

Peculiarities of local elections in pre-war Romania. The chrono-spatial distribution of key electoral variables (1864-1914)

Ionel Boamfă* 

Department of Geography, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, 20 A Carol I Avenue, Iași 700505,
Iași County, Romania; ionel_boamfa@yahoo.com

Received: 8 August 2021; Revised: 25 October 2021; Accepted: 29 October 2021;
Published online: 7 November 2021

Abstract: The article analyzes the chrono-spatial distribution of some electoral variables – the turnout, the political preferences of the voters and the political representation in the local councils (county and / or communal) – in pre-war Romania (1864-1914). Regarding the voters turnout, there is a downward trend, favored by some legislative measures (declaring the winner of the list submitted by a party, if it is the only one registered). The political preferences of the electorate were directed, predominantly, towards the big pre-war parties – Liberal or Conservative – with a modest presence of other formations, while only representatives of the two mentioned formations entered the local councils. The results of the local elections are very similar to the legislative ones (for the Assembly of Deputies and / or the Senate).

Key words: local elections, pre-war Romania, National Liberal Party, Conservative Party, local councils.

Citation: Boamfă, I. (2021). Peculiarities of local elections in pre-war Romania. The chrono-spatial distribution of key electoral variables (1864-1914). *Central European Journal of Geography and Sustainable Development*, 3(2), 42–61. <https://doi.org/10.47246/CEJGSD.2021.3.2.4>

1. INTRODUCTION

We intend to analyze the chrono-spatial distribution of some political-electoral variables in the local elections in pre-war Romania, this approach being part of the broader process of studying the particularities of the Romanian elections in the last two centuries.

Even if these local elections are the first of this type about which we have significant information (far from being, however, complete), these were not the first electoral consultations in Romanian space. The elective process of dignitaries, at different political levels, has a long tradition in this space. Without too many details, but also without exhausting the subject, we mention, first of all, the designation, by elections of *Sfatul Bătrânilor* = *the Council of Elders*, as the leading institution of the peasant communities, a tradition that appeared under the influence of Greek polis in Thracian-Dacian and continued by Romanians, after the Romanization of our ancestors, until the dawn of the modern era. Also, by elections, the *Concilium trium daciarum*, the provincial assembly of Roman Dacia (II-III centuries), was designed by the Daco-Roman citizens with the right to vote, for more than a century. From the Middle Ages, we mention the election of voivodes by *adunări cneziale* = *princely assemblies*, as happened frequently, for example, in the Maramureș voivodeship (before 1400, an element present in the extra-Carpathian space, for example, by choosing as ruler of Moldavia, by *adunarea țării* = *the assembly of the country* (representing all social strata), of Stephen the Great, in the place named *câmpul de la Direptate* (1457). In the same medieval epoch, *sfaturile orășenești* = *the towns councils* was designed by elections too[†]. This tradition was strengthened, in the Danube Principalities, after 1831, by including, in Regulamentul

* Corresponding author: ionel_boamfa@yahoo.com; Tel.: +4 0751 051 716

[†] I. Boamfă (2013), *Geografie electorală*, pp. 271-278; I. Boamfă (2021), *Mențiuni onomastice românești legate de vechi structuri politico-administrative la nivel local*, in *Buletinul Societății de Geografie din România*, Serie Nouă, Tom XV-XVI (XXCV-XXCVI), 2020, pp. 93-109, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2021.

Organic = the Organic Regulation, of the provision of the election of dignitaries at the head of any city following the citizen vote.

After the Union of the Principalities (1859), within the numerous reforms initiated by the prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza, it was counted the legislation of the elections for the county councils and the generalization of the designation by vote of all local councils, including those in rural areas (1864). Thus, starting from the dawn of the existence of the young Romanian state, a preserved electoral system was developed, with all the difficulties that affected it (especially in the periods of authoritarian and / or dictatorial regime, from 1938-1989), until today[‡].

The Romanian principalities - Moldavia and Wallachia - were, since the Middle Ages, in the situation of vassal states of the Ottoman Empire, which, since the early eighteenth century, no longer trusting the Romanian rulers, had introduced the leadership of the two Christian rulers from the Greek quarter Fanar of Constantinople, therefore called Phanariots. At the beginning of the 19th century, in 1821, the Revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu took place. One of the revolutionary demands, related to the reintroduction of the local leaders, instead of the Phanariots, was satisfied, starting with 1822. After a few years, a new Russian-Turkish conflict broke out, related to the Greek War of Independence, a conflict concluded with the Peace of in Adrianople (1829). It provided for the return to Wallachia of the Danube rayas (Turnu, Giurgiu and Brăila), the freedom of trade and navigation on the river of ships from the Principality and some political-electoral provisions, contained in a regulation similar to a Constitution, called *Regulament Organic = Organic Regulation*. Such an Organic Regulation was elaborated for each Principality, under the careful coordination of the Russian general Pave Kiseleff and, after the tsar's approval, these texts entered into force: on July 1, 1831, in Wallachia and on January 1, 1832 – in Moldova. These constitutional establishments provided for both the election of deputies from *Adunări Obștești = General Assemblies* (instead of the system of appointing dignitaries in the old *Sfaturi Domnești = Prince Councils*) and the election of local authorities, but only for urban centers, voters having the right to vote, based on the cense. These elections took place until the adoption, in 1864, of new legislation for local elections, promulgated by Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza. Also, the Organic Regulation provided for the election of the ruler by an *Extraordinary General Assembly*, consisting of both boyars and craftsmen, merchants and intellectuals from the cities. This provision was observed only once, at the election of Gheorghe Bibescu as prince in Wallachia, in December 1842. Otherwise, the rulers were proposed by the Porte, with the consent of the tsar.

Following the Revolution of 1848, also held in the Romanian Principalities, the *Balta-Liman Convention* eliminated the elective system of General Assemblies, replaced by the appointment, by the ruler of the deputies from Bucharest and Iasi. These so-called legislative assemblies functioned until 1852, when the Crimean War broke out the following year, pitting Russia against the Ottoman Empire (supported by a Franco-British alliance). In 1856, Russia lost the confrontation, convening a Peace Conference in Paris. Within it, it was decided that the southern part of Bessarabia (Cahul, Ismail and Bolgrad counties) be returned to Moldavia (from which Bessarabia had been annexed by the Tsarist Empire in 1812).

This assembly of European powers - comprising the British Empire, the French Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia, the Kingdom of Piedmont, the Habsburg Empire, the Tsarist Empire and the Ottoman Empire – also called into question the international status of the Romanian Principalities. Thus, in order to test the desire to unite the Romanians, in 1857 elections were convened for *the ad-hoc Assemblies*. In Moldova, those held in July were largely falsified by the administration of the Principality, coordinated by the caimacam Vogoride, who wanted the majority of elected deputies to be among those who opposed the Union with Wallachia. Among those dissatisfied with these frauds was the Colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza, who resigned from the leadership of the Covurlui (Galați) administration, making the electoral forgeries public. The great powers demanded the repetition of the elections: the new election, held in September, simultaneously with the one in Wallachia, gave a clear majority to the unionist forces. Both Assemblies – from Iasi and Bucharest – adopted almost identical resolutions, in which they demanded the Union of the Principalities under a ruler from a European dynasty.

The Great Powers, however, were divided on this subject. The Ottoman and Habsburg empires did not want the Union at all. The Court in Vienna had millions of Romanians in Transylvania and Bucovina, and the emergence of a united Romanian state would have become a "magnet" for them. The Ottomans

[‡] The presence of Local Councils was continuous until today and the County Councils was replaced, in the years 1938-1940, by the District Councils (at the level of the 10 big *ținuturi = districts*), and, from 1950 to 1968, by the Regional Councils (in the period of Soviet influence). From the 1969 Local elections, the communist regime returned at the County Councils (named Popular County Councils). We noted, in the other hand, the absence of Local elections between 1914 and 1926, and between 1938 and 1950.

knew, on the other hand, that a unified Romanian state, still under the suzerainty of the Porte, would have sought to break this yoke and become independent. The British initially supported the Union, but later rejected the idea in order to "keep the European balance". Following negotiations with France, an "Osborne compromise" was reached, following which *the Paris Convention* (1858), a new constitutional establishment of the Principalities, which replaced *the Organic Regulation*, specified the new political-administrative framework of the Principalities. The new state was to be called the United Principalities of Moldova and Wallachia, but with separate administrations, capitals, parliaments and different rulers. A single unifying political body became the Central Commission of Focsani, consisting of 4 Moldovans and 4 Wallachians, with the role of ensuring the unity of the legislation of both Principalities.

A provision in the Paris Convention allowed any elected official to be able to vote in both Principalities. As *the Electoral Assemblies* (Parliaments of Iasi and Bucharest) elected the ruler, both voted Alexandru Ioan Cuza, in January 1859. After 3 years (December 1861), the ruler obtained the sultan's approval for the unification of the administration of the Principalities, so that since January 1862, both the ruler and the government and Parliament have established their sole headquarters in Bucharest. Subsequently, in the following years, Cuza initiated a series of reforms, including in the electoral plan. Thus, since 1864, the communal elections took place in all localities, including in rural areas (by *Law no. 394 of March 31 / April 12, 1864 for urban and rural communes*), and at county level, the first elections for the Councils took place. County (based on *the Law for the establishment of county councils no. 396 of March 31 / April 12, 1864*). Among the first 3 county councilors, the ruler appointed one senator, for each county, the other half of the Senate being also proposed by the ruler. Thus, Romania benefited, from this moment, from a bicameral Parliament, the Senate, named at that time a Corp Ponderator = Pondered Body, having the purpose of "tempering" the excesses of the Assembly. But internally, dissensions between the ruler and some political forces – radical liberals (dissatisfied with reforms being too slow) and conservatives (bothered with reforms) – led to Cuza's abdication in February 1866. After a plebiscite, held in April, Carol I of the Hohenzollern-Siegmaringen family was appointed ruler. The new prince was related to the Prussian royal family and also had the approval of the Emperor of France, Napoleon III. Although dissatisfied with the perpetuation of the Union of Principalities under the new ruler, both the Habsburg and Ottoman empires accepted the fact. After the promulgation of the first *Constitution* of the Romanian state, both the first legislative elections – for the Assembly of Deputies and the Senate – and the first local elections took place. In the case of the Senate, its elected members were voted in two colleges. The county councilors were to be elected by the same electoral body convened for the Assembly of Deputies, in 4 electoral colleges, based on the census paid. Instead, local councilors were elected in two urban colleges, in the case of county residences and in single colleges – or all other settlements.

After about a decade, taking advantage of the unrest in the Balkan part of the Ottoman Empire, Tsarist Russia negotiated with the Principality of Romania a transit agreement for Russian troops through Romanian territory (1876). Although Romania was not yet involved in the conflict the following spring, after Russian troops crossed the country, Ottoman artillery began bombarding the Romanian bank of the Danube, with Ottoman soldiers making raids north of the river. The reaction was not delayed: at the end of April, the cannons from Calafat bombed Vidin, and on May 9/21, the Assembly of Deputies adopted the Declaration of Independence of Romania against the High Porte, the next day being voted in the Senate and sanctioned by Prince Carol I.

On the Balkan front, the situation of Russian troops worsened in front of Plevna. In this context, towards the end of the summer, following the Russian requests, the Romanian Army crossed the Danube, thus entering into war with the Ottoman troops. Hostilities, mainly in the northern part of Bulgaria, ended in January 1878, when the Ottomans demanded peace. Initially, a treaty was concluded in San Stefano, but because he was dissatisfied the great powers, a Peace Congress was convened in Berlin. For Romania, it recognized the Independence proclaimed a year earlier, but, at the insistence of the Russians, southern Bessarabia was reoccupied by tsarists (in September). Romania received, in return, northern Dobrogea (Tulcea and Constanța counties), where the Romanian administration settled in November 1878. If for the election of deputies and senators, Dobrogea waited until 1912, the first local elections in this region took place even in December 1878, a few weeks after the integration of this region. Based on *the Law on the organization of Dobrogea, of March 9/21, 1880*, the legislation from the rest of the country was extended from this point of view, with the difference that, in all the settlements of the region, the communal elections took place in single colleges.

In the following years, several reforms took place, which changed both the country's status and electoral legislation. Thus, in 1881, Romania proclaimed itself a Kingdom, and in 1883, the Parliament, convened as a Constituent Assembly, voted to change the electoral system. These changes mainly affected the Assembly of Deputies, in which case, the 4 electoral colleges were reduced to 3 (the same colleges, with exactly the same voters, also voted in the election of the County Councils). Also, those that finalised a

school received the right to vote (in the third college for the Assembly), increasing the number of voters who already had this right, based on the cense paid. Until the First World War, electoral legislation remained broadly the same, undergoing only a few minor changes (for example, *the Communal Law of May 7, 1887*, on the basis of which the mayor was elected by communal councilors, *the Law on the Organization of Rural Communes and the administration of plăși = districts of May 31, 1904*, by which the county became a legal entity, *the Law of December 15/28, 1912*, by which, where only one list was submitted, that was declared the winner, without voting, etc.).

The years 1912-1913 were distinguished by the development of the two Balkan wars. In the first of these, the Balkan states – Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Bulgaria – formed a coalition against the Ottoman Empire, which managed to abduct much of the Balkan territories. Later, however, Bulgaria refused to divide Macedonia with the Greeks and Serbs, sparking a second Balkan conflagration. Because Bulgaria was to incorporate territories inhabited by Balkan Romanians (Aromanians, Megleno-Romanians), which Romania could not annex to its territory, and the Bulgarian state also had an aggressive attitude towards its northern neighbor, considering that Romanian Dobrogea should be attached to the Bulgarian state), the authorities in Bucharest intervened in the conflict. Thus, in July 1913, Bulgaria demanded peace. The treaty was signed the following month, in Bucharest: Bulgaria ceded to Romania the southern part of Dobrogea (the Quadrilater), as a compensation for the annexation to the Bulgarian state of some territories inhabited by Romanians. Although, by *the Law for the organization of New Dobrogea* (March 31 / April 13, 1914), local elections were provided in this region, they did not take place until the interwar period: first came the outbreak of World War I (in the summer the same year), then the death of King Carol I (October) and the period of mourning (6 months) postponed, indefinitely, these elections.

The period around and after the proclamation of the country's Independence was the one in which the first Romanian political parties emerged. Thus, if until the Union and, a few years later (following the consolidation of the unified Romanian state), one cannot speak of a too clear political differentiation – intellectuals and the bourgeoisie generally having liberal views, and boyars being often conservatives – after the promulgation of the Constitution of 1866, the pre-war political forces began to be structured. In 1875 the National Liberal Party was founded, followed in 1881 by the Conservative Party. Economic development – including industry, trade, transport, etc. – also led to the structuring of a social democratic movement, culminating in the establishment of the Social Democratic Party of Workers in Romania (1893). It disappeared, however, towards the end of the 19th century, only to reappear, after a decade, as a Social Democratic Party. On the other hand, after 1910, there is both an extreme right-wing party – the Nationalist Party, and an important dissidence, detached from the Conservative Party – the Conservative-Democratic Party. Also, at the level of pre-war and local legislative elections, independent candidates often registered and obtained mandates. We noted, at the local level, even a coalition of minorities (Turks, Serbs, Bulgarians), who supported a common candidate in the 1894 municipal elections in Tulcea. In general, however, the representatives of minorities (especially in Bessarabia, before 1878, and in Dobrogea – after this year) ran and were frequently elected on the lists of the mentioned parties (especially liberal or conservative), a practice also encountered in the interwar period.

The number of eligible voters has seen an upward trend, both in terms of county and communal elections. Thus, in 1864, over 3200 voters were registered on the lists for the county elections. Their number increased to over 43 thousand in 1874, to almost 64 thousand – in 1888-1889, to 96.1 thousand – in 1899, exceeded 102 thousand in 1905 and approached 128 thousand in 1914. Related to the communal elections, the values are slightly lower, first of all, because we have not found data, so far, except for urban communes (cities), and in some cases, even for this type of settlements, no data have been published for the same number of localities. Thus, in 1864, over 20.8 thousand voters were listed, in 1874 – 23 thousand, in 1888-1889 – almost 36 thousand, in 1899 – almost 42.8 thousand, in 1905 – over 43 thousand, and in 1914 – over 62.2 thousand voters. However, despite this numerical increase – at least a few times in half a century – the Romanian electorate represents a modest share of the country's total population, the main cause being the restrictive censitary voting system, applied to legislative elections too.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are published works on the Romanian local elections that deal with this type of elections starting with the interwar period, as is the case of those published by **Gh. I. Ioniță** (1965), *Succesele forțelor democratice din România în alegerile comunale și județene din anii 1936-1937* / *The successes of the democratic forces in Romania in the communal and county elections of 1936-1937*, in *Studii*, volume 18, no. 4, Bucharest, pp. 785-805 [1], or by **Sorin Radu** (2004), *Administrația și procesul electoral din România în anii democrației parlamentare (1919-1937)* / *Administration and the electoral process in Romania during*

the years of parliamentary democracy (1919-1937), in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, year 8, Alba Iulia [2]. Instead, the way in which the pre-war local elections took place is treated, rather, tangentially, in some works with a more general theme, such as those written by **Tudor Drăganu** (1991), *Începuturile și dezvoltarea regimului parlamentar în România până în anul 1916 / The beginnings and development of the parliamentary regime in Romania until 1916* [3], or **Ioan Silviu Nistor** (2000), *Comuna și județul. Evoluția istorică / Commune and county. The historical evolution* [4], both works being published at the Dacia Publishing House in Cluj. Important mentions was made in the work *Rumânii fericiți. Vot și putere de la 1831 până în prezent / Happy Rumanians. Vote and power from 1831 to present* [5], by **Cristian Preda**, issued at Polirom Publishing House, in Iași (2011). Another work with references of the historical, economical and political context of this period are that realised by **Gheorghe Iacob** and **Luminița Iacob**, *Modernizare-Euopenism. România de la Cuza Vodă la Carol al II-lea. Vol. 1: Ritmul și strategia modernizării / Modernization-Europeanism. Romania from Cuza Vodă to Carol II. 1st vol: The rhythm and strategy of modernization* [6], issued at the Publishing House of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași. From another point of view, historian **Bogdan Murgescu** studied, by comparison with another peripheric spaces of Europe (Serbia, Denmark, Ireland), the evolution of the Romanian Space in the last 5 centuries, in the book *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010) / Romania and Europe. The accumulation of economic gaps* [7], at the Polirom Publishing House in Iași (2011). References, quite brief, were also made in the book *Geografie electorală / Electoral Geography*, published in 2013 at the Publishing House of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași [8]. Therefore, we considered that a broad, if not exhaustive, presentation of this type of election is not only necessary, but also useful, covering a gap in this type of research in Romania.

3. METHODS AND DATA

In carrying out this scientific approach we ran into several problems. Thus, with all our efforts so far, we have managed to inventory only a part of the electoral data related to the local elections and neither do they refer only to cities[§] (*comune urbane = urban communes*, as they were called at that time). The data already obtained do not refer to all urban settlements, but, in general, to the county residences and, more frequently, to a part of the other urban localities, but not always the same, from one election to another. Overall, we managed to inventory 13 county and communal elections, out of the 18 (county, respectively communal) held at national level, in the exact 50 years of pre-war local elections (1864-1914). The evolution of local elections in pre-war Romania is highlighted in the following table. The data regarding the county elections from 1866, 1870, 1876, 1878, 1883, respectively those from the communal elections from 1868, 1870, 1876, 1878, 1880 are missing. In all cases, the first time is from the "old style" calendar and the second after the "/" sign is "new style". Starting with the communal elections of 1905, both the information related to the dissolution of the rural communal councils and the date on which the next local elections were to be held for the designation of the new communal councils were published in *Monitorul Oficial = the Official Gazette*. Our intention, for the future, is to "cover" the statistical "gaps", as much as possible, for all local pre-war elections, through access, in more detail, to the press of the time, which was, many years before the Official Gazette, the main (the only) source of electoral documentation.

Table 1. Local elections in pre-war Romania (1864-1914).

Year	Local elections (county)	Electoral legislation (county elections)	Local elections (communes)	Electoral legislation (communal elections)
1864	October 18/30, 1864	Law for the establishment of county councils no. 396 of March 31 / April 12, 1864	July 26/August 7-August 15/27, 1864	Law no. 394 of March 31 / April 12, 1864 for urban and rural communes
1866	May 1/13, 1866	Constitution of 1866		Constitution of 1866

[§] In one case, we discovered, in the press, not in *Monitorul Oficial = the Official Gazette*, information, incomplete, related to voting at local elections in rural areas.

Peculiarities of local elections in pre-war Romania.
The chrono-spatial distribution of key electoral variables (1864-1914)

1868			November 12/24, 1868-January 15/27, 1869	
1870	April 16/28-May 3/15, 1870		February 1/13, 1870-February 3/15, 1871	
1874	May 2-14-8/20, 1874		June 13/25-July 16/28, 1874	
1876	July 8/20-14/26, 1876		July 1/13-July 22/August 3, 1876	
1878	January 26/February 7- August 30/September 11, 1878 (plus December 17/29 – only in Dobrogea)		July 15/27- December 5/17, 1878 (plus December 17/29 – for the communes of Dobrogea)	
1880	June 4/16-November 22/December 4, 1880		November 2/14- 4/16, 1880	
1883	May 7/19-13/25, 1883			
1884	October 14/26-18/30, 1884	<i>Constitution revised in 1883</i>	November 4/16- 6/18, 1884	<i>Constitution revised in 1883</i>
1888	May 7/19, 1888-January 20/February 1, 1889		April 30/May 12, 1888-January 15/27, 1889	<i>Communal Law of May 7, 1887</i>
1890			November 4/16- 6/18, 1890	
1891	May 5/17-7/19, 1891			
1894			September 4/16- 6/18, 1894	
1895	May 7/19-11/23, 1895		March 21/April 2, 1895-December 30, 1895/January 11, 1896	
1899	May 2/14, 1899-January 6/18, 1900		June 4/16-August 15/27, 1899	
1901			March 16/29- November 4/17, 1901	
1903	May 4/17-8/21, 1903			

1905	January 31/ February 13- September 28/ October 11, 1905	<i>Law on the Organization of Rural Communes and the administration of plăși = districts of May 31 / June 13, 1904</i>	January 22/February 4, 1905-December 29, 1905/January 11, 1906 (January 15/28, 1905- January 8/21, 1906 – rural communes)	<i>Law on the Organization of Rural Communes and the administration of plăși = districts of May 31 / June 13, 1904</i>
1907	June 10/23, 1907- December 20, 1907/ January 2, 1908		April 5/18, 1907- December 22, 1907/January 4, 1908 (January 28/February 10, 1907-January 27/February 9, 1908 – rural communes)	
1911	January 20/February 2- October 6/19, 1911		January 5/18- October 18/November 1, 1911 (January 15/28, 1911- January 8/12, 1912 – rural communes)	
1914	23 February/8 March, 1914-18/31 January, 1915	<i>Law of December 15/28, 1912</i>	March 1/14-May 4/17, 1914 (February 23/March 8, 1914- January 25/February 7, 1915 – rural communes)	<i>Law of December 15/28, 1912</i>

Source: Monitorul Oficial, 1864-1915.

Taking into account the differences related to the number of urban settlements whose data were accessible to us, but also to have the comparability of these data, both with the information related to county elections and with similar local elections in the following periods (especially with the interwar and post-communist too), we aggregated the data from the communal elections at the level of the interwar counties. Also, taking into account the application, also at the level of local elections, of the censitary vote, on collegies, we summed the data, at the level of localities** and, then, by counties, both for the urban colleges of the county residences and for the collegies at the level at which the county elections took place.

** At the level of urban communes, the voters with the right to vote in county residences voted in two collegies (the first comprising the bourgeois elite – owners of workshops, factories, commercial spaces, etc., and the second – especially workers, employees), while all the other cities – in a single college (as well – the electorate from the county residences of Dobrogea, Constanța and Tulcea). At the county level, the electorate was the same one that voted for the Assembly of Deputies, divided into 4 collegies (until 1883), then into 3 (after 1884). We note that, although at the level of the Parliament (Assembly of Deputies and Senate), Dobrogea voters received the right to vote only in 1912, for communal and county councils they could vote immediately after the incorporation of regions within the Romanian state (November 1878), i.e., in December 1878, subsequently participating in all local pre-war elections. We also add the fact that, in this case, in 1878, both the voters from the south of Basarabia (until the summer of the mentioned year!) And those from Dobrogea (in December) voted in the Romanian local elections. Also, the Tsarist Empire maintained, in southern Basarabia, until 1917, the electoral-administrative legislation implemented here by the Romanian authorities during 1856-1878 period.

Another problem is related to the variability of administrative boundaries, in which case, if there are no significant changes in intra-county boundaries, which would influence the aggregation, by county, of electoral data, in connection with the external borders of the Romanian state, important changes have taken place. Thus, in 1878, following the Peace Congress in Berlin, Romania was forced to cede to the Tsarist Empire the counties in southern Basarabia (Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail), receiving Dobrogea (divided into Tulcea and Constanța counties). Thus, we had to deal with the electoral variables (turnout, distribution of votes and/or mandates by political parties/orientations) over two intervals: 1864-1878 (really, 1864-1874), respectively 1880-1914. In the case of the second interval, we should have separated another one that would also take into account the annexation, following the Peace of Bucharest, in August 1913, of southern Dobrogea (the Quadrilater). It was later planned to hold local elections in the new counties of Dobrici/Caliacra and Siliștea/Durostor, but first the outbreak of the first world conflagration, then the period of mourning in the fall of 1914, decreed following the death of King Carol I (who lasted 6 months) and, finally, the entry of Romania itself in this conflagration (in the summer of 1916) made this election no longer take place^{††}.

Also related to the intra-county boundaries, taking into account the fact that, since 1864, since the first modern local elections, a single county council has been appointed for Bolgrad and Ismail counties and because the aggregate boundaries of these two counties overlap, to a large extent, over those of the interwar county Ismail, we treated together the electoral data regarding these South Bessarabian counties, including for their comparability with the similar ones from the interwar period.

Regarding **the research methods**, they fall into two categories: **documentation methods** (sources) and **analysis and interpretation methods**. In the first category – of *documentary sources* – there are, besides *Monitorul Oficial = the Official Gazette* [9], even more, more frequently than the official newspaper of the country, various titles of the pre-war press: *Adevărul* [10], *Lupta* [11], *România Liberă* [12], *Telegraful* [13], *Voința Națională* [14]. Beyond the partisan character, at least of some of these publications, we took into account, as a priority, exclusively, the statistical data, presented objectively and, often, in great detail^{††}.

This statistical information was entered into the computer and statistically processed in a Microsoft Excel document, being standardized for mapping. As **methods of analysis and interpretation** we used *the cartographic method* (using the ascending hierarchical classification) and *the geographical method*. The maps made with the help of the *Philcarto* program, made, updated and provided by the geographer and computer scientist **Philippe Waniez**, were processed and finalized in Adobe Illustrator. For each interval – 1864-1874 and 1880-1914 – we represented, together, both the data from the county elections and those from the communal elections. Also, in order not to overload the cartographic representations obtained with graphic elements (which would have made it difficult to read these graphic elements), we also divided the interval 1880-1914 into two: 1880-1899 and 1901-1914. Thus, if for the voter turnout we used only two intervals – 1864-1874 and 1880-1914, for the chrono-spatial distribution of the votes, respectively of the councilor mandates (county and/or communal) we made 3 maps, for the intervals of 1864-1874, 1880-1899 and 1901-1914.

4. CHRONO-SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL VARIABLES AT THE LOCAL ELECTIONS IN PRE-WAR ROMANIA

Voter turnout began with high values – 87.1% in the 1864 county election – but later dropped to 50-60%, sometimes – even less, as in the county election in 1905 – when only 40.7% was recorded or in 1914 – when the turnout reached only 36.4%^{§§}.

^{††} We specify that, in the case of the maps for the period 1880-1914, we included between the (pre-war) borders of Romania, besides the Quadrilater, and Basarabia (which joined the Country on March 27/April 9, 1918). As the last local elections took place in 1914, the mandate of the local elected officials should have expired in 1918 and local elections should have taken place, as in the middle of the same year (May/June 1918) parliamentary elections took place.

^{††} In fact, even the fact that the press of the time, as well as the political meetings, had a pronounced critical character towards the authorities in office at that time, is an expression of the democratic political life in pre-war Romania, this character being largely preserved between the two world wars.

^{§§} In 1905, in many counties, the Liberals did not submit lists, so that with only one (Conservative) list, voters' interest in voting declined considerably. Instead, the low turnout since the last pre-war county election is explained by the effects of a law of December 1912, according to which, in the constituency where only one list was submitted, it was declared the winner, without elections. Although this measure was adopted by a Conservative government, its real winners (and the only ones, by the way) were... the Liberals, who thus won many county and communal councils. The measure was applied, even longer (several decades), to the elections held in dualist Hungary (hence, in Transylvania),

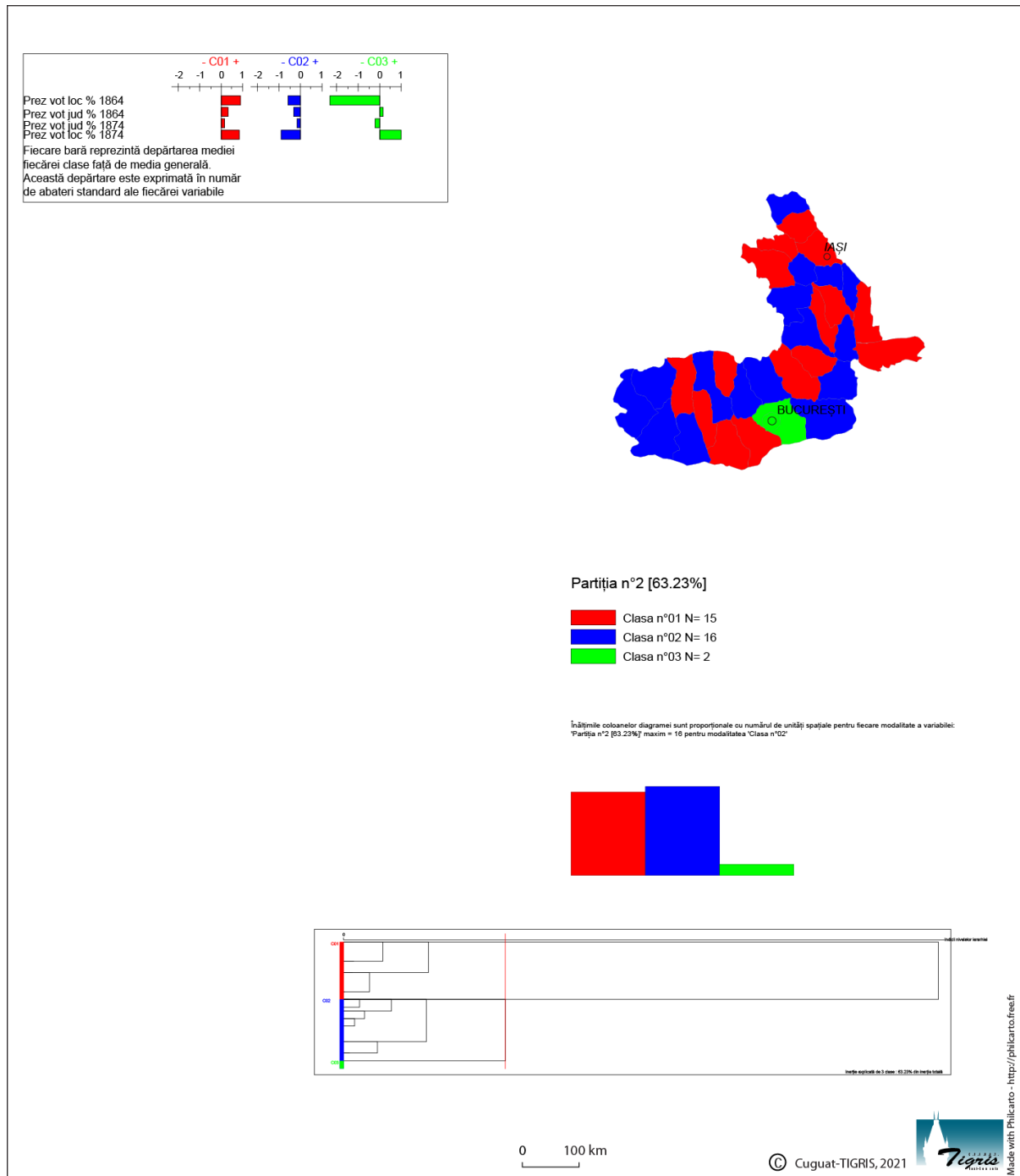


Figure 1. Chrono-spatial repartition of voter turnout at the county and communal elections in Romanian Principalities/Romania (1864-1874). Hierarchical ascendent classification.
Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

The turnout in the communal elections had lower fluctuations: if in 1874 there was a percentage of 73.3% of voters present at the polls, before 1914, the share of turnout was generally between 50 and 60%, with a minimum, also at the last communal election, in 1914, when only 46.1% of the voters registered on the lists voted***.

before 1918, being in force, also in the regions over the Carpathians and in the Romanian parliamentary elections of 1919-1922.

*** Inside the figures are used the following notations: Prez vot = Voter Turnout; loc = Local Elections; jud = County Elections; soc-dem = Social-Democrats; lib = Liberals; cons = Conservatives; extr dr = Extreme Right; minorit = Minorities; indep = Independents; Partiția = Partition; Clasa = Class; valori absente = missing values All date are in percentages (%).

Such values are lower than in the parliamentary elections – which also had shares of over 80% in the first legislative elections and were generally close to 70% or even above this value, in all years, until 1914, inclusive. The only legislative election with modest weights was in 1918, when, because electors of Oltenia and Muntenia voted among the Austro-German bayonets, many refused to go to the polls, in protest of maintaining the occupation of the Central Powers even after Romania signed the shameful "peace" in Buftea-Bucharest, but, even then, the turnout exceeded 51% in the election for the Assembly of Deputies and 46% in the senatorial elections.

If we refer to the delimited intervals, we will notice, first, that the first – 1864-1874 – had, rather, an amalgamated distribution of percentage values. Thus, on a general background of some weights of over 70% (except for the communal election of 1864, with only 58.2%), percentages higher than the national average were recorded in several counties in Moldova, in the southern Basarabian ones, several administrative units in the north and southwest of Muntenia and in Vâlcea. Ilfov County, along with Bucharest, has had an oscillating evolution. If at the first local election there were few voters present at the polls, at the next turnout it was even above average, while at the county elections it was close to the national average. In contrast, in several counties in central, eastern and western Moldova, eastern and northern Muntenia and most of Oltenia, the turnout rates were continuously below the national average (Figure 1).

The next analyzed interval – longer and with (almost) complete records, shows a different situation. Thus, Gorj and several counties in the central-northern part of Moldova are detached, with influxes at the polls higher, in general, than the national average. Other counties – Iași, Tecuci, Râmnicul Sărat, Prahova, Vlașca, Teleorman, Vâlcea – were noted for oscillations, being generally above average, before 1901, then with values lower than it in 1903-1907 and returns to weights over the national value, at the last two pre-war elections (1911-1914). Several Danube counties, from the south of Moldova (Covurlui), Dobrogea, the south of Muntenia and Oltenia, but also Buzău, were distinguished, in the whole range, by values located, generally, below the national average (Figure 2). Among them was a class, quite close in terms of electoral behavior, rather not involved in the act of voting, but which, however, also had situations, rare, above the national average (in 1907 and 1911). It is represented by counties such as Dorohoi, Vaslui, Bacău, Putna, Brăila, Dâmbovița, Argeș and Mehedinți.

Probably, this behavior, quite differentiated, both at county level and from one year and from one type of election to another, was also influenced by the electoral stake or – as we have seen, in the elections of 1905 or 1914 – even in the absence of such a stake. Although it is not the subject of our analysis, we can refer, comparatively, to the situation in the other two democratic intervals, for which we have even more complete data (and for a larger Romanian territory): the interwar and the post-communist too. Thus, in the local interwar elections (1926-1937), values of turnout were recorded even higher than in the pre-war period – reaching, in 1930, even 80%, but with a downward trend, synchronous with the values of the elections after 1931 (in 1936-37 only 62-65% went to the polls) – while the post-communist period (1992-2020) shows values rather similar to the pre-war period (initially, in 1992, a turnout of 67.5% was recorded, which subsequently dropped to around 50%). Thus, by comparison with the legislative elections of each period, the pre-war one is distinguished by the modest values of turnout at the polls, rather by disinterest of the electorate (compared to the interest shown in the legislative elections), while the next two periods – the interwar, respectively the post-communist one – shows a greater mobilization of the electorate in the local elections, by comparison with the legislative ones (however, with values generally lower after 1989, than in the interwar period).

If we consider the values, in absolute data (sometimes incomplete, as is the case of communal elections) of the total number of eligible voters, as in the case of legislative elections, the rigors of the censitary vote show a modest number, in the order of tens of thousands of citizens with the right to vote. Thus, in 1864, just over 3200 voters were registered, a total that increased to tens of thousands after the adoption of the Constitution of 1866 (almost 43.8 thousand voters in 1874) and to almost 128 thousand before the First World War II (1914). Apparently surprising, in Cuza's time, the number of voters in urban centers was higher – 20.8 thousand eligible voters in 1864, a number that also increased to almost 40 thousand (1894) and over 62 thousand at the last pre-war communal election (1914). It is possible that the limitation, by census, of the right to vote will explain, at least in part, the lower turnout of voters at the polls, in local elections. One (possible) argument in this regard is given by the large number of voters present at the interwar local elections (with weights of over 75%, before 1930), during which time the right to vote was extended to all male adults (and, since 1929, including literate women).

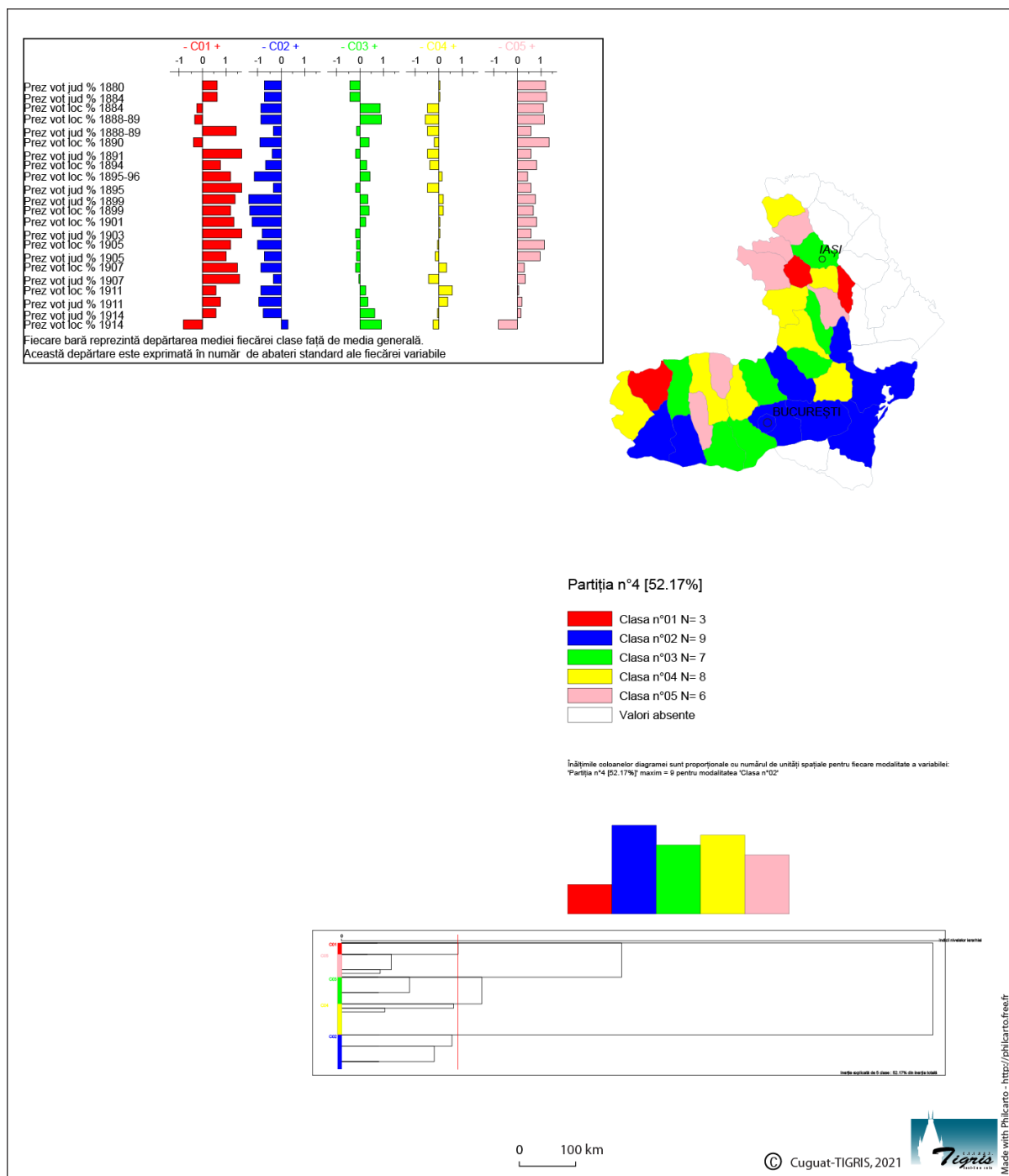


Figure 2. Chrono-spatial repartition of voter turnout at the county and communal elections in Romania (1880-1914). Hierarchical ascendent classification.
Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

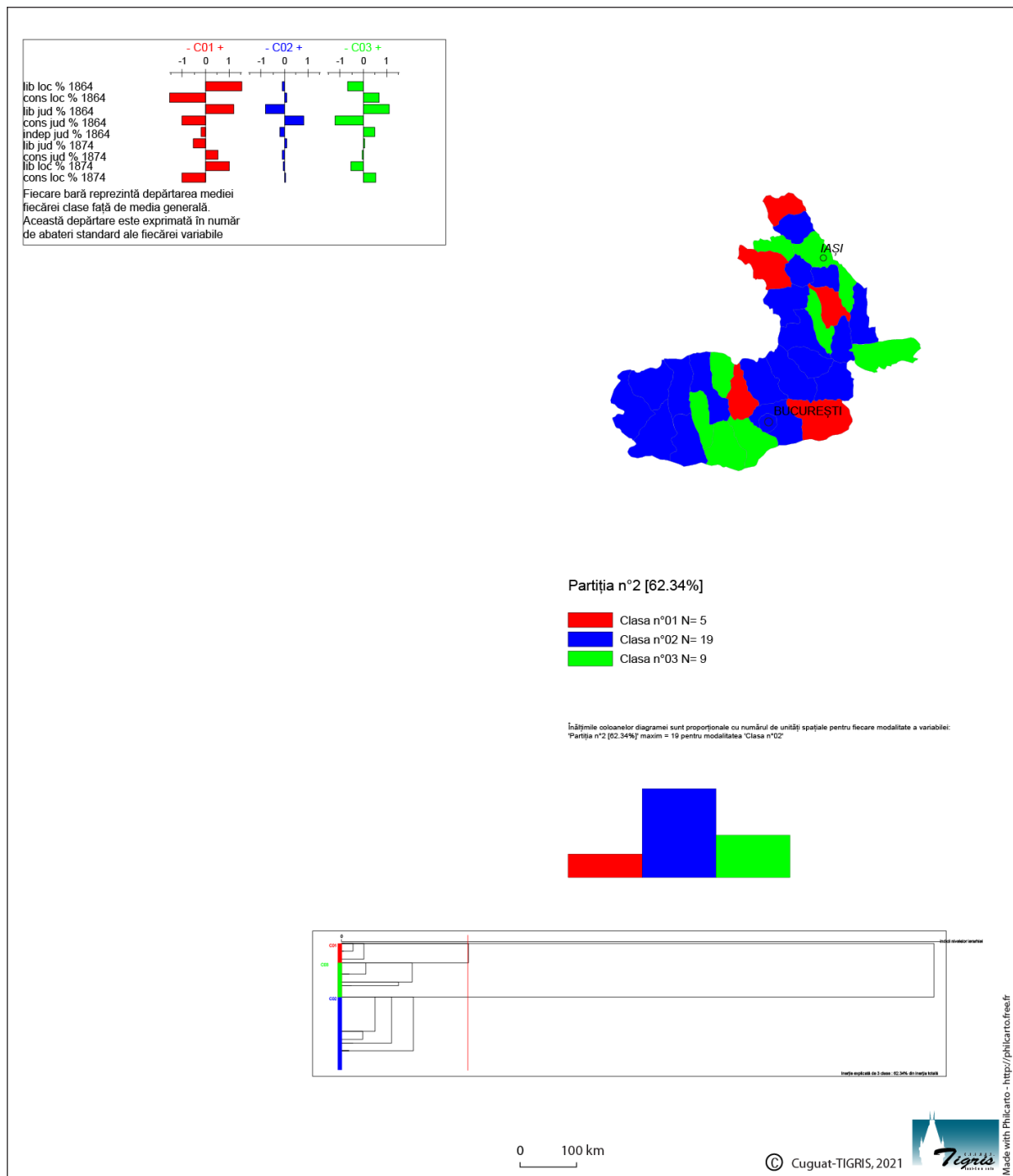


Figure 3. Chrono-spatial repartition of votes by political formations at the county and communal elections in Romanian Principalities/Romania (1864-1874). Hierarchical ascendent classification.

Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

If we refer to *the chrono-spatial distribution of the votes for the different political formations (orientations)*, we must specify, from the beginning, that the majority of the pre-war votes, in the local elections, went, as in the case of the legislative ones, alternatively, towards Liberals or Conservatives. In the first interval – 1864-1874 – the two great pre-war Romanian parties were just being formed^{†††}. If

^{†††} Thus, the National Liberal Party was founded in 1875 (being the oldest party in Romania, but not the oldest Romanian party – this title belongs to the Romanian National Party, founded in Transylvania, in 1869). A few years later, in 1881, the Conservative Party appeared. After a few more years – after the founding of several social-democratic circles – the Social-Democratic Party of Workers in Romania was founded in 1893 – which, later, after

counties like Dorohoi, Neamț, Tutova, Ialomița and Dâmbovița show, in this first interval, a predominance of votes for Liberals, in Suceava^{***}, Iași, Fălciu, Tecuci, Ismail-Bolgrad, Muscel, Olt, Teleorman and Vlașca there is a Liberal-Conservative alternation (Figure 3). Most counties show, however, a presence of preferences towards Conservatives, better highlighted by the elections of 1864, the other election framing this majority of administrative units (19 out of 33) in the general national trend^{§§§}.

After a first period of Conservative domination (1871-1875) and a long presence of the Liberals in government (1876-1888), the well-known *rotativa guvernamentală* = *governmental rotation* was established in the pre-war period, which allowed, practically, the governments alternation of the two great Romanian parties. Thus, the Conservatives were in power in the years 1888-1895, 1899-1901, 1905-1907, 1911-1914 and a few months in the second half of 1918, while the Liberals ruled Romania between 1895-1899, 1901-1905, 1907-1911 and 1914-1918. It is observed that, if the Liberals controlled the country for an entire legislature, for 4 years, the Conservatives was, after 1895, in power for only 2-3 years or even less (a few months, in 1918).

This alternation of Liberal-Conservative government also had a significant impact on local elections. Thus, the county elections of 1880, 1884, 1895, 1903, 1907 and 1914 were won by the Liberals, and those of 1888, 1891, 1899, 1905 and 1911 - by the Conservatives. The communal elections were similarly awarded: in 1884, 1895, 1901, 1907 and 1914 - by Liberals and in 1888, 1890, 1894, 1899, 1905 and 1911 - by Conservatives. In fact, starting with 1880, the local elections took place, as a rule, in "electoral" years (in which there was also an alternation in government, legislative elections being scheduled), the only exceptions being the local elections of 1894 and the county elections of 1890 and 1903, the last ones - scheduled on time, after the end of the 4-year mandates of the previous county councils.

Between 1880 and 1899, some Moldovan counties (Tutova, Bacău) and northern Muntenia (Prahova) stood out, rather, through their electoral support for Liberals. A slightly Liberal trend was registered in counties such as Brăila, Buzău, Dâmbovița and Vlașca, but also in Iași, Roman, Vaslui, Tecuci, Constanța, Ialomița, Teleorman, Olt and Romanați. This spatial distribution would show, without absolutizing this trend, the presence of a rather liberal area in the central part of Moldova, in a large part of Muntenia and, partially, in the south of Dobrogea and Oltenia. Instead, in the north and west of Moldova, isolated in Muntenia and Oltenia (in counties such as Dorohoi, Neamț, Putna, Râmnicul Sărat, Ilfov, Vâlcea, etc.) there was, rather, a Liberal-Conservative alternation. On the other hand, in Botoșani, Covurlui, Tulcea, Muscel, Argeș and most of Oltenia, Conservatives more frequently had weights above the national average (Figure 4). We also add that, when they submitted candidacies (in the years 1888-1894), the Social-Democrats obtained more votes in Iași, Roman and Ilfov.

The situation changed somewhat at the beginning of the twentieth century (1901-1914). Thus, in Suceava, Neamț, Roman, Putna, Covurlui, Brăila, Dâmbovița and Vâlcea, the Liberals obtained above average votes in the majority of elections, most of the times, these being won by the Liberals and in the legislative elections. A similar fact was recorded in administrative units such as Botoșani, Iași, Tutova, Bacău, Râmnicul Sărat, Buzău and Gorj (Figure 5). Instead, in other areas, the electoral competition was tight, the Liberals and Conservatives winning an equal number of electoral competitions (in the counties of Vaslui, Fălciu, Tecuci, Prahova and Romanați). On the contrary, the south-east of the country (from Constanța to Vlașca) stood out with a slight advantage for the Conservatives, who often obtained votes above the national average in the years when the party also won the legislative elections. Finally, in Dorohoi, Tulcea, Muscel, Argeș, Olt, Teleorman, Dolj and Mehedinți, the Conservatives won the majority of local elections in this period.

1895, disappeared, temporarily, to reappear as a Social-Democratic Party, after 1910. In the last pre-war years, the first Romanian far-right party emerged - the Democratic Nationalist Party, present at the local elections in 1911 and 1914. The two major parties - the Liberals and the Conservatives - also experienced various splits, however, at the level of electoral data, both in terms of voters' electoral preferences and the mandates of county and/or communal councilors, we summed up the data by political orientation (these, however, generally overlap by parties, almost the whole pre-war period).

*** This county represents a remnant of the old homonymous district, "broken" in two by the occupation of a large part (including the residence, Suceava) by the Habsburgs, at the annexation of the future Bucovina. The pre-war county was renamed, from the interwar period, initially *Fălticeni* and, later, *Baia*, until the abolition of the interwar counties by the communist regime, in 1950.

§§§ In 1874, local elections were won by the Conservatives, who were in power.

Peculiarities of local elections in pre-war Romania.
The chrono-spatial distribution of key electoral variables (1864-1914)

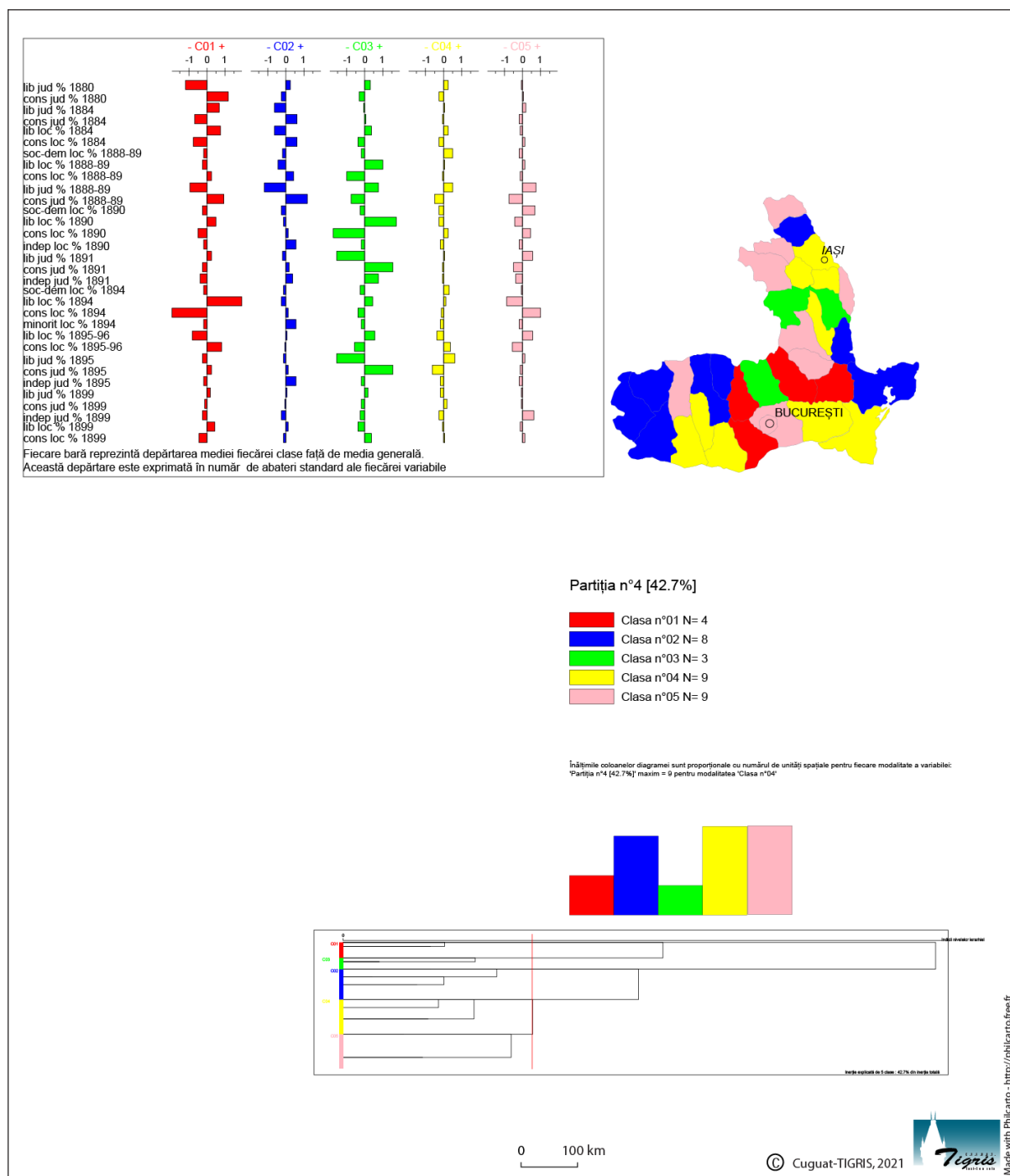


Figure 4. Chrono-spatial repartition of votes by political formations at the county and communal elections in Romania (1880-1899). Hierarchical ascendent classification.

Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

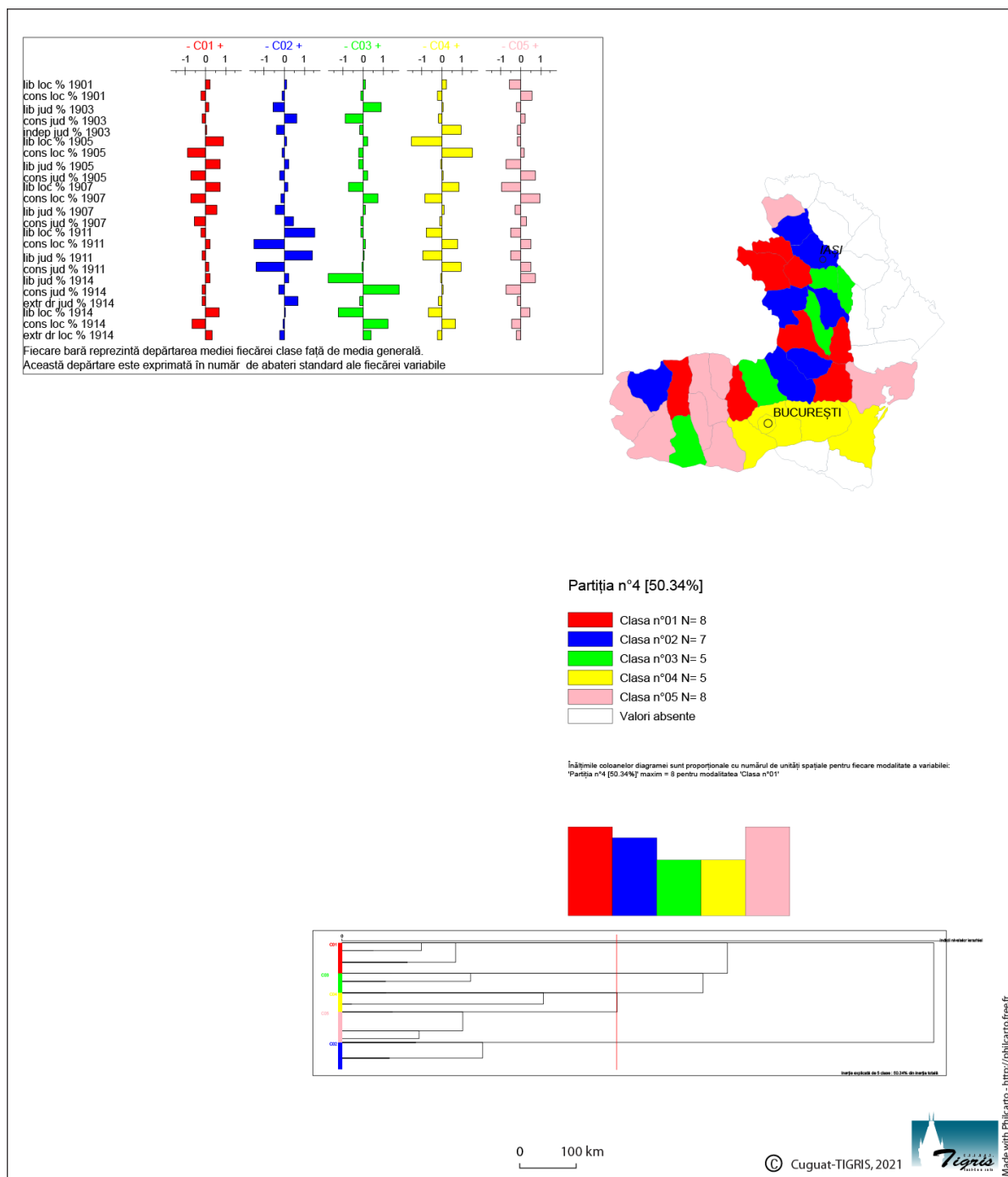


Figure 5. Chrono-spatial repartition of votes by political formations at the county and communal elections in Romania (1901-1914). Hierarchical ascendent classification.

Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

If we refer to the chrono-spatial distribution of the mandates of county and/or communal councilors on political formations, in the interval 1864-1874 there is a very great similarity with the distribution of votes (Figure 6). We attribute this reality to the fact that, in these years, the Romanian political system was at the beginning, being established.

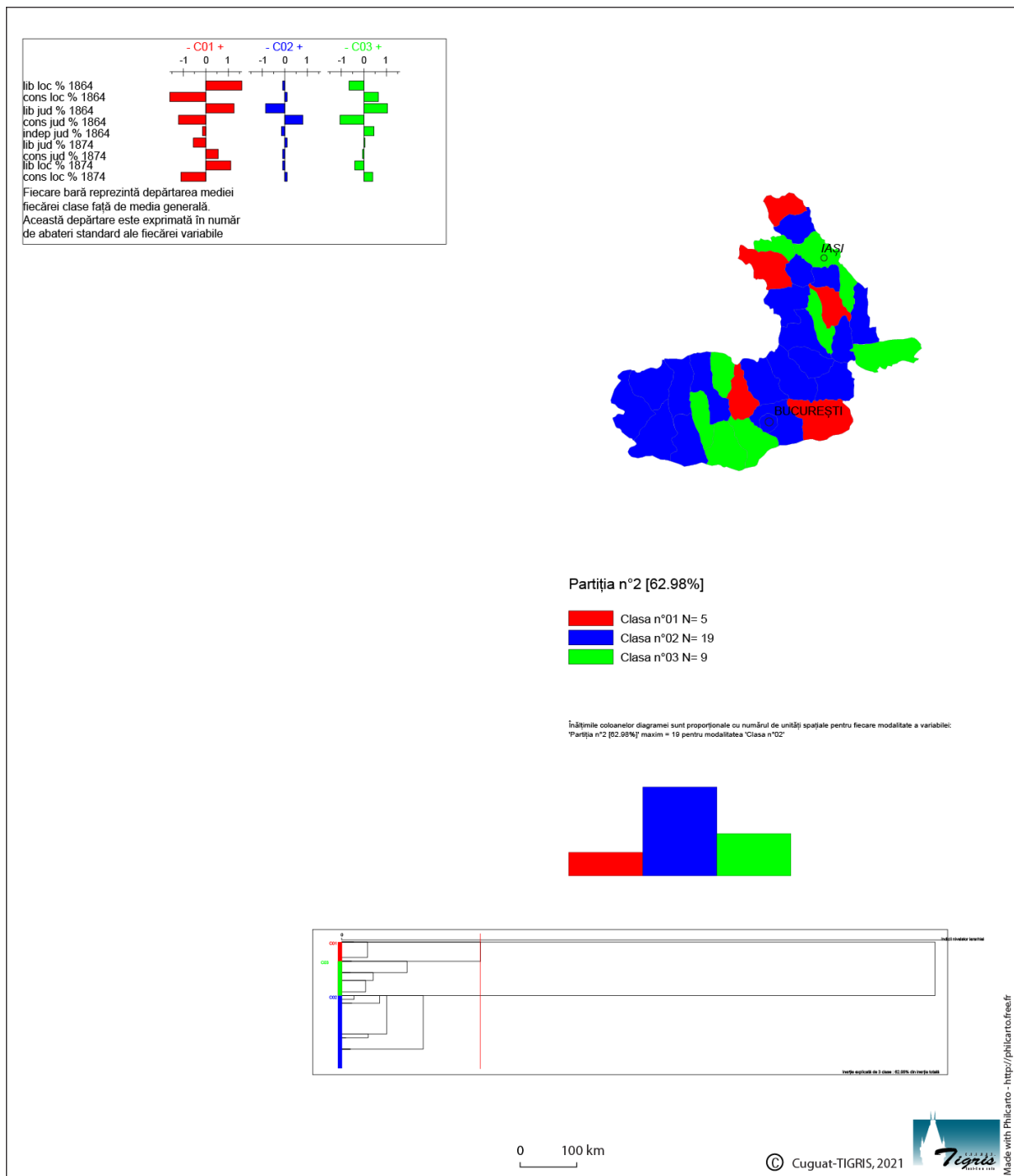


Figure 6. Chrono-spatial repartition of mandates by political formations at the county and communal elections in Romanian Principalities/Romania (1864-1874). Hierarchical ascending classification.
Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century were characterized, also at the level of councilors' mandates, by their adjudication by Liberals or Conservatives. If at the level of votes and – for other types of elections (legislative ones) – and of mandates, there were other formations that also obtained mandates (Social-Democrats, Nationalists), throughout the period 1880-1914 they could become county and/or communal councilors only some Independent and Conservative-Democrats (only in 1911 or 1914).

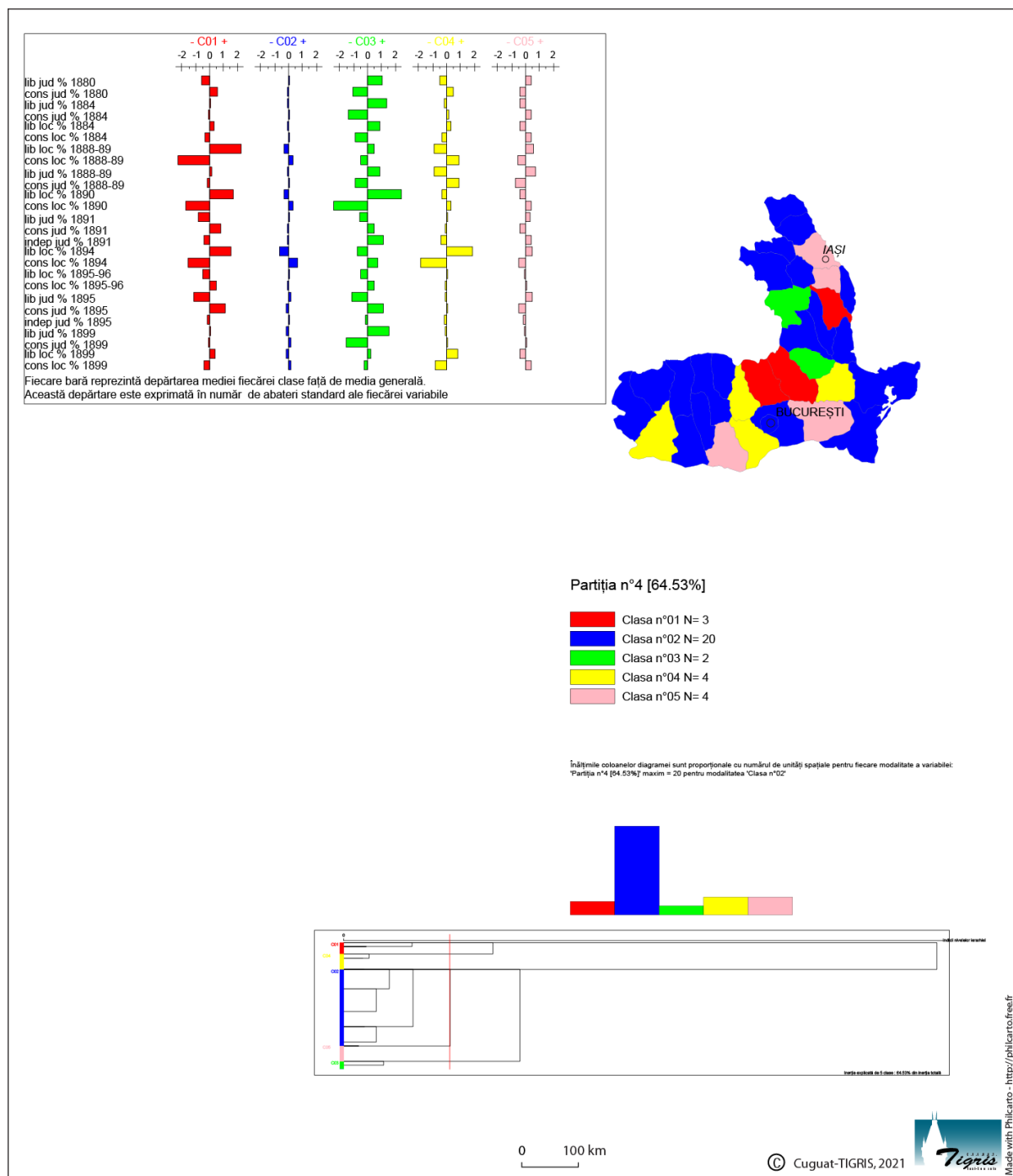


Figure 7. Chrono-spatial repartition of mandates by political formations at the county and communal elections in Romania (1880-1899). Hierarchical ascendent classification.
Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

For the interval we are referring to, Bacău and Râmnicul Sărat counties were characterized by numerous mandates won by Liberals (Figure 7), often in the years when the mentioned party also won the parliamentary elections. Tutova, Buzău and Prahova counties behaved somewhat similarly. Instead, the counties of Iași, Vaslui, Ialomița and Teleorman were characterized by mandates won somewhat on par by both major parties, while in Brăila, Dâmbovița, Vlașca and Dolj, the Conservatives won mandates slightly more frequently than at national level. The same Conservatives prevailed, more frequently, in the rest of the country, that is, in the north and south of Moldova, in Dobrogea, the south and west of Muntenia and in most of Oltenia.

Peculiarities of local elections in pre-war Romania.
The chrono-spatial distribution of key electoral variables (1864-1914)

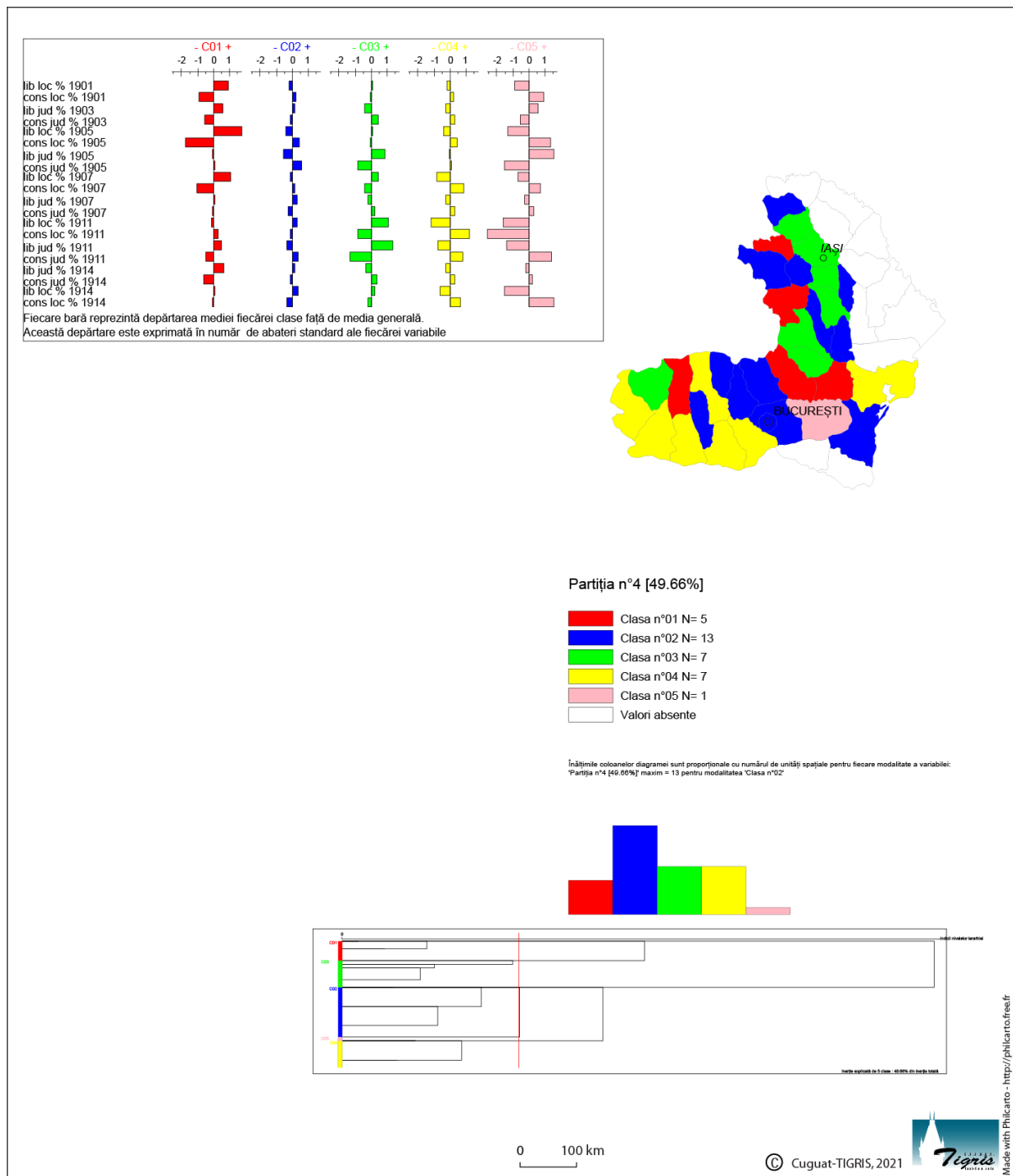


Figure 8. Chrono-spatial repartition of mandates by political formations at the county and communal elections in Romania (1901-1914). Hierarchical ascendent classification.

Source: *Monitorul Oficial*, 1864-1915, *Adevărul*, 1890-1914, *Lupta*, 1891-1894, *România Liberă*, 1880-1888, *Telegraful*, 1888, *Voința Națională*, 1888-1905.

In the local elections at the beginning of the twentieth century (1901-1914), in the counties of Suceava, Bacău, Brăila, Buzău and Vâlcea, the Liberals frequently won mandates above average, often – in the years when the same party obtained the government too. A similar situation was recorded in the counties of Botoșani, Iași, Vaslui, Tutova, Putna, Râmnicul Sărat and Gorj. Another group of administrative units stood out, rather, through a parity between Liberals and Conservatives (each party often winning in the years when it came to power): Dorohoi, Neamț, Roman, Fălciu, Tecuci, Covurlui, Constanța, Ilfov, Prahova, Dâmbovița, Muscel and Olt (Figure 8). Finally, if in Ialomița we recorded, mainly, Conservative

victories, the last group of counties stood out by winning, by the mentioned party, all the local elections in this interval: it is about the counties of Tulcea, Argeş, Vlaşca, Teleorman, Romanaţi, Dolj and Mehedinţi.

5. DISCUSSION

Throughout the pre-war period (1864-1914) there are certain areas in which the Liberals were, mainly, winners, represented by the counties: Neamţ, Roman, Bacău, Vaslui, Tutova, Putna, Râmnicul Sărat, Constanţa, Prahova, Teleorman, Olt, Vâlcea and Dolj. The Conservatives obtained the first place, most frequently, in Dorohoi, Botoşani, Tecuci, Covurlui, Tulcea, Ialomiţa, Ilfov, Vlaşca, Muscel, Romanaţi, Gorj and Mehedinţi. If the Dobrogea counties have a different situation, for the first analyzed years (1864-1874), the South Basarabian counties were also noted for the preponderance of support for Conservatives. In the other administrative units, no political formation was clearly evident during the whole analyzed period.

As we noted earlier – in the case of the elections for the Assembly of Deputies and for the Senate – the distribution of the mandates of county and/or communal councilors has a repartition very similar to that of the votes. The only notable difference is that only Liberals, Conservatives and, less frequently, Independents obtained mandates as councilors, the other political orientations not being represented.

We can analyze the electoral variables at the level of all types of elections from the pre-war period. Thus, in terms of turnout, in the first interval (1864-1877), it is noted by a high turnout in southern Basarabia and Moldova, followed by Ilfov (with Bucharest). The second interval (1879-1899) shows a Moldova very interested in the electoral processes, followed by Muntenia, this time, the same regions being noticed after 1900 (between 1901-1914).

Regarding the electoral preferences of the voters, the first interval (1864-1877) is highlighted by the preferences above average for liberals of Oltenia and Ilfov (with Bucharest), while southern Basarabia, Moldova and the rest of Muntenia were rather, conservative. Independent candidates were voted especially in southern Basarabia, but also in Muntenia and Oltenia. The second interval (1879-1899) already brings a diversification of the pre-war Romanian political spectrum. Thus, the Social Democratic candidates were often supported in Moldova, but also in the Capital. The Capital (within Ilfov) also voted, above average, in general, with the Liberals, as well as the rest of Muntenia and Oltenia, while Dobrogea and Moldova preferred, rather, Conservative candidates. We note, in the case of Dobrogea, the vote for minorities (even if it was singular, in the communal elections of 1894). Finally, Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldova frequently supported independent candidates.

In the last pre-war period (1901-1914) was distinguished by the presence of a wider political spectrum, with the difference that, instead of minority candidates, the Far Right appeared. The Social Democrats were supported, this time, especially in Muntenia, after which Moldova was highlighted again. The Liberals received support especially in Oltenia, while the Conservatives were voted especially in Muntenia (with Ilfov and Bucharest). The Far Right is starting to stand out especially in Moldova, being present in Muntenia (even if, in both regions, the share of votes was modest). Independent candidates were supported especially in Moldova and Ilfov, receiving many votes in Muntenia as well. Dobrogea had a special situation: the support for Liberals or Conservatives was relatively evenly distributed, in the elections in which voters between the Danube and the Sea participated, noting that in Constanţa the Liberals were preferred, and in Tulcea – the Conservatives.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Given that the turnout was declining (and for the reasons already mentioned), there were certain territorial concentrations that generally remained above average throughout the half-century. Such a group stands out in the north of Moldova, being constituted by the counties of Botoşani, Iaşi, Suceava, Neamţ, to which, after 1880, Romanul also joined. In the southern half of the region, only Tutova and Tecuci stand out, to which Fălciu was added, after 1880. In the south of the country, Râmnicul Sărat, Vlaşca, Teleorman, Olt, Muscel – all from Muntenia and only Vâlcea – from Oltenia stand out continuously. After 1880, Prahova and Gorj joined, but Buzău left this group. We also note that, for the first part of the analyzed period (1864-1874), the Basarabian counties were distinguished by notable influxes at the polls, which did not characterize, since 1880, the Dobrogea counties, as well as the other administrative units which were not mentioned. Thus, there are two areas with significant turnout – northern Moldova and southwestern Muntenia (plus southern Basarabia, before 1878), separated by other areas, larger, with low shares: southern Moldova, northern Muntenia and most of Oltenia, extended, since 1880 and in Dobrogea.

Regarding the electoral preferences, there are differences, both in terms of spatial distribution and related to the specifics of each interval. Thus, in the first interval (1864-1874), the Liberals were supported, in general, above average, in Dorohoi, Neamţ, Bacău, Tutova, Ialomiţa, Teleorman, Muscel, Dolj,

while the Conservatives won, mainly, in Fălciu, Cahul, Ismail, Putna, Tecuci, Covurlui, Râmnicul Sărat, Brăila, Buzău, Ilfov, Olt, Romanați, Vâlcea, Gorj, Mehedinți. The other counties did not stand out with a clear winner.

The interval 1880-1899 was characterized by a diversification of the political spectrum, being voted also representatives of the Social-Democrats and Minorities, in addition to the Independents who had appeared, isolated, earlier (in Ismail). The counties of Neamț, Roman, Tutova, Putna, Buzău, Prahova, Teleorman, Olt, Mehedinți were rather Liberal, and predominantly Conservative – Dorohoi, Botoșani, Iași, Bacău, Fălciu, Covurlui, Tulcea, Ialomița, Ilfov, Musf Vâlcea, Gorj. There was no clear winner in the other counties. We note the presence, quite modest, of the electoral support for the Social-Democrats in Iași, Roman, Covurlui, Brăila and Ilfov, for Independents – in several counties and for Minorities – in Tulcea county (at the communal elections of 1894).

Finally, in the last analyzed period – 1901-1914 – we noticed, in addition to Liberals and Conservatives, votes given to the Nationalist extreme right and, again, to the Independents. The Liberals were the most frequent winners in Dorohoi, Botoșani, Iași, Roman, Neamț, Bacău, Vaslui, Putna, Tutova, Covurlui, Brăila, Constanța, Râmnicul Sărat, Buzău, Prahova, Vâlcea, Gorj, and the Conservatives – in Fălciu Tulcea, Ialomița, Ilfov, Vlașca, Olt, Romanați, Mehedinți. The extreme right was highlighted, by modest weights, in Iași, Covurlui and Prahova, and the Independents – in Brăila, Ialomița, Ilfov, Argeș, Muscel and Romanați.

REFERENCES

1. Ioniță, Gh. I. (1965). Successes of Democratic Forces in Romania at the communal and county elections from the years. *Studii*, 18(4), 785-805. București, România: Academy Press. (in Romanian)
2. Radu, S. (2004). The Administration and the Electoral Process in Romania in the years of Parliamentary Democracy (1919-1937). *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 8, Alba Iulia. (in Romanian)
3. Drăganu, T. (1991). *The Beginnings and Development of Parliamentary Regime in Romanian before 1918*. Cluj-Napoca, România: Dacia Press. (in Romanian)
4. Nistor, I.S. (2000). *The Commune and the County. Historical Evolution*. Cluj-Napoca, România: Dacia Press. (in Romanian)
5. Preda, C. (2011). *Happy Roumanians. Vote and Power from 1831 to the Present*. Iași, România: Polirom Press. (in Romanian)
6. Iacob, Gh., & Iacob, L. (1995). *Modernization-Europeanism. Romania from Cuza Vodă to Carol II*. Volume I. The Rhythm and the Strategy of Modernization, Iași, România, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press. (in Romanian)
7. Murgescu, B. (2011). *Romania and Europe. The Accumulation of Economic Differences (1500-2010)*. Iași, România, Polirom Press. (in Romanian)
8. Boamfă, I. (2013). *Electoral Geography*. Iași, România: „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press. (in Romanian with English, French and Russian Abstracts)
9. *** (1864-1915). *Monitorul Oficial*, București.
10. *** (1890-1914). *Adevărul*, București.
11. *** (1891-1894). *Lupta*, București.
12. *** (1880-1888). *România Liberă*, București.
13. *** (1888). *Telegraful*, București.
14. *** (1888-1905). *Voința Națională*, București.



© 2021 by the author. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC-BY-NC) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).