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SHINING LIGHT ON HIDDEN PREFERENCES: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN THE 1989 ROMANIAN REVOLUTION

By Justin Clardie

Justin Clardie is an associate professor of international relations at Northwest Nazarene University. His research focuses broadly on transitions of government, with a special emphasis on dissent and social movements in former Communist Europe. His work has been published in *Armed Forces and Society* and *Religion and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*.

"A spectre is haunting Eastern Europe: the spectre of what in the West is called 'dissent.'" This is how Vaclav Havel, the Czech playwright, dissident, and President, began his influential 1978 essay, "The Power of the Powerless." Havel's statement of dissent in Eastern Europe was certainly true in his country of Czechoslovakia, as well as in countries such as Poland and Hungary. The presence of sustained and organized dissent was largely absent, however, in Romania. Even in countries with the presence of popular and consistent dissent, the collapse of the communist regime was still shocking in both scope and speed. As Gaddis suggests, the failure to conceive of and subsequent shock of the collapse of communism was true in academics as well as in government and the media.\(^1\) The unexpected collapse of communism in countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia with dissident movements as prominent as Solidarity and Charter 77 makes the collapse of the Ceausescu regime even more shocking. Small protests in Timisoara, on December 15, 1989, ultimately culminated with the execution of Ceausescu and his wife on December 25 that year. The speed and beginnings of the collapse of Romanian Communism are still puzzling to this day.

This paper attempts to address this puzzle by examining the role religion and religious institutions played in the sudden collapse of Ceausescu. The argument builds off the work of Timur Kuran and suggests that, under certain conditions, when religious leaders or institutions publicly speak out against the government, this encourages others, who may have otherwise been reluctant, to express their true preferences as well. The effects are primarily due to two characteristics associated with religion and religious groups. Religious groups are often excellent at building strong internal bonds resulting in cohesive groups capable of collective action. Furthermore, in many societies, religious leaders and groups command a great deal of respect and trust. Their actions are not the same as other potential actors in the society and their expressed opposition to the government and its policies may have more influence. These two factors are magnified in situations when the religious group has ties to other religious groups outside of the country because this potentially brings in new actors to the domestic context. The government, opposition groups and private citizens are forced to consider the actions of these international players in decisions related to dissent. The effects are also strengthened if the religious group has strong ties to other groups in society.

The argument presented here is not that religion or religious institutions are the primary factors in revolutions in general or in 1989 Romania specifically. There are obviously structural, historical, economic, cultural, and unique individual factors that are at play in every revolution. The influence of religion, however, is often underappreciated. This paper attempts to integrate the influence of religion into an existing theory of sudden revolution and collective action, which hopefully contributes to existing literature by providing a systematic explanation of religion's influence in such situations. The next section of the paper briefly examines some of the existing
literature on the role of religion in social movements and collective action. The theory is more fully explicated in the following section and is then applied to the case of 1989 Romania.

Religion, Social Capital and Collective Action

There is an extensive literature detailing causes and theoretical approaches to revolutionary and social movements. This literature is not of immediate concern for the current study, and as such, the focus here will be on the influence of religion in revolutionary and social movements. The bulk of research with respect to religion in social movements focuses on the potential role of religion in facilitating and building social capital.

The basic link between religion and social movements identified in the literature is that religion can increase levels of social capital and that social capital can increase the likelihood of social movements. Social movements benefit from high levels of trust and cohesive social networks, which are elements of social capital. So, to the extent that religion does influence social capital in a positive manner, it can indirectly influence the emergence of social movements.

Religious affiliation and/or beliefs are related to higher levels of trust, as demonstrated in a diverse group of studies. The main thrust of these studies is that individuals associated with religion in some fashion exhibit higher levels of trust in general than individuals who identified more as non-religious. This is true in a number of different contexts, such as modern-day Canada\(^2\) (Matta 2013), the United States\(^3\) and Germany.\(^4\) Religion has also been argued to

increase trust in specific economic contexts, like Jewish diamond merchants and Muslim traders in Northern Africa. The influence of religion on strengthening social networks and building community has also been identified in the literature, within multiple different contexts.

The basic argument presented for the influence of religion on both trust and social cohesion is two-fold. First, religious involvement results in increased interactions, which leads to both increased trust and stronger social networks. With respect to trust, this argument mirrors similar suggestions in the rational choice literature—specifically, as it relates to the concept of trust and the classic prisoner's dilemma game. Religious involvement often results in the repeated interaction that is necessary to overcome the lack of trust inherent in the game. The second basic argument suggests that religion creates signals and rituals that help to bind communities together and in the process, create stronger levels of trust. This line of thought is classically represented by Durkheim and Weber, but also has found traction in current research in this area.

Finally, there are many studies that argue religion helps play a role in solving collective action problems and lead to greater likelihood of social movements, political action and civic

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competence. Wald and his co-authors present the most comprehensive model of this within the context of the United States. They suggest that religion should be considered as a political resource that impacts three key aspects needed for collective action: motivation, organization, and social interaction.\(^{11}\) Numerous studies operating within this general framework have looked at religious involvement in social movements, like human rights\(^{12}\) and civil rights in the African-American community.\(^{13}\) Religious affiliation and/or religious belief have also been found to result in greater social cohesion\(^ {14}\) and adolescent civic competence\(^ {15}\) in the Netherlands as well as civic engagement and participation in the U.S. and Canada.\(^ {16}\)

**Kuran’s Model of Preference Falsification**

The challenge of the current study is to integrate the influences associated with religion described above into existing theoretical work on revolutions, specifically, the theory emphasizing the importance of preference falsification developed by Timur Kuran.\(^ {17}\) Kuran seeks to explain why so many revolutions surprise us by their sudden emergence, while in

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12 Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*.
14 Schmeets and te Riele, “Declining Social Cohesion in the Netherlands?”
hindsight they seem obvious. The explanation he arrives at builds on a model developed in previous work to explain why policies with little private support may be enacted and why they are difficult to overturn.\textsuperscript{18} Revolutions are often so surprising because there are incentives for individuals to keep their true preferences hidden. Large numbers of people may actually oppose the existing government and favor another option, but these private preferences are not made public.\textsuperscript{19} This is what Kuran refers to as preference falsification.

Preference falsification is influenced by two factors, which are generally unique to each individual: an integrity function and a reputation function. The integrity function relates to how much stress is created for the individual by “lying” about their true preference. If the integrity function is high enough, the individual cannot live with the preference falsification and their private and public preferences will be the same.\textsuperscript{20} Whereas the integrity function is based on individual psychological factors, the reputation function is influenced by external factors. In other words, the integrity function is influenced by internal payoffs and the reputation function influenced by external payoffs.\textsuperscript{21} There are costs associated with making the private preference public, such as social shaming, loss of employment or even physical harm. There is also uncertainty because of the difficulty associated with determining the true preference of others. Thus the perceived costs and the uncertainty create incentives to keep the true preference private.\textsuperscript{22}

The integrity and reputation functions jointly influence an individual’s threshold level. The threshold level is essentially the percentage of public preferences in society necessary for the individual to express their private preference in public. The individual sees there are people who

\textsuperscript{18} Kuran, “Chameleon Voters and Public Choice”; Kuran, “Preference Falsification…”
\textsuperscript{19} Kuran, “Sparks and Prairie Fires”; Kuran, “Now out of Never”; Kuran, \textit{Private Truths, Public Lies}
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
think like he or she does, which results in lower reputation costs. If a person has a high integrity function, meaning a great deal of psychological distress due to preference falsification, it will require only a small percentage of other people publicly expressing the same preference. If a person has a low integrity function, he or she will require a greater percentage of the population expressing the same preference.\textsuperscript{23}

The suddenness of the revolution results from a revolutionary bandwagon, which is usually caused by some change that lowers reputation costs. The decrease in reputation costs then allows some individuals to express their private preferences publicly. This in turn creates a greater percentage of people openly expressing opposition to the government, which in turn meets the threshold level for further individuals who then express their preferences publicly and so on.\textsuperscript{24} Because we cannot know for certain the true nature of private preferences in the society, we are shocked by such a sudden display of opposition to the existing government.

Kuran notes that this phenomenon is also expressed eloquently in Vaclav Havel’s essay “The Power of the Powerless.” In the essay, Havel describes a greengrocer who places a sign, which reads “Workers of the World Unite” in the window of his shop. The sign is not placed in the window because the greengrocer believes the slogan but it is placed in the window to avoid the costs of nonconformity, like losing his job. If one day the greengrocer decided to remove the sign, this could create ripples throughout the whole society and threaten the control of the government. Throughout the essay, Havel repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the social lie (in Kuran’s terminology preference falsification) to keep the government in power and the importance of truth in threatening the system.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
Three factors influence the prospects of revolution occurring. The first factor is an increase in the expected share of support for the opposition to the government, which can be caused in increased exposure of private preferences. The second factor is a widespread lowering of the threshold level, which leads to a greater number of individuals expressing their private preferences resulting in the revolutionary bandwagon. This can be caused by the opposition’s increased ability to minimize the reputational costs to expressing private preferences. The last factor is an increase in the number of individuals who have private preferences against the government.\(^{25}\) An additional factor that Kuran highlights is the role of leadership. The model is built on the preferences and behavior of non-activists but leaders can have tremendous influence. A leader can raise public awareness of discontent and create a jump in the perceived share of support for the opposition. A leader can also help minimize the reputation costs associated with expressing private preferences and shape private preferences.\(^{26}\)

**Religion and Preference Falsification**

The argument presented here is that religion can influence the likelihood of revolution by decreasing reputation costs associated with expressing private preferences and thus lowering the threshold level. Religion has much of the same impact that Kuran ascribes to leaders. The influence of religion is also very much related to its positive relationship with levels of social capital. The trust within religious communities and trust across society for religious leaders creates a unique ability to raise public awareness of discontent and cause an increase in the expected share of opposition support. Moreover, the trust and increased interaction within the community lower reputation costs to expressing private preferences. This has the added bonus of

\(^{25}\) Ibid.

\(^{26}\) Ibid.
increasing the expected share of opposition support as well. The combination of these factors decreases the threshold level, making revolution more likely. Each of these will be discussed in more detail.

The review of literature above demonstrates that religious affiliation and belief is often associated with higher levels of trust in general. This relates only to those who are religiously inclined. Does religion increase trust for those not associated with religion and for society? A number of studies suggest that this is the case, even when specific groups are identified through religious symbols. If greater trust is placed in religious people, regardless of association with a specific religious group, then we could expect that religious people, and especially leaders, will be able to increase the expected share of opposition support. The individual is afraid to express their private preference because they do not know how many others feel the same way they do. The fear creates uncertainty and general lack of trust. The individual is likely to be more inclined to believe a religious leader who raises awareness of public discontent than they might an intellectual or a worker. One argument for why greater trust is placed in religious people is the assumption that their religious beliefs restrain their selfish behavior. A group of workers may express opposition to specific government policies that adversely impact them but not society as a whole. Our individual who is afraid to express his or her private preferences may not be convinced that such an expression of opposition is truly widespread and moves beyond the specific interests of the group of workers. The greater trust placed in religious people and leaders create more certainty that others hold the same beliefs as the individual does. One of the most successful workers’ movements was Solidarity in Poland, but even Lech Walesa acknowledged

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the importance of the support given to it by the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II in his Nobel lecture and his memoirs.

The greater social cohesion often found in religious communities is of extra importance in societies that lack high levels of social capital, which is often the case in authoritarian or totalitarian societies before revolution. Normal social interactions through organizations outside the influence of the government are rare. The interaction that occurs within the religious community results in higher levels of social cohesion than in most other groups in society. This allows for greater mobilization and collective action within the community by lowering reputation costs and allowing communication and interaction through established social networks. Our individual may still be uncertain and lack trust in other members of society but because of the trust and social interaction within their religious community, they are more certain they share their private preference in opposition to the government. The larger the religious community, the more influence it has on lowering reputation costs as an individual is safer from possible negative consequences if shielded by a large group of people. The religious community does not have to be large or have connections with others in society to trigger a revolutionary bandwagon however. The challenge identified by Kuran is to get people to express their private preferences given the costs they face. If the reputation costs are lowered by qualities associated with the religious community and the private preferences of the individuals are expressed, this has the result of lowering reputation costs for individuals throughout society. It is possible then that this lowers threshold levels and leads to the revolutionary bandwagon— even if it is only a small group of individuals that is largely disconnected from society.

To summarize, the higher levels of social capital associated with religion allow religious people and leaders to increase the expected share of opposition support and lower reputation
costs. Both factors are magnified under two possible conditions. The first is if the religious group is connected to similar religious groups outside the country. This can have the effect of dramatically decreasing reputation costs by bringing large groups of people outside the country in to the consideration of expressing private preferences. Our individual may feel safer in expressing private preferences if they believe that not only other people in their country feel as they do, but that they also have the support and cover of people and institutions outside the country. The government is also less likely to aggressively repress dissent if they may face higher costs from outside groups. The role of the Catholic Church in movements in Latin America and Poland\(^{30}\) and the Lutheran Church in East Germany and Latvia\(^{31}\) illustrate this principle. Secondly, the likelihood of collective action leading to revolutionary bandwagons is greater if the religious community has extensive ties to other groups in society. The benefits expressed above of social interaction and networks within the religious community are greater if they incorporate other groups as well. Putnam\(^{32}\) discusses this in the context of his concepts of bonding and bridging capital and has been argued to be a factor in countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.\(^{33}\)

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Religion, Romania, and Revolutionary Bandwagons

Timothy Garton Ash reports that he commented to Vaclav Havel, “In Poland it took ten years, in Hungary ten months, in East Germany ten weeks: perhaps in Czechoslovakia it will take ten days.”\textsuperscript{34} As it turned out, it took just over a month in Czechoslovakia, but in Romania it did take only ten days. Protests began in Timisoara on December 15, Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu fled on December 22 and were executed on December 25. The removal of Ceausescu was shocking in and of itself, but the way it began and the speed in which it spread made it even more surprising. The spark that immediately precipitated the downfall of the regime was the attempt to evict a Hungarian Reformed pastor, Laszlo Tökes, and his family from his apartment in Timisoara. That the revolution began with events surrounding Tökes, a minority in both nationality and religion is noteworthy. The case of Romania appears a good case to explore the theory presented above. Kuran applies his model to other anti-communist movements in 1989 but devotes little attention to Romania. The level of repression and lack of dissent seem to make Kuran’s model a relevant one for analysis. The fact that the original protests centered on a religious leader makes it a good case to explore the characteristics of religious influence described above.

The structural conditions in Romania in 1989 were certainly conducive to some type of anti-regime movement. Ceausescu’s rule was as brutal as that of any other Communist leader in Eastern Europe. Extreme austerity measures, which rationed everything from cooking oil to electricity, began in the early 1980s. Elevators were avoided at night for fear of being stuck in one overnight if the electricity was shut off when you happened to be inside. Heating for apartment buildings was rationed resulting in brutal conditions for residents during the Romanian winter. Even something as simple as sharing your cooking oil with others could result in an

\textsuperscript{34} Ash, \textit{The Magic Lantern}, 78.
encounter with the Securitate, Romania’s secret police. The austerity measures were put in place to facilitate an aggressive campaign to pay off all of Romania’s foreign debt, a policy in line with Ceausescu’s general foreign policy of isolation.\textsuperscript{35} Against the backdrop of such harsh conditions for the people, Ceausescu implemented his program of “systematization,” which was an ambitious urban planning effort that certainly increased resentment and frustration in the population. One later aspect of this program was an attempt at urban renewal within cities, the best example being the construction of the “House of the Republic” in the heart of Bucharest. The building would eventually become the second largest administrative building in the world and require that entire blocks of the Romanian capital be destroyed to make room for Ceausescu’s building.\textsuperscript{36} Such opulence and grandeur directed by Ceausescu, within the setting of suffering and poverty largely created by Ceausescu’s policy, would certainly increase opposition to his government. The larger aspect of the program was the effort to industrialize the rural countryside by creating industrial centers throughout Romania. This required the elimination of hundreds of small villages throughout the country and relocation of their inhabitants to a more urban setting.\textsuperscript{37} Again, it is not hard to imagine that such a program could fuel increased opposition.

The international structure also seemed to be ripe for revolution. The Soviet Union was weakening and increasingly turning inward to resolve its own weaknesses. Perhaps most influentially, the other Communist states in Eastern Europe were collapsing in the fall of 1989, even Bulgaria, which was further from Western Europe than the others and closer to Romania in demographics. The domino effect of revolutions, like what happened in Europe in 1848 or what


\textsuperscript{36} Tismaneanu, \textit{Reinventing Politics}.

would happen in Northern Africa and Southwest Asia in 2011, made it likely that eventually Romania would be impacted. In hindsight, then, it is easy to look back at Romania toward the end of 1989 and suggest that given the domestic and international conditions, it was headed toward regime change. However, the bulk of evidence from that time lead to a different conclusion. Internally, although there was some dissent such as the “Letter of the Six” by six prominent members of the Communist Party, Ceausescu was still re-elected to his post of General Secretary unanimously in November of 1989.\textsuperscript{38} In December of 1989, the \textit{Christian Science Monitor} reported that Ceausescu’s hold on power seemed firm\textsuperscript{39} and Ceausescu himself felt confident enough to leave the country for a few days in the middle of the uprising.\textsuperscript{40} Romania was also in a position to be less influenced by external factors because of its reliance on a foreign policy independent of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{41} The structural conditions lent themselves to the likelihood of an uprising but such an event was by no means certain.

\textit{Religious Leaders and Trust}

We can turn now to the examination of the events of December 1989 in Romania in light of the theory described above. The first component of religious influence is also the most difficult to ascertain. As presented above, there is general evidence that people from across society have high levels of trust in religious leaders and people but such evidence is difficult to come by in the case under examination. To determine how much trust individuals placed in religious leaders during the time in question in Romania, we are forced to look for indirect

\textsuperscript{39} Tismaneanu, \textit{Reinventing Politics}.
evidence of such trust. One potential source is to look at public opinion data as close to the events of 1989 as possible. Unfortunately, one of the only sources for such data is the European Values Study survey of 1993. In that survey, 72.4 percent of respondents claimed to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in church institutions. In comparison, only 29.9 percent expressed such confidence in trade unions, 20.8 percent in parliament, and 45.1 percent in the police.42 Public opinion data three years following the event and at the aggregate level may not directly relate to the case under examination but it does paint a society that generally places greater trust in religious institutions and leaders than in other societal institutions.

The other aspect that may require some consideration is the concept of increasing perceived share of opposition support. Tòkes is noteworthy in his consistent efforts speaking against the systematization program of Ceausescu. He was rewarded by repeated harassments from the Securitate and relocation to different posts within the Hungarian Reformed Church.43 The beginning of his eviction from Timisoara began months earlier in March and was appealed through formal channels in the Hungarian Reformed Church hierarchy.44 Although Tòkes was forced to move several times before 1989 due to his open criticisms of Ceausescu’s policy, the actions intensified following the airing of an interview Tòkes conducted on Hungarian television.45 Tòkes’ telephone line was cut, he was refused ration books and in November, the windows in his apartment were broken and he was stabbed.46 The efforts taken by the Securitate, local officials and the church clearly indicate they saw Tòkes, his message, and his influence as a threat. He openly criticized Ceausescu and did so outside of the country, allowing him to reach a

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42European Values Study, Dataset Version: Release v3.0.0 as of November 2011, Study No. 4460, doi:10.4232/1.10790.
46Elliott, “Laszlo Tokes…”; Kotkin, Uncivil Society; Tokes, The Fall of Tyrants.
larger audience and thus had a dedicated group of followers in Timisoara. His supporters viewed him as one of the few people who had the courage to tell the truth and stand up to the unjust actions of Ceausescu.\textsuperscript{47} These factors could certainly result in others watching these events believing that there were more people who opposed the regime than imagined.

\textit{Religious Leaders, Reputation Costs and Mobilization}

The second factor of the theory, that religion can help lower reputation costs through stronger community and mobilization, is more clearly evident in the Romanian case. Romania stood apart from its Eastern European counterparts in terms of lack of organized dissent. As reported by Linz and Stepan, only two independent movements existed in Romania in June of 1989. This compared to 60 in Poland, 13 in Bulgaria and nine in East Germany.\textsuperscript{48} Romania did not experience high profile movements either, such as Solidarity in Poland or Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. The \textit{samizdat} publications that appeared in other countries were largely absent from Romania. Ceausescu had implemented an effective program targeting and isolating dissent, creating a society without much interaction between groups and lacking in trust.\textsuperscript{49} So thorough were the efforts to silence dissent that “typewriters had to be registered with the police…and failure to report a conversation with a foreigner was a criminal offense.”\textsuperscript{50} There are a few notable intellectuals, like Paul Goma and Doina Cornea, that spoke out against the government but their efforts failed to spark widespread movements. Cornea wrote multiple letters that were broadcast on Radio Free Europe. As a result, she was relieved of her position as a professor.


\textsuperscript{48} Linz and Stepan, \textit{Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation}.


\textsuperscript{50} Linz and Stepan, \textit{Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation}, 351.
spent time in jail, was subjected to 24-hour surveillance and vilified in the Romanian press.\textsuperscript{51} The costs were dramatic and served as a deterrent to others who might potentially act. Cornea’s \textit{Securitate} file indicates reports against her from former students and colleagues at the university she worked.\textsuperscript{52}

The other prominent source of dissent in Romania came from periodic workers’ strikes. The two most notable occasions were the Jiu Valley miners’ strike in August 1977 and the Red Flag truck plant workers’ protest in Brasov in November 1987. The Jiu Valley miners’ strike remained a principally work-related protest and was resolved within three days through negotiations between the workers and eventually Ceausescu himself.\textsuperscript{53} Although the strike was resolved peacefully, approximately 4,000 miners were forced to relocate to other parts of the country and were put under state surveillance.\textsuperscript{54} The protest of the workers at the Red Flag plant was more complex. Although it began with grievances about non-payment of wages, it spread quickly into an anti-Ceausescu protest concerned about lack of heating and food.\textsuperscript{55} Also unlike the Jiu Valley strike, the protest in Brasov was met with more force by the government and resulted in a number of arrests. Sixty-one people were convicted and received sentences of forced labor and dozens more were interrogated, harassed and placed under surveillance.\textsuperscript{56} The protest in Brasov did not spread in any meaningful sense to other areas of the country however.

\textsuperscript{51} Mirel Bran, “Romania: Dossier 666,” \textit{Le Monde} (2002).
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Marius Oprea and Stejarel Olaru, \textit{The Day We Won’t Forget: 15 November 1987, Brasov} (Polirom, 2003); Petrescu and Petrescu, “Resistance and Dissent under Communism.”
\textsuperscript{56} Oprea and Olaru, \textit{The Day We Won’t Forget}. 
In both 1977 and 1987, the movements suffered from the inability to reach across group lines and bring in others to mobilize in a sustained effort.\textsuperscript{57}

Finally, there were some efforts within various churches but they were largely individual clergy members. Within the Romanian Orthodox Church, the most well-known dissident was Father Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa who spoke out against the atheism of the regime in his famous seven words to the youth sermon of 1978.\textsuperscript{58} Father Calciu-Dumitreasa was arrested on several occasions, spending approximately 21 years in prison before he was finally exiled from Romania.\textsuperscript{59} There were some followers of his that continued within the Romanian Orthodox Church but the opposition was never widespread.\textsuperscript{60} There was also some limited dissent within the Baptist community as well.\textsuperscript{61} The inability to mobilize consistent opposition in Romania was by design. The one area of society that was most difficult for Ceausescu to control was the church and it remained one of the few areas of society not fully integrated into the Romanian state.\textsuperscript{62}

In examining the events in Timisoara during December 1989 specifically, there is some evidence that the nature of the church community facilitated mobilization. In other words, “…the prior group coherence provided by religious institutions was of critical importance.”\textsuperscript{63} The element of group cohesion is especially important in the atomistic society created by Ceausescu. In such an environment with limited formal opposition groups, spontaneous protest was the only method available to generate widespread opposition movements. On December 15, when Tökes was scheduled to be evicted, a very small group of around 40 parishioners showed up to form a

\textsuperscript{57} Petrescu and Petrescu, “Resistance and Dissent under Communism.”
\textsuperscript{58} Angi, “Three Instances… .”
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Socor, “Dissent in Romania: The Diversity of Voices.”
\textsuperscript{61} Moore, “Dissent in Romania: An Overview.”
\textsuperscript{62} Hall, “Theories of Collective Action…”; Pope, “The Role of Religion in the Romanian Revolution”; Tokes, \textit{The Fall of Tyrants}.
\textsuperscript{63} Hall, “Theories of Collective Action…”, 1076.
human chain outside the residence.\textsuperscript{64} During his time in Timisoara, Tökes had increased the number of events outside of official church services and had built a sense of community within the church.\textsuperscript{65} The initial group of 40 quickly spread into the hundreds. The lack of concerted effort to remove the protestors is one factor in the growth of the crowd.\textsuperscript{66} The crowd also grew because of the network between the other minority churches, both in terms of religion and ethnicity, in Timisoara. A member of Tökes’ congregation informed others in the Baptist and Pentecostal churches of the potential eviction and people from these congregations joined the protest.\textsuperscript{67} As the protest continued for the next few days, the crowds grew and included people from all aspects of society.\textsuperscript{68} Even after the regime countered the protest with violence, the crowds grew and the protest spread to other areas in Romania.

The social coherence within the Hungarian Reformed Church allowed for spontaneous mobilization in defense of its pastor. The connections between the Hungarian Reformed Church and other churches in Timisoara allowed for an initial expansion of the protest. This expanded protest then precipitated the revolutionary bandwagon through lowering reputation costs, and thus thresholds for others in society to express their private preferences. Tismaneanu, referring to Ceausescu’s promise on December 20 to fire on other demonstrators, writes “that was perhaps the magic moment when, in the consciousness of many Romanians, the threshold of fear was crossed: Revulsion, moral indignation, outrage, and contempt suddenly became stronger than fear.”\textsuperscript{69}

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\textsuperscript{64} Kotkin, \textit{Uncivil Society}
\textsuperscript{65} Elliott, “Laszlo Tokes…”; Tökes, \textit{The Fall of Tyrants}.
\textsuperscript{66} Kotkin, \textit{Uncivil Society}.
\textsuperscript{67} Hall, “Theories of Collective Action…”; Tökes, \textit{The Fall of Tyrants}.
\textsuperscript{68} Hall, “Theories of Collective Action…”; Kotkin, \textit{Uncivil Society}.
\textsuperscript{69} Tismaneanu, \textit{Reinventing Politics}, 233.
\end{flushright}
Magnifying Conditions

Two conditions were presented that would magnify the impact of religion. The first is if the group had connections to other groups outside of the country. This condition holds in the Romanian case. The logic suggests that groups from outside the country lower reputation costs and create a safer environment for individuals to express their private preferences. The likelihood of a movement emerging from the Romanian Orthodox Church was hindered, in part, because of its lack of support from outside of Romania.\textsuperscript{70} The Hungarian Reformed Church, however, did have connections outside of Romania. This was true in terms of ethnic Hungarians leaving Romania and seeking refuge in Hungary and the role of ecumenical organizations in offering support for Tökes.\textsuperscript{71} Importantly, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches echoed Tökes’ concern about the systematization program, sending public protests directly to Ceausescu.\textsuperscript{72} The support of groups outside the country provided strength and increased attention to the human rights violations within Romania.

The second condition concerns ties the religious community has with other groups in society. This condition seems to be less of a factor in the Romanian case. There were increased ties between Tökes’ church and other churches in Timisoara, as described above. There is little evidence, however, of ties between the church and other groups in society, such as labor unions or intellectual groups. The lack of extensive social ties is not surprising given the context of civil society in Romania. Indeed, the social coherence within the church itself is so important to the initial mobilization of protest in this case because of the lack of other organized groups within society. The uprising spread not through existing social networks but through a lowering of threshold levels across society and a widespread dissatisfaction with the government.

\textsuperscript{70} Angi, “Three Instances….”
\textsuperscript{71} Pope, “The Role of Religion in the Romanian Revolution.”
\textsuperscript{72} Pope, “The Role of Religion in the Romanian Revolution”; Tökes, The Fall of Tyrants.
Conclusion

There are many factors that led to the collapse of the Ceausescu regime in December 1989. The economic conditions within the country and the fall of similar governments throughout Eastern Europe certainly increased the likelihood of some type of opposition movement within Romania. But the task of mobilizing support remained extremely difficult in the very atomized and repressive society. It is here where the influence of religion may become part of the explanation. Individuals need to reach the point where they express their private preferences, despite the potential reputation costs. The social coherence within the church in Timisoara allowed for initial and spontaneous mobilization to emerge in support of their pastor. As the protest grew, the reputation costs associated with opposition decreased due to the number of people openly expressing their preferences. Perhaps the trust associated with religious communities and leaders also led to an increase in perceptions of shared opposition.

The analysis presented here is in no way intended to confirm the theory presented. The case offers a good opportunity to explore the theory presented and hopefully provide some insights to revise the theory and expand it to other cases. The specific study presented would benefit immensely by better data, especially as it relates to the issue of trust in religious groups and leaders. Survey data prior to December 1989 or interviews of participants in the events of December 1989 would provide a more accurate picture of levels of trust. Furthermore, the concept of trust as presented here requires further refinement and better operationalization within particular settings.

As discussed earlier, the purpose of the study is not to suggest that religion is a primary factor in revolutions. The main concern is to attempt to systematize the influence of religion. The
influence of religion is either forgotten completely or considered in an informal manner. The influence of its social capital potential along with its established place in society seems to be especially important in societies lacking networks of mobilization.