

Orientation of the Voters in the Presidential Elections in Romania 1990-2009

Ionel Boamfă¹

¹ "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, e-mail: ionel_boamfa@yahoo.com

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Abstract

After the change of the political regime in 1989, Romania has returned gradually to democracy. This return is illustrated by the electoral process in which the presidential elections play an important role. The first elections after December 1989 represent the exception, the elections being won, detached, in the first round, by the candidate of the party which secured an absolute majority in the legislative (Ion Iliescu, the National Salvation Front), all other elections providing a winner after the second round. The victories were shared between the center-left and the center-right candidates, two decades of witnessing several electoral alternance in power (as in the case of parliamentary elections). It also requires the continuity in the electoral preferences of certain regions (the "Old Kingdom" voting, in general, for the centre-left Social Democrat candidates), while central and western regions and the capital have voted consistently with the right candidates. Between these consistency elements, the Hungarian electorate registers oscillation of voters between the center-left and center-right.

Keywords: *orientations, permanencies, breaks, electoral behavior, presidential elections*

Rezumat. Orientarea alegătorilor la alegerile prezidențiale din România din 1990-2009

. După schimbarea regimului politic în 1989, România a revenit treptat la democrație. Această revenire este evidențiată de procesul electoral, un rol important avându-l alegerile prezidențiale. Primele alegeri după 1989 fac excepția, când alegerile au fost câștigate detașat, încă din primul tur, de candidatul partidului care a asigurat o majoritate absolută în cadrul puterii legislative (Ion Iliescu, Frontul Salvării Naționale), toate celelalte alegeri asigurând un câștigător abia după cel de-al doilea tur. Victoriile au fost împărțite între candidații de stânga și cei de dreapta, două decenii la care am asistat la câteva succedări la putere (ca și în cazul alegerilor parlamentare). De asemenea, este necesară continuitatea în preferințele electorale în anumite regiuni („Vechiul Regat” votând în general candidații de stânga ai social democraților), în timp ce regiunile centrale și de vest și capitala au votat constant candidații de dreapta. Între aceste elemente de consistență, electoratul maghiar înregistrează oscilații ale alegătorilor între stânga și dreapta.

Cuvinte-cheie: *orientări, permanențe, rupturi, comportament electoral, alegeri prezidențiale*

INTRODUCTION

The paper aims to highlight the chrono-spatial distribution of political choices of voters in the post-December presidential elections, to remove the permanent development of the foreground and breaks in the behavior of voters in the presidential elections and try to determine some correlations between the political options and some demo-socio-economic indicators. This approach is achieved by ascending hierarchical classification and principal components analysis.

Among the problems we came across we can mention the difficulty of clearly stating the political family to which certain candidates in the presidential elections belong, this situation being also typical of the other types of post-December elections (local, parliamentary, European¹).

On the other hand, the different level at which data have been published brought about certain

difficulties (only partly because, except for the 1990 elections, all others are accessible at the level of the elementary administrative units). We also mention that, in order to provide comparability, we focused the analysis on the county level, making use of the county division of the country before the year 1950 in order to supply accurate comparisons between post communist and older data (which use the same political-administrative cutting out of the country territory).

DATA AND METHODS

First, in terms of collection methods, we proceeded to the preparation and processing the database describing the electoral and demo-socio-economic variables, appealing to the following sources: the Central Electoral Bureau, the National Institute of Statistics, the National Commission for Prognosis, the Demographic Yearbook of Romania, the National Agency for Employment, the

Romanian press agency Rompres/ Agerpres, etc., statistical database of CUGUAT-TIGRIS Iași, personal calculations. The program used is Microsoft Excel.

Among the analytical methods we used the ascending hierarchical classification and the principal components analysis by means of the program Philcarto. We also used the mapping method, applied via Philcarto and Adobe Illustrator programs. Please note that all variables were given as percentage.

As mentioned, the variables taken into account are the voters' political choices for the candidates in the presidential elections in 1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2009, and as demo-socio-economic data, the ethnic, the religious structure, the age structure and the professional structure of population, the literacy rate, the share of total university graduates, the percent of unemployment, the income per capita (average per capita income in dollars – in 1995, gross domestic product per capita, in euro – 2005), the share of protest movements (strikes, demonstrations, etc.).

DISCUSSIONS

Features of the political options of the voters in the presidential election:

Romania's presidential elections have brought in the highest office of the state, so far, four candidates. The position of country president was established in March 1974 by Nicolae Ceaușescu. The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania was quickly amended to include the new position, and Ceaușescu was elected, no other candidate, by the Communist parliament, the Grand National Assembly. The length of the presidential mandate was fixed at five years; Ceaușescu was reelected, again without any other candidate, in March 1979, March 1984 and March 1989.

After the change of the political regime in December 1989, the Provisional Council of National Unity decided to make the presidential election by the people; the presidential elections were set the same day as the legislative, 20th of May 1990. The candidate who received half plus one of the number of valid votes was to be appointed the winner of the competition. In the case in which no candidate obtained this score, a second round was supposed to take place between the first two candidates. In the race entered three candidates, being elected as president, in the first round, the candidate of the National Salvation Front, Ion Iliescu, with 85,07% of the vote.

The Parliament elected on the 20th of May, 1990 played the part of a Constituent Assembly. After the promulgation of the country's new constitution, in November 1991, the new presidential elections were fixed on the 27th of September 1992, being to take place at the same time with the parliamentary ones. The presidential mandate was set for a period of four years. Six candidates entered the election race. Although ranking first, Ion Iliescu – the candidate of the Democratic National Salvation Front², gathered only 47.34% of the votes during the first round, having to compete, during the second round, with Emil Constantinescu, the candidate of the Democratic Convention³, who received 31.24% of the votes. The second round was again successful for Ion Iliescu (with 61.43% of the valid votes).

The following presidential elections were held on the 4th of November 1996, on the same day with the legislative elections. The first round was a true "inflation" of candidates, 16 in number. The most important of them were the ones who occupied the first four places in the hierarchy of the first round, in the following order: Ion Iliescu (Party of Social Democracy in Romania⁴) – with 32.25% of the valid votes, Emil Constantinescu (Romanian Democratic Convention) – 28.21%, Petre Roman (Social-Democratic Union⁵) – 20.54% and Frunda György (Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania⁶) – 6.01%. The Romanian Democratic Convention had the highest number of votes. The setting up of an agreement between the leaders of RDC, SDU and DUHR, according to which the last two parties committed themselves to convince their electorate to support Emil Constantinescu in the second ballot enabled the first rotation in respect of occupying the position of head of the Romanian state. On the 16th of November 1996 Emil Constantinescu won the elections with 54.41% of the votes cast.

The political errors, the lack of experience, the frequent conflicts between the partners of RDC-SDU-DUHR coalition⁷ and the economic difficulties of the period 1996-2000⁸, led to the return to power of Ion Iliescu and the party led by him⁹. President Emil Constantinescu's decision in the summer of 2000 of not going to compete in the upcoming presidential election and the disagreements in the coalition led to the enrolment of five candidates in the election campaign of November 2000: Theodor Stolojan (supported by the National Liberal Party, withdrew from the RDC¹⁰), Mugur Isărescu (independent candidate supported by the Romanian Democratic Convention 2000), Frunda György (DUHR), Petre Roman

(Democratic Party) and Teodor Meleșcanu (Alliance for Romania¹¹). This political context, worsened by the discontent of a large part of the electorate who had been in favour of the ruling coalition, led to the qualification, in the second round, from the second position, after Ion Iliescu (36.35%), of the candidate of Greater Romania Party, Corneliu Vadim Tudor (28.34%¹²). In the first round were 12 candidates, but the last five candidates totaled together, only 2.86% of the valid votes cast. In these circumstances, the second round led to a mobilization, both of the politicians and of the electorate, meant to "stop" Corneliu Vadim Tudor. Even the Hungarian electorate, traditionally having a center-right orientation¹³, voted massively in favour of Ion Iliescu, who won his third presidential mandate with 66.83%¹⁴.

The fragmentation of center-right electorate was observed by the political parties represented in the Parliament (NLP and DP), which decided to create a political party called the Alliance "Justice and Truth" NLP-DP (Alianța "Dreptate și Adevăr" PNL-PD, or D.A. Alliance). This take part, experimentally, with candidates (only in the county of Cluj and in Bucharest), in the local elections in the summer of 2004, submitting a single list and having its own candidate in parliamentary, respectively presidential elections, held on the 28th of November 2004. In the electoral competition 12 candidates have registered, but only four have won more than 5% of the votes: Adrian Năstase on behalf of the Social Democratic Party¹⁵ (40.94%), Traian Băsescu, supported by the D.A. Alliance (33.92%), Corneliu Vadim Tudor – PRM (12.57%) and Bela Marko – DUHR (5.1%). The other seven candidates got together, 7.47% of the valid votes cast¹⁶. In the second round came Adrian Năstase and Traian Băsescu. Although starting from the first position and also benefiting from an agreement with the DUHR, which in return supported the Hungarian party in government, to ensure the voter support for the PSD candidate of the Hungarian electorate, Traian Băsescu won at the limit, with 51.23% of the valid votes, had a better mobilization of the electorate who supported in the polls. The candidate of the D.A. Alliance was to be first president after December 1989 to have a 5-year presidential mandate, its duration being established after the revision of the Constitution (2003). In these circumstances, for the first time since 1989, the presidential elections were delayed by the legislative (the parliamentary mandate is maintained at four years).

Thus, winning the presidential election, Traian Băsescu also benefited from the possibility of bringing the DA Alliance to government, although it had not got the largest share but it had associated

with two parties previously allied with SDP: DUHR and HPR. As with the RDC-SDU-DUHR government, between the ruling coalition members appeared conflicts, accentuated especially after Romania joined the European Union (January 1, 2007), which made HPR¹⁷ leave the government during the same year and which caused the DA Alliance split and the exclusion of the DP executive ministers. The party has changed the political orientation, since 2005, moving to a popular political current, taking advantage of poor election results of the CDNPP after 2000. In the autumn of 2007, a Liberal dissidence, led by Theodor Stolojan grouped around him, as the Liberal Democratic Party merged with the Democratic Party and formed the Liberal Democratic Party. This party supported Traian Băsescu in the presidential elections held in November 2009. Again, 12 candidates entered the electoral competition, only three of them having real chances to win the highest position: Traian Băsescu (DLP), which won 32.45% of valid votes in the first round, Mircea Geoană (SDP¹⁸) – 31.15% and Crin Antonescu (NLP) – 20.02%. The top two candidates entered the second round. Although Mircea Geoană received the support of the Liberal and DUHR candidates, who asked the voters who had supported them to vote for the SDP candidate, Traian Băsescu was elected with an even lower percentage than in 2004 (50.33%). The current president seems to have benefited, beside the support of his own electorate who favoured him in the first round, from a part of the Liberal voters, unhappy with Crin Antonescu's support for Mircea Geoană, and a majority of Hungarian voters, disappointed by the DUHR¹⁹.

As regards the distribution of the chrono-spatial political choices of the voters in the presidential elections, it highlights the continuity of the extracarpathian counties electorate who voted above average the social-democratic candidates, whether they were named Ion Iliescu, Adrian Năstase or Mircea Geoană. On the other hand, the Capital, the Banat, southern and northern Transylvania expressed their constant support, superior to the national average for the center-right candidates²⁰. There are exceptions on both sides of the Carpathians. Thus, Maramureș and Hunedoara counties are close to the Social Democratic candidates. The first is a more rural county with many socio-economic specificities which bring it closer to the extracarpathian area; in the case of the second county, which has a left-wing traditional orientation dating back to the prewar and interwar periods, an important part of the active population is concentrated in industrial units (V. Bodocan, 2001).

In contrast, the northern, central and eastern Transylvania have registered oscillations. The north-west was, in presidential elections an "electoral battle ground" between the Romanian nationalists (supporters of the RNUP candidate Gheorghe Funar, mayor of Cluj, until 2004, in the 1992-1996, then of the GRP, in 2000) and the Hungarian voters of the DUHR. Since 2004, however, this part of the country joined southern Transylvania and Banat by supporting center-right parties²¹. On the other hand, eastern Transylvania, where the majority population is Hungarian, voters claimed before 2000, Romanian center-right candidates (except, in 1996, during the first round, the candidate voted UDMR). The fear of a possible victory of the GRP candidate (Corneliu Vadim Tudor) motivated them to vote, in the second round in 2000, for Ion Iliescu. The social democratic option was maintained in 2004, when SDP promised DUHR to enter the government but in 2009, for the reasons already mentioned, the Hungarian voters returned to a center-right voting pattern, disobeying the directions of the DUHR representatives, which they no longer trusted.

To the south and east of the Carpathians, are not an option so we are witnessing the "single colored", as it seems at first sight. Thus, against the background of a vote for the social democrats, slightly above the national average, in the already mentioned Hunedoara and Maramureş counties but also in the subcarpathian counties, Dubrodja and certain slightly more urbanized counties in these regions (Dolj, Covurlui, Iaşi) the difference between the social democratic candidates ranking first and the center-right ones fades away, some of these counties even experiencing a change in their voters' preferences, which turn to the right (Suceava, Tulcea, Constanta, Prahova etc.). Instead, the voters of the counties lying in the eastern and southern part of Moldova and Wallachia and in southeast of Oltenia, consistently show a clear preference for Social Democratic candidates, in association with the vote for other candidates, for the communist (Tudor Mohora – 1992, Adrian Păunescu – 1996, Ion Sasu – 2000, Constantin Rotaru²² – 2009) or for the far-right populist candidates (Corneliu Vadim Tudor, George Becali – in 2004 and 2009). These facts are illustrated in the above cartographical representations (figure 1 and 2).

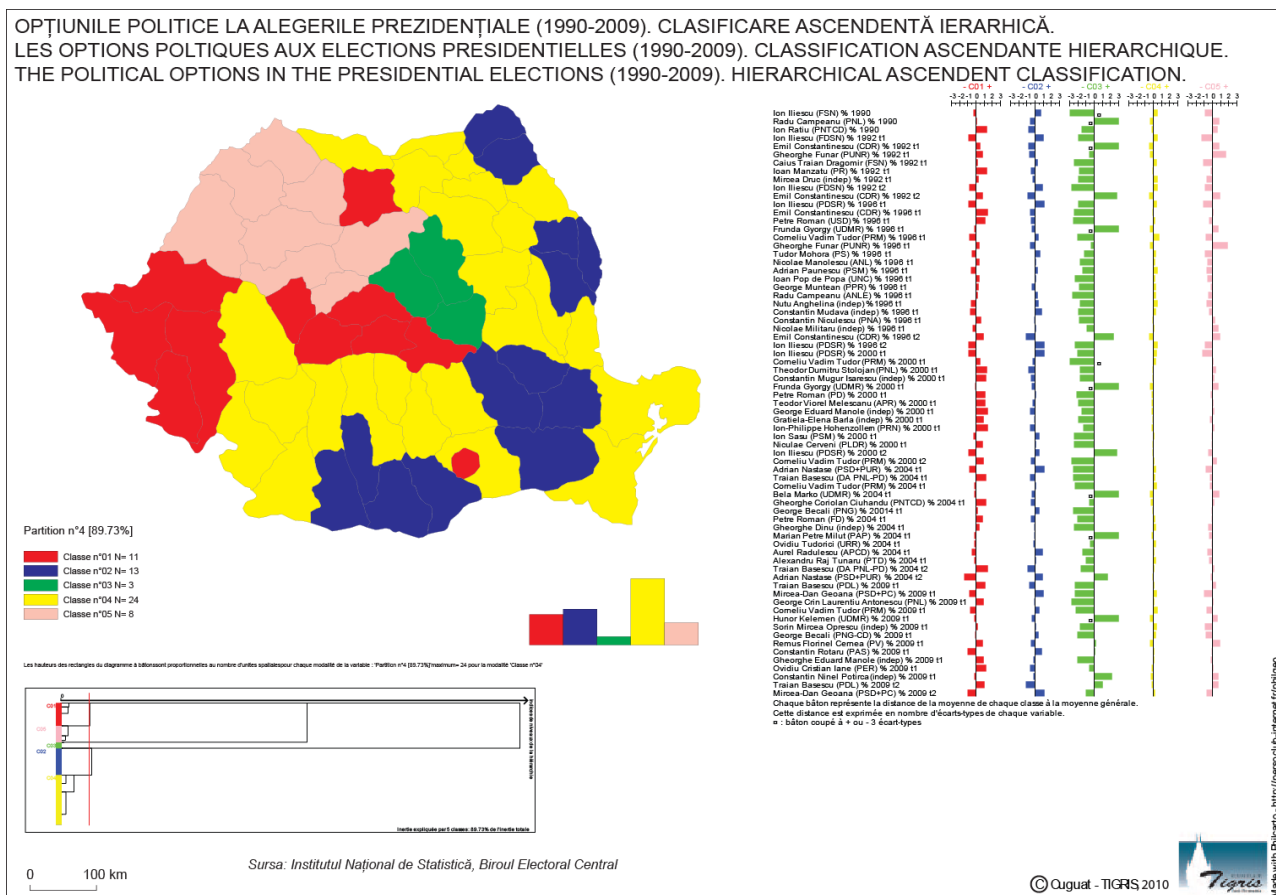


Fig. 1. The political options in the presidential elections (1990-2009). Hierarchical ascendancy classification

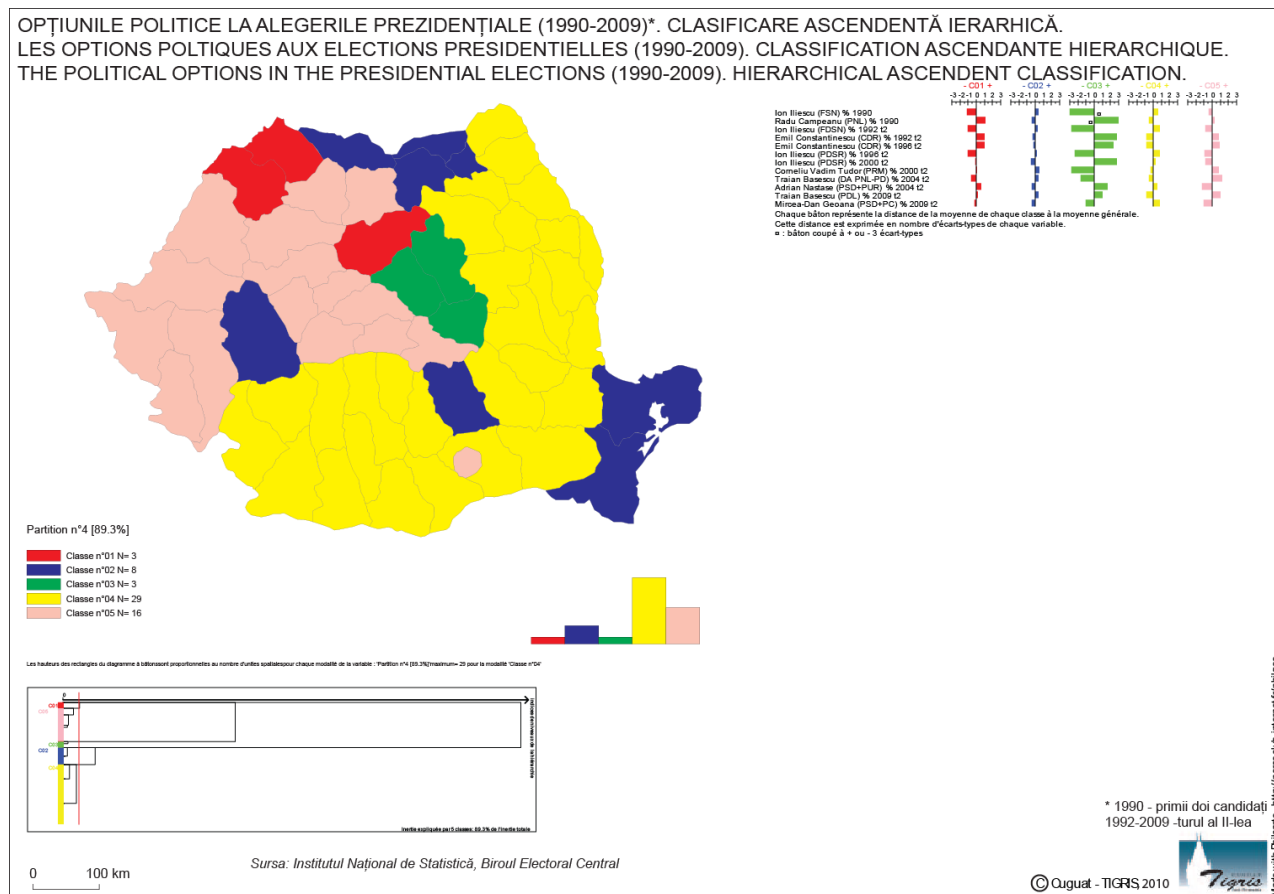


Fig. 2. The political options in the presidential elections (1990-2009). Hierarchical ascendant classification

What causes such an electoral behavior? We tried to find out, using a combination of principal components analysis and hierarchical ascendant classification, adding, besides the electoral options, some socio-demographic-economic variables: the ethnic, religious, professional and age structure of population, share of urban population, the percentage of literacy and of higher education graduates, the unemployment rate, county income per capita, the share of protest movements (strikes, etc.).

The presidential elections in 1990 (figure 3) recorded a general opposition between the counties situated in the west on the one side, and those lying in the south and east of the Carpathians. Thus, the voters in the Capital and the counties located in the center and west of the country, where the share of urban population, of the literacy and that of the active in the secondary and tertiary sectors recorded higher values, revenues are also higher, massively voted for the Liberal candidate, Radu Câmpeanu. This group includes counties with a Hungarian ethnic majority, lying in eastern Transylvania, and the extracarpethian mostly urbanized counties (Suceava, Iași, Bacău, Covurlui, Constanța, Prahova, Argeș). In contrast, the counties with more significant share of activity in the primary sector

and with a percentage of rural population above the national average, supported the NSF candidate, Ion Iliescu²ⁱⁱⁱ. This group is includes Maramureș, and the counties in northern Transylvania and eastern Banat.

Ion Iliescu was especially voted by the Romanian population belonging to Eastern Christian cults (especially of Orthodox religion), with an above the national average share of rural population and a significant percentage of active population in the primary sector. Instead, Radu Câmpeanu received, in addition to the votes of the Hungarian electorate comprising followers of Western Christian cults (Roman Catholic, Reformed, Unitarian), a significant support on behalf of the more urbanized counties with a large share of university graduates, an above the average standard of living and an active population employed mainly in non-agricultural economic sectors.

The presidential elections in 1992 had, more or less, the same characteristics. The only change refers to the fact that eastern Banat joined the group of counties supporting the RDC candidate, Emil Constantinescu, to an above the national average extent (figure 4).

OPȚIUNILE POLITICE LA ALEGERILE PREZIDENTIALE (1990) CORELATE CU INDICATORI SOCIO-DEMOGRAFICI.
 LES OPTIONS POLITIQUES AUX PRESIDENTIELLES (1990) CORRELEES AVEC DES INDICATEURS SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIQUES.
 THE POLITICAL OPTIONS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (1990) CORRELATED WITH SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICAL INDICATORS.

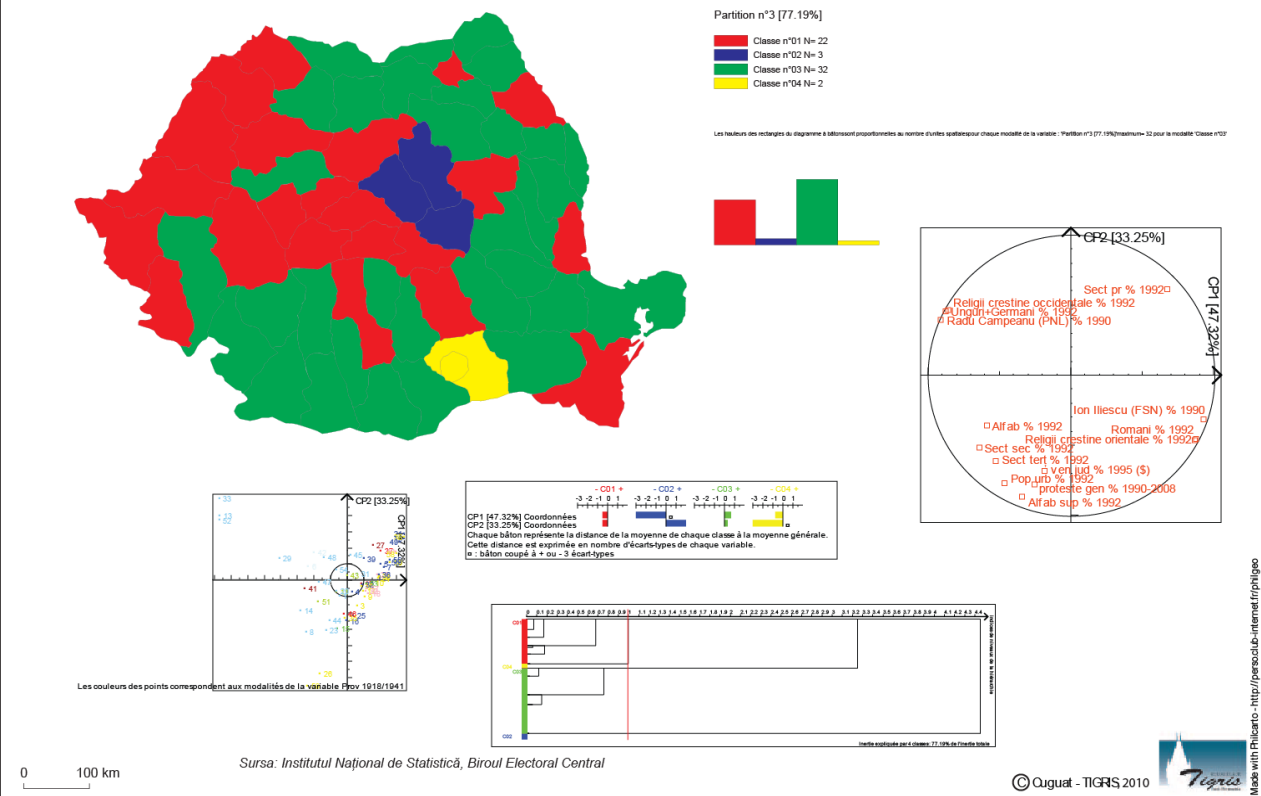


Fig. 3. The political options in the presidential elections (1990) correlated with socio-demographical indicators

OPȚIUNILE POLITICE LA ALEGERILE PREZIDENTIALE (1992*) CORELATE CU INDICATORI SOCIO-DEMOGRAFICI.
 LES OPTIONS POLITIQUES AUX PRESIDENTIELLES (1992) CORRELEES AVEC DES INDICATEURS SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIQUES.
 THE POLITICAL OPTIONS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (1992) CORRELATED WITH SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICAL INDICATORS.

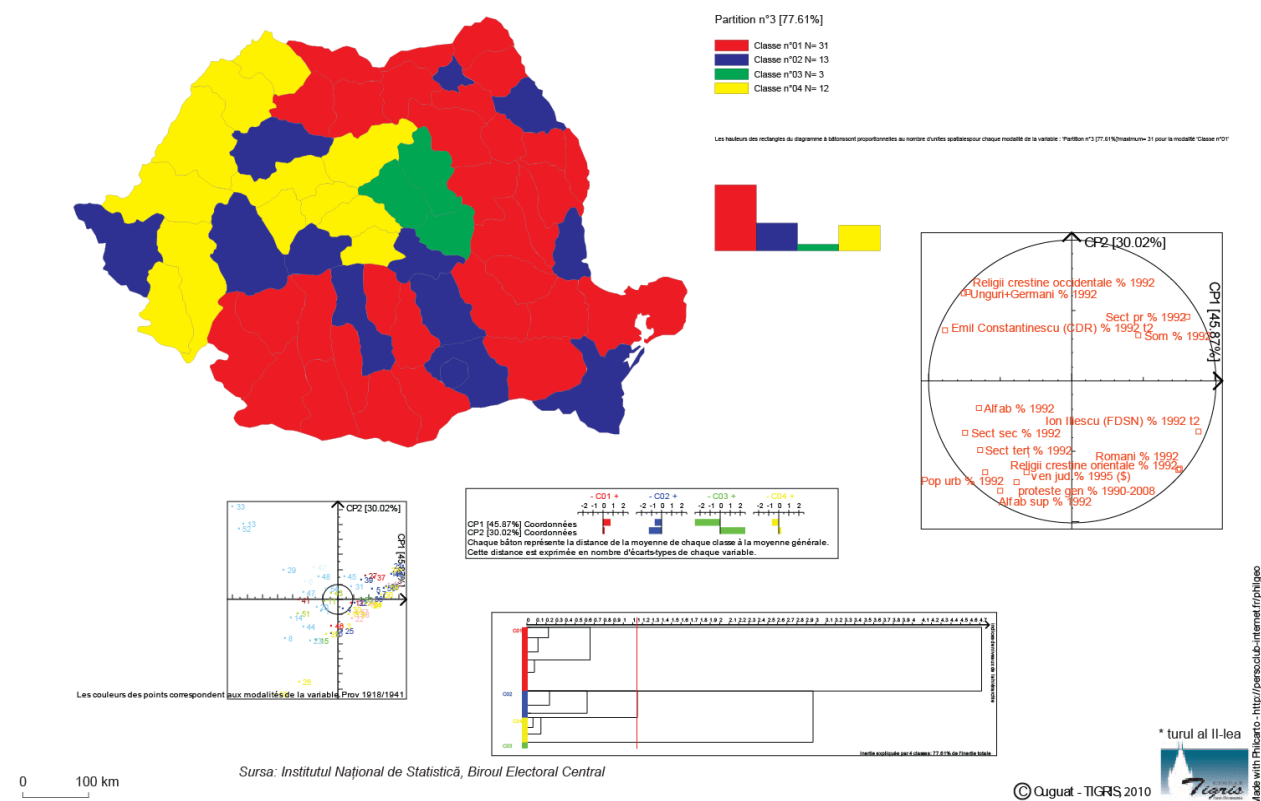


Fig. 4. The political options in the presidential elections (1992) correlated with socio-demographical indicators

These elections, just like the ones in 1996, preserve the same features, Emil Constantinescu being supported by the same categories of voters who had previously voted for Radu Câmpeanu (figure 5). Moreover, the recurrence of

unemployment (in 1991) made the electorate in the areas with the largest unemployment rate be in favour of Ion Iliescu during these two electoral processes.

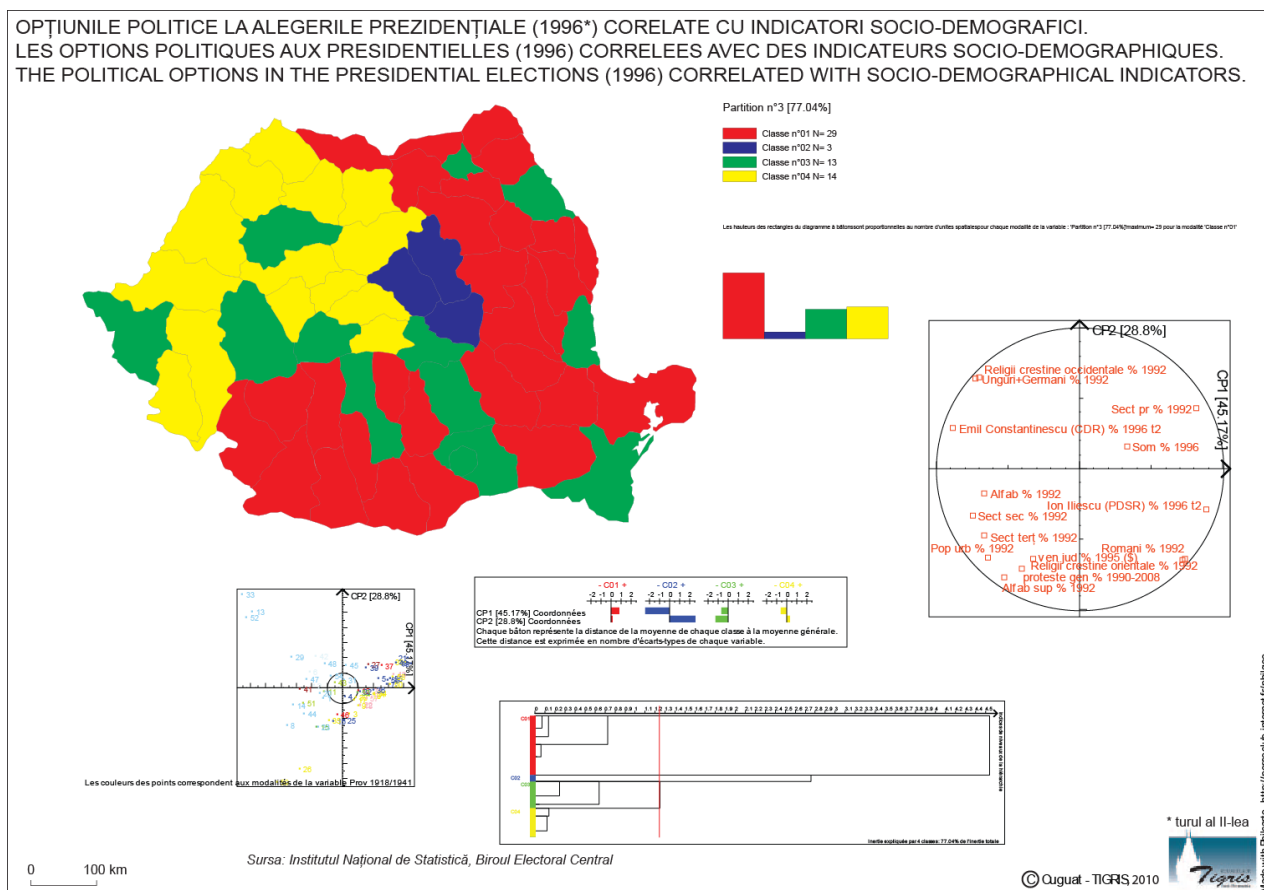


Fig. 5. The political options in the presidential elections (1996) correlated with socio-demographical indicators

The "offensive" to support the RDC candidate continued in 1996 when the overwhelming majority of the counties in the central and western parts of the country voted over the national average, with him. Only Maramureș joined the group of counties in which Ion Iliescu received larger than the national average percentages during the second round. On the other hand, just like in 1992, the population in the counties with an above the average unemployment rate stood among Ion Iliescu's supporters.

The 2000's elections, although they brought in the second round, as a competitor against Ion Iliescu, a representative of the extreme right (Corneliu Vadim Tudor), do not show sensitive changes in the socio-economic profile of the electorate who supported the two candidates (figure 6). Thus, most of the counties in the central and western parts of the country were in favour of a candidate of the right (even if it was the extreme right), while many electors in most of

the extracarpathian counties supported, again, Ion Iliescu. The only notable change is the "shift" of the Hungarian electorate to the PSDR candidate. These elections brought several changes in the electoral behavior of the Romanian voters. Thus, while the Romanian voters in the more urbanized counties, with an active population employed mainly in non-agricultural sectors preferred to vote for the GRP candidate, the Hungarian electorate supported Ion Iliescu, as did a majority of voters in the counties lying in the east and south of the Carpathians, more rural, with a significant proportion of activity in the primary sector and with values above the national average of unemployment rates.

The elections in 2004 brought some changes in terms of the area of the counties in which the population voted, to an above the average extent, with a center-right candidate (Traian Băsescu, the candidate of the D.A. Alliance – figure 7). Thus, some counties situated to south and east of the

Carpathians, formerly traditional supporters of Ion Iliescu, joined the group of the alliance formed by NLP and DP (Dolj, Gorj, Vâlcea, Brăila, Tulcea, Covurlui, Bacău, Iași and Suceava). The Hungarian electorate chose once again to vote the Social Democrat candidate (Adrian Nastase), just like the electors in the rural and agricultural counties with higher than the

national average unemployment rates, while the dominant profile of the voters of Traian Basescu points to people living mainly in urban areas, employed particularly in secondary and tertiary sectors, enjoying a higher than the national average living standard and a more obvious civic spirit (frequently involved in various protest actions).

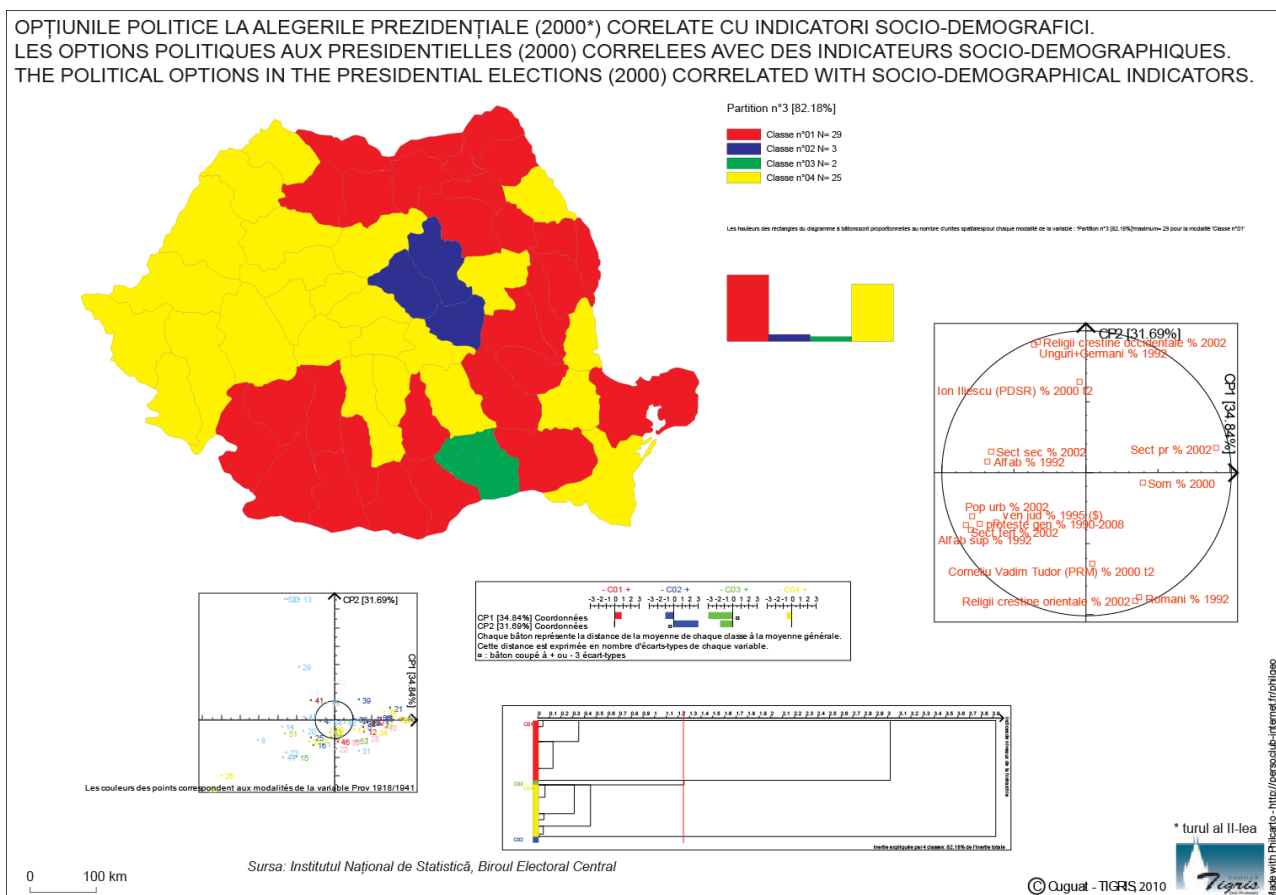


Fig. 6. The political options in the presidential elections (2000) correlated with socio-demographical indicators

The last presidential election (2009) revealed a return to "polarization" of the electorate, according to the position of the Carpathians. Thus, voters in the center and west of the country (except Maramureș, northern Transylvania and southern Banat), the Capital and the counties of Prahova, Constanța, Covurlui and Iași, situated in south and east of the Carpathians, voted with Traian Băsescu more than the national average. This group included eastern Transylvania counties with a Hungarian ethnic majority. Instead, the electors in most of the extracarpethian counties (including several counties in northern Transylvania and Banat) voted, in percentages above the average, the SDP candidate, Mircea Geoană (figure 8). This election marks the return of the Hungarian voters

to the support of a right-wing candidate, also supported by the voters in the urban regions, employed in non-agricultural activities, with an income above the national average. Geoană's electorate preserved its former characteristics: largely rural, employed in the primary sector, affected by unemployment more than the national average.

This analysis points out a (however relative) remarkable stability of the center-left respectively right, voter profile. Thus, the Social Democratic representatives were voted above average by the electors of the counties where the rural population, the unemployment rate and the actives in the primary sector held important percentages above the national average, mostly located in regions outside the Carpathians, with

the constant exception of Maramureș county, and sometimes, of some counties in northern Transylvania and Banat. In contrast, the right candidates (represented, especially by the competitors from center-right parties, but in 2000, by one of the extreme right) have received support, above average, from an electorate, mostly urban, educated, active in secondary and tertiary sectors, with incomes above the national average. These voters are found, mostly in the Capital, in the country's central, western and in the most urbanized extra Carpathian counties. The correlation between electoral variables and the socio-demo-economic ones highlights the "swing" of the Hungarian voters between the right candidates (supported in 1990-1996 and 2009) and the Social Democratic candidates (voted in the elections of 2000 and 2004).

However, the opposition between the counties usually voting with the right (the Social Democrats, respectively) tends to fade away.

Thus, while in the first post-December elections, the coefficients of correlation between the vote for the Social Democratic candidates and the above the national average share of the Orthodox Romanians exceeded 0.8 - 0.9, starting with the presidential elections in 2000 it has fallen below 0.5. Similarly, the correlation coefficient between the vote with the right candidates and the significant percentage of ethnic Hungarians (specific in Transylvania's counties, even those in which the percentage of Romanians exceed 60-70%) decreased similarly. Such oscillations of the correlation coefficients are also to be found in the relationship between the vote with Social Democratic candidates and the weight of the primary sector, unemployment rate, respectively between the vote for candidates of the right and the share of the literacy rate, of the actives in the non-agricultural sectors, with higher than the national average incomes.

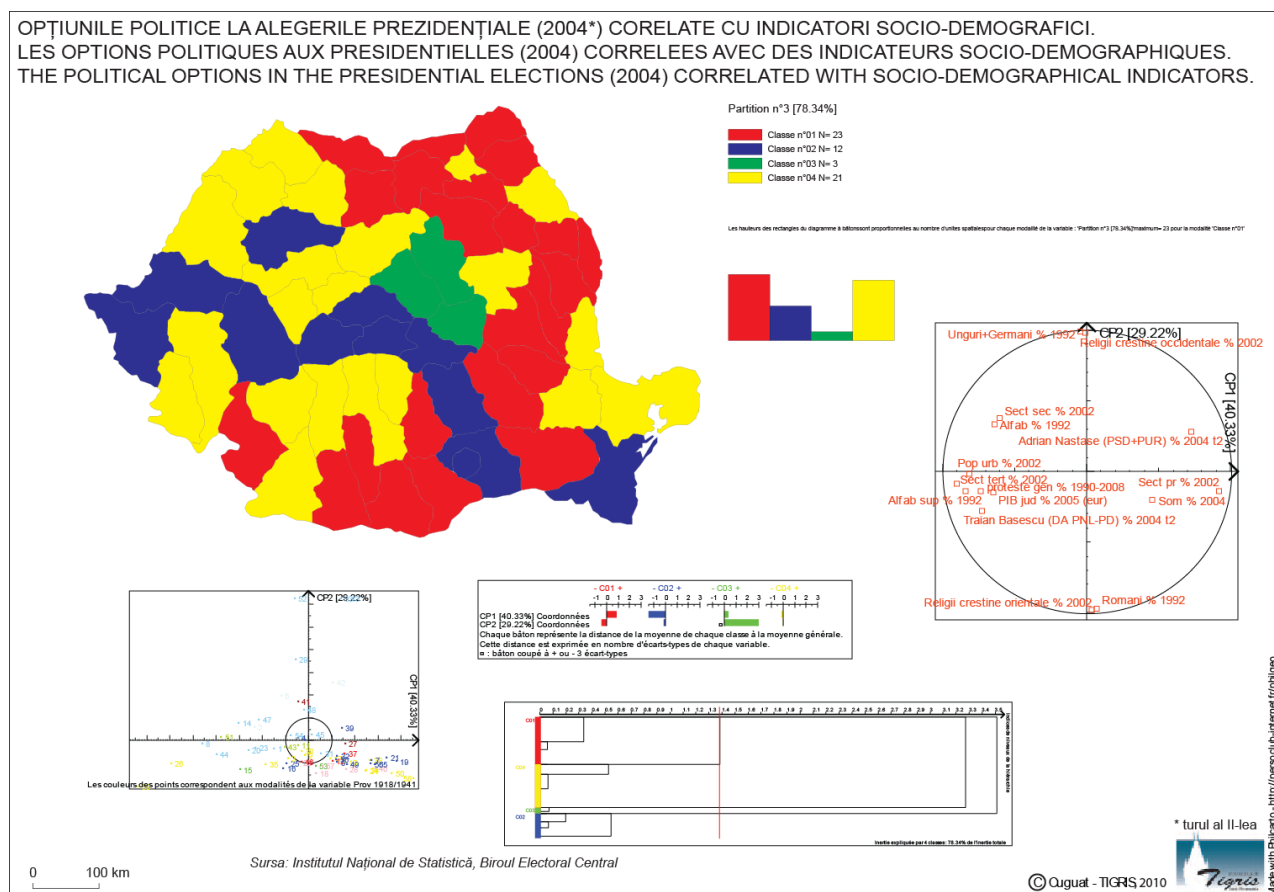


Fig. 7. The political options in the presidential elections (2004) correlated with socio-demographical indicators

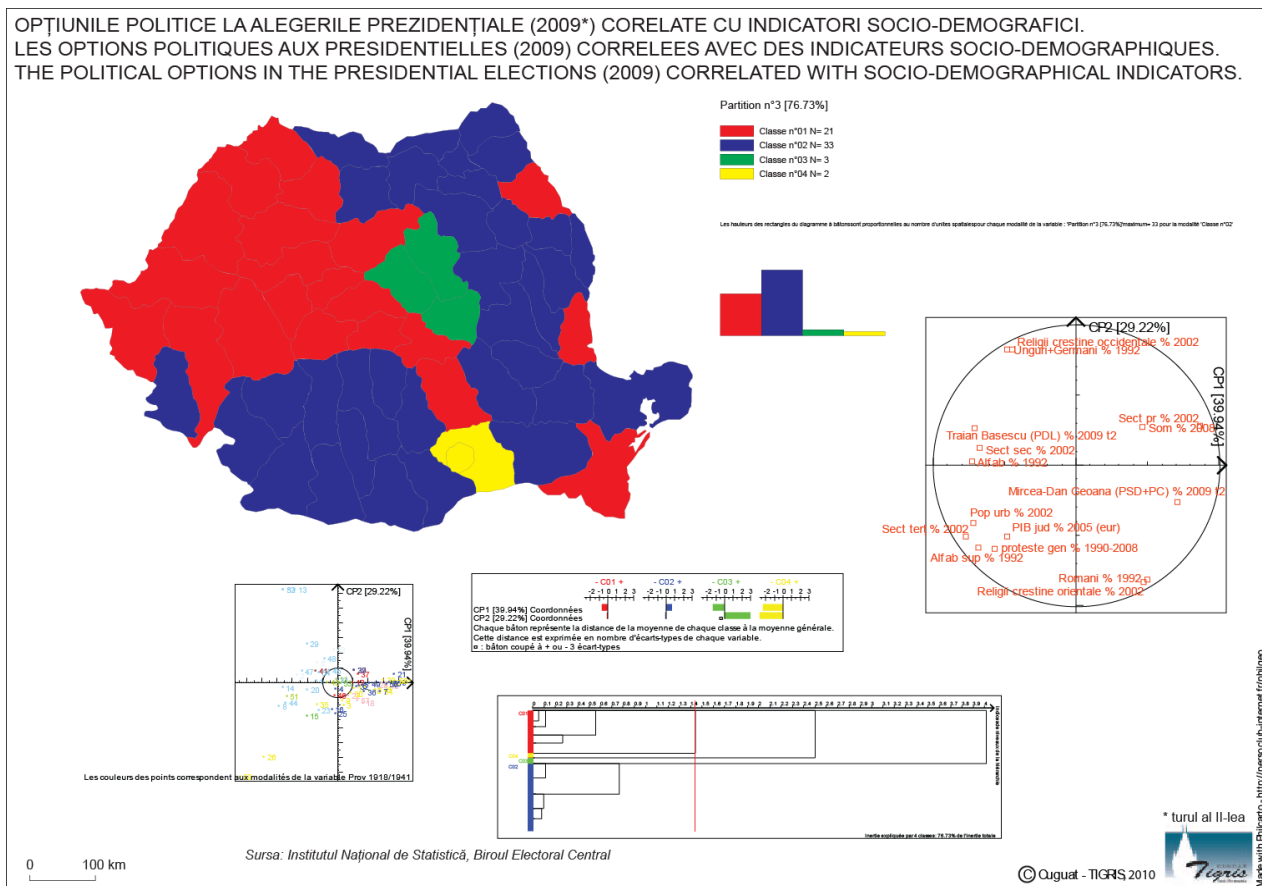


Fig. 8. The political options in the presidential elections (2009) correlated with socio-demographical indicators

CONCLUSION

Under these circumstances, several ideas stand out:

The constant vote of the counties in south and north Transylvania, Banat and the Capital for right and center-right candidates;

The oscillations of the central-northern part of Transylvania (in a broad sense) between the nationalist Romanian vote opposed to the vote for Hungarian candidates (until 2000) and the vote for the center-right candidates (including those proposed by the DUHR);

The vote of ethnic Hungarians in East Transylvania oscillated in the second round, between the right Romanian candidates (prior to 1996 and 2009) and the left (2000-2004); the electorate's preference for a right-wing candidate in the last election proved that the Hungarian electorate no longer obeys the DUHR; however, in the first round since 1996, when the Union began to have candidates, the Hungarian voters supported them;

The constant vote for the left (and even extreme left) candidates as well as for the extreme right ones (since 1996) of the voters in most extracarpathian

counties and in those intracarpathian counties either with a significant share of the active population employed in secondary sector activities and with a traditional left political orientation (Hunedoara) or with large similarities to the areas southwards and eastwards of the Carpathians (Maramureș); the second round depicts the more obvious preference for right and extreme right candidates of certain counties such as Prahova, Dobrogea, southern Bucovina, Maramureș, Hunedoara (since 2000).

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¹ Thus, by 2005, the Democratic Party (now Democratic-Liberal Party) was a social-democratic party, after “migrated” to the right and then affiliated to the EPP. Romanian Humanist Party (Social-Liberal Party) has shown, long a liberal doctrine, having almost a year (January-November 2007) an MEP affiliate of the Alliance of European Liberals and Democrats. Later, when the name change in the Conservative Party (which generates confusion, reminiscent of the old pre-war Conservative Party), it manifests a preference stated, the membership of the European People's Party, although steadily since 2000, presidential elections, parliamentary and even European (2009) to ally with the Social Democrats. In fact, in terms of presidential elections, this party has not presented their own candidates.

² A detached wing of the National Salvation Front

³ A political alliance grouping several parties and civic organizations, led by Christian Democratic National Peasant Party

⁴ The new name of the Democratic National Salvation Front

⁵ An electoral coalition formed by the Democratic Party (former National Salvation Front) and the Romanian Social Democratic Party

⁶ It was the first time that the Hungarian minority political party had its own candidate in the presidential election. This practice will be held in the following presidential elections, in the second round the Hungarians support the candidate who would have brought the greatest political advantage after the elections

⁷ Although the coalition fell apart and he went 4-year mandate at the end, it had three prime ministers who led the executive of one year or so, each: Victor Ciorbea (1996-1998), Radu Vasile (1998-1999) and Mugur Isărescu (1999-2000)

⁸ The delay of economic reforms, contracting external debt led to large country during Nicolae Văcaroiu Government (1992-1996), supported by the coalition of the DNSF, the Democratic Agrarian Party of Romania, the Greater Romania Party and the Socialist Labor Party (the so-called “red rectangle”) led the country in the autumn of 1996, close to collapse. The reforms initiated by the RDC-SDU-DUHR coalition have recovered the socio-economic, not without sacrifices (rising unemployment, inflation, etc.), so, 2000 was the first year in Romania's social and economic post-December history which saw growth

⁹ The party participated in the 2000 general elections in a coalition called the Pole of Social Democracy of Romania, which entered SDPR and Romanian Humanist Party. After this election, the Party of Social Democracy of Romania became Social Democratic Party, by merging with SDPR

¹⁰ The LNP left the RDC after the president Constantinescu announced his withdrawal, who otherwise would have supported him during the elections

¹¹ Political party formed after the 1996 election, by the dissidents who left PSDR, which merged with the Liberals after the 2000 elections

¹² He ran in 1996, gaining only 4.72% of the votes. His rank to the second position was due to the fact that many supporters of the ruling coalition voted GRP candidate, especially in Transylvania, then to the “migration” to the party of the majority of Romanian National Unity Party supporters, but especially by the fragmentation of the remains of voters of the RDC-SDU-DUHR coalition between five candidates. If there had been a single candidate, it would have totaled at least 32.44% (cumulative percentages of the five candidates) and could attract some votes from undecided voters, that candidate may enter the second round, with Ion Iliescu

¹³ In 1990, the counties with Hungarian majority in eastern Transylvania supported him on the Liberal candidate, Radu Câmpăanu, and in 1992 (two rounds) and 1996 (second round) have given votes, mostly, from Emil Constantinescu (RDC)

¹⁴ The situation of Romanian presidential election of 2000 looks very much like the presidential elections in France in 2002 when, in the second round were qualified the center-right candidate Jacques Chirac's and the far-right National Front candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen

¹⁵ Supported by the National Union SDP+RHP, who was part of Romanian Humanist Party

¹⁶ The first of these, the CDNPP candidate, Gheorghe Ciuhandu, won only 1.9% of the votes, reflecting the decline of the party, after missing the entry into the Parliament in 2000, of the coalition led by the party, RDC 2000

¹⁷ In the same year, the party change his name in Conservative Party

¹⁸ Supported by the SDP-CP Alliance

¹⁹ A proof in this respect, being very modest percentage (3.84%) obtained by the candidate of the Union, Hunor Kelemen, in the first round, 2-3 per cent less than the results previously obtained by DUHR candidates in the presidential election of the years 1996-2004, while the Hungarians represent about 7.12% of the population. In fact, especially after 2000, more evidence of a feedback current to the dissatisfaction of the Hungarian relative to DUHR: numerous independent candidates on the lists of Romanian political parties (the Romanian Ecologist Party, for example) or more representatives of a concurrent Hungarian party in 2008 (Hungarian Civic Party) – elected mayors and local councilors in local elections (I. Boamfă, 2008), or election as an independent Hungarian MEP Tökes László's (2007). In these circumstances, the refusal of the Hungarian voter to vote Mircea Geoană appears as normal, and it marks the return of Hungarian voters to support Romanian center-right candidates, feature in the first decade after December 1989

²⁰ Even for an extreme-right candidate in 2000, when Năsăud was the only county where Corneliu Vadim Tudor has received over 50% of the vote, and in many counties in Transylvania, the score that won Ion Iliescu was below the national average

²¹ A proof being the award, after 2000, of the main stronghold of the nationalists Transylvanian sites (Târgul Mureș, where he established the RNUP and Cluj-Napoca), from the DP candidates (since 2007, DLP)

²² In 1996, Adrian Păunescu was the presidential candidate on the lists of the Socialist Labor Party, led by Ilie Verdeț, former prime minister at the time of the Ceaușescu regime. On the other hand, Constantin Rotaru, leader of the Socialist Alliance Party, has renamed his party, during the Congress in 2010, in ... Romanian Communist Party

²³ For comparability with other presidential elections (which required two rounds of voting to designate the winner, between the top two finishers in the first round), we not included in the analysis the results of the CDNPP candidate, Ion Rațiu. He recorded, however, a modest score (4.29%), topping third in the country and in most counties (except the counties of Ialomița and Ilfov and Bucharest, where the CDNPP candidate exceeded, slightly, Radu Câmpeanu)