THE ANXIOUS PARTISAN:  
A TEST OF AFFECTIVE INTELLIGENCE THEORY IN ROMANIA

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Abstract  
To navigate the complicated world of electoral politics, individuals may make use of cognitive shortcuts. One such heuristic is partisanship. When it comes time to make a choice at the polls, voters will follow their party identification in order to choose a candidate. Yet, for such attachments to develop, voters need time to familiarize themselves with the party system. Using panel data from the Romanian Presidential Election Study 2009, gathered before and after the Presidential Elections, this article identifies three groups of individuals: consistent partisans, inconsistent partisans, and non-partisans. This analysis tests the theory of Affective Intelligence and finds that partisans who are made anxious by a candidate are less likely to rely on their party identification when making a vote choice, while anxiety does not appear to have any effect on non-partisans. The model only applies to partisans of the main challenger’s party, and not for partisans of the incumbent’s party.

Keywords: party identification, anxiety, Affective Intelligence Theory, Romania

Introduction

One aspect of voting behaviour that has been, until recently, neglected in the literature is the impact of emotions. Research in neuroscience, political psychology and cognitive science suggests that emotions influence a wide range of political and customary activities. In political behaviour, Affective Intelligence Theory (AI) posits that individuals who are made anxious tend to seek out more information and will stop relying on habits when taking a decision. When it comes time to vote, partisans anxious about their party’s candidate may vote for a different candidate.

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No endeavour has yet been made to try and better understand the workings of party identification in post-communist countries through emotions. This study strives to improve the understanding of party identification in young democracies. In order to do so, the case of the 2009 presidential elections in Romania was chosen. These elections present an excellent opportunity to study party identification. As presidential elections occur in two rounds, with the two leading candidates competing in a vote-off, some voters will inevitably have to vote for a second preference if they are to vote at all. Using panel data, I investigate which types of voters maintain identification with their stated party and which changes their identification along with their vote.

My results confirm expectations drawn from previous studies. About 60% of Romanians declare themselves close to a party at one point or another. Of these, almost half can be considered consistent partisans, following their declaring themselves close to the same party over a period of one month, before and after the elections. The rest are individuals that consistently declare themselves independent from any political party. A comparison between these groups suggests that consistent partisans behave similarly to their European and American counterparts: they are more likely to vote consistently with the same party, be interested in politics, and trust political parties than non-partisans. I also look at campaign dynamics and find that voters whose preferred candidate did not make it into the second round are quite keen on following their candidate’s advice on who they should vote for in the second round. The effect is even stronger for partisans of the losing candidate’s party.

I also find some weak but consistent support in favour of AI, but only when the model is applied to voting for the challenging candidate. Supporters of the challenger are more likely to vote for another candidate when experiencing anxiety. Anxiety about one’s own candidate and about the whole range of candidates is also linked to increased levels of attention to the campaign and more discussion about the elections. I also analyze the direct relationship between voting behaviour and emotions. My results indicate that emotions do have a direct effect on candidate evaluations, but anxiety only influences assessments of the incumbent, not the challenger. Moreover, emotions have no direct effect on voting behaviour.

**Literature review**

The traditional understanding of emotions is that they are to be separated from rationality. Emotions stand in the way of calm examination of a given situation, triggering irrational behaviours. Yet developments in neuroscience and psychology...
suggest that emotions play an irreplaceable role in managing everyday experiences. Emotions have also been shown to have an active role in information seeking behaviours, in predictions, voting, risk assessment and partisanship. Instead of a think-first-and-feel-second order of managing information, recent research suggests that emotions may be antecedent to actual processing of information by the brain. Evidence that the cognitive and affective components interact is growing: an array of works by Isen and co-authors report a positive relationship between positive affect and problem-solving abilities, while Miller discusses the enhancive effect political sophistication has on experiencing emotions. Marcus, Neuman and MacKuen argue that it is the affective systems, those managing emotions, which also direct individuals' reactions to new situations and their tendency to rely on habits in familiar situations. Marcus explains that emotional systems hold more information about one's surrounding environment than the conscious. Therefore, emotions are the first to intervene when a new environment demands processing.

5 Wolak et al., "How the Emotions of Public Policy Affect Citizen Engagement and Public Deliberation."
6 Dumville and Norris, "Affective Forecasting Errors in the 2008 Election: Unpredicting Happiness."
7 Marcus and MacKuen, "Anxiety, Enthusiastic, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement during Presidential Campaigns."
8 Huddy, Feldman, and Cassese, "On the Distinct Political Effects of Anxiety and Anger."
12 Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen, Affective Intelligence and Political Judgement.
13 Marcus, The Sentimental Citizen. Emotion in Democratic Politics.
situation arises. In charge of these responses are the disposition system and the surveillance system, both found in the limbic region of the brain\textsuperscript{14}.

Marcus\textsuperscript{15} explains that the disposition system is the one that guides learned behaviours by continuously gathering feedback and establishing whether a particular activity can continue. It uses emotional markers to assess the failure or success of each activity as it is being performed. The disposition system guides such activities as writing or riding a bike, which, after being learned, become embedded in the procedural memory. Such behaviours can be performed without attention from the conscious and without occupying resources that the brain needs for other activities. The surveillance system, on the other hand, is connected to the associative memory. It scans the environment for any new element or threat and decides whether special attention is required to deal with any novelty or whether familiar habits are sufficient. The surveillance system does not intervene, but draws attention to the brain that the current plan of action must be stopped and another plan needs to be created to deal with the new situation\textsuperscript{16}.

Based on the roles of the emotional systems, the theory of Affective Intelligence predicts that voters will rely on their habits to make political decisions when they do not sense any novelty in the political environment\textsuperscript{17}. When faced with a political decision, individuals will process the information in two steps: first, the surveillance system scans the environment to detect any threatening or unfamiliar element. For example, in an electoral campaign, if an extreme party that the voter deeply dislikes appears to have a chance of winning, it could be perceived as a threatening element and determine the voter to pay more attention to the campaign. If such a situation does not arise and it appears to be ‘politics as usual’, the voter will rely on his political habits, if she has them. The second step consists of continuing with the familiar plan of action or modifying one’s actions. Therefore, in an election that appears to hold nothing out of the ordinary, a partisan will rely on his attachments to make a voting decision.


\textsuperscript{15} Marcus, \textit{The Sentimental Citizen. Emotion in Democratic Politics}.

\textsuperscript{16} The surveillance system should not be confused with the fight-or-flight system, which intervenes before the information of the danger is received by the brain, to ensure survival of the individual e.g. removing one’s hand from a hot object.

\textsuperscript{17} Wolak et al., "How the Emotions of Public Policy Affect Citizen Engagement and Public Deliberation."
One such heuristic that voters may employ in situations that hold nothing out of the ordinary is party identification. Some evidence suggests that individuals in post-communist societies are becoming attached to parties in the same way that more experienced voters have developed party identification. Miller and Klobucar argue that half of the electorate in Russia and Ukraine could be described as identifiers in the late 1990s. This is also confirmed by Brader and Tucker using Russian data between 1993 and 1996. Barnes, McDonough and Pina look at a survey panel from Spain, gathered in 1978, 1980 and 1984. They identify 16% of Spanish voters as consistently naming the same party as their close one in consecutive waves, after merely years of democratic experience (Franco had died in 1975).

Marcus and his colleagues apply the theory of affective intelligence to the political realm, hypothesizing that any anxiety caused by a political event will determine voters to abandon their previous habits and attentively consider the situation. They find that, indeed, anxiety proves to be a strong intervening factor between partisanship and one’s perception of political issues. Specifically, supporters of the incumbent president’s party are much more likely to have a negative view on the state of the economy if they are made anxious by the president’s actions, while supporters of the opposition are just weakly influenced by how they see the president. Moreover, anxiety about the challenger does not appear to have any effect on economic perceptions. Marcus and MacKeun conclude that anxiety motivates voters to pay more attention to the campaign settings and cease relying on their political habits for a voting decision. More recently, MacKuen et al. conducted an experiment, presenting subjects with newspaper articles on policy proposals that were meant to generate feelings of anxiety, anger or reassurance. Their findings support previous research. They find that, when confronted with a policy proposal that makes them anxious, individuals are more open to new information.

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22 Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen, *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgement*.
23 Marcus and MacKuen, "Anxiety, Enthusiasms, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement during Presidential Campaigns."
24 MacKuen et al., "Civic Engagement: Resolute Partisanship or Reflective Deliberation."
The theory, though, is not uncontroversial. Ladd and Lenz argue that emotions explain voting behaviour through a much simpler mechanism. They suggest, instead, that there is a direct relation between candidate evaluations and emotions. Appraisal Theory and Affect Transfer Theory suggest that emotions are linked to evaluations of events or individuals, though the theories disagree on the direction of causality. The authors replicate the analyses of Marcus and MacKuen and Marcus, Neuman and MacKuen’s and find little support for Affective Intelligence theory. They claim that the initial findings are an artefact of the unusual way in which anxiety was coded, as only anxiety towards the candidate of one’s own party was considered. In a second objection the authors refer to the multi-dimensional model of emotions used by Marcus and his colleagues. Ladd and Lenz suggest that anxiety and enthusiasm are only two sides of the same coin. They claim that anxiety about one’s own candidate is conceptually equivalent to enthusiasm about the opposing candidate, in accordance with a single-dimensional model of positive-negative affect. While some theories of political behaviour depend on a connection between positive and negative emotions, research suggests that the two dimensions are in fact independent of one another, with individuals holding both positive and negative emotions towards an object.

The recent discussion in *Political Psychology* moves the debate on Affective Intelligence Theory forward by showing where the theory is vulnerable. Whether considering only anxiety over one’s own candidate or the opposing candidate is debated by the two sides. Some evidence suggests that it should not matter what object generates anxiety (Way and Masters, for example, use images of snakes, skulls and babies to generate emotions in their study of political attitudes). The question of how to conceptualize anxiety is still open for discussion and in this study

26 Marcus and MacKuen, "Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement during Presidential Campaigns."
27 Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen, *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgement*.
28 Ladd and Lenz, "Reassessing the Role of Anxiety in Vote Choice."
I use two different conceptualizations in an attempt to provide an answer. I look both at the effects of anxiety caused by an individual’s in-party candidate and at a broader definition of anxiety, caused by a wider range of candidates competing in the elections at hand.

**Figure 1: AI Model**

![Diagram](image)

**Expectations**

The first part of my study consists of a descriptive analysis of party identification in Romania. Using two waves of a panel study conducted in the weeks before the first round of the presidential elections in 2009 and in the weeks following the second round I identify two types of identifiers: consistent partisans, who did not change their preferred parties between rounds and inconsistent partisans, who gave different answers when asked which party they felt close to in the two waves.

The last part of my study deals especially with understanding how emotions influence electoral decision-making. A voter that has an enduring party identification should make a voting decision based on this identification when an election appears to be familiar, i. e. with no new parties or candidates out of the ordinary. On the other hand, if the voter’s surveillance system detects a new element, she should become more eager to get informed about the election and the candidates. This does not necessarily imply that the individual will abandon the party she feels close to at the polls. Instead, it means that party identification will not be the main mechanism for coming to a decision about who to vote for. I propose that, if Affective Intelligence Theory accurately describes the role of emotions in electoral behaviour, voters that do not reveal signs of anxiety should
behave according to their party identification. In other words, for those low on anxiety, party id should be a strong predictor of vote. On the other hand, partisans who declare themselves anxious about their own party’s candidate or about any candidate in the race should show a decreased reliance on party identification in their decision-making process, i.e., anxiety and party identification should interact negatively in their effect on vote choice. For voters who do not consider themselves close to the candidates’ parties I do not expect anxiety to have a significant role on vote choice. Since these individuals do not have any voting habits to rely on, there is no mechanism in Affective Intelligence Theory that would predict any change in these individuals’ behaviours. Alternatively, if a more accurate portrayal of voting behaviour is characterized by Ladd and Lenz’s Affect Transfer Theory I expect to find a direct link between emotions and candidate evaluations. In this case, presumably voters who are made anxious about a candidate will abandon him at the polls irrespective of their party identification or lack thereof. Moreover, emotional reactions towards candidates should be classified along a negative-positive dimension, with anger and anxiety having negative effects on candidate evaluations and hope and pride positively affecting respondents’ evaluations of the candidates.

The study of emotions should prove especially fruitful in the context of an electorate with a medium experience with electoral democracy. Arguably, Romanian voters have had some time to familiarize themselves with the electoral process. The rules of presidential elections have remained unchanged since the early 1990s and the dynamics of politics are relatively stable. Electoral volatility decreased in the first decade of democracy below the average of the region and the effective number of electoral parties stabilized at 5.1 by the year 2000. Given the relatively high degree of party system institutionalization, there is reason to suspect that the Romanian electorate may have formed attachments to political parties, attachments that resemble those found in more experienced democracies. Yet politics, even more so in East-Central Europe, are emotion-ridden. The complexities of policy making may prove even more challenging in a country where some half of the electorate regularly abstains from voting. Therefore, the elections of Romania could represent an ideal case to study the way in which emotions and political habits interact and influence voting behaviour.

33 Ladd and Lenz, "Reassessing the Role of Anxiety in Vote Choice."
P_BEC.pdf.
Furthermore, Affective Intelligence Theory has so far been tested almost exclusively on American electorates. Notable exceptions are Rosema\textsuperscript{36} and Capelos\textsuperscript{37} who successfully tested the theory on Dutch voters and Kiss and Hobolt\textsuperscript{38} who looked at British voters. Multiparty systems should reveal with even more success the interaction of emotions and habit considering the greater pallet of choices voters face at any election. Whereas in two-party systems voters made anxious by their party's candidate have only one other electoral choice, if they are to vote at all, in European multiparty systems the potential for voters to actually abandon their parties' candidates at the polls is even greater. Therefore, if anxiety decreases the impact of party identification on electoral choice, this should be more apparent in multiparty systems.

Data and Methodology

The data used for this study was gathered as part of the Romanian Electoral Studies program. During the 2009 campaign for the presidential elections, a three-wave survey was conducted, with surveys being administered before the first round of the elections, between the two rounds, and after the second and final round of the presidential elections. For this study though, only the first and third waves were used. Questions regarding closeness to a party were not available in the intermediary wave. All variables were recoded to range from 0 to 1. To measure party identification, respondents were asked “Do you feel close to a political organization?” in the first survey and “Would you say that you feel close to a political organization?” in the third one. Further, those who responded affirmatively were asked to identify the party that they felt close to. Based on these questions, respondents were classified as consistent partisans, inconsistent partisans or nonpartisans. \textbf{Consistent partisans} are those that responded as feeling close to a party in both waves and identified the same party as the one they felt close to both times. \textbf{Inconsistent partisans} are those that changed their answers from one wave to another. Either they switched between feeling and not feeling close to a party or they nominated different parties in the two surveys. Finally, \textbf{nonpartisans} are those respondents who said they did not felt close to a party in both waves.

I begin with an investigation the nature of partisans in Romania by using descriptive statistics. In order to test the hypotheses related to AI theory, I use binary logistic regression. Two models are tested, one including the interaction term between

\textsuperscript{36}Martin Rosema, "How Passionate is the Electorate?," in \textit{4th ECPR Conference} (Pisa, Italy2007).


partisanship and anxiety and one without the interaction term. Each model is tested on two candidates, the incumbent president and his main challenger. The dependent variable is vote for that candidate, coded as a dichotomous variable: respondents were coded 1 if they voted for a candidate and 0 if they did not. Party identification in this case measures identification with the party of the candidate in each model. Then the models are replicated using another measure of anxiety, general anxiety. I also test a direct relationship between emotions on the one hand, and voting intentions and feeling thermometers on the other. For this purpose I will use binary logistic regression and linear regression.

Analysis

Partisan Characteristics
Table 1 shows that more than 60% of the sample considers itself close to a political party at one point or another. Of these, nearly half fits the definition of consistent partisan. From the remaining 37, 75% consistently declare themselves nonpartisans. Compared with other studies, the figure may seem low. Rose and Mishler\(^39\) found that, in 1995, 41% of Romanians considered themselves close to a party. Using data from the Post-Communist Public Study II, Rudi\(^40\) reports similar findings, with 40.4% identifiers in 1998. Data from the 1996 module of CSES shows some 44.4% partisans in Romania\(^41\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Absolute Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent partisans</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>28.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent partisans</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>33.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpartisans</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>37.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1102</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Romanian Presidential Election Study 2009

But these studies may overestimate the level of identifiers, because they use data gathered at a single point in time. While they capture the affective dimension of party identification, they ignore that some of these partisans may only be reporting...


\(^{40}\) Tatjana Rudi, "What Kind of Party Identification Does Exist in Emerging Democracies in Central and Eastern Europe?," in *ECPR Beyond 'Party Identification and Beyond'*(2006).

short-term attachments. The lower figures of partisans that I identify can be accounted by the fact that the measure used not only requires individuals to self-identify as close to a party, but also eliminates very unstable attachments. More likely, the cause of the high instability is the young age of Romanian democracy and the inexperience of voters with the political system. It is worth considering that, even over a one month period, half of partisans change their responses, either by naming another party as the one they feel close to, or by changing between identifying with a party and being non-partisans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Share of partisans</th>
<th>% of voters who are consistent partisans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social-Democratic Party</td>
<td>49.36%</td>
<td>37.3% (148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Party</td>
<td>26.28%</td>
<td>25.9% (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Liberal Party</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
<td>19.6% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Union of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>6.73%</td>
<td>36.5% (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Romania Party</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
<td>12.2% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Generation Party</td>
<td>0.96%</td>
<td>15% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma Party</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Romanian Presidential Election Study 2009. # Numbers in parentheses represent raw figures.

The distribution of consistent partisans reveals that the strongest party from this perspective is the Social-Democratic Party (Table 2). Half of those classified as consistent partisans are supporters of the Social Democrats. The results are to be expected in view of the fact that left-wing parties in Europe have traditionally been characterized by organizational cohesion, admittedly with a downwards trend. The Liberal Democrats come a distant second with 14%. The Social Democrats also benefit greatest from their core supporters when it comes to votes: 37% of their voters consider themselves close to the party. The large number of partisans could explain the party's constant level of support over the last years. Their share of votes in parliamentary elections has remained around 35% since the 2000 elections. As expected, the Democratic Union of Hungarians also benefits from their loyal supporters. 36.5% of its voters are also stable partisans of the party. Of course, considering the ethnic nature foundation of the party, it is plausible that identifying with the party does not only entail a political identification, but also an ethnic one.

Based on extant literature, I would expect partisanship to be strongly correlated with vote stability\(^{43}\) (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Weisberg 1983; Campbell et al. 1960; Blais et al. 2001). Chi-square tests were performed, on general vote intention (for parties) and vote intention in the presidential elections. Table 3 confirms this expectation: there is a monotonic link between partisanship and vote consistency.

Table 3: Effect of partisanship on vote consistency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Consistent partisans</th>
<th>Inconsistent</th>
<th>Nonpartisans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson’s chi square</td>
<td>1236.156***</td>
<td>1138.062***</td>
<td>720.071***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi</td>
<td>2.065</td>
<td>1.935</td>
<td>1.609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Romanian Presidential Election Study 2009. Consistency in voting. Chi-square (general vote intention X presidential vote intention)

The idea that these three groups are indeed different from each other is strengthened by further analyses. Table 4 reveals that consistent partisans are more interested in politics than inconsistent ones which, in turn, are more interested than non partisans, these results being in conformity with previous studies\(^{44}\). There seems to be no difference between consistent and inconsistent partisans with respect to the amount of knowledge they possess, but non partisans are systematically less well informed than both groups, as also found by Rudi\(^{45}\).


\(^{45}\) Rudi, "What Kind of Party Identification Does Exist in Emerging Democracies in Central and Eastern Europe?."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Consistent</th>
<th>Inconsistent</th>
<th>Nonpartisans</th>
<th>Consistent-Inconsistent</th>
<th>Inconsistent-Nonpartisan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest in politics</strong></td>
<td>.4677</td>
<td>.3117</td>
<td>.2497</td>
<td>.1499*</td>
<td>.0680*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( .28)</td>
<td>( .24)</td>
<td>( .23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political knowledge</strong></td>
<td>.6795</td>
<td>.6513</td>
<td>.5758</td>
<td>.0281</td>
<td>.0755*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( .30)</td>
<td>( .28)</td>
<td>( .32)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust in political parties</strong></td>
<td>.4558</td>
<td>.3871</td>
<td>.3305</td>
<td>.0687*</td>
<td>.0566*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( .25)</td>
<td>( .24)</td>
<td>( .25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived differences between candidates</strong></td>
<td>.5924</td>
<td>.5824</td>
<td>.5669</td>
<td>.0100</td>
<td>.0154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( .25)</td>
<td>( .25)</td>
<td>( .22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turnout intention</strong></td>
<td>.9646</td>
<td>.9289</td>
<td>.8279</td>
<td>.3570</td>
<td>.1009*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( .18)</td>
<td>( .20)</td>
<td>( .42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual turnout</strong></td>
<td>.9600</td>
<td>.8774</td>
<td>.8191</td>
<td>.0825*</td>
<td>.0582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( .19)</td>
<td>( .32)</td>
<td>( .34)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Romanian Presidential Election Study 2009. Entries in the first three columns are means with standard deviations in brackets. The fourth and fifth columns are t-test mean differences.

* p<.05
Trust in political parties follows the same expected pattern, with trust increasing as one moves from being a nonpartisan to a consistent partisan. Unlike other findings in the literature, there appears to be no differences between groups as to how large they perceived the differences between candidates to be. While the differences are in the expected direction, they fail to reach statistical significance. Voting behaviour shows a similar pattern as presented above and conforms to existing literature. Generally, partisans decide earlier in the campaign who they will vote for and they are more likely to actually vote. The actual mean differences between the three analyzed groups reveal that they are indeed separate categories of individuals, with inconsistent partisans oscillating between consistent partisans and non-partisans, but generally behaving as a distinct group.

**Campaign Effects**
Next, I look at the campaign dynamics and I examine the shift in votes between the two rounds among those respondents who cast votes both times. I am especially interested in the behaviour of voters of the second runner-up, whose preferred candidate failed to make it into the second round. The presidential elections were contested by twelve candidates, but only three of them tallied vote shares that go into double digits. The incumbent, Traian Basescu, was supported by the Liberal Democratic Party (PDL). His main challenger, Mircea Geoana, was nominated by the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Crin Antonescu was running on behalf of the National Liberal Party (PNL). Crin Antonescu, who came in third in the first round of the elections, subsequently endorsed one of the two main candidates, the challenger Mircea Geoana. I consider the role party identification has on cue following and also how the campaign influences partisanship.

Voting patterns between the two rounds show striking stability for the two candidates who made it to the second round (Table 5). Around 90% of voters of the incumbent president and the main contender maintained their vote choice. The choices made by voters of other parties reflect the dynamics of the electoral

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campaign in the weeks before the run-off as Crin Antonescu advised his supports to cast their vote for Mircea Geoana in the second round. 48

Table 5. Vote change between rounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round I vote</th>
<th>Round II Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traian Basescu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traian Basescu (PDL)</td>
<td>92% (227)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mircea Geoana (PSD)</td>
<td>10% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crin Antonescu (PNL)</td>
<td>24% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>45% (116)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Romanian Presidential Election Study 2009. Row percentages add to 100. Differences account for missing data or voters in the first round who did not vote in the second.

As a result, most of the individuals who had previously voted for him, 75%, switched their vote to Mircea Geoana. The large amount of voters who followed his advice is rather surprising, considering that, ideologically, Liberals in Romania are closer to the Liberal Democrats than to the Social Democrats (European Election Database). Moreover, the Social Democratic Party is considered the successor party of the Communist Party, and its symbolic leader, Ion Iliescu, is a former communist activist. As well, there is no history of alliance between the Liberals and the Social Democrats, while the Liberal Party and the Liberal Democratic Party successfully ran as a coalition in the 2004 general elections, which admittedly ended mid-term with the dissolution of the partnership. Perhaps party identification plays a role in explaining the large number of liberal voters who chose to support Mircea Geoana.

Table 6. PNL voters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PNL partisans</th>
<th>Round II vote</th>
<th>Non-PNL partisans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traian Basescu</td>
<td>8% (3)</td>
<td>29% (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mircea Geoana</td>
<td>92% (33)</td>
<td>69% (72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Romanian Presidential Election Study 2009. Entries represent percentages of respondents who voted with the candidate supported by PNL in the first round, distributed according to their partisan status and their vote in the second round of the elections.

Among voters of Crin Antonescu there seems to be a positive relation between being a PNL partisan and following its leader’s advice (Table 6), although the Chi-square test falls short of statistical significance, probably due to the small number of voters.

cases (Pearson’s chi-square = 7.261, df=3, p=.064). The results suggest that voters can still make use of partisanship as a cue when they do not have the option of voting for their party’s candidate.

Testing Affective Intelligence Theory
For the purpose of the following analyses I only consider consistent partisans as having a party identification and regard inconsistent partisans to be non-identifiers. Following Marcus et al. and Ladd and Lenz (2008) I include in the model, besides the variables of interest, also variables that could stand as proxies for policy preference and candidate personal qualities. In order to assess respondents’ opinion of the candidates in terms of policies, I use their predictions as whether the state of the economy will improve or deteriorate if each candidate is elected president. As a proxy for candidates’ qualities, I use 11-point feeling thermometers. The survey also includes a battery on candidate qualities, but it could not be used due to missing data. Later the models are replicated using another measure of anxiety, general anxiety. If the theory holds, we should observe that the interaction term between party identification and anxiety has a negative effect on voting for the candidate. This hypothesis is tested using two definitions of anxiety. First, I will consider only anxiety caused by the candidate supported by the party the respondent feels close to. Later, I will also test the theory using a general measure of anxiety, defined as the maximum level of anxiety caused by any of the candidates. As an alternative toAIT, I also look at the direct impact emotions have on voting behaviour.

Table 7 reports two logistic regression models, each for the two main contenders. Along with the odds ratios usually reported for logistic regression due to their intuitive interpretation, I also include the y-standardized coefficients, as they allow me to compare coefficients across models (Mare and Wonship 1984). Before interpreting the results, it should be noted that the models only include the variables ‘anxiety’ in interaction with party identification, following the example of Marcus and his colleagues (Marcus 2002; Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). While normally all constitutive terms of an interaction should be included, Brambor and Clark (2005) demonstrate that under some conditions variables may be excluded. Particularly, a variable may be omitted if the variable it is interacted with

49 Marcus, MacKuen, and Neuman, ”Parsimony and Complexity: Developing and Testing Theories of Affective Intelligence.”
50 Ladd and Lenz, ”Reassessing the Role of Anxiety in Vote Choice.”
52 Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen, Affective Intelligence and Political Judgement; Marcus, The Sentimental Citizen. Emotion in Democratic Politics.
has a ‘natural zero’ and if the effect of the former on the dependent variable is actually null. In this case, partisanship does in fact have a natural zero, since not being a partisan of a particular party does imply the natural absence of that characteristic. Second, a fully specified model reveals that anxiety has a main effect that is indistinguishable from zero on the dependent variable, vote, for both the incumbent and the challenger. Moreover, Kiss and Hobolt54 (2011), in an experiment on British voters, also find no main effects of emotions on partisan vote. Therefore, I feel comfortable in only including the variable ‘anxiety’ in interaction with party identification.

Overall, the models fare rather well. For the incumbent, model 1 predicts 87.1% of the cases correctly, and for model 2 the figure increases to 87.9%. For the challenger, model 1 predicts 84.6% of the cases correctly, and model 2 predicts 84.5%, a slight decrease. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test does not reach statistical significance for any of the models, indicating a good model fit. Including the interaction term improves the models, as can be seen from the decrease in AIC (from 646.20 to 595.96 for the incumbent and from 661.64 to 617.49 for the challenger). A quick overview of the results reveals that partisanship has a strong positive effect on vote (Model 1). Being consistently close to the president’s party, for example, increases the chances of voting for him by 21 times, whereas closeness to the social-democratic party increases the chances to vote for the challenger by almost 12 times. Believing that the candidate will highly improve the economic conditions of the country also has a very large impact on vote, whereas the candidate’s personal qualities (summarised through a 11-point feeling thermometer) has just a moderate effect, which is only significant in the model applied to the incumbent. Yet, the effect is in the expected direction, with more positive reviews of the candidate improving the chances of voting for him.

If AI holds, the interaction term between partisanship and anxiety should have a negative effect on vote. As Table 7 reveals, the evidence is limited, although in the expected direction. Both for the incumbent and the challenger, anxiety about the candidate supported by the party one feels close to weakens voters’ reliance on partisanship. Yet in neither case do the negative coefficients reach a level of significance. The insignificance of the results does not come as a great surprise since only a very limited number of people declare having been made to feel afraid of their own candidate. In total, only 12.2% of consistent partisans (38 individuals) report anxiety about their own candidate. 10.7% of partisans of the Social Democratic Party report some anxiety about Mircea Geoana and 19% of Liberal Democratic partisans are at least somewhat anxious about President Traian Basescu.

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54 Kiss and Hobolt, "The Emotional Voter. An Experimental Study of the Moderating Effect of Emotions on Partisan Behaviors."
Table 7: Indirect Effect of Anxiety on Vote Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Challenger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship</td>
<td>21.759*</td>
<td>1.0398*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship x Anxiety Own</td>
<td>.773</td>
<td>-.0872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>1929.272*</td>
<td>2.5539*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>1.961*</td>
<td>.2273*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer</td>
<td>.003*</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke $R^2$</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td>.555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>646.20</td>
<td>595.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*significant at .05 level; † significant at .10 level;
For a more intuitive interpretation, Figure 2 displays the change in predicted probabilities of voting for the incumbent as a function of anxiety caused by the president. For the partisans of the incumbent’s party the probability of voting for the president decreases from 92% to 75% as the level of anxiety caused by the president increases from ‘not at all’ to ‘very often’. On the other hand, in the case of non-partisans, the increase in level of anxiety leaves the probability of voting for the president virtually unchanged, at about 1%. Figure 3 shows the same patterns for the main challenger. Partisans of Mircea Geoana’s party who are not made anxious by the candidate have a probability of 88% of voting for him, while those who are very anxious about the candidate experience a drop in probabilities to 64%. Non-partisans again are not influenced by the increase in anxiety. Their probabilities of voting for the challenger are steady at above 1%. In both cases, the decrease in vote probability for partisans is not quite linear, but the intermediary differences are not significant.

Figure 2: Probability of voting for incumbent as a function of anxiety
I further look at the impact of emotions on both vote choice and on candidates’ individual evaluations. As expected, anger has a negative effect on candidate evaluations, while hope and pride are positively correlated with candidate ratings. Anxiety, on the other hand, is only related to incumbent evaluations. Results suggest that anxiety has only a weak effect (with a coefficient of -.057). Ladd and Lenz (2008) argue in favour of a direct relationship between candidate evaluations and emotions, yet the results presented here show only a weak support for their theory. Moreover, they also support a multi-dimensional view of emotions. While hope and pride, both positive emotions, have similar positive effects on candidate evaluations, anger and anxiety do not function as parts of a single negative emotion. Instead, anxiety has a very weak negative effect compared to that of anger and only in the case of the incumbent president. The failure to find a direct relationship between anxiety and vote choice suggests that the relationship is not so simple. Voters do not simply refuse to vote for a candidate that makes them anxious.

55 Ladd and Lenz, "Reassessing the Role of Anxiety in Vote Choice."
Table 8: Direct/Indirect Effect of Emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vote Intention (Logistic regression)</th>
<th>Feeling Thermometer (OLS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>.565*</td>
<td>.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>1.259</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear/Anxiety</td>
<td>1.766†</td>
<td>.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>1.208</td>
<td>.646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.167*</td>
<td>.203*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( R^2 )</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: Romanian Presidential Elections Study 2009. Entries in column 1 and 2 represent logistic regression odds ratios and in columns 3 and 4 OLS coefficients.

* p < .05; † p < .10

Ladd and Lenz\(^{56}\) (2008) also argue that general anxiety is a better measure for a test of Affective Intelligence. Therefore, I replicate the previous analysis from Table 7 by replacing anxiety about one’s own candidate with general anxiety, conceptualized as the highest value from the items measuring fear towards three major candidates in the race and a generic ‘other’ candidate. I call this general anxiety, but there are limitations to using such a conceptualization. There may be other elements in the electoral competition that make individuals feel anxious and which could have an influence on their decision-making processes. It could be that other minor candidates have a great enough impact on the electoral campaign so as to influence the dynamics of elections, or other exogenous elements, like the economy. Unfortunately, the data used in this study does not allow a broader definition of anxiety. Yet, the situation is not that dire. If something is to cause sufficient levels of anxiety to change decision-making patterns, it is expected that candidates that have a decent chance of winning the elections should have that impact.

The results in Table 9 are very similar to those presented previously. Of all consistent partisans, 27.8% (87 individuals) report having felt anxious about any of the candidates in the race. Party identification, economic prospects, and feeling thermometers, have the same impact on the dependent variable as in the previous models. Again, for the incumbent’s partisans, anxiety does not appear to have an influence. Yet, for the challenger, results suggest with a higher certainty that anxiety decreases voters’ dependence on partisanship. The coefficient, though, does not differ much from the previous model in Table 7.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
### Table 9: General anxiety model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partisanship</th>
<th>Incumbent Model 3</th>
<th>Incumbent Model 4</th>
<th>Challenger Model 3</th>
<th>Challenger Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. 420*</td>
<td>1. 0398*</td>
<td>22. 714*</td>
<td>1. 0546*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. 122</td>
<td>. 0390</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisanship x General Anxiety</td>
<td>2. 098*</td>
<td>. 2273*</td>
<td>2. 098*</td>
<td>. 2503*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy Own</td>
<td>1803. 475*</td>
<td>2. 5539*</td>
<td>1810. 056*</td>
<td>2. 5329*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>2. 098*</td>
<td>. 2273*</td>
<td>2. 098*</td>
<td>. 2503*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer</td>
<td>2. 098*</td>
<td>. 2273*</td>
<td>2. 098*</td>
<td>. 2503*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>. 002*</td>
<td>. 002*</td>
<td>. 001*</td>
<td>. 001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke R²</td>
<td>. 555</td>
<td>. 555</td>
<td>. 563</td>
<td>. 567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>646. 20</td>
<td>628. 87</td>
<td>661. 64</td>
<td>622. 90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* significant at . 05 level;
† significant at . 10 level;
As before, I look at the relationship between the predicted probabilities of voting for the two candidates as determined by the levels of general anxiety reported by respondents. In the case of the incumbent president (Figure 4) and partisans of the Liberal Democratic Party, the party supporting him, there is a slight decrease in probability of voting for the president from 92% to 80% as individuals report feeling anxious about any of the candidates very often. For non-partisans, general anxiety does not influence vote propensities. All non-partisans are assigned predicted probabilities of voting for Traian Basescu of about 1.5%, and not higher than 2%. For the main challenger, the results in Figure 5 reveal a stronger relationship between general anxiety and vote in the case of partisans. A respondent who declares herself close to the Social Democratic Party and who is not anxious about any of the candidates has a probability of voting for the party’s candidate of 87%. If the respondent reports being made anxious about any candidate very often, the chances of voting for the challenger decrease to 79%. For non-partisans, the chances of voting for Mircea Geoana are 1.7% regardless of the levels of anxiety reported.

Figure 4: Probability of voting for incumbent as a function of general anxiety
It appears that the conceptualization of anxiety does not make a great difference to the explanatory power of Affective Intelligence Theory. Overall, the results suggest that, indifferent to the definition of anxiety, AI is better suited to explain breaking with the partisan preference in the case of the challenger, while a direct relation between emotions and candidate evaluations is apparent only in the case of the incumbent.

Figure 5: Probability of voting for challenger as a function of general anxiety

Another important aspect of AI theory is the mechanism through which individuals come to reconsider their choices. Presumably, when individuals become anxious, they pay more attention to the situation at hand, because the surveillance system flags a disturbance in the environment. MacKuen et al.\(^{57}\) (2010) find that individuals who are made anxious are more likely to seek out new information. Therefore, if AI holds, individuals who are made anxious should be more likely to pay attention to the campaign. I test this hypothesis using simple bivariate correlations. I make use of both conceptualizations of anxiety: caused by one’s in-party candidate and the maximum level of anxiety caused by any of the competing candidates.

\[^{57}\text{MacKuen et al.}, "Civic Engagement: Resolute Partisanship or Reflective Deliberation."\]
Table 10. Relationship between anxiety and following electoral campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Follow campaign</th>
<th>... on TV</th>
<th>... in newspapers</th>
<th>... on radio</th>
<th>Talk with family or friends</th>
<th>Accessed web page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>.076 (.005)</td>
<td>.010 (.705)</td>
<td>-.013 (.627)</td>
<td>.018 (.519)</td>
<td>.070 (.010)</td>
<td>.011 (.694)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Anxiety</td>
<td>.011 (.648)</td>
<td>.108 (.000)</td>
<td>.038 (.173)</td>
<td>.059 (.035)</td>
<td>.175 (.000)</td>
<td>.050 (.077)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Again, the data offers support for Affective Intelligence Theory (Table 10). It appears that people made anxious by their own party’s candidate are more likely to follow the campaign in general and somewhat more likely to talk with their friends and families about the elections. General anxiety increases the propensity to follow the campaign on TV, on the radio and on the internet, and also has a positive impact on talking about the elections. These results reflect findings by Huddy et al.⁵⁸ (2005).

Conclusion

This study set out to describe the nature of partisanship in Romania. Consistent partisans are those who over the period of one month declared themselves as close to the same political party. They comprise almost one third of the sample analysed. These individuals are more likely to vote with the same party in different types of elections. They are more interested in politics, have higher trust in political parties and are more likely to vote. At the other end of the spectrum, we find nonpartisans, individuals who repeatedly reject any party identification. They represent 37% of the sample. These respondents are less interested in politics, have lower levels of political knowledge, they do not trust political parties, and are less likely to vote. They are also more likely to vote for different parties in different elections. A third category is that of inconsistent partisans, people who change between declaring themselves close to a party at one point and as not close to any party at a different point in time, or report different parties as their close one.

Turning to a test of Affective Intelligence Theory, my analysis suggests a rather weak, yet consistent, support for a model of voting behaviour consistent with it. In

accordance with established literature\(^5\) (MacKuen et al. 2010; Marcus 2002; Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Wolak et al. 2003) partisans that are made anxious by their in-party candidate are less likely to vote for him and more likely to attentively follow the electoral campaign.

Curiously, only partisans of the main challenger, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, appear to behave according to the theory. Perhaps the reason for this is that supporters of the president’s party, even if they were anxious about the president, perceived a lack of electoral alternatives. In an election where the atmosphere was of a competition of all-against-the-incumbent, it is possible that Liberal Democratic partisans may have felt a greater need to rally around their party’s candidate and as a result few partisans actually broke ranks come Election Day. Considering that respondents identifying with the Liberal Democratic Party were more ideologically clustered, it is quite reasonable to expect that they had a harder time finding alternatives. Moreover, if individuals vote retrospectively, the elections become a referendum on the incumbent’s performance in office\(^6\) (Ferejohn 1986). If supporters of the president’s party felt that the incumbent’s track record was good enough, they had even less reason to vote for another candidate. Moreover, an important part of anxiety is uncertainty\(^7\) (Davis 1992). The fact that the incumbent has a portfolio on which he can be evaluated could possibly reduce the effects of anxiety. Considering that the question refers to previous instances in which the candidate made respondents feel afraid, for the incumbent voters should have an easier time projecting his future performance based on his past record. In the case of the challenger, who had no experience with the presidency, the amount of uncertainty attached to his future performance was greater. This may leave more room for anxiety to influence voting behaviour.

The same results are obtained if I replace anxiety about one’s own candidate with general anxiety, defined as anxiety caused by any of the competing candidates. Moreover, individuals that are anxious are more engaged with the campaign, discussing events with friends and following the campaign closely. These results are in line with Affective Intelligence Theory. Evidence in favour of a direct effect of emotions on candidate evaluations is limited. While it appears that most emotions do influence candidate ratings in the expected direction, anxiety, the variable of interest, does not behave accordingly. Again, the effect of anxiety on feeling

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thermometers is only significant in the case of one candidate, in this case the incumbent. But the magnitude of the effect is very small compared with the impact of other emotions, about five times smaller.

These results have implications for both voting behaviour literature and affect-based theories. Voters do not reassess their electoral preferences at each election, instead base their decisions on stable relationships formed with parties in their political system. Conversely, they also do not blindly follow instructions from the parties they identify with. Voters seem to contrast previous information with current situations. If the candidate nominated by the party they feel close to does not conform to their expectation of what such a candidate should be like, they will gather more information on the electoral campaign. In the end, voters made anxious by that candidate or by the whole range of candidates may even come to reconsider their vote.

Future research should dig further into the mechanisms underlying Affective Intelligence Theory. So far it is less clear what causes anxiety in the political arena, as opposed to anger, or other negative emotions, or why is it that voters seem to react differently to different political figures? Perhaps the sources of anxiety can also help differentiate between different effects. It would be worth examining if individuals react differently to distinct stimuli. Can different sources cause different types of anxieties? It is obvious that emotions influence individual behaviour in complex ways. Further studies should seek to better understand the interactions between emotions and rationality, borrowing from the neuropsychology and cognitive science literatures.

Acknowledgements

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