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Political Parties and Clientelism in Transition Countries: Evidence from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

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Abstract

Earlier research focused extensively on political parties as promoters and users of clientelism. However, previous studies have also revealed that parties are not monolithic organizations and they can be seen through the lenses of several faces or components. As such, it is unclear which of the party features is more conducive to clientelism than others. This article analyses several party features in relation to clientelism and tests their explanatory power. Our analysis is driven by a differentiation between several features of the political parties: performance in office, public funding, territorial coverage and notoriety of local political leaders. We rely on data from an original expert survey conducted for 15 parties in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine between February and June 2018.

Keywords: clientelism, political parties, funding, organization, EaP countries

Introduction

The conditional offering of various benefits in exchange for political support—a process generally known as clientelism, has been portrayed in the literature as an interaction between a patron or broker (i.e. political parties and party members) and clients (i.e. citizens). Examples of clientelism include offers of cash, material goods and services (including public sector employment). The literature has focused extensively on this interaction between political actors and voters, closely examining its causes, functioning and consequences for those involved in it. Earlier research analysed how clientelism could be used as a tool for electoral manipulation and mobilization (Hasen 2000; Stokes 2005; Schaffer 2007; Nichter 2008; Carreras & İrepoğlu 2013), the means through which political parties develop clientelistic networks and how perceive them (Martz 1997; Auyero 1999; 2000; Mares et al. 2017), how benefits can enhance the trust and legitimacy of public authorities (Manzetti & Wilson 2007; González-Ocantos et al. 2015), the advantages brought by financial incentives

to different types of candidates (Medina & Stokes 2002; Wantchekon 2003), or the multi-faceted conditions in which these linkages develop (Kitschelt 2000; Kitschelt & Wilkinson 2007; Stokes et al. 2013; Gherghina & Volintiru 2017).

While much emphasis was laid on political parties as drivers of clientelism, little attention had been paid to understanding which of the party features is more conducive to clientelism. As research has shown, parties are not monolithic organizations and can be seen through the lenses of several faces or components (Harmel & Janda 1982; Panebianco 1988; Katz & Mair 1993; Bolleyer 2011). This point becomes even more relevant in those areas of the world, like post-communist Europe, in which party politics is the name of the game and very few political decisions lie outside the realm of these institutions (Enyedi & Toka 2007; Gherghina 2014).

We argue that party features are important determinants in the clientelistic process and by ignoring their role, the literature misses out important variations and nuances. Our paper seeks to understand which party related features drive clientelism in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region. We focus on three countries: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. They were selected based on a few theoretical reasons connected to our goal. First, these countries present a certain degree of institutional weakness and a historical inter-penetration between parties and the state, both of which make for a prolific setting for clientelism. Second, clientelistic exchanges usually take place in a context of (at least potential) political competition. Among the post-Soviet countries, the three have a relatively healthy plurality of their party systems. Empirically, the coverage of these countries is scarce. With a few notable exceptions on electoral clientelism in Ukraine (Birch 1997, Protsyk and Wilson 2003) and informal practices of successor parties in Moldova (March 2006), we have a fairly limited perspective on the clientelistic mechanisms at play in these countries.

Our analysis is driven by a differentiation between several features of the political parties: (1) performance in office, (2) public funding, (3) territorial coverage and (4) notoriety of the leaders. We build theoretical arguments through which we connect all these components to the use of clientelism and test their explanatory power against each other. To achieve this goal, we use an original expert survey data set, with data collected between February and September 2018. The experts were asked to assess to what extent the parliamentary parties in each of these three countries use clientelism. A total number of 15 parties is included in the analysis (4 in Georgia, 5 in Moldova and 6 in Ukraine) and we have

received 166 expert answers (55 in Georgia, 56 in Moldova and 55 in Ukraine). The study is carried at an individual level and the unit of analysis is the expert / political party.

The article proceeds as follows. First, we review the literature about clientelism from multiple perspectives: the state as a supplier of resources for clientelistic exchanges – impacting both performance in office and the survival through funding, and intra-party power relations. We argue that it is only by accounting for each of these facets that we can understand the reasons for which political parties deploy clientelism. Beyond the general conceptualization of the clientelistic phenomenon, we also assess the specific traits of clientelism in the context of the Eastern Europe. Then, we describe the research design with details about the variable operationalization, methodology and data used in this study. The third section presents the bivariate and multivariate analysis of clientelism both at general and country level. The final section summarizes the key findings, discusses their major implications and opens avenues for further research.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Not every exchange between parties and followers is clientelistic. Parties in government survive in office through public policies that allow them to win elections; while such policies might be favourable to their electoral base, their benefits should not be distributed conditional on the quid pro quo of electoral support. Parties also require some of their members to access public jobs in the governing process, but such appointments should not be based on party patronage or politicisation of civil service jobs. If parties make policy decisions that are in favour of certain private actors, this again should not be conditional on electoral support manifested through votes and/or donations. While the act of government frequently involves preferential decisions, in line with a party's ideology or electoral base, we consider clientelistic practices to be only those involving informal channels that allow conditioning mechanisms. If the political agents of a clientelistic party include conditional mechanisms for the delivery of public goods and services, then this, we argue, should be considered not simply a favourable action, but a discriminatory, clientelistic one.

We find that there are party features that can inform clientelism across the three dimensions it operates in any given polity: in society, in office and internal party organisation.

Performance in office and roots in society

Clientelism could potentially have a positive impact on the clients' quality of life, in delivering public goods, and public policy solutions that they might not otherwise be able access (Kawata 2006, Stokes et al 2013, Calvo and Murrilo 2013, Brun and Diamond 2014). This is especially true in the context of poor institutional performance. It explains why informal and discretionary practices are embraced by society, often to a larger extent than the formal bureaucratic or political channels available to them. It is by fulfilling the brokerage between the state and society that clientelistic exchanges help stabilizing parties.

When public institutions fail to deliver efficiently and effectively public policy, and public goods, clientelism can be a good substitute to ensure the representation of public interests, at the political and administrative level. This is especially visible in the case studies focused on Latin America (Brun and Diamond 2014), or Southern Italy (Chubb 1988) that point to the benefits of clientelism as a mediator for receiving dedicated policy and public goods. We find compelling evidence that in some cases it supports the development of a more or less formalized distributive system (Calvo and Murillo 2013, Muller 2013) through which people are able to receive the goods and services they need. Whether it is the function of formulating needs and grievances or that of distributing benefits, the clientelistic pyramid seems a potent substitute to the formal states.

Policy-making is a means of ensuring electoral support. We consider policy-making capacity (taken to be both the willingness and aptitude to deliver policies beneficial to the constituencies) to be a measure of performance in office; the more capacity a party has to create and implement policies, the more it can be regarded as performant. Performance in office is therefore the choice/possibility that any party has once in office, unencumbered by clientelistic networks of distribution.

If policy-making performance is poor, and the party in office cannot or will not respond to its constituents needs through policies, then clientelistic exchanges become a necessary substitute to ensure continuous electoral support and thus political survival. The less willing/able parties are to take on the delivery of platformatic results, the more likely it is that they will resort to clientelistic distribution of goods and services as a backup option of electoral mobilisation. Clientelism can therefore be seen as 'a strategy of partial mobilization that differs from more universal patterns, such as programmatic appeals or mobilization motivated by parties' achievement records' (Roniger 2004: 354).

The dimension of performance in public office is therefore not so much one related to the quality of governance (that might be affected by clientelism), but one concerning the strategic choice to deliver results to the electorate through formal or informal channels. We therefore propose a continuum with platform appeal (i.e. good policy performance) at one end and clientelistic mobilization (i.e. poor policy performance) at the other end, with parties placing themselves in between the two available options to a varying degree.

Public funding as an element of party-state interpenetration

As many case studies of new democracies show, clientelism thrives even when the administrative and electoral systems serve citizens well (Piattoni 2001, Andre et al 2013). This is because clientelistic systems rely on state capture more than institutional weakness. This brings into question the nature of the relations between a political party and the state. The clientelistic mobilization of resources is done either through office corruption, or private resources (Van Biezen and Kopecky 2014). In both cases, a circular process comes into place, as incumbents with access to public resources will fend off competitors. Clientelism thus allows incumbent politicians to stay in power. As such it becomes a survival strategy. This instrumental / adaptive use of clientelism contradicts an older string of clientelistic literature that presents it as a stand-alone phenomenon, contingent upon cultural and socio-economic settings (Powell 1970). We also find in our empirical evidence on political parties in Eastern Europe that clientelism is part of the survival strategy of some of them.

As the dependency between public resources and clientelistic linkages evolves, the reliance of clientelistic linkages on public resources extracted through state capture generates a strong motivation to perpetuate the extractive mechanisms. Policy-making, appointments to public office and the general governing process thus become subservient to the party's continuous access to public resources (Volintiru 2016, Meyer-Sahling and Veen 2012, Kopecky et al 2012). It is however important to note that it is within an administrative system that is weak or inefficient (Dimitrov et al 2006) that such conditional transactions can flourish.

State subsidies and public funding can be part of the clientelistic system; however, state capture and informal channeling of public resources in exchange for private donations is a faster and more consistent means of financing a political party (Gherghina and Volintiru 2017). This is why we test in this paper the use of clientelism by political parties that are more

reliant on private funding, as a proxy of state capture. Nevertheless, parties relying intensively on these clientelistic tools “are intrinsically vulnerable if state resources become scarce or fall under the control of rivals” (Hopkin 2002: 5).

Territorial coverage and party organisations

Exchange-based relationships between the political actors (i.e. patrons), and their voters (i.e. clients) develop on the basis of an existent party organisation. The internal organisation of the political party thus becomes the structure on which the clientelistic machine is built. As the electoral/clientelistic machine developed, so did the contractual definitions of this informal relationship. Therefore, moving beyond a code of conduct, the clientelistic phenomenon integrated systems of monitoring and enforcement to make efficient use of the distributional channels it exerts (Kitschelt 2000, Stokes et al 2013). The systems of monitoring and enforcement require dense networks of intermediaries, often called brokers (Auyero 1999, Volintiru 2012, Stokes et al 2014, Gherghina and Volintiru 2017). They are the ones that effectively transform a reciprocal support relationship into an economy of scale in electoral mobilization. Contemporary parties usually use their territorial organizations to fill these brokerage roles. Clientelistic parties are generally highly reliant on local intermediaries or brokers to develop roots in society and organizational capacity based on informal exchanges.

The more administrative decentralization there is (i.e. more resources are managed at the local level), the more likely it is that local leaders are co-opted in the national party leadership, because of their enhanced role in clientelistic mobilization. This falls in line with previous, large-scale comparative studies on party systems’ architecture depending on the locus of economic and political power concentration (i.e. national vs. local) (Chhibber and Kollman 2004). Essentially, the more economic and political power is concentrated at the national level, the more loyal and effective brokers the local party leaders will be. Whatever the internal power dynamics of a given political party, the notoriety of local party leaders remains important as they are the linchpin of clientelistic mobilization. No matter how diluted the dyadic relationship might be, in the era of machine politics, clients must still recognize and trust the brokers of the clientelistic system in order for it to work.

In terms of the clientelistic network, political parties can only engage in informal exchanges where they have people on the ground (to deliver goods and services, monitor compliance and mobilize voters). Otherwise, it is hard to talk about clientelistic exchanges

instead of preferential politics (i.e. policy measures targeting certain categories of voters). This is why, we expect both territorial coverage and the notoriety of local party leaders to be indicators of clientelistic practices in a given political organization.

Hypotheses

Following all these arguments we formulate four hypotheses matching the dimensions emphasized above. When political parties perform poorly in office and cannot build with the electorate a relationship based on their policies, they will resort to clientelism. Moreover, the consolidation of the patron-client relationship takes time (and a fair amount of public resources) and thus incumbent parties' easier access to private funds tend to deploy larger clientelistic exchange systems (Grzymala-Busse 2007; Gherghina & Volintiru 2017).

Finally, clientelism essentially occurs when a party leader or local party representatives have enough discretionary power to condition access to goods or services based on electoral support. In local communities that have stronger informal norms and ties, clientelistic exchanges are likely to find fertile soil. We do not support the deterministic view that certain cultural environments are more prone to clientelistic practices than others. We only observe that in many of the post-communist democracies or transition countries, contemporary clientelistic exchanges evolved within a context of higher socio-economic dependencies on public resources (see for example Volintiru 2016, Gherghina and Volintiru 2017, Saikkonen 2017). Taking this into consideration, it is only natural that clientelistic exchanges are employed by parties that have territorial presence in these lesser developed localities. As such, we hypothesize that:

H1: Poor performance in office favors clientelistic exchanges.

H2: Reliance on private funding for political parties favors clientelistic exchanges.

H3: Broad territorial coverage of party organization favors clientelistic exchanges.

H4: The notoriety of local political leaders favors clientelistic exchanges.

One could raise the point of reverse causality since many of these parties have used clientelism in the past. If there are such parties, it is important to make sure that poor performance in office, private funding, broad territorial coverage and notoriety of local political leaders are the sources and not consequences of clientelist practices in previous

elections. Our survey had a variable measuring the prior use of clientelism by these parties prior to the elections in which we measure clientelism. For the parties that were newly formed around those elections this is not an issue so we ran statistical tests with prior use of clientelism by older parties as an independent variable and each of the determinants in H1-H4 as dependent variables. The results of this analysis – not reported in the paper to avoid confusion – indicate weak and mixed empirical evidence about causal relationship.

Research design

To test these hypotheses, we rely on data from an original expert survey conducted online in February – April 2018 with experts from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Case selection

The post-soviet transition countries of the Eastern Partnership are a rich and underexplored area for studies on clientelism. The propitious setting for informal linkages is derived from both the style of the old regime (i.e. centralist, transactional), as well as the transitional circumstances. Previous studies have shown the extent to which local legacies enhance the propensity of clientelistic networks: “Under Soviet rule, corruption was both wide-spread, as most public officials and citizens regularly engaged in illicit activities such as bribery, embezzlement, etc., and highly institutionalized (...) [as] informal rules and norms guided illicit behaviour of officials and citizens” (Stefes 2006: 1).

The transitional circumstances also act as a catalyst for clientelism, given poor institutionalisation of the public administration and sudden pressures of democratic competition. In the early stages of the transition to a market economy, in post socialist and post-communist countries, privatization of state owned assets has created a deep intertwinement between the private and the political sphere. Captured states (Wedel 2003) offered the resource flow needed for the survival (and expansion) of clientelistic transactions. This led to a deep intertwinement between the private and political actors, which is consistent with a new model of clientelism (see Gherghina and Volintiru 2017). If anything, in the post-soviet context, it was the informal determinants of political participation that benefited from consolidation (Saikkonen 2017) and not formal institutions.

The case selection follows the logic of the most similar systems design. According to Transparency International Nations in Transit reports, among the Eastern Partnership

countries, only three are evaluated as transitional democracies: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; the other three countries in the Eastern Partnership – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus are qualified as being consolidated or semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes. As we do not expect electoral competition to function in any meaningful way in these latter settings, we ultimately resolved to analyze only those that have a generally acceptable level of political contestation. We therefore explore the extent to which parties in transitioning democracies in the proximity of the European Union recur to clientelism to win elections.

Experts and the survey

To test the hypotheses, our article uses an original expert survey conducted in February-June 2018. The unit of analysis is the expert / political party and the results are reported at expert level. Experts come from three fields: academics, representatives of civil society organizations dealing with political issues and journalists who focus on political reporting. There is a fairly equal distribution of respondents belonging to academia and NGOs, with a lower share of journalists in the sample (roughly 20%). The survey was pre-tested in January 2018 on a sample of 15 scholars from the three countries. All experts were contacted via e-mail and we used a snowball approach in which respondents were asked to suggest other potential experts on the topic of the survey. The numbers reported in this survey include all those respondents who finalized the survey, all those who dropped out anytime in the survey were removed from the analysis. The invitation to fill in the survey explained the purpose and depth of knowledge required. As such, only several respondents started the questionnaire and did not fill in, while those who did not feel confident that they can do it explained in a brief e-mail why they do not start the survey. Three quarters of the respondents included in the analysis come through direct contact on their personal e-mail addresses and one quarter through snowballing. All messages were delivered to individual experts' e-mail addresses (many of them were personal rather than institutional) thus increasing the likelihood that experts themselves filled in the surveys. We did not send invitations to general institutional addresses because we could not know who checks them. before sending out the invitations we ran a background check on every reviewer to avoid selecting respondents who have connections with political parties.

The empirical evidence in this article comes from a total number of 171 respondents (56 in Georgia, 60 in Moldova, and 56 in Ukraine). Not all the experts filled in all the questions

since they could skip those items where they did not feel confident. For these reasons, the number of answers varies across questions. The questionnaire also included a question about how confident they feel about the judgments they made about the parties. Most experts (85%) felt either confident or very confident. Potential respondents who were not confident enough about their ability to answer contacted us and explained that this is the reason for which they did not fill in the survey. Appendix 2 presents the distribution of confidence across the 15 parties that are represented on the horizontal axis: the first four are from Georgia, the next five from Moldova and the last six from Ukraine (the same order as in Table 1). The vertical axis includes the degree of confidence ranging from little confident (1) to very confident (4)

The same questionnaire was translated and applied in the three countries, thus increasing the comparability of cases. The questions were asked for every parliamentary political party: four in Georgia, five in Moldova and six in Ukraine. These parties were: Georgia Dream, United National Movement (ENM), Alliance of Georgian Patriots (SPA) and Industry Will Save Georgia (MGS), Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM), Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), the Liberal Party of Moldova (PL), Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM), Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), People's Front in Ukraine, BPP Solidarnist, Self-Reliance, Opposition Bloc, Radical Party and All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland" (VOB).

Variable operationalization

The dependent variable of this study is the extent to which political parties used clientelistic practices. In the context of this article, we are interested in clientelistic exchanges in the form of money, goods and services. This is measured as the answer to the following question "In the (year of the most recent) legislative election in (country), to what extent did the following political parties or their candidates give citizens money / goods (e.g. food, clothes) or provided services as inducement to obtain their votes?". The answers are recorded on an ascending four-point ordinal scale with values between not at all (1) and to a great extent (4). Since the dependent variable is ordinal, the statistical methods used to test the variables are non-parametric correlations (Spearman) and ordinal logistic regression. Since we asked experts to assess the degree of clientelism for more parties in the same countries, the data is nested; to adjust for this we use clustered standard errors.

The first independent variable, performance in office (H1), is operationalized as the answer to the question “How would you assess the political performance (e.g. electoral programme, policies proposed/supported, representation of citizens’ interests, parliamentary activity) of the following parties since the (year of the most recent) legislative election in (country)?” Answers were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from very poor (1) to very good (5). This measurement is used as a proxy for the general level of party performance. The theory section speaks about how party performance is, in the absence of major internal reforms, a long to medium-term issue. In line with this approach, we use the evaluation of recent post-clientelism performance as a proxy for pre-clientelism performance. There were no major reforms to indicate reasons for which these parties should have changed their performance from one electoral cycle to another, especially when we focus on issues such as pledge fulfilment and representation. Our decision to use this measurement as a proxy was informed by the results of the pilot-study conducted before running the full survey. In the pilot-study we had a question about the party performance in the previous electoral cycle, before the elections in which we asked about clientelism. The respondents did not recall the details and for those reasons they filled in the same values as they did for the post-election period (i.e. the current question in the survey). To avoid memory bias, we decided to use this proxy. We are aware about its limitations but it is one of the few ways through we can test the effect of performance on clientelism.

The sources of party funding (H2) was measured through the answers to the question “Political parties need financial resources to maintain their professional organizations and conduct activities (including campaigns). Which of the following options best characterizes parties’ revenue source in (country) since the (year of the most recent) elections?”. The available answers were coded as follows: most revenues from public funding (1), relatively equal revenues from private and public funding (2) and most revenues from private funding (3).

The territorial coverage of the parties (H3) is operationalized through the following question “Thinking about the period shortly before the (year of the most recent) legislative elections, during campaign and since then, do the following parties maintain offices and paid staff at the local or municipal level?”. The possible answers are ordered on a four-point scale and they correspond to the following values: in no locality (1), in a few localities (2), in about half of the localities (3) and in most localities (4). The notoriety of local party leaders (H4) is

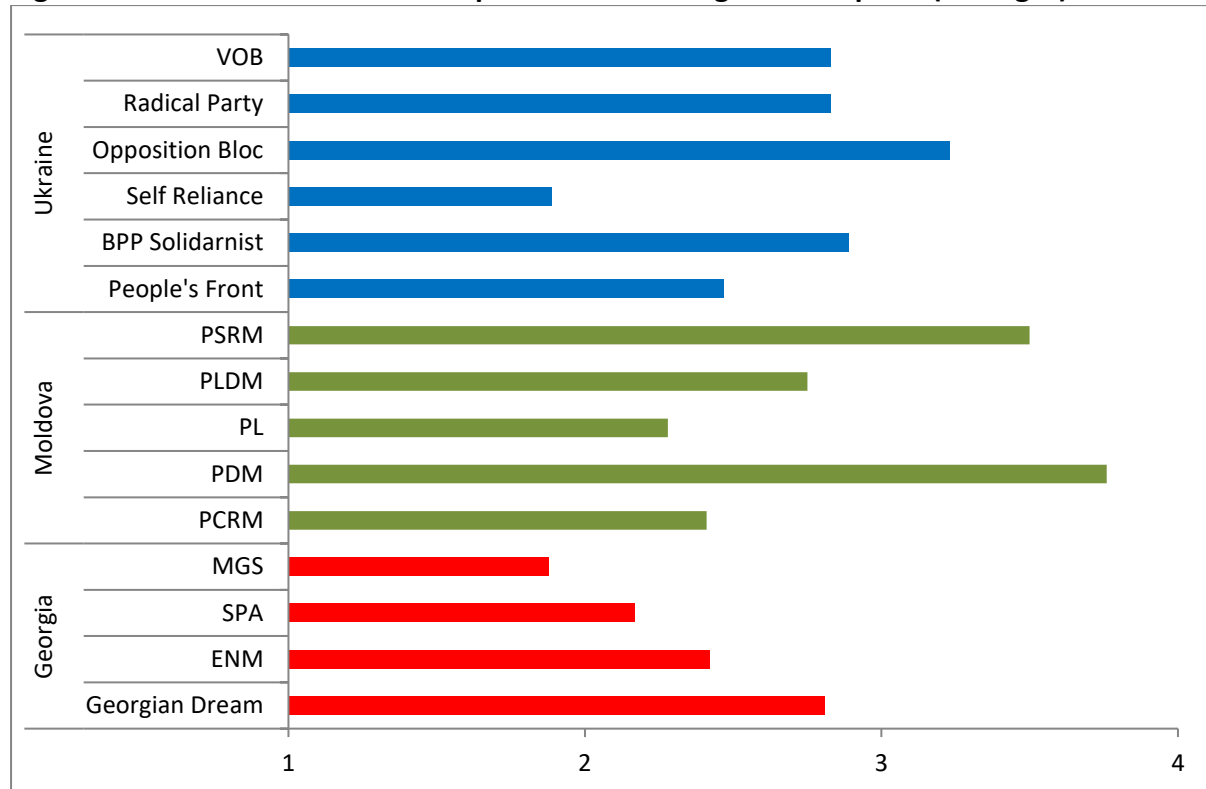
measures as the answer to the question “How well known are the local party leaders of the following parties in the last 5 years?”. The available answers are on a descending four-point ordinal scale with values between not at all (1) and to a great extent (4). Appendix 1 includes the descriptive statistics for all the variables used in this analysis.

Data analysis and empirical evidence

Before running the individual level analyses, we would like to provide a general overview about the extent of clientelism as indicated by the experts in each country. Figure 1 presents the distribution of averages to the question about the clientelistic practices used by each political party in the most recent legislative elections. The horizontal axis reflects the degree of clientelism coded as described in the previous section: 1 means not at all and 4 stands for extensive use of clientelism. We used different colors for each country to point both intra- and inter-country variations in terms of clientelism. The figure indicates important variations between countries with many Moldovan and Ukrainian parties more clientelism oriented than those in Georgia. The PDM in Moldova is the most clientelistic party out of the 15 investigated, while the Ukrainian Self-Reliance and the MGS in Georgia appear to be the least clientelistic. Moldova is the country in which we find the top two political parties in terms of clientelism used in the recent elections according to the answers from experts. The Opposition Bloc in Ukraine is ranked third in terms of clientelistic practices, quite far from the party with the highest score in Georgia.

There are great variations within the same country. To start with Moldova, although on average it displays higher levels of clientelism, the Liberals (PL) and the Communists (PCRM) do not engage frequently in clientelistic exchanges according to the experts. Their score on this variable is fairly similar to that of the parties in other countries. The Ukrainian parties appear to form quite a homogenous group when referring to the extent to which they practice clientelism. With the exception of the Self-Reliance party that was indicated by many experts as not using at all, the other parties use clientelism at least to some extent. Among the Georgian parties, the governing Georgian Dream and the ENM use more clientelism compared to the other two parties included in the analysis. These were also the most two voted parties in the 2016 parliamentary election.

Figure 1: The extent of clientelistic practices according to the experts (averages)



The correlation coefficients in Table 1 are calculated for the entire group of parties and for each country. Party level estimates are also available, but they could not be reported in a simple and meaningful manner. Since all the variables are coded similarly – from lowest to highest incidence – the interpretation of coefficients is straightforward. In the pooled model, the coefficients indicate empirical support for all hypothesized effects. The highest value of the correlation coefficient is observed for territorial coverage of the organization and notoriety of local party leaders. Both variables are positively associated with the use of clientelism and they are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. There is weaker empirical support for H1 in the hypothesized direction: poor performance in office correlates positively with the use of clientelism. The value of the coefficient is very small (-0.06) and lacks statistical significance. The empirical evidence also supports the theoretical expectations of H2. Our results indicate that private funding is associated with more clientelism. Although the relationship is not strong, it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

At the country level, there is empirical support for most hypothesized relationships with several notable differences between countries. First, in Georgia only leaders' notoriety is strongly and statistically significant correlated with the use of clientelism among the main effects. Unlike in the other two countries, media reporting is not associated to the use of

clientelism. In Moldova, the territorial coverage of the parties is the main driver for clientelism. In Ukraine, the private funding is the determinant that correlates the most with the degree of clientelism. All these indicate that the main triggers for clientelism in the three countries differ. Let us now turn to the multivariate statistical analysis to see whether these observations are confirmed.

Table 1: Correlations between the degree of clientelism and independent variables

	Pooled	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Performance	-0.06	0.11	-0.04	-0.34**
Private funding	0.12**	0.03	0.07	0.25**
Territorial coverage	0.34**	0.26**	0.54**	0.15*
Leaders' notoriety	0.18**	0.28**	0.16*	0.09
N	571-757	142-219	214-269	201-273

Notes: The N is different due to missing values on some questions.

Reported coefficients are for non-parametric correlations (Spearman)

** p<0.01; * p<0.05.

The regression analysis presented in Table 2 confirms and nuances the observations highlighted in the correlation. We ran a test of multi-collinearity prior to the analysis to make sure that the predictors are independent. The highest correlation between them is 0.35 (statistically significant at the 0.01 level) between territorial coverage and notoriety of local political leaders. This value of the correlation coefficient indicates no reasons to believe that multi-collinearity affects the results the regression. We also ran a regression model with fixed effects for each expert and the results are robust. We report in the paper the models without these fixed effects because they make the interpretation more straightforward.

The regression coefficients indicate the same general support for the hypothesized relationships. Similar to what revealed by the correlations, territorial coverage is the strongest predictor of clientelism in the pooled analysis. Political parties with many branches at the local level are 1.93 times more likely to use clientelism compared to those with only several branches throughout the country. This is in line with the theoretical expectation according to which territorial organizations can act as distributors of goods on behalf of their parties. The second strongest predictor in the model, quite different from what revealed by the bivariate relationship, is the poor performance in office. Political parties that did not live up to the expectations of the electorate after the most recent legislative elections are roughly

1.3 times more likely to use clientelism compared to political parties that delivered what they promised.

Parties with local leaders who have notoriety (H4) are roughly 1.27 times more likely to make use of clientelism when compared to parties with leaders who are not known to voters. This is the last effect that goes in the hypothesized direction. The private funding favors clientelism, an empirical finding that goes against H2. Parties who receive more private funding are 1.38 times more likely to use clientelism compared to those relying more on public money. One possible explanation behind this result is the horizontal nexus established by political parties with donors (see Gherghina and Volintiru 2017). Companies and firms may provide funding to political parties expecting in return to be the beneficiaries of public procurement once those parties are in office. In addition, private money is less scrutinized than public funding and the expenditures do not have to be always justified. As a consequence, the use of private financial resources for clientelism is somewhat easier.

The country level models tell an important story: clientelism is driven by different factors. In Georgia, the parties with high electoral support and higher degrees of clientelism rely extensively on local leaders to carry the message to voters. Their notoriety precedes the use of clientelistic exchanges (since in the survey we asked about the trend in the most recent five years, as opposed to two of clientelism), but such leaders establish tight relationships with the voters that they reward during campaigns. In essence, clientelism has a personalized component in Georgia. Parties use it more extensively when they have well-known political leaders on the ground to deliver goods and services. Their notoriety is a good indicator that they are well rooted and visible in the local communities.

Table 2: Ordinal logistic regression for the degree of clientelism

	Pooled	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Performance	-0.81** (0.09)	0.97 (0.20)	0.78 (0.09)	0.57** (0.08)
Private funding	1.38** (0.19)	0.89 (0.13)	1.64* (0.25)	1.79** (0.53)
Territorial coverage	1.93** (0.32)	1.44 (0.17)	3.31** (0.90)	1.55** (0.27)
Leaders' notoriety	1.27** (0.15)	1.42* (0.27)	1.35 (0.29)	1.05 (0.26)
N	541	133	208	200
Pseudo R ²	0.06	0.04	0.14	0.07
Log likelihood	-688.62	-173.02	-225.70	-253.06

Notes: Reported coefficients are odd-ratios.

Robust standard errors, clustered by party, are reported in parentheses.

** p<0.01; * p<0.05.

In Moldova, the organizational component is very important, with territorial branches being used as contact points to distribute and monitor clientelism. The extensive network of local organizations is the cause for the recent success of the PSRM in elections and ensured the continuity of the PL in the parliamentary arena. Their extensive web of organizations made possible not only the electoral performance, but also a better distribution of resources to the electorate. Political parties with thorough territorial coverage are 3.31 times more likely to use clientelism compared to the rest. A second determinant for clientelism in Moldova is the private funding (OR = 1.64). In Ukraine, the main drivers for clientelism are the private funding and the poor performance of the party in office. The two have a similar effect in terms of size with political parties with any of these two features being roughly 1.8 times more likely to engage in clientelism than the other competitors. For performance in office we interpret the inverse of the log function because its value is lower than 1.

Conclusions

This article aimed to distinguish the effects of party related features on the use of clientelism. The analysis used an expert survey to analyze the impact of the policy creation and implementation while in office, the type of funding received by parties, the territorial coverage and notoriety of their local political leaders. The findings indicate that the party organization – through its territorial coverage and notoriety of the leader – is a key important driving force behind clientelism. Private funding is also an important source for clientelism, with parties engaging in such practices especially in Ukraine. While these three variables play an important role in shaping the decisions of parties to use resources with such goals, there are important differences between countries. Our analysis indicates that in each of the three countries the exchange of goods and services for votes has different main drivers. In Georgia the notoriety of local politicians matters most, in Moldova the territorial coverage has the strongest effect, while in Ukraine it is about private funding and poor performance in office. In Such results point in the direction of contextual explanations that are worth exploring further.

These results have important theoretical and empirical implications. At a theoretical level, this analysis reveals a new facet of party organization: so far, earlier studies highlighted its importance for electoral gains or electoral stability. These results indicate that the role of the party organization expands beyond the voting process and contributes to establishing a

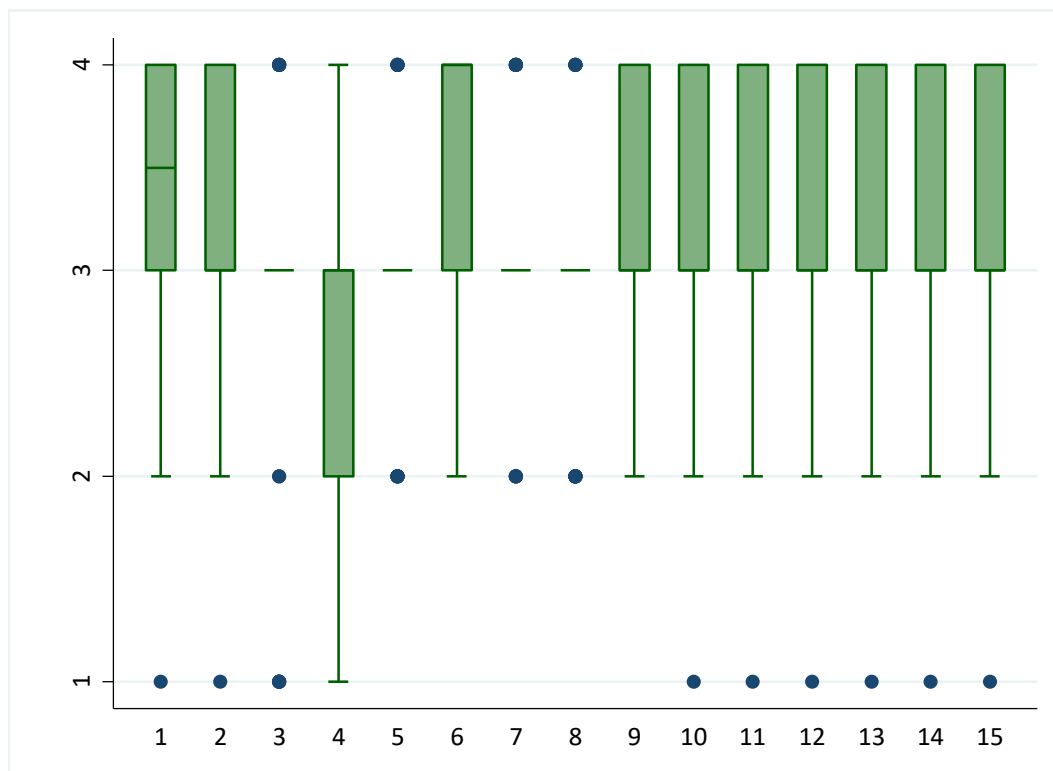
particular type of societal links. At the same time, the clientelistic nexus may be precisely the reason for which electoral performance occurs. In this sense, party organization succeeds in persuading the electorate to cast a vote for the party through various means, one of them being the exchange of services and goods for votes. At an empirical level, these results may inform structural and policy reforms. If private funding is a source for clientelism. None of the three countries investigated here is renowned for the scrutiny of private funding to parties and this may be one reason for which clientelism flourishes. The results of our analysis can inform either policies on either providing public funding that could potentially deter clientelism or policies on controlling better the private financial resources allocated to parties and how political parties spend them.

Further research could build on the idea of contextual drivers for the use of clientelism in transition countries. Since our survey is not country specific, it can be applied to other transition countries and thus expand the study of clientelism in the same or neighboring regions. One possible avenue is to apply the same questionnaire to experts from three Balkan countries and this will enable comparisons about different parts of the post-communist region. At the same time, an in-depth analysis of the causal mechanisms between variables would contribute to a better understanding of clientelism. The statistical analysis revealed several relevant patterns that can be explored through qualitative interviews or administrative data about the parties. For example, the territorial coverage can be triangulated with fieldwork illustrating the level of party organization activity between elections, length of operation in the territory or how rich constituencies are in each country. Finally, another line of future enquiry could follow the paths of surveys applied to party members who are very likely to be in contact with clientelistic practices of their and other parties. Experts are a useful and rich source of information but sometimes their views may be distorted by the more visible elements and may not have access to detailed information to the same extent as party members. A comparison between the perceptions of these two categories of respondents could provide a more balanced view on the use of clientelism.

Appendix 1: Descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analysis

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	N
Clientelistic practices	2.68	1.03	1	4	763
Performance	2.05	1.00	1	5	787
Private funding	2.32	0.75	1	3	636
Territorial coverage	2.81	0.97	1	4	561
Leaders' notoriety	2.63	0.88	1	4	578

Appendix 2: The confidence of experts in their assessments



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