three articles.

I can only speculate as to what is driving this pattern. It may be that we are more apt to reward work on more familiar countries through mechanisms such as grants, journal acceptances, encouragement to graduate students, and even the job market. Alternatively, all things being equal, scholars may have been drawn to elections that seem free and fair more than to those that do not. But although this may explain the lack of attention to the Caucus region and parts of the Balkans, it certainly cannot explain all the variation. One potential factor might be that some countries are seen as inherently more comparable than others; note particularly that Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Slovakia are all included in numerous comparative

¹¹A reviewer suggested that one explanation for the trend might be the fact that Poles had been more active than most in trying to get work published in these journals. Although there is some evidence to support this statement, a cursory glance at the authors suggests that at least 60% of the articles on Poland were written by non-Polish authors. So even if we eliminated articles authored or coauthored by Poles, Poland would still clearly be the second most popular country for analysis.

articles, but each is the focus of only one single-country study (Ishiyama 1994, Clark 1995, Carpenter 1997, Stukuls 1997).

Finally, it is important to note that numerous countries have received little or no attention. Fourteen of the countries appeared in no more than one article; of these, eight appeared not a single time. Although it is understandable that no one is investigating elections in Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan owing to the lack of democratic evolution in these countries, numerous countries in this neglected group have conducted multiple elections in which voters have definitely made choices at the voting booth. Elections in places such as Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Armenia may not be as free or fair as their counterparts in Central Europe, but these elections must still have something to offer social scientists.

Comparative Analysis

With the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, comparative political scientists were faced with an almost unprecedented opportunity. Over 25 states, having undergone similar political and economic experiences over at least the past four decades, were simultaneously facing the task of transition. For many of these states, elections and voting have played a crucial role in that process, both by installing democratic institutions and by providing the leadership of the governments that would undertake those transitions. Although there were undoubtedly important differences between the countries, the similarities in their collective political tasks may have outnumbered those in any other group of countries in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, as Table 1 demonstrates, the field of political science seems to have collectively shied away from the opportunity to pursue comparative research.

Of the 101 articles in the study, only 13 chose to compare countries. The old border between the former Soviet Union and East Central Europe seems to be remarkably intact, especially if we exclude the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) from the former Soviet Union. Seven of the articles compare only countries from Eastern Europe (Barany & Vinton 1990, Ishiyama 1993, Pacek 1994, Mahr & Nagle 1995, Bielasiak 1997, Szelenyi et al. 1997, Fidrmuc 2000), one compares only Baltic countries (Pettai & Kreuzer 1999), one compares two Baltic countries and one Eastern European country (Harper 2000), and one compares

TABLE 1 How comparative are election studies?

Number of countries	Number of elections		
	Single	Multiple	Total
Single	61	27	88
Multiple	0	13	13
Total	61	40	101

Russia and Ukraine (Pammett 1996). The remaining three are the only articles in the entire database to compare countries from the non-Baltic former Soviet Union with countries from Eastern Europe (Ishiyama 1997, Moraski & Loewenberg 1999, Moser 1999a; although see also Bohrer et al 2000; Tucker 2000a, 2001).

It is also interesting to note that the percentage of articles employing comparative analysis would have dropped even further had I chosen to include only articles that focused on elections as a dependent variable. Of the 13 elections included in the study solely because elections functioned as an independent variable, four were comparative studies (Ishiyama 1993, Pammett 1996, Bielasiak 1997, Pettai & Kreuzer 1999). Without these articles, only 10% (9 out of 88 articles) of the database would have contained multiple-country studies.

Whereas multiple-country studies have been largely eschewed, multiple-election studies have been far more prevalent. Almost 40% of the articles looked at more than one election. Although the vast majority of the 27 multiple-election single-country studies focus on Russia (14) or Poland (5), it is possible to find articles that analyze more than one election across a number of countries, including Bosnia (Shoup 1997), the Czech Republic (Fule 1997, Turnovec 1997), Lithuania (Clark 1995), Romania (Mihut 1994), Ukraine (Birch 1995), and even Kyrgyzstan (Huskey 1995, Koldys 1997).

Types of Elections

I turn next to the question of which elections scholars have chosen to analyze. Table 2 examines the breakdown of the articles across national and local elections (defined here as an election at any subnational level, including the elections of governors, regional legislatures, city mayors, or even town or local administrators).

There are two important patterns. First, scholars have overwhelmingly chosen to focus on national elections. Despite my broad definition of "local" elections, only 10 out of 101 articles analyzed such elections. Moreover, none of these articles compared elections across countries. Second, and perhaps more surprisingly, every article that analyzed subnational elections exclusively did so using Russian elections. If this trend continues, then almost our entire understanding of local elections in the post-communist context is likely to be based on the Russian case. Certainly, there is room here for interesting comparative research on local elections in other post-communist countries.

TABLE 2 National elections get all the attention

	Local	National	Both	Total
Single country: Russia	8	42	0	50
All other articles	0	49	2 ^a	51
Total	8	91	2	101

^aRomania and Kyrgyzstan.

TABLE 3 Scholars are more interested in legislative elections

	Executive	Legislative	Referenda	Multiple	Total
Single country: Russia	14	31	1	4	50
All other articles	0	42	0	9	51
Total	14	73	1	13	101

In addition to local versus national considerations, elections can be categorized by their subjects of contestation. Table 3 breaks down the articles in the database into those focusing on the vote for executives, legislators, or referenda. Again, two clear patterns emerge. First, elections for legislators are receiving much more attention than elections for executives. Some of this may simply be because several of the countries in the study do not have elected presidents, so that there are more legislative elections to analyze. Nevertheless, this cannot explain all of the variation. Russia has had both presidential and parliamentary elections. Given the predominant importance of the president in Russia's strong presidential system, one would expect to find more articles written about Russian presidential elections than Russian parliamentary elections. Instead, over twice as many articles have been written about Russian parliamentary elections.¹² The Polish case is an even more stark example. Of the 25 articles in the database that analyze Polish elections in either a single-country study or a comparative framework, 22 examine legislative elections exclusively, 3 examine both legislative and executive elections (Pacek 1994, Bell 1997, Shabad & Slomczynski 1999), and none examine only Polish presidential elections.

The second point of concern in Table 3 is that, similarly to the national/local divide, all the articles that focus exclusively on presidential elections are about Russian presidential elections. The situation is somewhat more heartening in that nine articles consider both legislative and executive elections in countries other than Russia. Nevertheless, it is curious that all the authors who chose to focus exclusively on presidential elections did so in the Russian context.

The lack of interest in presidential elections is somewhat surprising, especially when one considers that the study of elections in the American politics subfield is dominated by studies of presidential elections. The fact that most of the Eastern European countries are parliamentary republics may explain much of the preoccupation with parliamentary elections in that region, although this logic clearly does not explain the pattern in Russia. Likewise, it cannot explain why presidential elections in Poland, which is a mixed parliamentary-presidential state, have

¹²Interestingly, though, the eight articles that analyzed Russian local elections (see Table 2) are evenly split: four focus on regional gubernatorial elections (Hahn 1997, McFaul 1997a, Solnick 1998, Belin 1997), and the other four examine regional legislative elections (Colton 1990, Helf & Hahn 1992, Slider 1996, Golosov 1999).

TABLE 4 Both quantitative and qualitative methods are popular

	Qualitative	Quantitative	Total
Single country, single election	33	28	61
Single country, multiple elections	14	13	27
Multiple countries, multiple elections	5	8	13
Total	52	49	101

received so little attention. Perhaps it is intrinsically more interesting to sort out political parties in a new democracy than to study individual candidates who may run for election as independents. Alternatively, the predominance of studies of legislative elections outside of the Russian case may reflect the lack of attention paid to regions with powerful elected presidents, such as the Caucus region.

Finally, it is worth noting that only one article in the entire database attempts to explicitly compare the results of both presidential and parliamentary elections in multiple countries (Pacek 1994).¹³

Methods of Analysis

A final question concerns the methods that scholars have employed to study post-communist elections. Table 4 categorizes the 101 articles in the database on the basis of quantitative versus qualitative analysis. Both terms are open to interpretation; for this review, I have defined an article as quantitative if it either reports the results of statistical analysis or is primarily devoted to describing the results of a survey. I do not classify an article as quantitative if it merely reports public opinion polls as a supplementary form of analysis. Although the classification is obviously subjective, it does give us a sense of what proportion of articles are relying, at least in part, on quantitative analysis.

Table 4 contains two important findings. Most important, scholars are definitely taking advantage of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Moreover, there is no distinction between articles that focus exclusively on Russia and those that do not.¹⁴ Given the history of Soviet and communist studies as a largely nonquantitative field, one might have expected researchers to be hesitant

¹³Pacek compares the effect of economic conditions on election results and turnout in four elections: one parliamentary election each in Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia, and one Polish presidential election. My own work (e.g., Tucker 1999, 2000a), which is not included in the database, also spans this divide; it examines the effect of economic conditions on election results in Russia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia (two parliamentary elections from each country and two presidential elections from both Russia and Poland).

¹⁴Of the 50 articles that focus exclusively on Russia, 24 employ quantitative methods and 26 do not; of the remaining 51 articles, 25 use quantitative methods and 26 do not.

TABLE 5 Researchers take advantage of different sources of data

	National	Regional	Individual	Total
Single country, single election	0	14	14	28
Single country, multiple elections	0	11	2	13
Multiple countries, multiple elections	3	2	3	8
Total	3	27	19	49

to adapt the quantitative approaches long used in the study of elections and voting elsewhere. Conversely, one could imagine that analysts suddenly presented with new tools for analysis could get so caught up in using these new tools that they would abandon other important avenues of inquiry. Impressively, neither of these scenarios appears to have come to fruition, as scholars have chosen to apply both methods of study.

Table 4 also suggests a weak relationship between the methodology employed and the number of elections and countries studied. Generally speaking, comparative analysis is a little more likely than noncomparative analysis to rely on quantitative methods. Qualitative analysis is most frequently used in articles that examine a single election and is least frequently used in articles that examine multiple elections in multiple countries; single-country studies of multiple elections are in the middle. Nevertheless, this finding should not be overstated, as the proportions are fairly similar in any case and there is clear evidence of quantitative work in single-election studies and qualitative work in comparative studies.

Regarding the quantitative analyses, another interesting question concerns the type of data used in each article. Table 5 breaks down the 49 articles that employ quantitative analysis on the basis of the data used. Individual data come from surveys and are used to compare the vote choices or opinions of individuals.¹⁵ Regional data are used in studies that either compare national election results disaggregated to a regional or precinct level or employ a systematic comparison of different regional election results.¹⁶ National data are used in studies that compare the national election results for a party or candidate across different national elections; by definition, this category can only be applied to quantitative analysis from multiple elections, be it a time-series of election results from a single country or a cross-section of election results from multiple countries.

Table 5 leads to several interesting observations. Most striking is the predominance of cross-regional studies at the expense of cross-national studies in the

¹⁵One of the single-election articles used an elite survey as opposed to a mass survey, examining whether legislative voting behavior was affected by whether a Russian deputy had been elected on a party list or from a single-member district (Haspel et al. 1998).

¹⁶Of the 10 articles in the database that analyzed local elections, only three employed quantitative methods. Two of these compared results from regional elections across Russia (Solnick 1998, Golosov 1999), and one compared results from across Moscow (Colton 1990).

aggregate data category. In fact, 90% of the studies that use aggregate data relied on cross-regional data, whereas only 10% used cross-national analysis. Given the prevalence of quantitative studies using national data—especially in the economic voting sub-field—in the United States (Kramer 1971, Tufté 1975, Erikson 1989, MacKuen et al. 1992), other advanced industrialized democracies (Paldam 1991, Powell & Whitten 1993, Wilkin et al. 1997), and even Latin America (Remmer 1991), this finding seems baffling.

Nevertheless, in the context of the post-communist experience, it should not be so surprising. In no country are there enough data points to conduct a single-country time-series analysis across multiple elections. Cross-national analyses have to wrestle with the fact that the coding of basic categories such as “incumbents” across countries can be fraught with difficulties, not to mention problems with the comparability of explanatory variables. As an example, consider a study of economic voting. A cross-national statistical analysis including a series of Russian and Polish elections would have to assume that an unemployment statistic in Poland in 1991 measured the same thing as an unemployment statistic in Russia in 1999. A cross-regional statistical analysis, on the other hand, need only assume that an unemployment statistic in Russia in 1999 in Region A measured the same thing as an unemployment statistic in Russia in 1999 in Region B. In a region where questions persist concerning the reliability of data, especially in the earlier part of the decade, the second assumption is obviously easier to accept than the first.

Another explanation is that studies that employ national data must include multiple elections by definition, and, if single-country time-series analysis is not an option, this necessitates a study of multiple countries. Therefore, whatever factors have depressed the number of multiple-countries studies in general, as discussed above, are likely to have decreased the number of quantitative studies that employ national data as well.

A second interesting observation drawn from Table 5 is the variety in the popularity of survey data across comparative and noncomparative analyses. In single-election studies, survey data appear just as popular as aggregate data. In single-country multiple-election studies, however, survey data are much less popular than aggregate data, appearing in only 2 of the 13 quantitative studies. In multiple-country multiple-election studies, survey data appear more popular, although this impression is based on a small number of articles.

Though initially puzzling, these findings are not that surprising given the costs of acquiring survey data in an area of the world where researchers cannot simply download National Election Studies data from the web site of the ICPSR (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research). Finding the time and funding to carry out one survey, let alone trying to repeat the same survey four years later, can be quite a burden to an individual researcher.¹⁷ Therefore, it is not

¹⁷Indeed, it may even be easier to carry out the same survey in multiple countries—language difficulties notwithstanding—during a roughly similar time frame (e.g., Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic all had parliamentary elections during a six-month period in 1998) than to carry out another survey in the same country for another election.

surprising that most of the articles that used survey data commented on a single election. Regional data present a different picture. If one is willing to invest the time and effort to travel to the relevant national statistical office, then it is often not much more difficult to collect regional data over many years than it is for just one year. Although the quality of archives and libraries certainly differs between countries, the major investment of both time and money involves getting to the country in the first place.¹⁸ By this logic, one would also expect little difference between the number of cross-regional studies that analyzed data from one election in a single country and the number that analyzed more than one election in a single country, but a large difference between the number of single-country and multiple-country studies that employ regional data. This is exactly what Table 5 reveals: 14 single-country single-election studies and 11 single-country multiple-election studies used regional data (for a total of 25 single-country studies), but only 2 articles used regional data from more than one country (Pacek 1994, Fidrmuc 2000; although see also Tucker 2000a, 2001).

Overall, though, Table 5 must be viewed in a similarly positive light to Table 4. Faced with new methodological opportunities, researchers who study elections and voting in post-communist countries have chosen to examine both aggregate and individual-level data, which can only be good for the development of the discipline. Analyses of individual and aggregate data can teach us different lessons, and it is encouraging to see scholars embracing both in their research.

Another interesting facet of the question of research methods can be found in Table 6. Table 4 illustrated an almost even split between the number of articles that employed quantitative analysis and those that did not. However, when we break these articles down by type of journal—area studies versus political science—this even split disappears. As Table 6 demonstrates, there is a much larger proportion of quantitative work on post-communist elections and voting in the political science journals (70%) than in the area studies journals (43%). One possible explanation could be that post-communist area studies journals probably have a history of publishing relatively qualitative work owing to the nature of Soviet Studies, and perhaps this bias has lingered into the post-communist era. Likewise, one might expect that general political science journals that have historically published quantitative work on American elections might be more comfortable publishing work on elections in new democracies that looks familiar; quantitative analysis might be a step in that direction.

Disaggregating the data to the level of the individual journal, however, suggests that the much of the explanation may lie with the journals themselves. Within the area studies journals, qualitative articles predominate in three journals

¹⁸The acquisition of language skills is a similar investment: Once a researcher has acquired the skill to translate data in one country, it is not costly to translate data from other years. Moving on to another country, however, can be much more difficult. Although more data are available in English as time goes by, this availability is by no means universal. In particular, Russia continues to publish its election results and regional statistical yearbook in Russian.

TABLE 6 Area studies journals are less likely to feature quantitative work

	Qualitative	Quantitative	Total
Area studies journals ^a	46	35	81
Political science journals ^a	6	14	20
Total	52	49	101

^aClassification of journals by type can be found in footnote 2.

(*Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *Demokratizatsiya*, and *Problems of Post-Communism*) and quantitative articles in two other journals (*Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* and *Post-Soviet Affairs*), while the remaining three have almost an even split. Although there are many fewer articles from the general political science journals, there is also evidence of journal preferences. One journal (*Comparative Politics*) published three qualitative articles and no quantitative articles, whereas three other journals (*American Political Science Review*, *Comparative Political Studies*, and *World Politics*) published only quantitative articles (two, three, and one respectively). In addition, *Electoral Studies* published five quantitative articles and only one qualitative article, although it is worth noting that this pattern would have changed greatly had I included articles from the “Notes on Recent Elections” section in that journal.

Why particular journals might prefer quantitative or qualitative studies of elections is another question, and there may be selection bias at work as the authors decide where to send their papers. Still, such findings beg the question of whether this pattern is limited to articles on elections and voting or whether it is present in other fields. Regardless of its cause, it remains an interesting pattern and one that merits watching as the field continues to develop.

A final interesting aspect of the qualitative/quantitative divide is highlighted in Table 7. Based on a very crude coding rule—whether or not the author’s name suggested that he or she could be a citizen of one of the post-communist countries in the study—I broke down all the articles into three categories: only author(s) from post-communist countries; only author(s) who were *not* from post-communist countries (almost all of these were from Western countries, so for simplicity I will refer to them as Western authors); and collaborative works involving at least one author

TABLE 7 Is there a diffusion of quantitative methods from West to East?

	Qualitative	Quantitative	Total
Post-communist author(s)	17	6	23
Non-post-communist author(s)	32	33	65
Collaborative (at least one of each)	3	13	13
Total	52	49	101

from each of the groups. Although I am confident that a more rigorous coding rule would reveal shortcomings in my simple coding scheme, there are nevertheless distinct patterns in the table that would survive a recoding of a number of data points.

Of the three categories, articles written only by post-communist authors are by far the most likely to fall into the qualitative category. Whereas Western authors utilize quantitative and qualitative methods at a practically even rate (thus mimicking the database as a whole), post-communist authors are almost three times more likely to employ qualitative than quantitative methods. However, when post-communist authors collaborate with Western authors, the resulting work is much more likely to be quantitative than it is to be qualitative; of the 13 articles that fall into this category, 10 are quantitative.

One possible explanation for this pattern is that we are witnessing a diffusion of quantitative methods developed in the West for studying Western elections to non-Western academics through collaborative work. Clearly, work written by post-communist authors without collaboration with a Western author is much less likely to be quantitative than if there is collaboration. There are multiple means by which this diffusion may be taking place, but one must be the fact that post-communist citizens are both studying and teaching at Western academic institutions, which would obviously increase the likelihood of collaboration with Western colleagues. Another may be that Western academics are actively seeking collaboration with post-communist authors, not necessarily limited to those who are already studying or working in Western countries. Although the percentage of such collaborative work is still low (13% of the articles in the database), it is encouraging to see that it is occurring. That being said, it is important to note that 10 of the 13 collaborative articles examined Russian elections; of the remaining three, two focused on Poland, one on Poland and Hungary. Still, the fact that over one third of the articles in the database have at least one post-communist author is interesting, as it shows that although the field may still be dominated by Western authors, theirs are not the only voices being heard.¹⁹ It would be interesting to learn the corresponding figures for other regions of the world.

WHAT ARE WE STUDYING ABOUT ELECTIONS AND VOTING?

Having explored how the subfield of elections and voting in post-communist democracies conducts research, I now address the question of what scholars are studying in their research on elections and voting. This section is divided into three

¹⁹One other interesting finding regarding the authorship of articles concerns the propensity of collaboration within the two categories. Whereas slightly under a third of the Western-only articles had at least two authors (20 out of 65), only one (Mateju & Vlachova 1998) of the 23 post-communist-only pieces was collaborative. So for the time being, it appears that the post-communist authors are much more interested in collaborating with Western authors than with other post-communist authors.

parts. First, I look at the cases in which elections function as explanatory variables and examine what they are being used to explain. Next, I turn to the vast majority of the articles in the database in which election results and voter choices are the dependent variables of the studies. I conclude with a short discussion of a small number of articles in the database in which elections function as a dependent variable but the outcome of the election is not what the author is interested in explaining.

Elections as Independent Variables

It was previously noted that 13 articles are included in the database exclusively because elections function as a primary independent variable in those articles. In 11 other articles elections function as both an independent and dependent variable, resulting in a total of 24 articles in which elections play a role as an explanatory variable.

What do authors use elections to explain? Most articles can be placed into one of two general categories. Either the election is invoked for its effect on the overall success or failure of democracy (or democratic consolidation) or the election is used to explain developments in the party system.

In the first category, one finds several articles on elections that took place in the first half of the decade, all of which have a roughly similar theme. The basic argument is that despite some hiccups in the process, the occurrence of the election (or series of elections) demonstrates that pluralism and democracy are indeed emerging. One finds this type of article across numerous countries, including Ukraine (Bojcun 1995), Romania (Mihut 1994), Lithuania (Clark 1995), and Russia (Sakwa 1996). One also finds the opposite argument: Despite the presence of a democratic election, and indeed victory by the democratic candidate, the election should not be interpreted to mean that democratic consolidation has taken place (Brovkin 1997). Two articles look for insight into the future success of Russian democracy by examining gubernatorial elections: Solnick (1998) assesses whether the 1996–1997 round of gubernatorial elections reveal that local democracy is being overrun by either a powerful center or powerful regional bosses (he finds that neither is the case), and Hahn (1997) comments on the likelihood of these same elections leading to further disintegration in the country (he concludes that they will not). One other interesting article examines not the results of an individual election but rather whether people in Ukraine and Russia see elections as having any inherent meaning in their lives and the effect of this attitude on the likelihood of democratic development in those countries (Pammett 1996).

The second type of article that uses elections as an explanatory variable examines the effect of an election or elections on the development of political parties and the party system. One common approach is to look at a series of early elections, asking how these elections have affected the emergence of a post-communist party system in that particular country or countries (Ishiyama 1993, Millard 1994b, Bielasiak 1997, Pettai & Kreuzer 1999). Other articles look at a specific election (or election cycle), asking how it will change the nature of the party system in that country (Zubek 1993, Koldys 1997, Szczerbiak 1999, McFaul 2000). In the Russian

case, some authors have used elections and electoral rules in an attempt to explain the failure of Russian political parties to consolidate (Moser 1995, Clark 1999), although others provide a more optimistic outlook (Sakwa 1995, McFaul 2000). In addition, one article focuses on the effects of an election defeat on the evolution of a particular party, in this case the Hungarian Socialist Party (Agh 1995).

Falling into neither of the two general categories, a final set of articles examines whether aspects of the previous legislative election affect how Russian legislators subsequently vote in the parliament (Remington & Smith 1996, Haspel et al. 1998, Treisman 1998).

Elections as Dependent Variables

The vast majority of the articles in the database (88 out of 101) attempt to explain some aspect of election results or individual voting decisions. It is possible to very roughly divide these “dependent variable” articles into three distinct (but not entirely exclusive) categories. First, there are articles that primarily focus on explaining what happened in a particular election. These articles aim to communicate who won and lost the election and why. I refer to these articles as “election centered.” A closely related type of article, which I label “party centered,” tries to explain the success or failure of a particular party in an election or series of elections. The final type of article is interested not only in explaining election results but also in using those results to shed light on a particular topic of interest in the political science literature. Although some articles are much more explicit about this task than others, they all share the common feature of trying to draw conclusions that will be of interest beyond the confines of the particular election(s) and parties being analyzed. I refer to such articles as “hypothesis centered.” Below, I address each of the three types of articles in turn.

Before turning to the examples, it is important to note that the classification proposed above is not intended to privilege any of the types of articles at the expense of the others. There is nothing inherently better or worse about election-, party-, or hypothesis-centered articles, and all three have clearly enhanced our understanding of elections and voting in post-communist countries.

ELECTION-CENTERED ARTICLES An election-centered article is primarily concerned with trying to answer the question, “What determined the results of election X?” Accordingly, almost all of the articles that fall into this category are single-country single-election studies.

Election-centered articles come in two varieties. Quantitative election-centered articles tend to throw a lot of independent variables—often including various measures of demographics, socioeconomic status, subjective and objective economic indicators, and social, political, and economic attitudes—into a statistical analysis of the election results or vote choice. In general, aggregate-level studies have fewer variables than micro-level studies relying on survey data, but the overall approach is similar. Authors use these analyses to comment on the type of support enjoyed

by the various political parties and candidates and/or the major factors underlying the voting decisions of individuals. Examples include articles on Ukraine (Wilson & Birch 1999), Poland (Wade et al. 1994, Chan 1995), and Russia (Wyman et al. 1994, Rose et al. 1997).

Qualitative election-centered articles are distinguished by a different pattern, although the general goal of providing insight into a given election remains the same. These articles always focus on the actions of the political parties and candidates competing in the election. The emphasis usually includes a systematic look at how the parties have run their campaigns and the types of voters they have attempted to target, but it may also extend to a wide variety of factors, such as policies pursued in the legislature or government, development of internal party decision-making structures, and public behavior of key party leaders. In addition, most qualitative election-centered articles contain at least a cursory description of the electoral system, if not a more explicit attempt to link electoral laws to election outcomes. In addition, many of these articles address other issues that may have influenced the outcome of the election, including economic conditions, underlying socioeconomic cleavages, and the degree to which the election may have been free and fair. Examples include articles focused on several different countries, such as Poland (Olson 1993, Millard 1994a), Hungary (Racz & Kukorelli 1995), Ukraine (Bojczun 1995), Bosnia (Shoup 1997), and Russia (Zlobin 1994, McFaul 1996, White et al. 1997b, Oates 2000).

PARTY-CENTERED ARTICLES Party-centered articles aim to explain why a particular party fared the way it did, either in an individual election or across a series of elections. The most popular variety of the party-centered article attempts to explain how communist successor parties have fared in post-communist elections. Two articles address this in a comparative vein, and both conclude that the key explanatory variable in distinguishing between the relative success of post-communist parties across countries is the nature of the party itself and the type of strategy it pursues (Mahr & Nagle 1995, Ishiyama 1997). The same point is emphasized in single-country studies of the post-communist Party of Democratic Socialism in Germany (Olsen 1998) and Party of the Democratic Left in Poland (Curry 1995); see Wade et al. (1995) for a more demographic-based approach. In the Russian context, the debate often concerns whether the success of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation really represents a preference for a return to communism or whether the party has managed to morph itself into something new (Tsipko 1996, Urban 1996).

There are also party-centered articles focused on other parties, although the ones in the database are primarily limited to the Polish and Russian cases. Two articles examine Solidarity's stunning victory in the 1989 Polish parliamentary election; both concluded that a vote for Solidarity was a vote against the communists and predicted that the coalition of disparate groups under its umbrella would not last long (Heyns & Bialecki 1991, Zubek 1991). In Russia, scholars have tried to understand how Boris Yeltsin could manage to win the 1996 elections (Brovkin 1997, Brudny 1997) and why pro-reform liberals have done so poorly in parliamentary

elections (Tsygankov 1995, Fish 1997). Finally, a recent article tracks the meteoric rise of Unity in the run up to the 1999 Russian Duma elections (Colton & McFaul 2000).

HYPOTHESIS-CENTERED ARTICLES Hypothesis-centered articles are distinguished by an attempt to more directly link the analysis of an election or voting to a thematic question, usually with a strong connection to the general political science literature. Although the articles do not necessarily use the terminology of hypothesis testing, they do consider whether the subject of analysis provides evidence concerning a larger question about the nature of elections and voting. The three most popular topics that authors have attempted to address using post-communist countries as case studies are the influence of underlying societal cleavages in determining election results, the effect of economic conditions on electoral outcomes, and the impact of electoral institutions on elections.

I turn first to articles that consider whether election results are a function of underlying societal cleavages. In a way, all of these articles are looking for evidence to refute a null hypothesis that claims post-communist societies are so chaotic and filled with uncertainty that there will be no coherent patterns in elections and voting. Cleavages are important in political science because of their relationship to overall political stability and the development of party systems. In addition, much of the theoretical work on voting in advanced democracies depends on the presence of clear cleavages in society.

In general, the literature on elections and voting in post-communist countries offers a fairly consistent “yes” as an answer to the question of whether societal cleavages exist and can be recognized through voting patterns and election results. Beyond this minimal consensus, though, lie numerous suggestions as to where these cleavages are located.²⁰ Many have chosen to look toward traditional socioeconomic cleavages such as urban/rural splits, generational effects, and class (Kopstein & Richter 1992; Clem & Craumer 1995c, 1997; Wyman et al. 1995; Szelenyi et al. 1997; Moser 1999b). Other scholars have looked beyond socioeconomic considerations to cleavages based on factors such as geography (Wade et al. 1995, Hough 1998), ethnicity (Birch 1995), center-periphery conflict (Wyman et al. 1995, O’Loughlin et al. 1996), degree of religiosity (Jasiewicz 1993), and a contemporary-versus-traditional conflict (Gershanok 1996). Some studies have also addressed a cleavage that may be peculiar to transition countries, which is the attitude of voters toward political and economic reform (Clem & Craumer 1993, Powers & Cox 1997, Shabad & Slomczynski 1999).

Another subfield of the general voting literature that has attracted a great deal of attention from those studying elections and voting in post-communist countries is economic voting; as my own work falls into this category I include it in

²⁰Indeed, the question of whether these cleavages should be located in the same place in different post-communist countries has itself become a subject of argument; see O’Loughlin et al. (1996) for a good summary of this debate.

the following discussion as well. In almost all of the election- and party-centered articles mentioned above, the state of the economy is considered as a potential explanatory variable; likewise, in the hypothesis-centered category, many of the cleavage-centered approaches use socioeconomic variables to help identify cleavages. However, some scholars have decided to place economic voting at the center of their analysis. Not surprisingly, all articles in the database in this category use quantitative analysis. The topic has been explored through both comparative and single-election analyses relying on both individual level-data (Colton 1996a, Mason & Sidorenko-Stephenson 1997, Powers & Cox 1997, Harper 2000) and aggregate-level data (Pacek 1994, Gibson & Cielecka 1995, Bell 1997, Fidrmuc 2000; Tucker 2000a, 2001).

To date, the primary motivating question for most studies has been whether the economy affects election results and voting behavior. Interestingly, there seems to be a divergence in the answer to this question between the macro-level work, which generally supports the conclusion that economic conditions affect election results, and the micro-level work, which tends to minimize the importance of economic considerations in affecting individual vote choices, especially relative to other factors (although see Mason & Sidorenko-Stephenson 1997). My suspicion is that this distinction is largely driven by the nebulous nature of the question. How exactly does one measure whether the economy matters? In micro-level studies, analysts have a wide range of additional variables that they can throw into the regression, such as evaluation of democratic reform (Harper 2000), assessment of the communist past (Powers & Cox 1997), and partisan affinity and issue preferences (Colton 1996). As these other variables also matter, they tend to affect the size and significance of the coefficients of the economic variables (see Colton 1996 for an explicit comparison of economic models with and without these other factors). In the macro-level analyses, it is much harder to find data on political variables, so the analyses are largely restricted to economic and demographic variables. Because the economic variables have turned out to have effects across numerous studies, authors tend to conclude that the economy matters.

Although it may be that the inherent nature of the analyses will continue to lead to different conclusions, more explicit attention to what is being tested and claimed would help. Testing to see whether economic conditions affect election results is clearly not the same thing as arguing that economic conditions completely determine election results. Likewise, testing to see if economic conditions affect certain types of parties in the manner in which a hypothesis predicts they will is not the same as testing to see whether economic conditions have the same magnitude of effect on all parties of a particular type. As we move away from the general question of whether the economy matters to examining in detail how it matters, micro- and macro-level studies may be able to complement each other more easily. Explicit consideration of the substantive effect of results may also allow more common dialogue across various studies, since it is possible in both micro- and macro-level studies. For example, Powers & Cox (1997, p. 628, Figure 2) report the change in the predicted probability of individuals supporting different parties as economic

evaluations shift, while Tucker (2001, p. 321, Table 3) reports on the change in the predicted vote share for each party in an average region following comparable economic shocks.

Cutting across the micro-macro divide, however, is a different pattern. Single-election studies almost always focus on the question “how has the economy affected the vote for the parties that contested this particular election?” This is not to say that the authors do not have a priori expectations, but they are by and large couched in the particular circumstances of that country and tend to remain more implicit than explicit (although see Powers & Cox 1997). Although one can certainly find similarities in these expectations across articles, the authors are less concerned with the generalizable implications of their findings than with what has been learned about the effect of the economy on that particular election. Comparative analyses, however, are likely to be much more explicit in presenting general hypotheses about which types of parties—irrespective of country—the economy is likely to affect. Although the categories differ from study to study, the conclusions are all able to speak to the more general question of how economic conditions affect election results and voting in the post-communist context (Pacek 1994, Fidrmuc 2000, Harper 2000, Tucker 2000a).

As the study of economic voting in post-communist countries moves forward, it would be encouraging to see the trend toward more general models of economic voting in post-communist countries continue. This does not mean that we should eschew single-election studies but rather that we should strive toward a common theoretical framework in terms of which we can discuss either single-country or comparative work. To accomplish this, it may prove useful to be more explicit about the theoretical links between our hypotheses and existing economic voting models from established democracies, while remaining conscious of the factors that differentiate the post-communist context. Doing so may help the field move away from a series of individual hypotheses that vary from author to author toward a more unified theoretical approach, although the fact that all four studies mentioned above chose to use different general categories illustrates that this will not happen overnight.

Additionally, after a decade of work, it may be safe to move beyond the simple question of whether the economy matters. Clearly it does, and clearly it is not the only factor that matters. Therefore, we can now begin to ask the more interesting question of exactly *how* the economy affects election results and voting. Up until now, most generalizable work in this regard has focused on the question of what types of parties are affected by economic conditions and the direction of this effect (e.g., are they helped or hurt by better economic conditions?). Not surprisingly, incumbents have attracted the lion’s share of attention, but other categories of parties have also been examined, including new-regime and old-regime parties (Tucker 2000a), reformist, nationalist, and left-wing parties (Fidrmuc 2000), post-communist parties (Harper 2000), and opposition and extreme-opposition parties (Pacek 1994). This attention to categories other than incumbents may prove

especially valuable given that the two most broadly comparative studies both found that economic conditions did not affect incumbents in the manner the received wisdom would have us expect nearly as consistently as they affected other categories of parties (Tucker 1999, 2000a; Fidrmuc 2000).

Perhaps even more intriguingly, the post-communist cases hold open the possibility of contributing to an emerging literature that predicts variation in the effect of economic conditions, or, in other words, when economic conditions should be expected to have a stronger or weaker effect on election results and voting (e.g., Powell & Whitten 1993, Wilkin et al. 1997). Two articles that appeared in print after the closing date for the database tackle this question in regard to incumbent parties. Tucker (2001) predicts that economic conditions will have a greater effect on the election results for the primary incumbent in governing coalitions than on other incumbents; Duch (2002) predicts that economic conditions will have a greater effect on the choice to vote for incumbent parties as citizens become more informed about how democratic institutions function. Both authors present empirical support for their propositions, the former using aggregate-level data and the latter survey data. Taking the same idea in a different direction, I have elsewhere considered the effect of electoral and governing institutions on the relative impact of economic conditions on election results across different elections (Tucker 2000b).

Several authors have also used the post-communist experience to contribute to debates over the effect of electoral institutions and rules on election outcomes. Two articles explore the familiar debate over whether single-member districts reduce the number of effective political parties. In a single-country study of Hungary, Gabel (1995) finds support for the consensus view that fewer parties emerge from single-member districts than proportional representation districts. In a comparative study of six countries, though, Moser (1999a) comes to the opposite conclusion, arguing that single-member district elections do not necessarily reduce the number of political parties in the parliament. Other articles trace the effect of electoral rules more generally on the number of parties that successfully enter the parliament (Zubek 1993, Clark 1999, Moraski & Loewenberg 1999). Employing a slightly different approach, Colton (1996b) explicitly contrasts the effect of the winner-take-all nature of presidential elections with parliamentary elections lacking that feature in Russia. Finally, several articles test the effect of electoral rules on other aspects of elections that are discussed in the following section (Ishiyama 1994, Turnovec 1997, Golosov 1999).

Although space limitations prohibit going into much detail, numerous additional themes in political science have been addressed by articles in the database. One question of interest, especially in the post-Soviet cases, has been the relative influence of unfair election practices, ranging from the manipulation of local election administration by old party *nomenklatura*, violations of campaign spending rules, and control over the media (Helf & Hahn 1992, Huskey 1995, Slider 1996, Brovkin 1997) to outright fraud in determining election results (Filipov & Ordeshook 1997, Hough 1998). Another topic of interest has been electoral turnout,

including variation across countries (Pacek 1994, Bohrer et al. 2000), elections (Myagkov et al. 1997), and regions (Wade et al. 1994; Clem & Craumer 1995b, 1997). Two other studies use turnout as an independent variable for explaining the party vote in Poland in 1991 (Heyns & Bialecki 1991, Wade et al. 1995). Finally, a number of interesting articles have explored geographic influences on election results (Clem & Craumer 1993, 1995a; O'Loughlin et al. 1996, O'Loughlin & Kolossov 1997, Hough 1998, Hinich et al. 1999).

OTHER DEPENDENT VARIABLES Not all of the articles in the database that treat elections as a dependent variable attempt to explain election results or voting decisions. Additional topics include the translation of votes into seats (Turnovec 1997), the nominating strategies of parties (Ishiyama 1994), the decision of candidates to run with or without party affiliations (Moser 1999b), the relative success of candidates with party affiliation (Golosov 1999), and the stability of voting patterns across elections (Fule 1997, Myagkov et al. 1997). Finally, one article in the database analyzes the different types of campaign posters produced by competing political organizations in the 1993 Latvian parliamentary elections (Stukuls 1997).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As the study of elections and voting in post-communist countries heads into its second decade, it faces both challenges and opportunities. Of all the aspects of the post-communist experience, elections and voting may be the most directly tied to a large existing literature in the field of political science. Therefore, studies of elections and voting in post-communist countries are not merely one facet of post-communist area studies but rather are part of a general political science literature. To make a contribution to this literature, however, will require a continued effort. Given the dearth of articles from the field in major political science journals and the lack of books published by university presses, it is clear that we need to be more aggressive in engaging questions that are of interest to the broader political science community. The trick is to do this without sacrificing the understanding of political dynamics inside these countries that comes from more focused study of individual elections and parties.

One option is to pursue research that strives to more explicitly link analyses of post-communist elections and voting to broader themes in the literature. Even if the purpose of an article is to shed light on a particular election, it is possible to simultaneously engage theoretical issues. Many studies have already proved this task manageable, especially in the areas of societal cleavages, economic voting, and electoral institutions. Another solution may be a renewed focus on comparative analysis. As noted above, most of the work in this field has focused on a single country. Comparative analysis may be able to speak more directly to the discipline as a whole by presenting evidence that is less closely tied to individual countries

and circumstances. Although it surely would have been a mistake to rush into comparative analysis without understanding dynamics in individual countries, the field may now be reaching a point where the numerous single-country studies have provided a sufficient base upon which to build more comparative work.

This leads, however, to what might be the most serious issue facing the field, which is the preponderance of articles on Russia and Poland. We can take several steps to address this situation. The first, and probably most obvious, is to continue to encourage work on other post-communist countries. But because the pattern is probably unlikely to change greatly in the near future, we should be more conscious of the imbalance and avoid the temptation to generalize from one case when it is not warranted. Another, perhaps counterintuitive, approach is to continue to encourage work on Russia and Poland, but to place this work in a more explicitly comparative framework. By including these countries in comparative studies, we can both take advantage of the wealth of knowledge that is accumulating around them and see how they compare to other countries, thus gaining a better sense of when it is legitimate to generalize from the Polish and Russian experience and when it may not be.

Another way to break out of this seeming dependence on the Russian case may be for researchers to follow in the footsteps of the successful East-West collaboration on studies of Russian elections. As was noted above, 10 of the 13 articles in the database that included at least one post-communist and one Western author focused on Russia. Obviously, this pattern reflects the prevalence of contacts and relationships between Western and Russian academics. One way to encourage collaborative work on non-Russian elections—and indeed more work in general on non-Russian elections—must be for Westerners writing in this field to try to develop similar contacts and relationships with post-communist academics and institutions in countries besides Russia.²¹ Although normally beyond the purview of a review article, I think it is worth noting that this is an area in which funding and grant-giving institutions could play important roles in helping the field to develop. Imagine what could be gained from an annual conference, rotating among post-communist countries, that paired local social scientists and Western academics to produce joint studies of post-communist elections. Not only could such contacts lead to an increase in work on specific post-communist countries, but it might get the whole community of scholars thinking about what could be learned about elections and voting in post-communist countries generally.

²¹There are certainly institutions in post-communist countries where researchers are already studying elections and voting in their own (and other post-communist) countries. Even in my own field work, I have met academics engaged in such research at the Institute for Social Studies at the University of Warsaw, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology in the Polish Academy of Sciences, Central European University in Budapest, the Institute of Sociology in the Academy of Social Sciences in Prague, and the Institute for Sociology in the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Although it is clear that Westerners and Russians have managed to start this process already, it is possible that a little money in the right place now could build similarly fruitful partnerships in the rest of the post-communist world, which could play a crucial role in the development of the field.

I would like to close with another exhortation for collaborative efforts. Not only do Western authors and post-communist authors have much to learn from one another, but those who study Western elections and post-communist elections must have much to teach each other as well. As the study of Western, and in particular American, elections can provide a reservoir of theoretical and methodological insights for those interested in post-communist elections—preventing us from having to reinvent the wheel in many cases—it is likewise true that post-communist elections can present a host of new empirical data and theoretical questions for existing debates. There are many potentially valuable synergies between work on elections and voting in new post-communist democracies and similar literatures in more established democracies. Anyone who has ever wondered how electoral institutions affect electoral outcomes should be thrilled by the possibility of having so many new sets of electoral rules appear simultaneously. Scholars who have bemoaned the lack of survey data during the early days of voting in the United States can finally have an opportunity to test how voters behave in initial rounds of competitive elections. Theories of economic voting that have primarily been tested in relatively stable economic settings can be analyzed in (and modified for) a context of much more extreme change. Moreover, the opportunities for comparative research may be unprecedented. So just as I have suggested that those who write on elections and voting in post-communist countries ought to try to contribute to the general theoretical literature, I also urge those who study elections and voting in more advanced democracies to give a long hard look at the post-communist cases and the emerging literature in this field.²² It is hoped that this article can serve as a springboard to such collaborative interest.

Although important challenges remain, there are many achievements of which the subfield of elections and voting in post-communist countries should be proud. Faced with a brand-new subject for analysis, scholars have eagerly rushed to the fill the void and employed a wide variety of methodological tools in doing so. And although a large amount of attention continues to be focused on Russia, scholars are clearly branching out and considering multiple post-communist experiences. At the same time, we are beginning to actively embrace questions of interest to those who are not area specialists, demonstrating that there may be much for mainstream political science to learn from the study of post-communist elections and voting.

²²Consider, for example, a two-day conference. On the first day, those who study elections in established democracies could present papers and those who study elections in post-communist countries could serve as discussants; on the second day, they would reverse roles. This would probably be extremely illuminative to all participants.

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