

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Clientelism and Cartelization in Post-communist Europe: The Case of Romania

Clara Volintiru

A thesis submitted to the Government Department of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy, London, October 2016

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of < 92,610> words.

Statement of inclusion of previous work

I can confirm that subsections from Chapter 3, and Chapter 6 were the result of previous study (for a PhD in Political Economy) I undertook at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE).

I can confirm that parts of Chapter 2, and Chapter 4 were published as:

Volintiru, C. (2015). The exploitative function of party patronage: does it serve the party's interest?. *East European Politics*, 31(1), 39-55.

I can confirm that parts of Chapter 3 were published as:

Volintiru, C. (2012). Clientelism: electoral forms and functions in the Romanian case study. *Romanian Journal of Political Science*, 12(1), 35.

Volintiru, C. (2012). The Institutionalisation of the Romanian Party System. *Sfera Politicii*, 20(6), 134.

I can confirm that parts of Chapter 6 were published as:

Gherghina, S., & Volintiru, C. (2015). A NEW MODEL OF CLIENTELISM: Political Parties, Public Resources, and Private Contributors. *European Political Science Review*, (forthcoming) Published online: 18 September 2015

Volintiru, C. (2013). How Public Spending is Fuelling Electoral Strategies in Romania. *Südosteuropa*, 61, 268-289.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the product of the most patient and sage guidance I received from my supervisors: Vesselin Dimitrov and Jonathan Hopkin. My gratitude towards them is immense!

I am also extremely grateful for their invaluable advices and support to Prof. James Hughes, Prof. Sven Steinmo, Sergiu Gherghina, James Gledhill and Prof. Petr Kopecky. The foundations of my arguments have been strengthened by the generous input of Timothy Haughton and Sean Hanley.

My fellow PhD colleagues have been a true source of inspiration, and I am proud to have stood alongside them: Rikke Wagner, Gauthier Marchais, Neil Ketchley, Ellie Knott, Jurgen Braunstein and Mona Morgan-Collins.

I have to humbly acknowledge the permanent support and encouragement of my family, to whom I owe everything.

The thesis is dedicated to my father.

Abstract

The present thesis makes a twofold contribution to the existing literature. Firstly, it shows that clientelism complements cartelization, providing parties with stability in condition of weak mass mobilization. Secondly, it traces the specific mechanisms through which cartel parties channel public resources, within the institutional setting of the post-communist Europe. It provides an important extension to the cartel party literature in the context of new democracies.

The main finding of this project is that cartel parties can survive and achieve stability through clientelistic distribution of benefits, both within, and outside their organisations. Furthermore, I find that cartelization generates a new model of clientelism, as public resources (e.g. procurement contracts) are also used to finance the party organisations, not only the clients. Through the in-depth case study of Romania, we can see that when political parties have little time to develop territorial networks and mobilization capacity, clientelism becomes an effective tool for establishing roots in society. The context of post-communist countries presents distinctive conditions for clientelistic linkages and the cartelization process. Multi-party systems in these countries have reappeared simultaneously with the institutions of the democratic state. Consequently, party-state interpenetration has been more profound, building upon previous legacies, as well as the permissive transitional circumstances.

The present thesis analyses the following sequences of clientelistic exchanges: (1) internal party selection – patrons within the party organisations, (2) party patronage – political interference in public institutions, (3) politicization—political appointments in key positions of the Central Government (i.e. Senior Civil Servants), and finally (4) preferential resource allocation—public funding channelled through party networks. In addition to the chapters devoted to each of these clientelistic mechanisms, the thesis also contains a comparative chapter overseeing the challenges and opportunities for clientelism and cartelization in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	12
CONCEPTS, THEORY AND RESEARCH QUESTION.....	12
METHODOLOGY	16
CASE SELECTION	23
RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH.....	27
STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	31
CHAPTER 1. CLIENTELISM – THE MISSING INGREDIENT OF THE CARTELIZATION	
MODEL IN NEW DEMOCRACIES	37
1.1. PARTY MODELS, EVOLUTIONARY CHALLENGES AND CARTELIZATION.....	38
1.1.1. <i>Transitional Challenges in New Democracies</i>	47
1.1.2. <i>Challenges to the Survival of the Established Political Cartels</i>	53
1.2. CLIENTELISM IN NEW DEMOCRACIES: FROM DYADIC BONDS TO STATE CAPTURE	57
1.2.1. <i>Clientelism—A Political Phenomenon Driven by Party Organizations?</i>	59
1.2.2. <i>Clientelism—A Political Practice Embedded in Society?</i>	61
1.2.3. <i>Clientelism and State Capture</i>	62
1.3. INTERCONNECTED PHENOMENA: CLIENTELISM, PARTY PATRONAGE, AND POLITICIZATION.....	64
CHAPTER 2. CLIENTELISM AND CARTELIZATION IN NEW DEMOCRACIES:	
COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW	70
2.1. INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL SETTING	72
2.1.1. <i>Political Parties as Employers of Informal Linkages</i>	73
2.1.2. <i>Legal Provisions as a Framework of Deployment</i>	77
2.1.3. <i>Governmental Structures as a Target of Politicization</i>	83
2.2. CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN PATTERNS OF PARTY PATRONAGE	89
2.3. CARTELIZATION AND CLIENTELISTIC LINKAGES IN CEE	96
CONCLUSION.....	107
CHAPTER 3. CLIENTELISTIC LINKAGES AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES’	
ORGANIZATIONS IN ROMANIA	109
3.1. <i>Political Parties Formation and Evolution in Romania</i>	110
3.2. DISTRIBUTION OF POWER BETWEEN THE CENTRE AND THE PERIPHERY	119
3.2.1. <i>Party Leader Selection</i>	121
3.2.2. <i>Party in Central Office: Representation in Party Leadership Forums</i>	124
3.2.3. <i>Electoral Candidate Selection</i>	129
3.2.4. <i>Party Switching</i>	134
3.3. CHANGING ROLES: FROM LOCAL BROKERS TO POLITICAL PATRONS IN THE ROMANIAN	
CLIENTELISTIC NETWORKS.....	139
CONCLUSION.....	144
CHAPTER 4. PARTY PATRONAGE AND POLITICIZATION: CIVIL SERVANTS AS THE	
LINCHPIN OF CLIENTELISTIC LINKAGES.....	146
4.1. PARTY PATRONAGE IN ROMANIA	147
4.1.1. <i>Perceptions and Figures on Public Employment</i>	147
4.1.2. <i>Scope and Functions of Party Patronage</i>	152
4.2. SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS: PROCEDURAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS	160
4.3. MECHANISMS OF POLITICIZATION OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS.....	170
CONCLUSION.....	179
CHAPTER 5. GOING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE: APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES IN	
SELECTED MINISTERIAL CASE STUDIES.....	181
5.1. DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF PERSONNEL CHANGE.....	185
5.2. THE STAKES IN CONTROLLING EACH MINISTRY	187
5.3. CAREER PATHWAYS ANALYSIS AND CLIENTELISTIC NETWORKS.....	202

5.4. DIFFERENT PARTIES, DIFFERENT METHODS: MAXIMIZING POLITICAL DISCRETION AND APPOINTMENTS IN RELATION TO PARTIES' INTERESTS	211
CONCLUSION.....	221
CHAPTER 6. CLIENTELISM AND STATE CAPTURE IN ROMANIA.....	224
6.1. POLITICAL ALLOCATIONS AND THE LINKAGES WITH LOCAL PARTY LEADERS	226
6.1.1. <i>Local Governments (LGs) Budgetary Dependency</i>	227
6.1.2. <i>Discretionary Governmental Funds Allocations</i>	231
6.1.3. <i>Centrally Controlled Development Projects Serving Electoral Purposes</i>	237
6.2. CLIENTELISTIC NEXUS: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND PARTY FINANCING	245
6.2.1. <i>Public Procurement as a Facilitator of Clientelistic Transfers</i>	247
6.2.2. <i>Party Financing through Private Donations</i>	254
6.3. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF CARTELIZATION: ELECTORAL OUTCOMES AND JUDICIAL SANCTIONS	264
CONCLUSION.....	272
CONCLUSION.....	275
CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXISTING LITERATURE.....	275
RELEVANCE OF THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS.....	280
AVENUES FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION	286
BIBLIOGRAPHY	288

List of Tables

Table 1	Electoral Volatility in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)	p.74
Table 2	Comparative Perspective on the Regulation of Civil Service	p.81
Table 3	Comparative Perspective on the Local Governmental Structures	p.84
Table 4	Party Regulation in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)	p.98
Table 5	Territorial Presence of CEE Political Parties	p.101
Table 6	Clientelistic Provisions in CEE Political Parties	p.106
Table 7	Electoral Volatility in Romania (1990-2008)	p.116
Table 8	Leadership Selection Regulation of Romanian Political Parties	p.122
Table 9	Composition of the Parties' Leadership Forum	p.125
Table 10	Renomination Rates for the Major Romanian Parties and their Electoral Shares (1992-2008)	p.130
Table 11	Density of Local Intermediaries and Power of Candidate Selection in Romanian Political Parties	p.133
Table 12	Index of Party Patronage in Romania	p.152
Table 13	Average Yearly Changes in Romanian Prefectures (2007-2012)	p.172
Table 14	Permanent Appointments of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (2005-2012)	p.174
Table 15	Temporary Appointments of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (2005-2012)	p.175
Table 16	Mobility of the Romanian Civil Servants	p.177
Table 17	Mobility of Senior Civil Servants (to and from the position of Governmental Inspector)	p.178
Table 18	Total Number of Senior Civil Service Changes (2005-2013)	p.182
Table 19	Appointments of Senior Civil Servants in Ministries (2005-2013)	p.183
Table 20	Decisional Patterns in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (2005-2013)	p.190
Table 21	Decisional Patterns in the Ministry of Economy (2005-2013)	p.195
Table 22	Decisional Patterns in the Ministry of Environment (2005-2013)	p.201
Table 23	Career-pathway Analysis of Senior Civil Servants	p.204
Table 24	Changes of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (per Cabinet)	p.213
Table 25	Changes of Prefects and Underprefects (per Cabinet)	p.216
Table 26	Changes of Governmental Inspectors (per Cabinet)	p.220
Table 27	Local Governments' (LGs) Financial Situation (1999-2012)	p.228
Table 28	Evolution of Sums Allocated through Government Resolutions (H.G.) from the Reserve Fund and the Intervention Fund	p.333
Table 29	Political Distribution Reserve Fund before Local Elections	p.235

	in 2012 (allocations of over 1,000,000 lei)	
Table 30	Thermic Rehabilitation Allocations (2009-2011)	p.241
Table 31	Private Donations Received by the Romanian Political Parties (mil. €)	p.256
Table 32	Share of Financing Sources for the Romanian Political Parties (2003-2010)	p.257
Table 33	Party Financing from Private Contractors	p.259
Table 34	Top Donors with Public Procurement Contracts (amounts in €)	p.260
Table 35	Presidential Campaigns and Clientelistic Exchanges	p.269

List of Figures

Figure 1	Comparative Overview of Institutional Scores of Party Patronage	p.90
Figure 2	Comparative Overview of Policy Sector Scores of Party Patronage	p.93
Figure 3	Comparative Overview of Qualifications of Appointees	p.94
Figure 4	Comparative Overview of Patronage Motivation Scores	p.95
Figure 5	Electoral Scores in Romania (1996-2012)	p.113
Figure 6	Party Membership as Percentage of the Electorate in Romania (2008-2012)	p.118
Figure 7	The Index of Candidate Selection in CEE Political Parties	p.131
Figure 8	Parliamentary Party Switching in Romania per Legislative Term (1992-2012)	p.135
Figure 9	Number of Employees in the Romanian Public Administration	p.148
Figure 10	Evolution of the Number of Civil Servants	p.149
Figure 11	Appointment System in the Central Government (CG)	p.167
Figure 12	Number of Decisions on Senior Civil Servants in Ministries, Governmental Agencies and Prefectures (2005-2012)	p.171
Figure 13	Decisions on General Secretaries and Deputy General in Selected Ministries (2005-2013)	p.186
Figure 14	Non-Earmarked Revenues (NER) for Capital Expenses in Romanian LGs	p.229
Figure 15	Discretionary Revenues in Local Governments (per capita)	p.231
Figure 16	Party Donations in Romania (2008-2012) Total Value (RON)	p.255

Acronyms

AEP	Permanent Electoral Authority (Romania)
AJOFM	National Agency for Employment (Romania)
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (Romania)
ANFP	National Agency for Civil Servants (Romania)
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CG	Central Government
CSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party
DALP	Democratic Accountability Linkages Project
DPS	Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Bulgaria)
EEP	European People's Party (EU)
EU	European Union
Fidesz	Hungarian Civic Alliance
	Independent Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Civic Party
FKGP	(Hungary)
FSN	National Salvation Front (Romania)
GERB	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPP	Index of Party Patronage
KSCM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Czech Republic)
LG	Local Government
MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum
MP	Member of Parliament
MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party
NDAC	Non-departmental Agencies and Commissions
ODS	Civic Democratic Party (Czech Republic)
PC	Conservative Party (Romania)
PDL	Democratic Liberal Party (Romania)
PES	Party of European Socialists (EU)
PLR	Reforming Liberal Party (Romania)
PMP	Popular Movement Party (Romania)
PNL	National Liberal Party (Romania)
PNȚCD	Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party (Romania)
PPDD	People's Party- Dan Diaconescu (Romania)
PRM	Great Romania Party
PRU	United Romania Party
PSD	Social Democratic Party (Romania)
UDMR	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania
UNPR	National Union for the Progress of Romania
USL	Social Liberal Union (Romania)

Introduction

Concepts, Theory and Research Question

European political parties are currently facing a series of challenges to their survival. This thesis deals with the key problem of the parties' weakening links with society leading to a decline in mass mobilization. The weakening ties with society are reflected in the lowering levels of party membership, and high electoral volatility—especially due to new competitors. Consequently, political organizations are not only facing challenges of electoral mobilization, but also of financing their current activities, which previously came from membership fees and contributions. Furthermore, constraints from outside the organization include regulation of political activities (e.g. campaign funding, internal party selection mechanisms) and administrative reforms aimed at depoliticizing the state—often a marked change in European post-communist democracies.

Addressing an existing gap in the literature, the research question addressed here is: **How can a stable political party system emerge in a post-communist setting given the weakness of mass mobilization?** For this research question, Romania is a good case study, as it has relatively stable party system (more so than most other post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)), with regard to the three big players: PSD, PDL, and PNL. These three parties also have a relatively clear development trajectory: PSD and PDL (the former more than the latter) stem from the National Salvation Front, a communist successor party; the PSD has a relatively clear ideological and sociological profile, and the PNL is a historic party, with a clear sociological and ideological profile. Given this context, this thesis argues that the stable party system in Romania emerged because of the development of the cartel system. The present thesis analyses how the process of cartelization can stabilize a party system and increase the survival chances of established parties, when complemented by clientelistic linkages.

The process of political cartelization involves both the anchoring of the parties within the state (as opposed to an anchoring in society), and an agreement between the main competitors to enhance their chances of

survival (much like the economic cartels). Clientelism can substitute the diminishing capacity of political organizations to achieve mass mobilization. As informal channels of resource distribution, when deployed in a consistent and predictable manner, clientelistic networks can create the same effect of voters alignment as policy measures benefiting a specific electoral group. In the context of new democracies, these channels become embedded in the cartel party system, which grants them increased and continuous access to public resources. As such, they can effectively contribute to the latter's survival on the long term.

Richard Katz and Peter Mair (1995) developed the cartel party model in response to the same puzzle: how can we explain the continuing relative stability of party systems in Western Europe, given the weakening ties between parties and society? Their answer was the stability generated by party-state inter-penetration and inter-party collusion. However, the survival of cartel parties is a persistent puzzle given their continuous reliance on limited resources (Hopkin 2002, Bolleyer 2009).

Cartel parties thus remain exposed to this dual challenge of developing networks to substitute their lost (or previously non existing) organizational capacity, and to ensure alternative funding. We have partial answers to these challenges in the existing literature on cartel parties. On one hand, a detachment of the party leadership from the lower ranks of the party would diminish the need to develop the territorial organizations (Koole 1996, Carthy 2004, Bolleyer 2011). But, this leaves them vulnerable to new competitors employing mobilizing electoral promises, such as populist or extremist parties. On the other hand, public funding is seen as a solution to the financing challenges (Van Biezen and Kopecky 2007, Casal Bertoa and Kopecky 2014, Van Biezen and Napel 2014). Once again, this leaves them vulnerable to governmental monitoring and increased public scrutiny on internal party affairs (e.g. candidate selection procedures, appointment criteria).

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the emergence of a stable party system is even more of a puzzle than in Western Europe, given how the new

parties in CEE are and how weak their links to society are. In contrast, in European new democracies, clientelism is much better established as an informal linkage mechanism, employed by parties across the political spectrum. In this context, it can play an important role in hedging against the potential threats to the cartel party. By establishing a territorial presence, and a means of conditional mobilization, clientelism can provide a solution to the fact that “regardless of the strategy employed, cartels invite challengers” (Blyth et al 2010:14, see also Koole 1996:508).

Several criticisms emerged with regards to this theoretical framework. On one hand, the path to cartelization is not clearly mapped out, as cartel parties form in different contexts, in different ways (Detterbeck 2005). On the other hand, the distinctiveness of the cartel party model was challenged, as it does not necessarily mark an abrupt change of parties’ relation to the state, given that patronage and clientelism can be traced to previous party models as well (Kitschelt 2000). While accounting for such conceptual limitations, the cartel party model continues to be the best theoretical option we have to frame the study of contemporary party organizations. The present thesis attempts to extend the model to the context of post-communist party systems in Europe.

The evolution of political parties in Europe has been heavily contingent upon the circumstances of their formation and the institutional conditions in which they subsequently developed. Political parties in new democracies went through a different process of genesis, within a vastly different context than their Western counterparts (Van Biezen 2003). Given the much poorer institutionalization of the party system in these countries, their current stability is surprising. This comes up when we look at the electoral volatility of all stable parties (i.e. those above the threshold for inclusion in the political system over two consecutive elections) (Powell and Tucker 2014, Crabtree and Golder 2016). Thus, focusing solely on the very low scores of electoral volatility of the main political competitors (Powell and Tucker 2014, see Table 1), we find them quite stable in the CEE context.

Within the subset of post-communist countries, we find a weaker state apparatus, as a result of the Communist Party symbiosis with the state (Dimitrov et al 2006, O'Dwyer 2006, Grzymala-Busse 2007). The cartel party model gains distinctive empirical substance in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), given the simultaneous development of the multi-party system and the new administrative institutions. The permissiveness of the institutional system, as well as the poorly developed regulation of political activities left parties in a privileged position to deploy state capture. Parties in office subsequently built an institutional framework that would continue to allow informal linkage systems to persist decades after the initial transition (e.g. patronage, politicization, preferential allocation of public goods and services).

Unlike in Southern new democracies, clientelistic networks in CEE are generally an integral part of the political organization, be they inherited—in the case of successor parties, or subsequently developed by parties in office. I argue that the interpenetration between the party and state made clientelism a genuine solution for developing the organizational capacity, and a response to the weakness of mass mobilization. Through clientelistic networks, public resources could thus be channeled along party lines.

Given such a systematic informal deployment of public resources, clientelism empowered cartel parties in a way that would not have been possible to parties in old democracies. The latter were subjected to a much better institutionalized and less flexible administrative system at the time of their formation. This distinction between the administrative permissiveness in old and new democracies follows Shefter's argument that the timing of bureaucratization explains why certain parties employ informal linkages (Shefter 1994).

Clientelism is a political phenomenon that involves the informal exchange of goods and services for political support. The clientelistic networks' ability to extract and distribute resources, on a large scale, is essential to the survival of the patron political organizations, nowadays. It is important to note that clientelistic exchanges are mainly distinguishable from

any other social democratic or populist policy measure (designed for electoral mobilization) by the informal manner in which the benefits are transferred. As Simona Piattoni suggests: „*politics is inherently particularistic* and what makes the difference is how particular interests are presented, promoted, and aggregated” (2001:3, emphasis in original, see also Roninger 2004:360). Thus, clientelism is essentially an informal system of interest representation and partial mobilization; its success is reliant on unhindered access to public resources—which is optimally achieved within a political cartel.

In the existing literature, we find only general comparative overviews of cartel parties’ reactions to the challenges they face (e.g. public funding, stratification of party organizations). Little attention has been paid to the specific mechanisms and conditions that allow cartel parties to survive over multiple electoral cycles. Even more so, the distinctive traits of old political parties vs. new political parties in Europe remain largely unaccounted for.

Methodology

This thesis explores the informal linkage mechanisms between political parties, central and local structures of government, and society—clients or brokers. The present study is focused on the process of state capture, and the systems of informal resource distribution. Process tracing analysis allows us to see how political parties in post-communist countries remain, or become, embedded in the state, even after the transition period. This enquiry is important not only from the perspective of state capture, but also on the implications it has for the party system and political organizations. Within the present research project I develop an in-depth analysis of how the clientelistic linkages can develop the organizational capacity of a cartel party.

Given that clientelistic exchanges operate obscurely, assessing the extent of the transferred goods and services, as well as who the final beneficiaries are often requires proxy measures (e.g. number of appointments/dismissals, funds transferred outside main budgetary chapters). Through data triangulation, and comparative assessment of the linkage mechanisms employed by the main Romanian parties, I can account for the

overall orientation of their deployment. A reliable perspective on the predominant goal of their deployment (i.e. fueling the party's roots in society vs. self-interested exploitation) is developed through in-depth evaluations of each sequence of such informal transactions. While state capture may also accommodate private gains, I argue that the clientelistic phenomenon presented here is more complex than state capture. The mechanisms employed to informally distribute the captured resources (e.g. transfers to local governments, party donations) are highly indicative of the extent to which clientelism develops the patron organizations.

Sequences of clientelistic exchanges analyzed in the present thesis are: (1) internal party selection – who are the patrons within the party organizations, (2) party patronage – projections of political power on public institutions, (3) politicization—political appointments in key positions of the Central Government (i.e. Senior Civil Servants), and finally (4) preferential resource allocation—public funding channeled through party networks.

Conceptual Delimitations

Both party patronage and politicization reflect the degree of party-state interpenetration. While politicization has been regarded in other studies as a component of political patronage (see for example Meyer-Sahling 2012), I conceptually distinguish the two, to zoom in on mechanisms of public resources extraction. Party patronage involves political appointments in public institutions, many of which fall under the prerogatives of elected parties in office. This is why I refer to it as a projection of political power on the public sector. This does not necessarily involve the clientelistic channeling of public resources. Politicization (i.e. political appointments in key civil service positions) is treated separately in this thesis, as it presses upon the formal/legal separation between the political and the administrative functions of the state. It can therefore be more closely linked to state capture than party patronage, as the rank of the appointments can easily lead to proprietary use of state resources . This thesis focuses on linkage mechanisms embedded within different, but inter-linked informal phenomena.

Another conceptual distinction that informs the present methodology deals with the units of observation. The cartel party literature does not provide us with clear-cut distinctions between the cartel party and a cartel party system. More specifically, we do not generally have the empirical possibility to analyze cartel parties as independent units. Explicit criticism in this regard was formulated against the cartel party as a dominant typology: „a systemic property (a cartel at the level of the party *system*) should not be used to characterize *individual* parties” (Koole 1996: 508, emphasis in original). Rather, we find that cartel parties belong to a cartelized party system, characterized by: party-state interpenetration, and inter-party collusion (Katz and Mair 1995). Therefore, this thesis reveals linkage mechanisms belonging to the Romanian party system as a whole; within a cartelized party system, clientelism is deployed by all parties. There are slight variations in terms of the specific clientelistic tools (e.g. distribution of consumer goods vs. preferential regulatory rules) or in terms of their effectives (i.e. delivering electoral victories). Still, overall the evidence presented here does indeed confirm that all the main parties are employing informal exchanges to strengthen their organizations.

Most of the empirical data collected in this thesis is focused on the forms, outputs and outcomes of the party-state interpenetration, as the main element of variation within the cartel party model. Looking at the existing case studies of cartelization in the United Kingdom, Sweden and United States (Blyth and Katz 2005), or Ireland (Bolleyer 2011) we can easily see that collusion between parties is an implicit element of party-state interpenetration. Furthermore, it is within the party-state interpenetration that we also find one of the most significant distinguishing elements of the cartel model from previous typologies: the heavy reliance on capital intensive strategies of mobilization.

Placing the Analysis in Time and Space

The timeframe of the research covers the entire post-communist period, since the transition to democracy, until present day. It also traces

some of the communist lineages in terms of party organizations, and administrative structures. Certain categories of empirical data do not cover the entire post-communist period (e.g. civil service appointments, party membership, party donations, funding allocations). This is due to: the sequential implementation of administrative reforms, and the late introduction of the legislative provisions on public access to some of the relevant data. Whenever the official records permitted it, we have assembled a systematic collection of data for as wide a period as possible. Essentially, as the research question is addressed through a qualitative framework, even the absence of data over certain periods of time is informative to the topic. The more opaque the appointment procedures or funding decision are, the more likely it is they are done in a discretionary manner.

Given the need to conduct in-depth research on the linkage mechanisms that embed parties within the state, and allow them to discretionary channel public resources, this thesis employs a single case study. Such an in-depth research allows us to trace alternative routes of electoral mobilization, as well as the implications of informal exchanges. Therefore, Romania serves as the selected case study meant to provide insights into the utility of clientelism to cartels, and to showcase their symbiosis in the context of CEE party systems.

There have been some notable comparative studies on the extent to which parties in Central and Eastern Europe develop a high dependency on extracting resources from the state (see for example Kopecky 2006, Van Biezen and Kopecky 2007, Grzymala-Busse 2007, Grzymala-Busse 2008, Kopecky et al 2012, Van Biezen and Kopecky 2014, Innes 2014). A particularly prominent study in this regard is Anna Grzymala-Busse's 2007 book on party competition and state exploitation in post-communist democracies, which together with her 2008 article on clientelism and state capture lay the foundations of conceptualizing the complementarity between cartelization and clientelism. Still, Romania is not covered by any of these studies:

“The striking omission from Grzymala-Busse’s study is Romania; a particular surprise especially in light of the lack of regulatory reform and the cronyism and patronage of the early 1990s under President Ion Iliescu (Gallagher, 2005). Indeed, given the lack of ‘robust competition’ in this period one would expect it would bolster Grzymala-Busse’s case considerably” (Haughton 2008:488).”

I argue that the Romanian case study not only bolsters Grzymala-Busse’s argument that the lack of robust competition leaves way for state exploitation and clientelism, but it also allows us to further nuance this argument. The case study of Romania illustrates the cartel party model through party-state interpenetration via state capture, as opposed to the majority of studies on cartelization in CEE that focused on party funding. Romania also illustrates well the inter-party collusion via weak representation or contestation from the opposition (Evans and Whitefield 1993, Innes 2002, Hanley and Sikk 2016), gerrymandering (Giugal et al 2017) and electoral legislation that safeguards the *status quo* (Marian and King 2010, Radu and Buti 2015). In the contextual determinants of CEE, the Romanian case study shows not only how weak opposition leaves way for clientelism, but also how state capture and clientelism interact to achieve political stability. This has not been reflected in the literature before.

Data Collection

Empirical evidence is collected in this thesis from various sources: face to face interviews, archival research and official documents, statistical data and various secondary sources. The 50 interviews that informed the present research were conducted at different stages of the research. I started by identifying relevant experts from public records and contacted them via email or phone. Subsequently, I employed the snow-balling technique, asking each respondent to recommend other persons with whom I should talk to regarding the particular topics of interest. The interviews can be broadly separated in two categories: those dealing with appointments in public office, and those

dealing with contracts and acquisitions. The topics overlapped at times, especially with regards to anecdotal illustrations, and also covered adjacent topics relevant to this thesis, depending on each interviewee's profile and expertise. Because the fight against corruption has been prominent in the public debates in Romania, I encountered little difficulties in reaching respondents and obtaining expressive, illustrative answers.

Out of the total number of interviews, 37 structured and semi-structured interviews replicated the methodology of the Party Patronage Index¹ and targeted the following categories of expert respondents: academia, civil service, civil society, media, and party officials. Some of these interviews also comprised a semi-structured discussion of the traits of the civil service in Romania which helped me develop the foundations of the Rotation Index Methodology presented in Chapter 5. As the topic of the interviews was sensitive, especially for civil servants and party officials, every respondent had the option of answering anonymously. Most of the interviewees from this phase of the research did not solicit their names to be hidden, yet refused in general to be recorded and asked for my notes after transcription².

The rest of the 13 semi-structured interviews were spread across different years to help me understand the mechanisms through which political parties extract public resources to the benefit of their organizations. The main categories of respondents were: private contractors, public officials dealing with investment projects and/or public procurement, and political campaign staffers. In this category of respondents the majority preferred to remain anonymous, as the discussions involved descriptions of personal experiences, and procedural or legislative breaches.

While the interviews were sufficiently numerous to enable me to reproduce the party patronage index for the Romanian case study (i.e.

¹ Initially developed in Kopecky et al 2012, and subsequently extended to a larger set of cases in Kopecky et al 2016

² I also sent the manuscript of the peer-reviewed articles (Volintiru 2015, Gherghina and Volintiru 2017) that draw on these interview data to the interviewees before being published.

average scores for the 9 policy sectors, and depth of patronage at different institutional levels), their qualitative input was much more limited.

The inherent subjectivity of respondents meant that every relevant answer had to be ascertained through additional empirical evidence (e.g. judicial prosecutions, own archival research, press coverage). Every reference to legislative provisions or procedural aspects was researched in-depth subsequently. The assessment of political parties organization was based on various party documents (e.g. rules and regulations, manifestos).

I have conducted a great number of additional conversations on the topics of interest (e.g. clientelistic mechanisms of distribution in the territory, party organisation and internal dynamics, private contractors and public procurement) that have provided me with valuable insights, but their nature was 'off-the-record' so I did not include them in Annex 4 (i.e. Interview List). Generally, all the interviews were a starting point, providing clues for further investigation and systematic analysis.

For the purpose of the legislative analysis, I used the digital on-line repository iDrept³ which makes subsequent changes, or amendments visible in the text of each law and official decisions. The same repository allowed me to trace the evolution of the institutional framework: the development of new institutions and changes, through governmental decisions and subsequent laws. For appointment and dismissal decisions in the Central Government, I manually downloaded each Ministerial decision from the online repository of the national Parliament and from institutional archives. For various other pieces of information, I benefitted from the possibility to solicit information from the relevant authorities based on the provisions of the Law No 544/2001 regarding free access to public information in Romania. I also used declassified reports on Romania from the Department of State⁴ to compile a broader picture on the transitioning circumstance in Romania.

³ <http://idrept.ro>, last accessed on 2.08.2016

⁴ FOIA Request F-2011-04522

In terms of quantitative data, the series were often fragmented and required a compilation efforts (e.g. public funding), or had to be constructed from scratch (e.g. party donations, political affiliation of mayors). The datasets that composed some of the indexes used in this thesis (i.e. Index of Party Patronage, Democratic Accountability Dataset) were previously created using expert surveys. Much like many other widely used democracy or governance indexes, they represent a perception-based assessment of each country's/party's relative positioning. While it is useful to have an overall perspective on the extent to which party patronage or clientelistic exchanges are used in Romania (in comparison to other countries) these can not be treated as hard measures of the phenomena under investigation and thus are treated as starting points for in-depth research and validation.

The within case analysis developed here is aimed at unveiling the mechanisms that couple political cartelization and clientelistic distribution of goods and services. This means that a triangulation of data was necessary and the observable patterns in the data sets and indexes had to be contextualized within a process tracing analysis of party organizations and political choices, which allowed me to distinguish both macro- as well as micro- level elements of the phenomena of interest (George and Bennett 2005: 206-216, Munck 2004:108-112). Such a mechanism-focused analysis allowed me to assess the outcomes of such practices at the intra-party and party system levels, as well as their impact on institutional processes.

The risk of reaching narrow or idiosyncratic findings is managed and (hopefully) avoided by looking at processes that have or can be explored in the context of other European post-communist case studies. I address the extent to which the current findings can travel in the region through the comparative analysis in chapter 2.

Case Selection

The Romanian case study illustrates the underpinnings of how the party-state interpenetration was maintained and developed in the post-communist period, successfully transitioning from the one-party state, to a

multiparty system. It provides us with ample opportunity to explore the role clientelism can have within cartel parties in new democracies. The size of its administration, as well as its economy, territory, and population, all allow us to develop a multi-layered analysis of clientelistic linkage mechanisms—at the central and local government levels, both within the party organizations and outside them (e.g. linkages with private contractors) etc.

Firstly, the selection criteria are focused on the Romanian political parties—as employers of clientelism and promoters of cartelization. The emerging successor party—the National Salvation Front (FSN), comprising its subsequent versions (i.e. PDSR, PSD), was the most successful example of its kind in CEE post-communist democracies (Tismaneanu 2003, Gallagher 2005, Gledhill and King 2008). Not only did it manage to win the first electoral rounds, but it also managed to remain competitive on the national political scene, as the biggest political force—measured in members and territorial capacity, returning periodically to power. Its electoral volatility has been relatively low, judging by the changes in their vote share, as they score around 35%, for list-based electoral competitions, either at the local (e.g. county or local council), or legislative elections (e.g. House of Representatives or Senate).

The main competitor—the Democratic Party (PD) that would later become the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) has its roots in the same successor party—National Salvation Front (FSN). In other words, two of the main political parties of the post-communist period emerged from the one-party state lineage at the time of the transition. The National Liberal Party (PNL) is the only surviving historic party, and as such has a clear ideological profile, but has never managed to win a majority in Parliament on its own, and it was often a right-wing coalition partner.

Important to note, a further argument in support of the stabilizing role clientelism plays in consolidating cartel parties: there is no noticeable extremist or fringe party in Romania. Sean Hanley and Allan Sikk note that no anti-establishment parties have materialized in Romania, which they relate to

“markedly low level of democratic freedoms (...) compared to other EU states (as indicated by *Freedom House* political rights and press freedom scores)” (2016:524). The nationalist Greater Romania Party (PRM) had a good electoral performance in 2000, driven mostly by the charisma of its leader, and weak competition from the right wing spectrum (given its high fragmentation at the time). It was thus a temporary opposition agent, which subsequently disintegrated. Subsequent attempts of extremist parties (e.g. United Romania Party (PRU)) have not been able to meet the Parliamentary threshold.

The electoral stability of the mainstream parties in Romania under cartelization allows us to empirically evaluate the manner in which clientelistic linkages successfully preserve political parties’ roots in society. The literature explains how the narrowing policy space occupied by the cartel parties essentially invites challengers (e.g. populist parties, extremist parties) who can effectively pursue the electorate whose grievances remain unrepresented (Koole 1996, Blyth and Katz 2005, Blyth et al 2010). As we see the emergence of fringe alternatives across Europe, the Romanian case becomes an essential illustration of the conditions under which the cartel party system can fend off such competitors. When effectively deployed, the clientelistic system hedges the mainstream political cartel against outsiders.

On the other hand, the selection criteria of the Romanian case study is based on the institutional development of the state—as the main object of the investigated phenomena of clientelism and cartelization (through party-state interpenetration). The single case study approach is informed by the consideration that Romania has certain distinctive traits, both in terms of the sultanistic nature of the Communist Rule (Linz and Stepan 1996), and the violent nature of its transition. These traits make it an illustrative case for the intersection of the clientelistic phenomenon and the cartelization of political parties.

The Romanian Revolution was paradoxical in its nature as it preserved an entire echelon of political elites in power, while being also the bloodiest in

the Eastern Europe (Tismaneanu 2003, Gledhill 2011/2012, Stan and Vancea 2015). In contrast, the rapid proliferation of political parties “brought about a weak form of pluralism that was not conducive to genuine political competition (...) new political parties had weak constituencies, little grass-roots support, and lacked well-defined doctrines and internal discipline” (Stan and Vancea 2015:15). The strong position of the successor party from an organizational point of view, as well as the need for social stabilization in the face of repeated violent confrontations (i.e. *Mineriade*) ensured an elite continuity in the administrative and political systems - the *nomeklatura* (Light and Phinnemore 2001, Grosescu 2004, Gledhill and King 2008). While the alternation in power, and liberalization reforms slowly started to take shape, the initial circumstances of the birth of the post-democratic party system ensured the continuity of many of the informal/party linkages with administrative structures that characterized the old regime.

In conclusion, the selection of the Romanian case study fits the ‘extreme’ case study typology (Gerring 2007: 86-109, Seawright and Gerring 2008: 297, 301-302) with regards to clientelistic mechanisms. For the extreme case study “it is the rareness of the value that makes a case valuable” (Seawright and Gerring 2008: 301). As the topic of this thesis’ inquiry the stability of the major Romanian parties is remarkable, given that it is the lowest in the region based on the electoral volatility data of Powell and Tucker (2013) (see Table 1 in Chapter 2). The stability of the major Romanian parties (Preda 2016) coupled with the fact that it is the only post-communist European democracy with no successful extremist or anti-establishment party (Hanley and Sikk 2016: 524) reflect the rareness of this case study.

The selection of the case study based on the traits of the dimension of interest (i.e. party stability) is in apparent contradiction with the usual selection methods that argue against selecting on the dependent variable (see Geddes 1990, Collier et al 2004). Still, I do not claim that Romania is a representative case study for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, it has distinctive traits both in terms of the trajectory of its political parties, and in terms of the context in which these parties

appeared (i.e. transitional circumstances) and evolved. It has however a strong explanatory power of how the coupling of cartelization with large-scale informal distribution channels (i.e. clientelism) can contribute to party survival. As suggested by Seawright and Gerring, as long as we do not ignore the full range variation of the population of interest (in this case post-communist political parties) and retain them as points of reference in the analysis, sample bias is unlikely to affect the findings (2008:301-302)

Relevance of the Research

The current relative stability of CEE party systems is a puzzle, in view of their weak links with society. The case study of Romania allows us to explore the interaction between clientelistic linkages and cartelization, as well as to validate the causal mechanisms through which cartelized party systems maintain their roots in society, effectively preventing outside challengers. Most of the described mechanisms of intersection between political interests and clientelistic solutions are not idiosyncratic, as they can be traced to the challenges and opportunities faced by all post-communist parties in Europe.

As such, the present research has a twofold relevance to wider academic debates: (1) it illustrates how clientelism complements cartelization providing parties with stability in the face of declining mass mobilization, and (2) reveals the specific mechanisms through which cartel parties channel public resources in a clientelistic manner, in the institutional context of new democracies.

The political parties in this region faced similar organizational challenges—streaming both from the legacies of the previous party-state regime, as well as from the transitional circumstances. Recent comparative evaluations of the extent of such informal practices as clientelism (Kitschelt 2015) or party patronage (Kopecky et al 2016) show that in larger datasets, CEE countries remain grouped around similarly high values. We have every reason to believe that similar structural interactions are at play across the region. Nevertheless, comparative overviews of informal linkages (e.g. Kitschelt 2015, Kopecky et al 2016) are mainly based on expert survey data.

They allow us only to understand the presence and perceived range of the phenomena, yet leave the specific linkage mechanisms involved largely unaccounted for.

Romanian parties are much more likely to resort to clientelistic exchanges to achieve electoral success. As such, the expert surveys conducted under the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP) (2011) show that Romania has the third highest regional score, after Bulgaria and Greece, for how much effort politicians and political parties make to induce voters with preferential benefits to cast favourable votes. Along these lines, the Romanian party system as a whole is judged to be steering major efforts in clientelistic exchanges, as opposed to more moderate stances taken by other European new democracy case studies, such as Spain, Portugal, or Italy.

Therefore, an in-depth investigation in this case study of the different clientelistic linkages operating within cartel parties is informative on several accounts. Firstly, it allows us to understand when and how informal linkages distort public institutions. While it is usually referred to as a corrosive phenomenon, we do not generally have the insight on how exactly it erodes or distort the functions of the state. The present research elaborates on such specific instances as politicization of civil service, and political allocations. The supporting empirical evidence provides us with variation across institutions, and across parties, so that specific patterns of deployment emerge. Effective policy measures against wasteful spending or governmental corruption can only be based on such a thorough assessment of the informal institutional processes: how clientelistic networks tap into public resources, and what do they do with them.

Cartelization and clientelism together make for mixed effects in terms of public support. On one hand, cartelization via state capture deprives citizens of public resources and creates a preferential or restrictive access to them. This in turn usually leads to popular discontent, which does not contribute to the patron's party stability. Simply put, state capture can not buy

all the votes needed for survival. This is one of the main lines of argument in the literature regarding the inherent instability of the cartel.

On the other hand, I argue that a nation-wide clientelistic system that ensure predictable while still informal or conditional exchanges contributes to the stability of the patron party. Highly illustrative to this point is the electoral context of the 2016 national elections in Romania when the Social Democrats (PSD) won a landslide majority in Parliament with over 45% of the public suffrage, only to face a month later the largest protest movement since the 1989 revolution. Their social roots fueled by decades-long clientelistic exchanges ensured their victory, even though discretionary control over the state resources resulted in a predictable popular contestation. The cartel is further confirmed in this context, as none of the other major parties in Romania made a similarly forcible opposition.

This avenue of investigation also helps us understand the iterative nature of a clientelistic system (e.g. state capture, informal distribution). Weak institutions for example lead to the development of an informal system of benefit distribution. Nevertheless, once such clientelistic channels are set up, they will continue to erode public institutions by extracting resources. A comparative overview would only reveal a context of poor institutional capacity, but not the continuous reinforcement of clientelism. Therefore, the present thesis is relevant to the wider debate on the source of institutional weakness. I argue that it is not driven by the clientelistic phenomenon, but exploited by it.

Secondly, the in-depth case study allows us to see the composition of the clientelistic networks—who the patrons and clients actually are, and especially to account for co-opted members from outside the political party organization (i.e. civil servants, private contractors). By accounting for such third parties as private contractors, we are able to develop a new clientelistic model (Gherghina and Volintiru 2016)—one that portrays the alternative party financing mechanisms under the current organizational constraints.

Finally, one of the main unresolved issues regarding both clientelism and cartelization is whether they are effective electoral instruments. While impossible to disentangle their contribution to electoral victories in a single case study, it is much easier to understand their overlapping functions once we analyze both losing and winning candidates. As this thesis shows, electoral victory is only one of the outcomes targeted by clientelism. For cartel parties, clientelism serves both as a means to mobilize the electorate, but also, as a means to effectively control public institutions.

In terms of long-term survival, the key target of clientelism is to fuel the party organizations. When the territorial network of the party is strong, the informal distribution system is in place, and parties in public office only need to maintain the flow of goods and services. Even parties with a weaker territorial presence benefit from deploying clientelism, as channeling funds in the territory helps them develop their own local organizations. Cartelization can ensure such a continuous access to public resources, but it also creates tensions between the different layers of the party organization. This is mainly due to the fact that cartel parties develop a stratarchy, as leaders detach themselves from the base. The present thesis shows how the stratarchy is counteracted by the clientelistic system, as hierarchical links are reinforced within the party to ensure the distribution of resources to local organizations and to the electorate.

As the present research shows, tensions between central leadership and local organizations may arise as control over resources enhances. If local leaders control increasingly more public resources, they usually claim more decision-making power within the party (e.g. central government appointments), as it is they that take on the burden of financing electoral campaigns. If, on the other hand, the institutional context limits their access to public resources (e.g. strong opposition, legislative changes that restrict their budget or attributions), local leaders remain more dependent on the central leadership, and usually can not deliver electoral victories on their own. Most of the political parties in new democracies find themselves in this latter situation, as their territorial presence was scarce to begin with, and the institutional

context in these countries was sooner steered towards centralization than decentralization. In this aspect, it is only the successor parties, with their stronger territorial presence, that resemble Western cartel parties in their ability to create a franchise system. In support of the argument that clientelism is developing the organizational capacity of cartel parties I account for how and why power is distributed/shared between the center and the periphery of Romanian political parties.

In terms of control over governmental institutions, under cartelization, parties in office have only limited control over the subordinated state apparatus, sharing it with coalition partners (e.g. political appointment algorithms). This thesis shows that even if the electoral outcomes are not always favourable, the utility of clientelism to cartel parties persists. Through a network of political appointments (i.e. party patronage), the clientelistic system allows parties to make full use of the party-state interpenetration.

The topic of this thesis (i.e. how clientelism complements cartelization) and the area of its study (i.e. CEE) is relevant to the wider debate on the survival of cartel parties, and means of mobilization. Linkage mechanisms can have a significant role in the functioning of the state apparatus (to the better, or to the worse). Charles Tilly argued in favour of their prominence in the political life: “relational mechanisms (e.g. brokerage) and environmental mechanisms (e.g. resource depletion) exert strong effects on political processes” (2001: 24-25). The informal linkage mechanisms (i.e. clientelistic exchanges, patronage networks) are even more important to explore in-depth, as they usually operate outside (not necessarily against) the prescriptions of the legal framework. The present thesis aims to address the fact that little light has been previously shed on the informal linkage mechanisms, the extent of their contingency, their purpose and utility for political parties that deploy them.

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 develops the conceptual framing of the present research, and its anchoring in the existing literature. The main assertion of this thesis is

that clientelism can be a powerful substitute to the depreciated linkages cartel parties have with society, with their own party organizations, and a useful tool for extracting most advantages from party-state interpenetration. As clientelistic channels of distribution fuel the lower ranks of the party organizations, the party leaders and lower levels become brokers, and are able, to the extent of the clientelistic phenomenon, to maintain or develop roots in society. This counterbalances both the internal strataarchy of cartel parties, and their detachment from the electorate. But, for a cartel party to be able to create these clientelistic linkages it has to capitalize on party-state interpenetration. As such party appointments, and politicization are key means of controlling the public institutions, and consequently the funding allocations, and decision-making process.

The conceptual linkages between clientelism and cartelization are placed against the background of European post-communist new democracies. It is in CEE that political parties faced specific organizational challenges, as most of the political actors were established at the same time as the multi-party system. Furthermore, it is within this specific context that political organizations were more readily able to deploy clientelism and party patronage because of two reasons. Firstly, there was a historical interpenetration between political elites and the administrative process within the single-party state. Secondly, within the transition to democracy, the public administration was either redesigned or newly created, leaving it more accessible to politicization than in the more established institutional system in Western Europe. It is especially because of this latter aspect that clientelism can contribute to the development or survival of cartel parties in CEE.

The second chapter of this thesis develops a comparative overview of four Central and Eastern (CEE) new democracies: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania. It looks at the political parties in each of the selected cases—formation and evolution, and the way their specific traits (i.e. organizational constraints, electoral competition) were conducive to the deployment of party patronage, or political appointments. It is within the specific context of CEE that the connections between party patronage and

politicization on one hand, and clientelistic channeling of public resources on the other hand can contribute to the development of political organizations.

Furthermore, Chapter 2 develops a systematic comparison of the legislative and administrative framework of the selected case studies. This dual assessment from the political parties perspective, and from the public administration perspective is needed in order to reveal the specificities of the clientelistic mechanisms in CEE. In this sense, of particular significance is the distribution of power within the administrative apparatus. We can thus see the legislative and administrative reforms in CEE, over the course of the post-communist period, as determining factors to the extent and utility of party patronage and politicization. This finding is supported by existing large comparative datasets (i.e. Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP), Index of Party Patronage (IPP)) on the extent and form of clientelistic exchanges that are interpreted in this chapter.

The following chapters of the thesis develop the in-depth case study analysis of Romania. Chapter 3 explores the party organizations in Romania, and the internal power relations between the central leadership and the periphery. The formal (e.g. internal party regulation on leadership selection) and informal (e.g. influence in support a candidate) system of power sharing within the party organizations is highly significant to clientelistic exchanges. This chapter aims to assess who are the patrons in the clientelistic systems of exchange within the parties: central or local leaders? We thus can understand better who benefits from the political penetrations of the administrative system. Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the internal party dynamics is frequently influenced by administrative reforms that alter the distribution of prerogative between Central Government (CG) and Local Governments (LGs). Therefore, this chapter is addressing the issue of who is accountable to whom—formally and informally, in the political parties' internal clientelistic systems.

The following two chapters deal with the mechanisms through which political parties place loyal supporters, or party members in public jobs.

Chapter 4 develops an overview analysis of the public sector employment in Romania, and the opportunities and constraints of political appointments. It presents the original dataset for Romania based on the patronage index methodology (Kopecky et al 2012). The collected empirical dataset allows us to see cross-sectorial variation in party patronage, and an in-depth analysis is developed to explain these patterns. Based on the same expert survey assessment, we can also see the scope and depth of patronage within different administrative strata (e.g. ministries, non-departmental agencies or commissions, executing institutions). Party patronage is nevertheless a blunt tool, as it can be used both as an electoral or organizational resource (Kopecky et al 2012, see also Piattoni 2001, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007), as well as an exploitation tool of personal enrichment (Volintiru 2015). Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the politicization mechanisms in Romania—based on an original systematic analysis of all personnel appointments in Senior Civil Service positions.

Finally, a conceptual distinction is made between the deployment of clientelism for functional purposes (i.e. winning elections, developing the party organization), and exploitative purposes (i.e. benefits concentrated around party elites). The separation between the two functions of clientelism is not clear-cut, and they are often co-existing, but we develop throughout the thesis in-depth qualitative assessments of who are the people composing the clientelistic linkages in Romania, and whether these are predominantly party connections, or personal networks. As clientelism can be seen as having a predominantly functional purpose, we nevertheless argue that in those instances in which a political party uses clientelistic mechanisms of public resource extraction without fueling the party organizations, then it becomes a counterproductive survival strategy.

Chapter 5 looks at key office-holders responsible for managing public resources. It provides a comparative analysis of the Romanian Senior Civil Service. The cases selected for this comparison are the Ministries with most personnel changes for Senior Civil Service positions: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of Economy.

For the period 2005-2013, an original Rotation Index is developed to reflect the stability of appointees in Senior Civil Service position, and the variation across different ministerial mandates. The Rotation Index is used as a proxy indicator for politicization, or how much the politically appointed Minister affect changes on administrative personnel.

Chapter 6 shows the relevance of party patronage and politicization to clientelistic exchanges and electoral outcomes. There are two clientelistic linkage systems presented in this chapter. Firstly, public funds that are allocated along party lines to local governments. Secondly, central and local governments make discretionary allocations to private contractors, who in exchange become party donors. This latter clientelistic linkage is significant because it has never been explored in the literature before, and it is a new model of clientelism (Gherghina and Volintiru 2016).

When linking the clientelistic practices of political parties in Romania to their electoral performance we see variation of outcomes across different administrative layers. At the level of the cities and communes that benefit from political allocations, we find that more than 70% of them managed to get reelected—suggesting a powerful role of proprietary spending in relatively small communities. Admittedly, the continuity of these political leaders in office is not influenced only by political allocations, but this analysis addressed the broader patterns of the functional utility of clientelistic mechanisms. On the other hand, we can see less than half of the county presidents managed to get reelected even if they were the ones that were negotiating the budgetary shares of various transfers and programmes for the localities.

These county leaders or “local barons” apparently benefited less from preferential allocations because of two reasons. Firstly, the power distance towards them was higher, and consequently their patronage role towards the electorate was diluted. Secondly, they were the targets of opposition attacks with regards to preferential spending and political allocations. At the same time, as corruption cases unveiled for more than a quarter of county council presidents, their main goals in deploying clientelistic mechanisms were not as

much electoral, as they were exploitative. As our empirical focus is not on corruption, but on clientelism, the interesting fact about the links between political elites and private contractors is that the latter were used to transform public contract payments into party donations, thus fueling the political organizations with financial resources.

Overall, this thesis is designed to address the puzzle of stable party systems in a post-communist setting (which faced much bigger challenges of party system consolidation) despite the weakness of mass mobilization. I argue that the first layer of stabilization for the newly formed parties was that of cartelization. As opposed to Western democracies, the party-state interpenetration in CEE was effectively achieved given its preexisting party-state interpenetration under communism, as well as the favourable post-communist political environment. The transition meant a simultaneous development of the multi-party system and the democratic state, which left the parties in office with considerable leverage over public institutions. Given cartels' continuous access to public resources, clientelism thus becomes a powerful instrument of stabilization, as it can solve many of a cartel's inherent challenges (e.g. funding, territorial presence, electoral mobilization).

Within the propitious setting of the CEE, this thesis shows how clientelism provides a second layer of stabilization to the main political parties. The relevance of this research is that it shows how a weak administrative capacity (i.e. transitional circumstances) can lead to the consolidation of informal exchanges (e.g. political allocations, politicization of senior civil service jobs). Furthermore, it shows how the informal networks embedded within the state apparatus can ensure party financing solutions (i.e. public contractors making party donations). Finally, and most importantly, this thesis argues that the clientelistic exchanges within a cartel provide more than partial electoral mobilization: they consolidate its organization and develop roots in society.

Chapter 1. Clientelism – the Missing Ingredient of the Cartelization Model in New Democracies

Clientelistic linkages can help cartel parties survive: when deployed systematically they become informal systems of redistribution, and anchor the party in society. They also provide a substitute for traditional measures of organizational strength (e.g. human and material resources). The cartelization process generates informal linkages on its own, even in the absence of clientelism, as it builds upon an interpenetration with the state. But, the emergence and development of a cartel party brings about the detachment of its leadership from the party base, and to a certain extent from the electorate as well. It is within this context that party patronage, politicization, and especially the clientelistic distribution of goods and services become useful to the electoral survival of a cartel party, in the longer term.

Extensive theoretical and empirical studies have shown that the process of cartelization is driven by the weakening of political parties' ties with society and this tendency has been covered in depth with case studies and comparative analysis of older democracies. However, it is much less clear why and how the cartelization process occurs in newer democracies—where political parties had very different paths of formation and evolution. Furthermore, insufficient studies to date show us how the cartel parties manage to survive successive electoral cycles in the absence of strong roots in society, and limited resources.

This thesis responds to the following research question: **How can a stable political party system emerge in a post-communist setting, given the weakness of mass mobilization?** The process of cartelization provides a partial answer to this question, as it stabilizes the political parties by anchoring them in the state. In addition to this, I argue that clientelism serves as a supporting mechanism of cartelization. In this sense, the present thesis addresses the twofold puzzle of how political parties in new democracies have reproduced the cartel party model, and its subsequent survival.

Clientelism can play a stabilizing role in the development of a cartel party, both within the party organization—interlinking various strata of the political party, as well as outside it—interlinking the party with its institutional and societal counterparts. It can be an effective complement to the model of cartel parties typical of western Europe, as it recreates connections with the electorate and the lower ranks of the political parties. It uses the captured public resources to maintain political linkages with society. Clientelistic tools (i.e. party appointments, politicized administrative functions, discretionary resource allocation) can be used to extract public resources to the benefit of the party leaders, the party organizations or local bosses, and ultimately, the party members and supporters.

1.1. Party Models, Evolutionary Challenges and Cartelization

The literature on political parties has produced a series of typologies of party organizations. The most recent paradigm is the cartel party model. Richard Katz and Peter Mair (1995) put forward the cartel party model following a process of organizational transformation within the European political parties. It can be best characterized by a weakening of the parties' linkages with society, and by the intensification of their relation with the state (Katz and Mair 1995). This thesis builds on this typology, as it frames cartelization as the solution for both the organizational weakening of mainstream parties and the increased competition they face. It does not however appear to be stable due to its continuous reliance on state resources, and poor links with society. Where possible to systematically extract resources from the state (e.g. in the context of CEE post communist democracies) clientelism can reinforce the cartel party, by consolidating the internal party organization, and ensuring electoral support.

Most of the initial typologies of political parties analyzed the level of inclusiveness within the organization, or the extent of the members' involvement. Based on this consideration, Maurice Duverger (1954) made the famous distinction between cadre-party and mass party. With a similar logic, Neumann (1956) distinguished between the party of individual representation

and the party of mass representation. Both of these classic typologies are however constructed on the assumption that at least some political parties retain extensive organizations.

Party politics scholarship later offered typologies that help us understand how contemporary parties have coped with/adapted to the demise of organizational capacity. Kirchheimer (1966) developed the catch-all party model in response to the ideological detachment of parties that no longer engaged with specific social cleavages. In conjuncture to the catch-all party model, Otto Kirschheimer developed some considerations on what he called the 'state-party cartel' looking at the increasingly weak or inexistent opposition in party systems and the 'reduction of politics to mere management of the state' in a paper written in German in 1954 (see Krouwel 2003:23-24)

Panbianco (1988) puts forward the typology of the electoral-professional party—relying heavily on external professionals in campaigning and communications for winning elections. This is an important step forward in conceptualizing contemporary parties whose internal weakness (i.e. decreasing membership, stratarchy, poor territorial presence) should have made them succumb according to previous prescriptions. Instead, old and new parties resort to external resources—either as campaign staff, or party donors. This is clearly illustrated in the business firm model, where internal party structures are loose “with technical tasks often ‘contracted out’ to external experts with no ties to the party” and “membership is also limited, with a high proportion of its members being officeholders who see the party as a vehicle for acquiring political positions” (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999:133).

Linked to the issue of organizational capacity, political parties also have to face the threat of competitors, especially in the context of weak mass mobilization. Addressing both the issue of organizational demise, and the issue of outside challengers, Katz and Mair (1995, 2009) develop the cartel party model involving: party-state interpenetration and inter-party collusion. As such cartel parties become agents of the state, and no longer fulfill their brokerage function between the state and society (Katz and Mair 1995). This

is particularly important to the present thesis' hypothesis that clientelism, which is essentially a brokerage mechanism, can fulfill some of the lost function of cartelized parties.

Few theoretical models have been so expressive and largely supported by empirical evidence than the cartel party and its party-state interpenetration dimension. Systematic comparative empirical tests in old and new democracies (Van Biezen and Kopecky 2014), from both Europe and elsewhere (Blyth and Katz 2005, Van Biezen and Kopecky 2007) show that the model holds its relevance and explanatory power decades after its initial formulation.

A wealth of studies illustrates the organizational weaknesses of contemporary political parties (i.e. party membership decline, narrowing programmatic appeal, financing) (Mair and Van Biezen 2001, Schmitter 2001, Dalton and Wattenberg 2002, Blyth and Katz 2005, Van Biezen et al 2012). Some of these organizational challenges are related to the simultaneous pressure of resource scarcity, and increased relevance of financial resources in electoral competitions. Consequently, political parties tend to increase their reliance on public funding (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002, Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, Hopkin 2004, Scarrow 2006, Van Biezen and Kopecky 2007, Van Biezen 2010, Haughton 2012, Casal Bertoa and Spirova 2017) or resort to state capture (Ganev 2007, Kopecky 2006, Muller 2006, Grzymala-Busse 2007, Innes 2014, 2016). This latter aspect of state capture is particularly relevant in the poorly consolidated institutional context of post-communist European democracies.

The initial theoretical statement of the party-state interpenetration within a cartel model by Richard Katz and Peter Mair (1995) has been subsequently nuanced in its rejoinder (Katz and Mair 1996), as well as its restatement in 2009 (Katz and Mair 2009). The 2009 restatement of the cartel party thesis defends the key traits of this ideal model and its empirical validity, while also expanding the initial considerations. Here the authors touch upon such aspects as the narrowing policy space—"increasing homogeneity of

experiences and expectations of the vast majority of citizens” and the inherently limited resources of the state (2009:758). It also integrates some of the previous limitations of the model in dealing with the international context of policy harmonization, increasing reliance on mass media and new technologies for campaigning (see criticism in Koole 1996), as well as the threat of defection from the cartel (see criticism in Kitschelt 2000).

Poor differentiation through policy and platform in contemporary electoral competitions (i.e. narrowing policy space) is more widely considered in a complementary analysis of Mark Blyth and Richard Katz (2005) in which the political economy of the cartel is reviewed in consideration of policy resources rather than party subsidies. Blyth and Katz engage with the risk of defection as one of the main challenges to cartels (2005) in addition to the initial risk of new competitors (Katz and Mair 1995, 2009). According to their analysis, the fiscal limits of public budgets—as an inherent problem of catch-all politics, transform “parties from maximizing competitors to risk averse colluders” (2005: 40), and thus diminish the risk of defection.

While generally embraced as a useful ideal party type, some of the most prominent criticism to the cartel party model came shortly after its initial formulation, from Koole (1996) and others such as Beyme (1996) Kitschelt (2000), Detterbeck (2005), or Birnir (2010). The criticisms target what they believe to be too ambitious theoretical claims, and question whether the cartel party is indeed an evolution from the catch-all party, or whether it is simply a variation of existing party models.

Ruud Koole quickly reacted to the initial formulation of the cartel party model by signaling out both theoretical and empirical limitations. Firstly⁵, Koole challenged the novelty and distinctiveness of the cartel model. He mentions to this effect previous studies portraying established parties collusion to keep new entrants out by Arend Lijphart’s analysis of the Dutch “kartel democratie” (1996:515). A similar criticism is also presented by Andre

⁵ The order of the arguments varies between the abstract and the structure of Koole’s 1996 article, as well as from the order in which they are addressed in the Katz and Mair 1996 Rejoinder.

Krouwel regarding Otto Kirscheimer's mention of the emergence of a "state-party cartel" (2003:24).

Still, the contested novelty of the terminology is less relevant than the novelty and validity of the analytical framework put forward by Katz and Mair's model. They assert that the failing linkages between parties and (civil) society leave way to a rising prominence of the parties' linkages with the state (1995: 7-16). In contrast, Koole argues that the increase of state interventionism makes it much harder to discern an evolutionary pattern of parties moving away from civil society towards the state (509-514), as the state is essentially moving towards society. Similarly, Herbert Kitschelt critique of the cartel model targets "the continuing vitality of relations of representation" (2000:152). Kitschelt criticism is supported by some empirical studies. Lisa Young (1998) tested the cartelization of Canadian parties, and finds that although there is some collusion in ensuring access to public funding, the linkage between parties and society remains intact. Both Beyme (1996) and Detterbeck (2005) also question the linear evolution of major political parties towards forming a cartel and argue that there is consistent variation in the socio-political context of cartelization.

In defense of their initial conceptualization, Katz and Mair point to the fact that their model did not engage in any way with the changing relationship between the state and society, but rather how this relationship (changeable as it may be) is mediated or not by the political parties (Katz and Mair 1996: 527-528). As most empirical studies that subsequently applied this conceptual framing show, it is all about the resources. Cartel parties become heavily focused on the state rather than popular representation, as it is the state, and no longer the society, that supplies the most consistent share of their resources. Still, there is merit to the idea that parties survival can not be linked exclusively to state capture and collusion and some form of representation for internal (i.e. party members) and external (i.e. voters) principals has to exist (see Kitschelt 2000:151). To this point, the present thesis argues that clientelism serves as a substitute channel of informal representation in the case of cartel parties.

In the initial outline of the cartel party model, Richard Katz and Peter Mair have clearly ascribed it to a situation in which ‘colluding parties become agents of the state and employ the resources of the state (the party state) to ensure their own collective survival’ (1995:5). This assertion has been challenged by Koole on the grounds of conceptual clarity: can a cartel party exist without a cartel of parties? Katz and Mair respond by explaining that cartelization involves both intra-party characteristics derived from the party-state interpenetration, as well as party system characteristics derived from the inter-party collusion (1996: 526, and the initial argument 1995:17). Indeed, empirical studies show that in some cases we see cartelization at the party level (Bolleyer 2007), while in other cases, we see more indicators of cartelization at the party system level than within individual parties (see for example Krasovec and Haughton 2011).

The present thesis builds the argument of the synergy between cartelization and clientelism on what I argue is the main characteristic of the cartel party model: party-state interpenetration. While Katz and Mair (1995, 2009) see party-collusion as the means to ensure party-state interpenetration, it is nevertheless much more volatile than the gradual process of anchoring the parties within the state. The changing nature of the party collusion is driven by the wide variations in the competitive context in which parties exist, and while cartelization might be designed to keep new entrants out, sometimes it fails at doing so. This is exemplified by the current rise of anti-establishment parties across Europe (Hanley and Sikk 2016) despite a consistent inter-penetration with the state of all major parties. Based on the empirical evidence collected here, we can see that party collusion is visible in Romania in political networks (see Chapters 4,5,6), in broad spending patterns (see Marian and King 2016), and also with regards to electoral legislation (see Giugal et al 2017). Still, ensuring the flow of resources from the state is the main and most consequential trait of cartelization in post-communist societies.

Ruud Koole’s final criticism of the cartel party model in empirical terms is the most resounding element. The success of cartel parties translated by

their ability to survive and win elections has been also questioned subsequently by several landmark studies on cartelization in Southern Europe (Hopkin 2002) or Western democracies (Blyth and Katz 2005). Indeed, in some cases, the organizationally challenged political parties rely on selective benefits to reward supporters and develop their territorial presence while in power, but are unable to do so while in opposition (see for example Bolleyer 2007). Overall, the stability of the cartel parties and their long-term survival is a reasonable concern. In fact, it is in response to this very observation that the present thesis explores the (re)anchoring of cartel parties in society via clientelistic networks.

While specifically laid out as a model of intra-party dynamics (see also Katz 2001), the empirical investigations on this dimension have only appeared more consistently in recent years. The initial formulation of the cartel party model casts a shadow of doubt on the perspectives of intra-party democracy and engagement with internal principals (i.e. members, activists). A series of studies have engaged with this issue in depth (Carty 2004, Sandri and Pauwels 2010, Bolleyer 2012, Loxbo 2013, Cross 2016) and the empirical evidence constrains the assumptions of gradual separation given complex inter-dependencies. This seems to support some of Kitschelt's (2000) criticism on the conceptual side of the cartel party model. Furthermore, the party-state interpenetration via public funding can also lead to an undesired statist interference in the internal life of parties through more intrusive regulation (Van Biezen and Kopecky 2007, Van Biezen and Rashkova 2014).

Richard Katz and Peter Mair explicitly place their thesis within the context of Western democracies, where the weakening of ties between parties and civil society "was understood to be relative to expectations regarding the mass party of integration" (2009:754), and "whether one should expect ties also to weaken in cases in which they had never been particularly strong remained to be seen" (2009:754). Thus, one of the main question of the research area that is rooted in the cartel party thesis is: how far can it travel?

Previous studies have shown the extent to which the cartel party model can travel to the new democracies of Southern Europe (Hopkin 2012) or those of Central and Eastern Europe (Lewis 1998, Sikk 2003, Krasovec and Haughton 2011, Kopecky 2006). The present thesis is firmly rooted in the assumption that the cartel party model can be an even more expressive framing of political organisations in the setting of new democracies. I account in the following paragraphs for the elements that remain specific to older democracies and can not be transferred to new democratic contexts, and those that are specific to post-communist countries and strengthen the cartel party argument in a way Western democracies can not.

As anticipated by Katz and Mair (2009) what can not travel from the context of old democracies to that of new European democracies is first and foremost the genealogy of the parties from agents of the society to agents of the state. Especially in the case of post-communist democracies, parties have been consolidated as agents of the state and attempted to transition reversely towards becoming agents of society “parties in these new democracies often originate within the state and reach out only minimally towards society” (Van Biezen and Kopecky 2007:237, for the same argument see Krasovec and Haughton 2011: 208).

Secondly, it is much harder to assess locus of power in political parties in CEE. The detachment of the party leaders from the lower ranks is an essential aspect of the cartel party model in Western democracies. Katz and Mair structure internal party dynamics on three key dimensions: party on the ground (POG) (i.e. members and activists), party in central office (PCO) (i.e. national leadership of the party organisation), and party in public office (PPO) (i.e. Parliament or Government) (Katz and Mair 2009:756). In the post-communist context, the party in public office (PPO) is often overlapping with the party in central office (PCO) and as such the dominance of the latter through cartelization is hard to assess (Van Biezen 2003, Haughton 2004, Dimitrov et al 2006, Krasovec and Haughton 2011).

There are some cartelization elements that can be assigned specifically to the context of post-communist democracies. As such, the cartel party model is in fact particularly more relevant to the CEE parties because of historical party-state interpenetrations: “In terms of resources, these parties have actually never been anything other than cartel parties” (Krasovec and Haughton 2011:208). The reliance of political parties on public resources to reward supporters and fuel territorial organizations are more heavily developed in the context of the single party-state tradition. Generally speaking, Jonathan Hopkin observe that where “traditions of state interventionism meet weak parties, informal politics is likely to be a key component of party competition” (Hopkin 2012:201).

Characterized by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi as a form of ‘competitive particularism’, Romania along with other CEE democracies display a poor distinction between public and private goods: “In these countries, the main funding for political parties is public, and the chief commodity of the campaign is not private money (still controlled by the state by various means) but rather administrative resources of every kind.” (2006:94). Consequently, the poor regulation and standardization of institutional procedures, leaves way to state capture where extractive or “entrepreneurial” party behaviour is not opportunistic but deliberately and systematically pursued (Innes 2014: 6).

Studies dealing with the traits of cartelization in the CEE context have grown in recent years, ranging from larger comparative assessments focused on party resources derived in the context of party-state interpenetration (e.g. Lewis 1998, Van Biezen 2003, Kopecky 2006) to specific case studies dealing with the cartelization process in Slovenia (Krasovec and Haughton 2011), Czech Republic (Haughton 2012), Poland (Szczurbiak 2001), Estonia (Sikk 2003, 2006), Russia (Hutcheson 2013). Additionally, while not explicitly about cartelization, for the Romanian case there are studies on parties’ reliance on public funding (see Gherghina et al 2011, Gherghina and Chiru 2013), as well as collusion between major parties to keep new entrants out (Giugal et al 2017). The present thesis builds upon this line of research, by adding both a

widely overlooked case study, and a new conceptualization of the cartelization process in symbiosis with clientelistic linkages.

As mentioned before, I argue that clientelism can play an important role in the development of a cartel party. Beyond the role of parties as agents of the state and their “increasingly shared purpose and identity”, Katz and Mair ascribe as a characteristic of the cartel parties “the ever more visible gap that separates them from the wider society” (2009:760). I argue that in the coupling of cartelization with clientelism the latter aspect is not necessarily a feature of the cartel party. In a context where informal exchanges are deployed systematically and to a large scale, the cartel becomes stable and embedded in those segments of the society that it clientelistically engages.

Such a contribution of clientelism to the cartel party is determined by: (1) the nature of the challenges political parties faced when turning to cartelization, and (2) the challenges cartel parties face once they adopted this model. In terms of preexisting challenges that lead to cartelization, the literature reveals significant contextual variation between post-industrial societies and new democracies (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002, Gunther et al 2002, Van Biezen 2003, White and Webb 2007). Of interest to the present analysis is especially the simultaneous development of multiparty system and democratic administrative institutions in the case of new democracies.

1.1.1. Transitional Challenges in New Democracies

New democracies exhibit wide distinctiveness from the “old”, Western countries, with regards to parties’ genesis and evolution (Panebianco 1988; Stark and Bruszt 1998; Van Biezen 2003; Blondel, Muller-Rommel and Malova 2007; Webb and White 2007). This distinctiveness emerges from two sets of conditions. On one hand, there is an evolutionary path charged with the historical political legacies: ‘old’ mentalities/perceptions/expectations have an important influence, even after the regime change, on the way the political linkages form. They shape the manner in which political parties connect to the electorate (i.e. informal linkages with the voters), and the manner in which they govern (i.e. political appointments in civil service). The imprint of the

Communist Party's embedded relationship within the statist structures has left political parties with a persistent tendency to use state resources in a proprietary manner. Similarly, in the case of some of the territorially strong parties in Southern Europe, informal networks have been preexisting to the new democratic party system (Hopkin 2001, Hopkin and Mastropalo 2001, Trantidis 2014, D'Attoma 2016).

On the other hand, we find the impact of the transitional process. In the new democracies of Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, and in Latin America, the change of regime implied a sudden shift to political competition and free elections. As the political system faced the significant challenge of fast-tracked institutionalization, the new political parties were constituted in a vastly different pace and timing from their Western counterparts (Van Biezen 2003).

The newly formed political parties thus had the opportunity to construct the new political system in a relatively unconstrained manner. In many of the post-communist new democracies, legislative provisions regulating the political competition, as well as the internal life of political parties, only came into force years after the first democratic election. Such institutional engineering continued throughout the following decades (Van Biezen 2003, Renwick 2010). It targeted the organizational architecture of the state, or various provisions regulating the political life—from the organization of elections to that of the governmental apparatus. Comparing various Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, much of the institutional engineering was the effect of elite collusion, within the process of cartelization.

The opportunities of a newly created institutional system allowed parties to employ such clientelistic tactics as filling up numerous positions with their party members or supporters. For example, it was not until 2004 or 2002 that legal provisions were adopted in Romania, and respectively the Czech Republic, to specifically delimitate administrative personnel from political appointments. The situation is similar in other CEE countries as well. Even when laws regulating civil service were adopted early in the transition period,

their provisions were vague or ambiguous, thus providing political actors with ample room for manoeuvre.

The former communist parties were much more prone to systematic interpenetration between political and administrative systems, than the authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe. As such, the party-state relationship—a central element of cartelization, has a natural force of attraction to political actors educated and socialized in a communist system. The inherited weak administrative institutions—the “hollow crown” (Dimitrov et al 2006) only made state capture more feasible for cartel parties, and their clientelistic appointment strategies.

In terms of constraints, for both successor parties, and newly established parties, their territorial presence or roots in society did not exist in an institutionalised, recognizable manner. Essential for the present analysis is how the newly established political parties maintained existing or developed new ties with the state (Van Biezen 2005, Dimitrov et al 2006, Grzymala-Busse 2008, Van Biezen and Kopecky 2014). By becoming agents of the state, cartel political parties in new European democracies have ensured electoral success, but faced new challenges of weak territorial presence and potential contestation.

The literature proposes various alternative explanations of the development path of the political parties in post-communist European democracies. While contextual determinants are generally analyzed together, seminal studies pick different focus points: nature of the communist regime, transitional choices, party organization or cleavage structure.

Some consider the explanatory power of the previous regime traits (e.g. Kitschelt et al 1999, Pop-Eleches 2007). Most of these comparative studies tend to exclude the case study of Romania due to its distinctive form communism. Building on a previous conceptualization of Max Weber, Juan Linz has described the Romanian communism as a “sultanistic” regime (Linz and Stepan 1996, Chehabi and Linz 1998), „characterized by patronage, nepotism, cronyism, and corruption” (Huntington 1993:111). The patrimonial

and discretionary nature of this form of communism makes for a much more difficult institutionalization of administrative rules and formal practices. In contrast, as seen in the evidence presented here, in the aftermath of the dictatorship, the new ruling elites attempted to emulate the previous system of personalistic exchanges (Grosescu 2004).

The Romanian communism relied predominantly on the figure of the leader Nicolae Ceaușescu and his family; they were not only representing the Communist Party and the Romanian state like predecessors (i.e. Petru Groza, Gheorghe Gherghiu Dej), but also themselves and their rule. This partial disambiguation allowed for a much more ambitious engagement in foreign affairs than other neighbouring communist leaders. It also meant the state apparatus developed with a relative autonomy from the doctrine and the wider regional trends. Vladimir Tismăneanu refers to the „successful utilization of Lenino-Stalinist party structure to reach absolute control over the whole of Romanian society” (1989:2, see also Tismăneanu 2003).

While such „stalinistic” or „sultanistic” traits can be easily seen as a root of the democratic state capture and patrimonial control of public resources, we have no connecting mechanisms apart from the general inclination of the elites to resort to such practices. This is in fact one of the main weaknesses of the legacy-based arguments: they are not particularly persuasive in explaining subsequent change or strategic choices of replication (especially in the case of successor parties) (Haughton 2014: 218, for the same argument see also Hanley et al 2008, Haughton and Fisher 2008).

Other studies focus mainly on the transitional choices of the successor parties (e.g. Grzymala-Busse 2002). This assessment approach is made difficult in the Romanian case study by the confusion surrounding the power struggle that unfolded at the revolution and in the early years of transition. In other CEE countries the Communist Party had a much more structured presence, its factions thus known, and reformists easily traceable. In contrast, the Romanian successor parties had an uncertain positioning:

“Our Romanian contacts, however, have given us a number of speculative, sometimes conflicting, theories about what “really” happened. These include: an orchestrated plot by the Ministry of Interior and Securitate remnants to crush the opposition and regain its former preeminence, a plot to destabilize the security situation to prepare the way for a Ministry of Defense take-over; efforts by a pro-Iliescu front hardliners to intimidate the opposition or a move by anti-Iliescu hardliners to discredit him internally and abroad. A definitive version in the conspiracy laden environment of Romanian politics may never emerge. Although the more elaborate theories seem farfetched, anything is possible.” (Note 06723, Department of State, Bucharest Office).

Furthermore, it was not only the revolution of '89 that was marked by violent confrontations, but also the subsequent years. John Gledhill links these events to the “intense uncertainty about the form that the new regime might take and associated uncertainty about the distribution of power and the state funds” (2012:43, for a similar positioning see also Gledhill 2005). Alina Mungiu Pippidi characterized the dual nature of the Romanian revolution as an overlap between the one of the protesters and intellectuals wanting swift and extensive institutional reforms, and the one of the army, bureaucracy and general public wanting a nonconflictive gradual transition (2002:189). The latter one won, which in turn left an imprint on the structure of the institutions and the compositions of the political elites – both bearing many similarities to the *status quo* of the old regime.

Beyond reform choices and political calculus, alternative explanations also link party (in)stability and overall performance to party organization: „the stronger the party organization, i.e., the more sizeable its membership, extensive its local presence, and professional its staff, the more successful is the party electorally” (Tavits 2012: 95). Central and Eastern Europe is far more receptive to the organizational strength of political parties than their

ideological positioning (Innes 2014). Still, their means of building this organizational capacity were more restricted than in the case of Western parties. Margit Tavits claims that „organization matters regardless of (...) access to pork or patronage” (2012: 95). While accurate as his assertion might be, it is incomplete. One can not ignore the fact that the access to public resources and patronage impacts directly the organizational capacity of a political party on at least two of his measured dimensions: network of local branches—whose utilities, rent, and other expenditure rely on party resources, and the ability to employ professional staff. As I show in the present thesis, these indicators of organizational capacity are often build on clientelistic pyramids.

Borrowing from the classical theories of voters alignment and social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Dalton 1988), another line of studies has attempted to identify their occurrence in Central and Eastern Europe. Representative contributions in this line of research went beyond the existence or absence of cleavages in a given society, but also enquired about of their nature (e.g. ideological, economic, religious, ethnic) (Evans and Whitefield 1993, Whitefield 2002, Tavits and Letki 2013) or the extent to which they overlap and thus reinforce party stability (Casal Bertoa 2014). As opposed to Western democracies where previous cleavage structures informed current one (see Kriesi 1997), in the context of post-communist countries there were no traceable differentiation patterns given the nature of the regime and its stated purpose of socio-economic homogenization.

The Romanian case study provides us with little visible cleavages to explain support for certain political parties over others. As opposed to other countries in CEE, religious cleavages are not effective in Romania with over 80% of the population sharing the Orthodox faith. Economic cleavages have been substantially increasing after the fall of communism across the region, and this might create a stronger mobilization for left wing parties that address them (see Tavits and Letki 2013). Still, in Romania they do not imply voters' alignment patterns as poorer areas (measured by average income) will support either of the main parties with consistency, showing that roots in

societies—measured as size of the local organizations, are much stronger determinants of voting behaviour⁶ (see for the same argument Tavits 2012).

In conclusion, most of these alternative explanations in the case of Romania either converge with the clientelistic exchanges and cartelization process (e.g. patrimonial nature of the communist regime, transitioning choices for survival), or they simply do not hold an explanatory value for the Romanian case study (e.g. cleavage structure). Furthermore, those elements that converge with the present model, only strengthen the selection strategy of the case study, as Romania presents itself as a remarkable case study both in terms of the only European “sultanistic” regime, and in terms of having the only violent transition. Finally, while there is ample evidence supporting the role of party organization for political survival (Tavits 2012), little is known of why some the post-communist parties have in fact managed to achieve a better organizational capacity. In this sense, the present thesis and its conceptual model can bring a modest contribution to the party organization literature.

1.1.2. Challenges to the Survival of the Established Political Cartels

One of the main challenges faced by cartel parties once established is that they are unstable entities with a limited survival chance in the long term. This is one of the main puzzles this thesis is addressing as it shows how clientelism can play a role in stabilizing cartels. Some of the existing studies (Hopkin 2002, Bolleyer 2009) explain: political parties are growing increasingly detached from society, without a steady popular base of support, and as such they remain dependent on their position in office, and the flow of state resources.

What is similar in both old and new contexts is the general decrease in party membership, financing problems and increased electoral volatility. These can be either traits of the decay of party organizations in post-industrial societies, or emblems of poor institutionalization of the party system in new

⁶ <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2016/12/21/social-roots-romania-2016-election/>

democracies (Katz and Mair 1995, Dalton and Wattenberg 2002, Mair and Van Biezen 2001, Gunther et al 2002, White and Webb 2007, Gherghina 2014). Nevertheless, given the genesis of political parties in Central and Eastern Europe was different from the West (Van Biezen 2003) it is difficult to establish an accurate comparison between the two systems (see for the same argument Lewis 2000, Millard 2004).

The clientelistic phenomenon is a natural complement to a party because it provides necessary support to face various challenges. Informal clientelistic distribution can mobilize political support from both internal agents—party members, and external agents—party supporters. If we account for a longer timeframe, cartel parties without extended clientelistic linkages can be easily contested in elections. Their main competitors will be new political actors that build upon the disenchantment of the electorate towards corrupt practices of incumbent parties. This is reflected in two measures of electoral volatility: how many parties have entered/exited the party system, and how much has the vote share of established parties diminished/changed. Stable cartels (i.e. able to resist contestation) should theoretically enjoy low values on the latter, as even if new competitors appear, they would not be able to cut from their electoral share.

Recent datasets allow us to see how historically low levels of party system electoral volatility have started to increase in Western Europe, especially in the last two decades based on both new entrants (i.e. volatility by regeneration) and changes in the vote share of existing parties (i.e. volatility by alternation) (Chiaramonte and Emanuele 2015). With regards to Central and Eastern Europe, we find that an important component of the high volatility scores has been that of party system regeneration (i.e. parties entering or exiting) and not as much the changes in the vote share of the main parties (Powell and Tucker 2014).

The Powell and Tucker study on drivers of electoral volatility in CEE (2014), as well as another recent calculation of electoral volatility at party level in CEE (Gherghina 2014:65) both concur on the fact that the main parties in

CEE have been remarkably stable. Amongst which, Romanian party systems scores the lowest electoral volatility in European post-communist democracies, with only 7 for the Type B volatility (i.e. based on vote switching) (Powell and Tucker 2014, see also in Table 1 in the present thesis).

There are inherent limitations of the Pedersen Index of Volatility formula employed by Powell and Tucker regarding the aggregate view of the party system, yet not the specific party-level dynamics. They attempt to engage with this issue by disentangling the between different drivers of volatility (i.e. vote switch or party entry/exit). Still, it “offers only a partial resolution because it does not account for the component parts of the system or allow simultaneous comparisons across multiple elections” (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015: 62-63, for the same argument see Casal Bertoa et al 2012 and Haughton 2014: 212). In response, Haughton and Deegan-Krause (2015) apply to Central and Eastern European democracies the Weighted Party Age Index (WPAI) developed by Kreuzer and Pettain (2003) for the Baltic countries which looks at the length of time since party establishment. This measure too confirms Romania as an extreme case “whose party system grew older by roughly one year for every year of its existence, suggesting extreme stability” (2015: 63).

The extremely low score further supports the case selection for this study, as “although political systems with low levels of volatility can be stable and consistent, those with too little volatility may also open themselves up to charges of cartelism” (Powell and Tucker 2014:123).

The second category of challenges for established cartel parties stems from their interaction with the state. In many of the new European democracies, the weakness of the governmental institutions (Dimitrov et al 2006) created a propitious setting for the development of new informal linkage mechanisms. They were not necessarily connected to remnant personnel networks (Grzymala-Busse 2007, 2008, 2010). Much like the waves of party formation and development (Van Biezen 2003), new democracies also face a different sequencing of other institutional developments. As far as formal

dependency on state resources goes, cartel parties appear to be captured themselves by the state through public funding and intrusive regulations of their organizational activities (Van Biezen and Kopecky 2007, Van Biezen and Napel 2014).

Still, empirical evidence amply reveals, the party-state relationship usually leads to state capture. In most of the cartel party examples from old and new democracies alike, it is the informal reliance on state resources, and the proprietary control over them that fuels the parties survival in office. Party-state interpenetration, often leads to a perpetuating and increasing dependency on the extraction of public resources through state capture (Grzymala-Busse 2007). It is more frequent in post-communist European democracies because the previous regime was fundamentally based on a party-state interpenetration—where the administration was dominated by the Communist Party (Dimitrov et al 2006).

For example, third parties safeguarding political processes in Western democracies, such as the media, or watchdog civil society groups have not been well established in new democracies at the time of the party formation. Such complementary institutions to a democratic system have themselves appeared as a consequence of a top-down approach. As we can see in the Index of Party Patronage (IPP) (Kopecky et al 2016) some of them are perceived to be heavily politicized in CEE (e.g. state-owned media).

Clientelism helps stabilize parties when public resources extracted through cartelization are used for political purposes (i.e. financing electoral campaigns, maintaining networks of supporters, mobilizing voters). It is only inclusive clientelistic linkages (i.e. they expand to the lower ranks of the political party, and further into the societal strata) that can safeguard a political organization over multiple electoral cycles. In this sense, the present thesis argues that clientelism can be an effective mechanism of resources distribution, as it is through it that cartel parties reward all supporters, rather than simply extracting rents. This has previously been a gap in the literature, as most of the studies on clientelism and patronage in CEE have been

focused on the mechanisms of extraction (i.e. securing access to resources), and not concerned with how these benefits are further distributed. I argue that their utility goes beyond the recipients (i.e. clients that receive benefits or jobs), but that it also strengthens the party's organizations, and presence in society, overcoming various challenges to its existence.

1.2. Clientelism in New Democracies: From Dyadic Bonds to State Capture

Clientelism is here defined as the exchange of goods and services for political goals. This thesis accounts for both electoral goals in deploying clientelism (i.e. winning elections), as well as organizational or relational goals (i.e. developing the territorial presence). The mechanisms investigated here are: (1) obtaining/capturing public resources (facilitated by cartelization), and (2) distributing public resources along party lines to local leaders and supporters (facilitating the cartel party stability).

The clientelistic phenomenon creates linkage systems between the political sphere and the citizens that anchor the patron party in society. Informal networks are often better transmission belts between decision-makers and citizens, in the context of poor institutional performance. The development of such linkages has however been different across European democracies, contingent upon the sequences of party system and public administration formation and evolution.

Case studies of clientelism in South European new democracies show that the development of a democratic system did not replace the existing informal networks (Lopes 1997, Papakostas 2001, Caciagli 2006, Trantidis 2014). In other words, in such cases, the clientelistic system was integrated within the plural party system, as an electoral instrument. Within the South European countries, Spain stands out, as its traditional *caciquismo* was not integrated very well by the new political parties (Blakely 2001, Hopkin 2001).

Still, newer forms did emerge, building upon the acquired taste of political actors for reliable linkages with the electorate. These were sooner built upon the administrative prerogatives of ruling political parties, rather than

on societal, hierarchical linkages. As such, in the case of Spain, we see the Socialist Party using patronage and political appointments in the public institutions to grow and consolidate its clientelistic networks (Hopkin 2001). In a similar manner, although the clientelistic mechanisms from the Junta regime have survived the transition to democracy in Greece, a new form of 'bureaucratic clientelism' based on the extension of public employment rose to prominence here too (Lyrintzis 1984). Despite the weak social linkages, Portuguese political parties have entrenched their position through state resources (Silva and Jalali 2016:5, Jalali 2007). In the Italian case, the *familism* of the South (Chubb 1982) was gradually complemented by newly developed informal networks in the North, exchanging economic interests, rather than loyalty (D'Attoma 2016).

The post-communist new democracies, as opposed to many of the Southern cases, had little to offer to the newly developed plural party system, along the lines of informal networks and linkages. In this context, clientelistic bonds were already subsumed to a political organization within the former country-by-country versions of the Communist Party. Consequently, these were not integrated into the post-transition political competition, rather inherited by some of the more or less openly declared successor parties (e.g. PSD in Romania, BSP in Bulgaria, MSZP in Hungary, the KSCM in the Czech Republic). Still, throughout the following decades, the newly established political parties build up their own linkage mechanisms, and informal networks were especially easy to cultivate in the rural setting where social norms were propitious to the hierarchical nature of the clientelistic phenomenon.

In order to develop a systematic assessment of the contact points between clientelistic practices and political parties' challenges, I account for the political parties' tridimensional existence: (1) relative to their own organizations, (2) relative to society, and (3) relative to the state. From this perspective, clientelism appears as a parallel system of reinforcement that offers informal anchoring in each case, when the political party cannot uphold effectively one of these relational dimensions due to either loss or non existence of organizational capacity.

1.2.1. Clientelism—A Political Phenomenon Driven by Party Organizations?

In broad terms, the existing literature on political clientelism mentions such causes for it as the pursuit of electoral mobilization, and a low territorial presence and/or the lack of roots in society. As a result, exchange-based relationships develop between the political actors (i.e. patrons), and their voters (i.e. clients). Amongst the measures undertaken to maintain a clientelistic strategy for the development and survival of a political party we find: appointing loyal supporters in public institutions, as a reward, or appointing politicized personnel in key positions (e.g. state agencies, ministries), for control purposes, to ensure the flow of resources (see party patronage motivations in Kopecky et al 2012). 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).

Starting with the electoral and organizational value of clientelism we find an evolutionary path that begins with dyadic bond (Scott 1979) between patrons and clients in hierarchical societies, moving on to broader networks, deployed especially on horizontal levels—the pyramidal structure of clientelism (Chubb 1988; Auyero 1999, 2000; Hopkin 2001, 2002). At this latter stage of the empirical analysis of clientelism, the literature starts to mention the idea of a clientelistic machine (Chubb 1988) that is an efficient system of electoral mobilization, and informal benefits distribution.

It stands in contrast to the previously social, personalized relationship between the parties involved (Tarrow 1967, 1977; Weingrod 1968) that was closer to a political cultural phenomenon, developing a code of conduct based on reciprocity and deference (Caciagli 2006:158). This personalized relationship can still be found in the case of clientelistic linkages active in smaller, local communities, as they are often promoted by local party bosses that have a certain degree of control over preferential distribution of goods and services.

As the electoral 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, 2008; Stokes et al 2013). The systems of monitoring and enforcement require dense networks of intermediaries, often called brokers. 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.

An important aspect of employing clientelistic systems of distribution within the political party hierarchy is the internal party competition between central and local leaders. In cartel parties, the power of local leaders is significantly lower than that of central party leadership. As such, their position in the clientelistic pyramid can be ascribed to that of the brokers. Recent studies suggest that the more internal party leadership competition there is, the less likely it is that leaders will continue to distribute patronage jobs on internal party hierarchical lines (Kemahlioğlu 2012). This is congruent with the findings that the more competition there is in a party system, the more constrained clientelism is (Grzymala-Busse 2007). But, there is a gap in the existing literature concerning what happens when both the central party leadership, and the local leaders are incentivized to cooperate rather than compete.

The power relations between the center and periphery in a cartel party bring into question whether the local party bosses in a new democracy are brokers, or patrons, within the clientelistic pyramid. The basis of this puzzle is the general view that it is the patron who provides, and controls the flow of resources to its clients, with the help of intermediary agents, generally labeled as brokers (Auyero 2000, Volintiru 2012a, Stokes et al 2014). The evidence from the Romanian case study reveals that the clientelistic distribution of resources in the context of cartelization (i.e. continuous access to state resources) reinforces the local leaders support for the central party leadership. But, the systematic deployment of clientelism empowers them to

demand involvement in the party decisions, as key agents of an exchange-based system of mobilization.

This thesis explains that 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 contradicts some of the previous conceptualizations of the cartel party (i.e. stratarchy). It does however fall 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). With respect to the present inquiry on clientelism: the more economic and political power is concentrated at the national level, the more loyal and effective brokers the local party leaders will be.

1.2.2. Clientelism—A Political Practice Embedded in Society?

A significant stream of the existing literature discusses the impact clientelism might have on the clients' quality of life, in delivering public goods, and public policy that they might not otherwise be able to receive (Kawata 2006, Stokes et al 2013, Calvo and Murrilo 2013, Brun and Diamond 2014, Diaz et al 2014). As such, we find the channeling function of clientelism, not only as a discretionary distribution of public goods from the patron to the clients, but also as a means of communicating needs and grievances. As mentioned before, 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 stabilize cartel 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 popular 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, Diaz-Cayeros et al 2014) through which people are able to receive the goods and services they need. Some studies have suggested that clientelism creates the habit of the representation of interests, which can ultimately be absorbed by political parties deploying social policies, and a better functioning democratic context (Brun and Diamond 2014). As such, clientelism would seem to be only a temporary substitute for the failures of representation in democracies around the globe. One of the main factors driving this reliance on informal channels is the detachment of the political elites, from the needs of the electorate. In-depth empirical studies of the brokerage system in Argentina (Auyero 1999/2000/2001) provide us with a full picture of how grievances would hardly be known, and much less be resolved, without these intermediaries.

1.2.3. Clientelism and State Capture

As the numerous case studies of new democracies show, clientelism thrives even in settings in which the administrative and democratic procedures work well in favor of the citizens (Piattoni 2001). This is because clientelistic systems also reinforce state capture, which brings into question the nature of the relations between a political party and the state. In these circumstances, the mobilization of resources by the clientelistic machines 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. Even if clientelism does empower voters without proper political representation, it also allows incumbent politicians to stay in power. Clientelism thus appears to be a political instrument, or a strategy of surviving in office. This instrumental/adaptative use of clientelism supported by the empirical evidence

of the present research contradicts an older string of clientelistic literature that presents it as a stand-alone phenomenon, contingent upon cultural and socio-economic settings (e.g. Banfield 1958, Powell 1970).

Also, under weak competition in the political system, as is often the case with the emergence of the cartel party model, the electorate can revert to a pre-democratic status of trapped *clientele*: clientelistic parties become dominant political actors (Trantidis 2015). This is mostly due to the fact that clients stop having alternatives. In terms of the clients' relationship with other political forces, much like in any market exchange, the 'consumers' would be able to change the supplier of clientelistic benefits, if another one existed. In a climate in which the political competition is narrowed down (through cartelization), and the incumbent position is effectively reinforced, there is no longer an alternative supplier of informal access to public goods and services.

The more clientelism relies on informal linkages with the state, the more exposed the patron political party remains on its ability to extract public resources. State subsidies and public funding are part of the cartelization process (i.e. party-state interpenetration). In addition to this there is also a wide array of material and human resources employed by the party in office, through its ability to control public institutions. To be able to distribute these benefits in a clientelistic manner, parties recur to personnel appointments and politicized funding allocations. 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). In other words the tools for continuously extracting state resources are vital to the survival of a cartel party deploying clientelism. I will further elaborate in the following section on the dependence of clientelism on party patronage and politicization.

As the dependency between cartel parties 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. When political competition is co-opted, clientelistic

parties ensure their continuous access to public resources. This can be achieved either through formalized governing alliances, or ad-hoc collusion between the political forces on various matters.

The clientelistic linkages with the state can create various opportunities to the political parties' organizations that have penetrated the state through cartelization. Firstly, there is a policy-making purpose in deploying party patronage, as governing parties require a certain level of political discretion in appointments, with the purpose of advancing their policy and governing goals (Dimitrov et al 2006, Meyer-Sahling and Veen 2012, Kopecky et al 2012).

Secondly, the informal channeling of public resources or regulatory favors is a means of advancing a party's standing with its supporters and electorate. This thesis explores clientelism as an instrument of developing roots in society by using local leaders as brokers of preferential resource allocation. It is within an administrative system that is weak or inefficient that such personalized transactions flourish. Analyzing the existing clientelistic mechanisms in my selected case study reveals a variety of objects of exchanges—from appointments to public jobs, to regulatory favors and public contracts.

Finally, clientelistic mechanisms can become instruments of party financing and electoral mobilization. Through partisan public contractors that work for the state, the political organizations receive donations and other material assistance. Furthermore, this thesis shows how a wide range of appointments in public office and public contracts are mobilized for campaigning and electoral mobilization. Nevertheless, the electoral outcomes are contingent upon a wider array of factors than simply clientelistic exchanges, but the resource accumulated through them ensures the stability of local organizations that would otherwise wither under cartelization.

1.3. Interconnected Phenomena: Clientelism, Party Patronage, and Politicization

My conceptual framing of the clientelistic phenomenon, as an intrinsic part of the cartelization process draws on interconnected informal political

mechanisms: party patronage, politicization, and clientelistic distribution of benefits. These practices should be regarded as manifestations of the same political survival strategy. Without established networks of loyal appointees first, the extraction of public resources for political reasons can easily be cut off.

The empirical evidence of this thesis illustrates instances of clientelistic distribution of goods and services, as well as politically driven appointments. Because clientelism and party patronage fit within the study of political parties, they are seldom related to the instances of politicization, which usually fall within the area of public administration studies. In the present study I argue that these are interlinked phenomena, and as such, I account for all of them as sequences of the clientelistic system of extraction and distribution.

The clientelistic phenomenon has long been investigated in connection to political parties, either as an electoral strategy, or as an exchange mechanism (Hopkin 2001, 2002, 2006, 2012). A newer stream of the literature started focusing on the public policy repercussions of political clientelism (Stokes et al 2013, Brun 2014). Still, the actual, structural penetration of the public administration remains a topic of disparate analysis, focused mainly on personnel appointments, either as party patronage, or politicization of civil service positions (Meyer-Sahling 2008, Kopecky et al 2012, Nakrosis 2014). The purpose of clientelistic mechanisms, be they electoral or organizational, cannot be fully understood without the structural assessment of the distribution of power within the state apparatus.

As such, clientelism is here analyzed not only as a political phenomenon embedded in the general setting of the new democracies, but more specifically within the simultaneous development of democratic party systems and the institutional architecture's characteristics of post-communist new democracies. It is within this multilateral context that it plays a particularly important role in the development and survival of cartel parties, as a stabilizing complement.

The justification for this approach stems from the main argument that clientelism delivers to organizationally weak parties the necessary human and material resources to ensure their survival. As such, I account for party driven appointments, either in the public administration (i.e. politicization), or in other public institutions, as the means to reward supporters and control material resources. The political appointments are not enough to win elections, and as such, I argue that their purpose for the patron is to access in a preferential manner the allocations, and decision-making functions that would ensure the wider clientelistic distribution of goods and services to the lower ranks of the party, the supporters, and ultimately the electorate.

Patronage's relationship with clientelism is a nuanced issue of overlapping functions. Clientelism is focused on cyclical electoral goals, while patronage serves more permanent goals of continuously controlling certain key positions and institutions. Kopecky et al (2012) see these differing goals as one of the fundamental differences between patronage and clientelism: in one case the party is trying to achieve control of institutions, or reward loyalty—party patronage, in the other case the party pursuing electoral outcomes—clientelism. Indeed, Kopecky et al accept patronage might be an electoral resource (2012:7, see also Piattoni 2001, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). Similarly, I argue that clientelism can be an organizational resource as much as an electoral one. This thesis shows that in fact, clientelism is much more efficient in anchoring a party in society than it is at delivering electoral victories that are contingent upon a wider array of factors.

Between the two concepts, there is also a difference of range. Piattoni (2001) considers patronage to be 'an instrumental use of power positions', which mainly takes the form of distributing public jobs to personal or partisan supporters. Clientelism on the other hand, is depicted as a more penetrating, all-encompassing phenomenon, as 'all public decision-making may become a token of exchange' (Piattoni 2001: 6-7).

This thesis argues that clientelism is not only an exchange system, but also a mechanism of organizational consolidation. Through the iterative

exchanges (fueled by party patronage and politicization) the mobilization role of local organizations is reinforced, or created from scratch. This is why clientelism can make cartel parties stable in the absence of mass mobilization.

Patronage networks develop through the cartelization of political parties, especially through the process of interpenetration between parties and the state (Katz and Mair 1995, Hopkin 2012). It is this thesis' argument that once in office, the governing parties work towards deploying public resources—jobs and funds, in a discretionary manner, as part of their survival strategy.

The politicization of public office occurs when political parties use their influence over public institutions to accommodate their own organizational interests. Through the politicization process clientelistic exchanges may be realised, using different types of state resources (i.e. funds, jobs, assets). The literature gives us convincing evidence on how politicization of senior civil positions in CEE can aim at achieving programmatic or performance-driven policy-making, targeting at the electorate as a whole (Meyer-Sahling 2008). The problem with this conceptualisation is that it does not account for the vulnerabilities of political parties in CEE. Under cartelization (and threat from outside competitors), it is the targeted distribution of benefits that ensures political parties a stable electoral support. Therefore, while accepting that political appointments can further policy agenda as well, this thesis investigates politicization of Senior Civil Servants as a means to ensure the partial and resource-driven mobilization of the electorate.

Bringing together the various streams of research in the academic literature portraying the clientelistic phenomenon, and the empirical evidence collected in the present thesis, we can briefly sketch the clientelistic goals and the roles it can play within the development of a cartel party. Clientelism can be exerted with a functional purpose to substitute political and institutional linkages that either do not exist, or are not serving the party's interest in their formal function. As such, clientelism can play an active role in developing

roots in society through informal channels of communication and distribution, which in turn strengthens the electoral chances of political parties with poor organizational capacity. Furthermore, as we have seen in the case of many of the Latin American case studies, it delivers needed goods and services to the clients that they would not otherwise be able to access within a malfunctioning administrative system of distribution.

The functional dimension of clientelism has two manifestations: party networks embedded within the public administration system, and patronage networks within the local party organizations. In the first instance, through politicization, functional clientelism draws on a network of party appointments to deliver policy outcomes (Meyer-Sahling 2008, Eichbaum and Shaw 2010, Ennser-Jedenastik 2014a) especially in those cases in which the administrative elites are loyal to another political patron, or hostile to change. This appointment logic is often mirroring the political distribution of coalition partners in the decision-making functions (Ennser-Jedenastik 2014b).

In the second instance, through patronage networks, loyal supporters are rewarded with various functions (not necessarily in the public administration), thus strengthening their commitment to the party organization. This latter form of clientelism aims at electoral outcomes. In both forms, the appointees become gatekeepers of public resources and decisions. In this capacity they are able to facilitate the preferential allocations to local governments, which again can serve the functional purpose of fueling the informal distribution channels for the targeted constituencies.

Overall, clientelism can play a dual role in the development of a cartel party. Within the political party, it can build towards electoral success in a manner in which the parties are no longer able to. It can thus develop the territorial presence through informal distribution of goods and services within the party organizations.

Furthermore, outside the political party organization, clientelism plays a role in helping cartel parties extract public resources beyond state subsidies, and channeling those resources, along with other types of benefits to the non-

affiliated party supporters, thus mimicking the preferential allocations and policy-making decisions of mass parties towards their traditional base of supporters. In this sense, a cartel party with large, effective systems of clientelistic distribution in a post communist country might be very similar to well-established social democratic parties in Western democracies.

In conclusion, organizational challenges, both from within the party (e.g. weak capacity in local organizations), and from outside it (e.g. new entrant competitors) can be dismissed through the process of cartelization. But, because the latter is inherently unstable, this thesis shows how clientelism can contribute to the survival of a cartel, in the context of post-communist European democracies. I argue that it is with the help of clientelistic channels of resources distribution that a cartel party can make the best use of its ability to penetrate the state. With a continuous access to public resources (given cartelization) clientelism thus becomes an effective system organizational development, as well as mobilization/electoral instrument, by anchoring the party in society.

Chapter 2. Clientelism and Cartelization in New Democracies: Comparative Overview

The present chapter is a comparative overview of informal linkages' prerequisites, forms of manifestation and outcomes, in European post-communist democracies. The party-state interpenetration (within the process of cartelization) is the focal point of this thesis. As such, the features of both the party system and the public administration become relevant; I compare and contrast along these lines similar case studies of the following CEE new democracies: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania.

The selection of the four case studies is informed by two considerations. Firstly, in order to avoid selection bias or narrow and idiosyncratic findings, I refer to a comparative perspective on the wider set of post-communist European democracies. Some of the contextual elements that empower the symbiosis between cartelization and clientelism in Romania can be found in the entire region: a tradition of party-state interpenetration, weak state apparatus in the eve of the transition⁷, genesis of the major political parties. While Romania can be considered an extreme case of the most successful deployment of cartelization and clientelism by its major parties, the literature shows that these phenomena are not restricted to it. As such, it is to be expected that they can play a role in the electoral success of other major parties in CEE region, even if it is to a lesser extent than in the Romanian case study.

Secondly, I selected these countries out of the total population of cases based on the data availability. In order to maintain a systematic comparison, it was important to explore the same analytical dimensions in all cases. While various elements of party system and public administrative structure were widely available for all CEE countries⁸, others were not. The most restrictive data set was that of the Index of Party Patronage (Kopecky et al 2016) which is here used as a proxy of party-state relations. As it only contained values for

⁷ State weakness can be more pronounced in some cases than in others given specific historical developmental paths: for example the administrative bureaucratic tradition is stronger in Central European countries than in Romania or Bulgaria.

⁸ The DALP dataset on clientelistic linkages includes more cases from the region as well.

three other countries from CEE apart from Romania, the sample of comparison is defined by this common reference framework⁹.

Arguably, given the territorial and administrative size of Romania, which provides both a higher demand for clientelistic distribution of resources, and more opportunities of state capture, Poland would have provided a much more similar setting than the smaller case studies covered in this chapter. Unfortunately, the analytical method deployed for Romania can not be applied to this case study yet, as there is no measure of the extent of party patronage. Notable studies to date suggest an increasing reliance of Polish parties on public finances (see Szczerbiak 2001, 2006). The Democratic Accountability and Linkages Dataset (DALP) also indicate a higher prevalence of clientelistic exchanges in Poland than in the Czech Republic or Hungary, yet lower than in Romania and Bulgaria. It is thus reasonable to assume that similar cartelization and clientelistic mechanisms can be observed there, and the Polish case study would constitute a valuable extension of the findings of the present chapter.

The first part of the chapter is dedicated to the contextual setting in which informal linkages (e.g. party patronage, politicization) have emerged or developed. Three contextual dimensions—party organizations, legal provisions on civil servants, and the architecture of the public administration, reflect the in-depth and systematic investigations into the Romanian case study covered by the subsequent chapters of the thesis. Political parties are analyzed here as both employers of patronage, and drivers of political appointments. Overall legal provisions, and the reform of the civil service in each country are analyzed here as determining elements to the range, and goals of politicization. Finally, the administrative structure can reflect the power distribution between the center and periphery—both within the state, and within the party organization.

The second part of this chapter evaluates the range of the party patronage phenomenon in the selected case studies. Many of the scores

9

presented in this section are congruent with the qualitative, structural analysis conducted in the first part of the chapter. As such, the prolific or discouraging context for clientelistic exchanges is complemented by the perceived dimension of the phenomena (based on the Index of Party Patronage (IPP) data).

The third section of this chapter looks at such specific elements of cartelization, in the selected case studies, as the extent of party regulation. It is informative to the present study in terms of its timing and coverage (e.g. provisions on regulating electoral activities, intra-party organization). This chapter accounts for CEE regulation on party financing from external sources, as in the case study of Romania I will later show how private donations are given in return for public contracts. Additionally, existing survey-based comparative evidence on clientelistic linkages (i.e. Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP)) helps us disentangle the extent to which different parties in the CEE are able and willing to use preferential benefits distributions.

2.1. Institutional and Contextual Setting

Party appointments in key positions are considered in this thesis to be the cornerstone of a clientelistic system. Still, political clientelism as a whole is much harder to analyze in a structured comparative manner, as it involves deep linkage mechanisms that are sometimes idiosyncratic to the organizational and environmental specificities of each political party.

Party patronage and politicization are however much more readily embedded within a comparative perspective. While for party patronage the present thesis, and the existing literature looks at perception based evaluations, for the politicization phenomenon a much readily operationalization of the evidence is possible, as it is deployed in a specific setting, to specific appointments (i.e. civil service positions). As such, there is an interlinking relationship between the two phenomena investigated in this chapter.

2.1.1. Political Parties as Employers of Informal Linkages

As this chapter explores the specificities of clientelistic phenomena in the post-communist setting of four Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, the structure of the political parties is at the core of the informal linkage mechanisms as strategic survival choices. The genealogy and transitioning process of the political systems as a whole, and of the political parties as evolving organizations, has been much discussed in the literature (Panebianco 1988, Kitschelt et al 1999, Van Biezen 2003, Grzymala-Busse 2002, Webb and White 2007). This consideration to the origins and organization of political parties is justifiably granted in the context of new democracies, as their formative and transformative path impacts much of the larger institutional structure, and ultimately the behavior of agents involved in the political process.

In the selected case studies—Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania, we can find a similar political offer, with a successor type leftist party having alternative terms in power over the last decades, and various forms of center right opposition parties. Furthermore, in all four cases we find a growing predominance of new entrants (i.e. new parties or coalitions) in government. As such, the structure of the political system is relatively similar, as thus provides a good basis for comparison of the underlying mechanisms of clientelistic proliferation within and between political parties.

By all accounts, the party systems in CEE seem to have had a poor institutionalization. This is explained by the fast pace of their formation, and is reflected in higher volatility scores than in Western Europe (Chiaramonte and Emanuele 2015). Interestingly enough though, if we look at the subcomponents of volatility scores—volatility by regeneration (i.e. new party entrants/exists) and volatility by alternation (i.e. changes in the vote share of main parties) we find a remarkably stable situation for the main political parties in CEE (Powell and Tucker 2013) (see Table 1). As this thesis argues, the explanation for the stability of the main political competitors in CEE lies in the successive stabilization waves of cartelization and clientelistic linkages.

The broader discussion of the successor-type political parties in the selected case studies is necessary, as it is within these organizations that we generally find the most extensive vertical and horizontal power structures, given their relatively steady party base. As such, with internal organizational power and discipline, they are primed to deploy party patronage once in power. Furthermore, given the heavy reliance of these parties on blue-collar voters, their intimate relations with unions created additional pressures to manage politically appointments in the public sector.

Table 1. Electoral Volatility in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (1989-2009)

Country	Mean Volatility Type A (based on party entry/exit)	Mean Volatility Type B (based on vote switching)	Total Mean Volatility
Romania	38	7	46
Slovakia	50	9	59
Moldova	36	10	46
Czech Republic	15	11	27
Hungary	13	14	26
Lithuania	56	14	69
Slovenia	35	15	49
Bulgaria	22	17	39
Latvia	34	17	50
Estonia	30	17	47
Poland	28	18	46

Source: Powell and Tucker 2013

One of the most notable disruptive elements in this linkage system between left wing parties, and wide-ranging spectra of union members was the massive wave of privatization of state-owned companies. This economic transitioning phase restricted the range of party patronage high-ranking management jobs, as it both eliminated the use of patronage appointments, as well as the beneficiaries of such amenable appointees, with mass dismissals. Consequently, most of the patronage based appointments in the state-owned agencies and companies remains a matter of reward, or

proprietary exploitation of resources, and much less a matter of favorable decision-making to traditional electoral segments. As such, we can see that the party patronage mechanisms of the latter democratic period can be transferable from left wing to right wing ruling political parties just the same.

The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), much like the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), and the Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSD) have all had a constant presence in the political setting of their home countries. All of these left wing parties benefitted from more or less openly recognized organizational inheritances from their communist predecessor state parties, as well as from a relative stable party base. Their roots in society have generally been more stable than the democratic opposition spectrum, mostly because they had no serious competition in their corner. The monopolistic representation of the typological leftist electorate is especially visible in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, where the BSP and the PSD have been traditionally the only game in town.

For Romania things appear to be shifting towards a strategic, or intentional fragmentation of the political left, as fractions of the PSD started to split over the past years—UNPR (National Union for the Progress of Romania), and more recently the PRU (Party for a United Romania). Even though they do not stand together officially, these appear to be calculated movements of covering the entire potential of the target electorate, as the PSD is moving towards mainstream, in the context of growing ties with the European family of the Party of European Socialists (PES). The ‘splinter’ parties on the other hand, effectively cover the existing deeply nationalist electorate, which was left without representation after the organizational demise of the Great Romania Party (PRM), once seen as the main opposition force to the PSD¹⁰.

In contrast to Bulgaria and Romania, the Czech Republic and the Hungarian setting had a slightly more fragmented political offer from the very

¹⁰ The Great Romanian Party (PRM) was the the second largest Parliamentary party after the Social Democrats, in 2000, with an average electoral score of 25.39% (between the Senate score and the House of Representatives score).

beginning. As such, we find the Communist Party of Moravia and Bohemia (KSCM) in the Czech Republic, which even if it is not desirable as a coalition partner, managed to hold on its electoral base with relative resilience. In Hungary, the representative power of the Agrarian Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP) creates slight overlaps with the rural profile of much of the target electorate of left wing parties in post communist countries. Romania also had the historical Agrarian Party (PNȚCD) rise to power in a right wing coalition format, in the first decade after communism, but the representative power of that political force diminished altogether in the following years.

On the right wing of the political spectrum, there is much more fragmentation and change throughout the post communist democratic period, in each of these countries. Notable representatives from the very beginning include the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in the Czech Republic, the United Democratic Forces (SDS) in Bulgaria, or the Democratic Party (PDL) in Romania. These parties have changed over the course of the past decades several times, either by restructuring, rebranding their own organizations, or by entering various catch-all coalition platforms to win the governmental mandate. As opposed to the left-wing parties, which have a much more structural informal linkage system in place, most of the right wing actors do not present the same institutionalization potential of their party networks, due to relative organizational volatility.

Given the shifting nature of the right wing political offer, and the prominent emergence of/conversion to populist platforms, these ruling parties approach party patronage and politicization in a different way than left wing ruling parties. If the legislative reforms on the civil service were generally spearheaded by leftist parties, such as the CSSD in the Czech Republic, or the PSD in Romania, this can be linked to the fact that they had the internal personnel resources to populate various administrative appointments.

If the professionalization reform of the civil service would be locked in under their cabinets, then it would be these appointees that would survive,

and be protected from subsequent political turnovers. A telling example of this strategy is the professionalization of Prefects and Underprefects in Romania, which were political appointments under the Social Democratic cabinet of Adrian Năstase, and were subsequently transformed into senior civil servant positions. Many of the appointees renounced their party membership status, and were consequently much harder to be dismissed by the following right wing government.

In contrast, much less appetite for reforms aimed at the professionalization of public administration is found in right wing cabinets throughout all our case studies. This is not necessarily traceable to politicization objectives, but rather the opposite. In the case of many of the large spectrum populist coalitions, there is a significant penury of cadres. In such cases, we see these parties engaging in slightly distorted patronage strategies: they appoint professionals to high-ranking jobs, and then court them to become party members, or at least partisans. Such technocratic infusion can be observed in the case of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in the Czech Republic (Kopecky 2012), or in the case of the Liberal Democratic Party (PDL) in Romania. Still, this reverse party patronage mechanisms is not exclusive to the right wing spectrum, but rather specific to parties that suffer from a lack of qualified professionals in their ranks, at a certain point in time. Spirova (2012) thus points to similar patronage tactics on the part of the leftist BSP and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) coalition in Bulgaria.

2.1.2. Legal Provisions as a Framework of Deployment

The reform of the civil service in CEE countries was a prolonged process altogether that is yet to be fully accomplished in some cases (Kopecky 2012, Volintiru 2014). Additionally, the legislative framework for the post-communist administrative system was not only in need of reform, it generally needed to be built from scratch in many regards. In this sense, integration pressures played a powerful role at least in fast-tracking existing proposals, or in encouraging the development of new legislative support for the proper

functioning of the central and local administrative apparatus (Meyer-Sahling 2001, Dimitrova 2002/2005, Pop-Eleches 2007, Spirova 2012).

The convergence pressures on the national administrative systems, from the part of the European Union (EU), as well as international organizations such as the World Bank, had the ultimate goal of building sustainable and predictable institutional partnerships that can last longer than the electoral terms. This is not a normative stance, but rather a operational objective, as many of the internationally funded development projects are managed by national governments—either central, or local, and usually span over longer periods of time than the average term of a political leader.

In contrast, national political pressures, as discussed in the previous section, have been traditionally focused on preserving as much leeway for appointments in the public sector as possible. This was done both for policy-making goals, as well as survival objectives—the more loyal supporters you have in key administrative institutions, the better your electoral chances are. A telling example of the effectiveness of this patronage-driven survival strategy are the small ethnic minority parties, such as the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR), or the Turkish minority in Bulgaria representative party DPS who found themselves as coalition partners throughout the majority of post communist cabinets. Beyond their grasp over a specific section of the electorate these parties have equally consolidated their party patronage networks of public appointees, aiming steadily at the politicization of specific policy sectors, or institutions. For example, the UDMR is always aiming for the appointments in the Environment Ministry or Culture Ministry, thus deriving better control over systematically developed personnel networks.

Within this intersection of professionalization and politicization, the Civil Service in each of our case studies has equally progressed in its own pace towards consolidating as an autonomous structure, or professional body. As revealed in the Romanian case study, many Central or Local Government positions, especially in the Financial and Judiciary policy areas, have formed

organizational ties that are distinctive from those under the patronage of political parties. Thus, rather than being party agents, many of these appointees become members in their own professional networks, gaining significant autonomy from political appointment algorithms, and finally becoming hard to replace, even after their initial patron party has lost power. Similar dynamics can be observed in all of our case studies.

The legislative reform on the Civil Service is not only important in securing the professionalization of the civil servants, or to protect these functions from electoral turnovers, and politicization. It is also highly relevant in terms of structuring the power relations within the state apparatus. As we can see in Table 2, there are various typologies of senior civil servants in each of our case studies, defined in one or several pieces of legislation. The most significant aspect in this regard is how much power these upper echelons of administrative professionals can hold.

Accounting for the criteria of overarching control of all the functions and departments of the respective institution, the Bulgarian and Romanian Senior Civil Servants are the most powerful bureaucrats. In Bulgaria, the Administrative Secretaries for Ministries, like the Chief Secretaries for local governments are in charge of the entire administrative structure below. Similarly, in Romania, the title of General Secretary applies for Senior Civil Servants in both central and local public administration. As explored in other chapters, these positions are cornerstones of the institutional functions and processes, with the politically appointed state secretaries being mostly representative and prestige appointments, divided mostly for the purpose of rewarding loyal supporters, or attracting electoral capital from professional public figures.

In contrast, the political echelon of State Secretaries plays a much more substantive administrative role in the Czech Republic and Hungary. In these two cases the Senior Civil Servants are either directly subordinated to the State Secretaries, as in the case of the Czech central administration, or doubled by a political figure with equal institutional standing, as in the case of

the Hungarian central administration. This organizational scheme created high interdependence of political appointees and Senior Civil Servants, which in turn means that a deeper politicization of civil service positions is not as necessary as in the case of Bulgaria and Romania.

Indeed, as the expert survey data shows, there is a much smaller tendency of party patronage penetration to lower strata of the civil service in the Czech Republic and Hungary, than in Romania and Bulgaria. An easy inference is consequently that party patronage is as much reliant on the contextual permissiveness for the ruling political parties, as it is on the actual institutional architecture, and the potential gains derived from various appointments.

Hungary has been a frontrunner of the Central and Eastern European post-communist countries in reforming and implementing new legislation concerning its Civil Service (Meyer-Sahling 2001). The Civil Service Act (Law no. 23/1992) was passed simultaneous with a new legislation on the public finance system, and several organizational reforms aimed at empowering local governing bodies. As such, it seems that a picture of systematic reform was developed in the Hungarian legislative body that had as a main goal the professionalization of the administrative apparatus both at the central, and at the local levels. Still, the actual effects were slow to follow, and various degrees of politicization continued to exist within the state apparatus. The Civil Service Act went through multiple amendments throughout the following decades.

Bulgaria and Romania rank second in the chronology of legislative reform on Civil Service, in the selected case studies. As such, we find in Bulgaria an overall framework for the administrative system—Public Administration Act (Law 130/1998), complemented the following year by a dedicated Law on Civil Servants or the State Officers Act (Law no. 67/1999). It is also in 1999 that Romania passed its cornerstone legislation on Civil Servants (Law 188/1999) even if the functions, and conduct of civil servants would be regulated by subsequent pieces of legislation.

Table 2. Comparative Perspective on the Regulation of Civil Service

COUNTRY	LEGISLATION	SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE POSITION/S
Bulgaria	Law on Public Administration (Law no. 130/1998) Law on Civil Servants (Law no. 67/1999)	Administrative Secretaries <i>(administrativni sekretari)</i> Chief Secretaries (<i>glavni sekretari</i>)
Czech Republic	Law on Civil Service (Law no. 218/2002, Law no. 234/2014)	Section Director (<i>reditel sekce</i>) Department Director (<i>reditel odboru</i>)
Hungary	Law on Civil Service (Law no. 23/1992)	Administrative Secretary <i>(kozigazgatasi allamtitkar)</i>
Romania	Law on Civil Servants (Law no. 188/1999, and Law no. 7/2004) Law on Local Public Administration (Law no. 215/2001)	General Secretaries <i>(secretar general)</i>

Source: compiled by the author based on national documents, and expert interviews

In the case of Romania, an important legislative landmark is that of the regulation on local public administration (Law no 215/2001), as unlike other post communist administrative systems, the size and nature of the Romanian public administration has placed important powers on local governments. Before the 2001 provisions on local governments, their functions and attributions were mainly informal, fueled by the political strength of local party bosses. Connected to the rule of the territorially strong Social Democrats (PSD), the provisions of the Law 215/2001 went even further in reinforcing this

local strength with formal prerogatives and attributions being granted to mayors. This created a favorable setting for the development of parallel systems politicization: one at the central level, and one at the local level.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, the continuous dependency of local governments on central transfers makes the local party leaders cooperate, rather than compete with central party leaders. Nevertheless, as their resource autonomy grows (see Decentralization Reform in Romania), they require more decision-making power within the party—a place in the party leadership forum (further detailed in Chapter 3). Furthermore, when the options of state capture increase at the local level, the clientelistic system is reinforced with a denser territorial presence.

In the case of the Czech Republic, the regulation of the civil service appointments was supposed to be done through the Law 218/2002 on Civil Service—initially supported by the leftist Social Democratic Party (CSSD), but it was not effectively implemented in practice (Kopecky 2012, Innes 2016). As such, given amounting EU pressures for reinforcing the Czech public institutional capacity—especially in local government structures, and improving the implementation of EU funded projects (Council Recommendation, 2014/C 247/03), a new Law on Civil Service was adopted more recently (Law no. 234/2014).

Furthermore, within the Czech Public Administration there is no clear demarcation line between the Senior Civil Service representatives, and the political appointments of the governing party. As such, like in all our cases, the Minister is assisted by multiple politically appointed State Secretaries, which in turn are assisted by section managers (*reditel sekce*). While these section managers can be considered the upper echelon of the Czech civil service, they are still politically appointed. Only the Department Heads (*reditel odboru*) are civil service personnel that are not politically appointed, which makes for a very blurred line, in the executives positions of the Central State, between civil servants and political appointments. Also, the provisions of the new Law on Civil Service (Law no 234/2014) include even the relevant

Ministers, and State Secretaries as steering bodies of the Civil Service, thus effectively creating significant overlaps between the political and the administrative powers, in this case study.

For most of the Ministries within the selected case range, there are on average 1 or 2 State Secretaries, while for the Czech case, we can normally see between 4 and 5 State Secretaries per Ministry. Still, the appointment pattern of these openly politicized administrative actors follows a similar algorithm of appointment (i.e. representatives from the entire ruling coalition spectrum) (Kopecky 2012), as we observe in the case of Romania (see chapters 4 and 5). These political appointed state secretaries generally have the function of policy-steering, or political representation. As previously mentioned, the weaker the Senior Civil Service is in relation to them (e.g. in the case of the Czech Republic), the more likely it is that at least some of the State Secretaries, usually those representing the main coalition party, will take on *de facto* the administrative function.

2.1.3. Governmental Structures as a Target of Politicization

The previous subsections showed how the legislative prescriptions on the organization of the central government (CG) informs the extent to which party patronage can be deployed. Similarly, if we look at the structural distribution of power between the central government and the local government, we are able to discern the degree to which politicized appointments in the local governments are desirable by political clients.

The architecture of the public administration in the four case studies varies on different levels. The most important is the leverage central authorities have over local authorities in administrative terms. While the process of decentralization has evolved at different paces throughout Europe, in most of the post communist countries there is still significant reliance on the central apparatus from the fiscal point of view. As such, the only dimension on which variation can be linked to differences in the party patronage linkage mechanisms is that of administrative prerogative division between central and local governments.

Table 3. Comparative Perspective on the Local Governmental Structures

COUNTRY	LOCAL GOVERNMENT (APPOINTED LEADERS)	LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ELECTED LEADERS)
Bulgaria	28 districts (<i>oblasts</i>), with centrally appointed Governors	247 municipalities, with elected mayors and local councils
Czech Republic	-	13 regions (<i>kraj</i>) ¹¹ , with elected regional councils (<i>krajska zastupitelstva</i>), within which a council president is elected (<i>hejtman</i>)
Hungary	-	20 counties (<i>megyek</i>) with elected county councils 23 towns with extended regional prerogatives (<i>megyei jogu varos</i>) with elected mayors and local councils
Romania	42 counties (<i>judete</i>) with centrally appointed prefects	42 counties (<i>judete</i>) with elected county councils, and county council presidents 320 electoral districts (103 municipalities and 217 towns) with elected mayors and local councils

Source: compiled by the author based on national documents, and expert interviews

When local governments have extensive electoral representation systems put in place by the legislative framework, it is more likely that the elected leaders will be coopted in the clientelistic system of the party in office, rather than centrally appointed agents of it. Reversely, when local government leaders are appointed by the central government, than such local leaders

¹¹ The Capital City of Prague has a mayor and is treated as a municipality for electoral purposes.

have to rely much more heavily on continuous political support (i.e. patronage) for their survival in office.¹²

This comparative section is concerned with the degree of administrative autonomy at the local level, which would entice local party patronage networks to develop. Clientelistic networks are most likely to emanate from relatively sizeable administrative units, such as the main municipalities, or larger districts (e.g. regions, counties), with advanced administrative prerogatives, and with an electoral system of representation. The size is meaningful because it is a proxy for the potential resources (i.e. jobs, funds) that can be channeled into clientelistic exchanges.

There is an interesting pattern emerging from the comparison of the local governments architecture in the selected case studies. In the Czech Republic and Hungary the local governments are managed by elected representatives, while in Bulgaria and Romania there is an overlap of prerogatives between elected local leaders and appointed ones. The electoral representation is telling of the motivation of local leaders to develop and support their own patronage networks, in order to ensure their continuity in office. In contrast, the centrally appointed officials are more likely to enjoy their status, without the hassle of developing extensive personal patronage networks, as it is only to their superiors that they are accountable to.

There is a greater degree of circularity in the case of local government based party patronage phenomenon, as the ties with the party organization are much stronger than in the case of central appointees. On one hand, the stronger the local party bosses are, the more likely it is that they will form and develop their own patronage networks within the extensive administrative apparatus available to them, at the local government structures. Furthermore, they generally have projection power of appointment within the central administration, according to coalition informal algorithms, especially for state secretary positions. Key regional party leaders can go as far as to politicize

¹² Chapter 6 continues along the sphere of resource availability this discussion of administrative power relations, and how they support clientelistic relations between the ruling party leadership and local bosses in Romania.

such senior civil service appointments as general secretaries, within Ministries.

On the other hand, the circularity of the situation is reflected in the fact that the strength of these appointment networks, promoted through party patronage and politicization are further contributing to increasing the standing of local party bosses. Even if a local party organization losses the mayoral race, the steady structure of informal linkages created can maintain their representation in the council bodies—local or county level. This situation is reflected in the analysis of General Secretaries of local governments. These civil servants perform similarly important functions as those in the bodies of the central government (i.e. Ministries), acting as effective gatekeepers to the institutional processes and functions in which they are employed. While the local government General Secretaries can frequently survive successive electoral cycles, this is generally attributable to a comfortable representation in the local councils of their patron party, as much as to their gained skills and experience. In other words, for patronage networks within local governments the criteria of appointments continue to be a combination of professional aptitude based on experience, and the strong ties with the cartelized political forces in the respective constituency.

In the case of Bulgaria and Romania we find a parallel administrative system of centrally appointed regional leaders and locally elected decision-making structure—mayors and county councils. In the case of Bulgaria the separation is based on the administrative size: regional local governments (for the *oblasts*) are lead by central appointees, and the smaller administrative units of towns and municipalities by elected leaders. Within the 28 regions, or districts, the governors of these *oblasts* can ensure the implementation of the governing strategy of the party in office. Complementing these broader administrative structure, the local divisions of the 247 municipalities run by elected officials, represent the opportunity for quicker responses to citizens' interests. It is at this level that clientelistic exchanges can develop the parties' roots in society.

In the case of Romania, the centrally appointed prefects act with similar prerogatives and functions as the county council presidents, and the county councils. For several years in Romania there have been ample discussions and political efforts on the part of various ruling parties, to create a similarly regional structure for Romania, as there is in Bulgaria. As such, there would be distinctive development regions, encompassing several counties, which would have centrally appointed officials. The regionalization would allow a better control to the central government of development targets and national strategies. In effect, the fact that the regionalization process failed in Romania is a testimony to the strength of the local governments, and especially local party bosses. Furthermore, with recent administrative reforms of decentralization (i.e. Law no. 339/2004, Law no. 195/2006) the local governments have received enhanced prerogatives (transferred from central government). Selected sectors include: health (e.g. sanitary inspections, diagnostic and treatment centers), environment (e.g. solid waste management, environmental permits for construction), education, culture and sports (e.g. children palaces, clubs and facilities), tourism (e.g. rating tourist facilities) etc.

On the other hand, there are other similarities between Czech Republic and Romania in what concerns the size of the administrative units. Even if in these two countries, there is local elected representation at the town level, there are also these intermediary units run by an elected council that we do not find in Bulgaria. If in the case of Romania there are 42 such counties (*judete*) including the capital city of Bucharest, in the Czech Republic there are 14 such regions (*kraje*) including the capital city of Prague. The complexity of the local governments' hierarchy is reflected in the levels of subnational spending as percentage of general government spending. In 2014 for example, subnational spending in Hungary represented 16% of general government spending, 23% in Bulgaria, 24% in the Czech Republic and 26% in Romania (World Bank Romania, Final Report on Romania's Local Government, February 5, 2016:18).

In both the Czech Republic and Romania, the elected council voted for the council president—effectively a mayor, or a governor of the province. This structure ensured a very close relationship between the organizational power of a party in the territory—measured by its ability to promote a list of candidates rather than a charismatic figure, and the post-electoral control of the respective local government. Since 2012, the county council presidents in Romania have been elected nominally, like mayors. This deemphasizes slightly the significance of the party organization, and implicitly party patronage networks, and emphasize the personnel connections of the local party leader.

In terms of the comparison between the local governments' potential to politicize civil service appointments, and the central governments power, the Czech Republic is different from Romania. As previously mentioned, the local governmental apparatus is extensive in Romania, with many public services under its belt—ranging from social services, to health care, from parks and infrastructure, to education. These are all bits and pieces of the national services provided in each sector, but the fact that the local governments play a part, smaller or greater, in so many public sector areas makes them effectively poised to create patronage networks much larger than the civil service under their direct control. In contrast, in the Czech Republic, like in many other post-communist countries, there are national or municipal agencies that deliver local public services, and their control fall directly under the designated ministerial departments or sections. As such, the following section will reflect a much smaller depth (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) of the party patronage phenomenon from the central government (i.e. ministries) to agencies and executive institutions.

In the case of Hungary, there is the highest concentration of local administrative power in the major towns. While every one of the 20 counties (*megye*) has an elected council body, it is the mayor and councilmen of the 23 towns with extended prerogatives (*megyei jogu varos*) that have overarching administrative and budgetary attributions. This division of power between central government and local government structure in Hungary is the

most nuanced in all four cases. On one hand there is a certain degree of administrative devolution between the national level, and the county level. But, on the other hand, the decision-making power and budgetary density is centralized again around certain power poles (*megyei jogu varos*). Similar to the Romanian situation, this administrative architecture creates advanced political power to the mayors of the towns with advanced prerogatives.

The balance of administrative attributions between the central government and the local government tells us a lot about the internal power dynamics of ruling parties. In countries where local elected officials have advanced administrative prerogatives, such as Romania and Hungary, we can expect the local leaders to become patrons of local networks, adding to the density of the clientelistic system of a cartel party. As the results of expert surveys will show in the following section, Romania and Hungary score higher in party patronage, at the executive institutional level. This can be linked to the fact that advanced administrative autonomy, or prerogatives usually mean that many of the executive institutions become decentralized, falling fully, or partially under local governments' control (e.g. municipal agencies) (Nakrosis 2014).

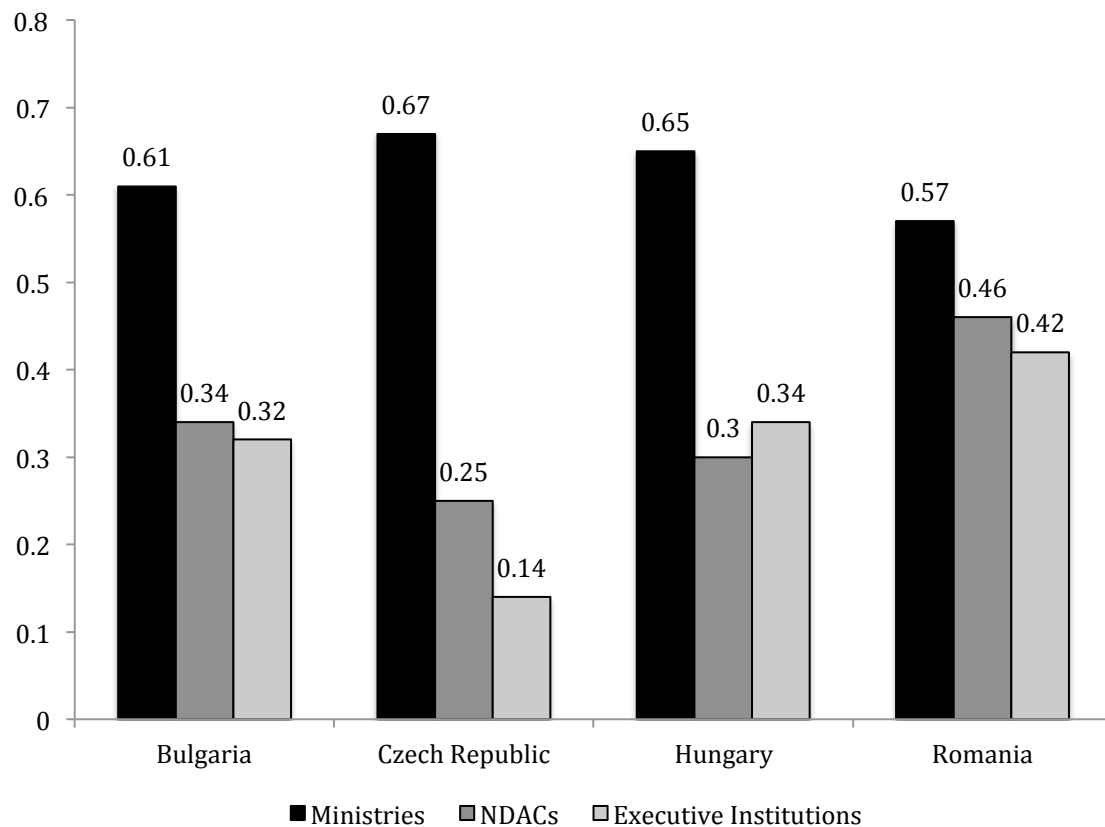
In contrast, we find the case of Bulgaria, where the administrative architecture places the balance of power definitively on the side of the central government. Firstly, the elected officials—best candidates to become political patrons, are restrained by the oversight of the centrally appointment regional governors. Secondly, the level of fragmentation of local governments—at the municipal level, makes it very hard for local officials to sum up the prerogatives and public resources necessary to create, and support patronage networks. Consequently, the concentration of the patronage phenomenon in the case of Bulgaria is within the central government structures—the ministries (see Figure 1)..

2.2. Central and East European Patterns of Party Patronage

In order to better contextualize the incidence of party patronage in Romania, it is helpful to look at the index scores, in a comparative perspective. As such,

Romania's evaluation (0.48) is compared and contrasted with that of all the other post-communist countries for which a patronage index exists—Bulgaria (0.42), Czech Republic (0.34), and Hungary (0.43). Their similarities—from the political pathway, to the regional constraints, gives us the chance to see party patronage as a broader phenomenon, with broader implications, than a mere opportunistic, idiosyncratic informal political manifestation.

Figure 1. Comparative Perspectives on Institutional Scores of Party Patronage



Source: Kopecky et al (2012) and present research

In terms of the institutional predominance of party patronage, we see a consistently higher incidence in the Ministries, in all three cases (see Figure 1). This is a predictable pattern, as given the public administration structure in all of these countries, the Ministries' leadership is subjected to open politicization. Still, the high score of party patronage in Romania, at the level of non-departmental agencies and companies (NDAC), is the second highest for all the European democracies. As such, we can deduce a much deeper degree of institutional penetration by party patronage in this country. This is

even more telling, as these institutions are the main drivers of state capacity in the Romanian Public Administration—with advanced prerogatives, but limited responsibilities—as they still fall under the direct political control of the ministerial leadership.

At the central level, the momentary or continuous control of institutions may often be an ‘instrument of steering policy-making and implementation’ rather than a means to reward loyal party supporters (Meyer-Sahling and Veen 2012). Under external or internal constraints to support administrative professionalization, in the case of NDAC or executive institutions, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Hungary record much lower scores than for Ministries. Romania’s closer scores between the three different institutional categories suggest a much more limited progress in terms of professionalization of public jobs.

The comparative assessment of the policy sector scores, for the four countries, is equally telling of Romania’s predilection for exploitative usage of party patronage mechanisms. As such, we find comparatively higher scores in such policy areas as Economy (0.65), Health Care (0.67), or Regional and Local Administration (0.52). These are areas with a high importance for public procurement contracts, or other advantages that private actors can derive from the governing party’s protection (i.e. privileged information on privatizations, state compensation on specific medication, infrastructure and rehabilitation works etc.). Hungary and Romania have similarly high scores of party patronage in the Media sector—0.67, and 0.69. We can easily see how the political control of the Media sector is useful for electoral mobilization.

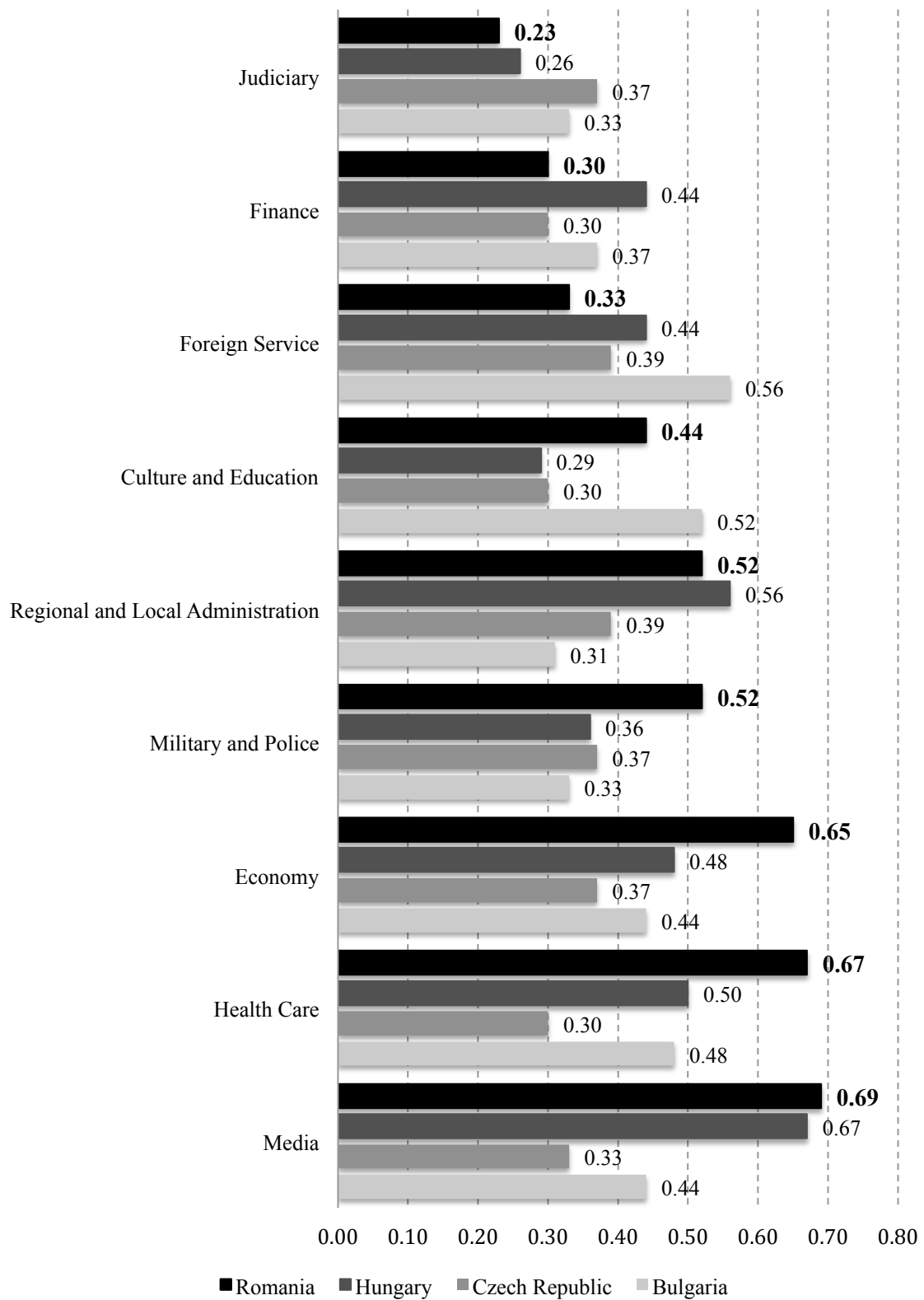
In all of the four post-communist countries compared in this section, there are similarly low levels of party patronage in such policy sectors as judiciary and finance. International pressures for judiciary independence, and professional capacity in the financial policy sector are main drivers for this situation. While for internal affairs all of the other three countries score equally low—Hungary 0.36, Czech Republic 0.37, Bulgaria 0.33, Romania’s patronage score for Military and Police is much higher—0.52. This is mostly

due to the long lasting institutional overlap between local public administration and internal affairs. Even if the two policy sectors are presently managed by two distinctive Ministerial entities, the overlap between the two persists in the territory, creating a communicating vessels mechanism of patronage diffusion.

While Bulgaria and Hungary show distinctive predominance of party patronage based appointments, Romania and the Czech Republic seem to record strong determinacy of other drivers for appointment. As such, in the case of the Czech Republic we see a higher relevance of the professional background of appointees, while in the case of Romania there is a higher relevance of personal connections. Nevertheless, the most significant factor in CEE public appointments remains that of political connections, contrasting with the EU pattern (i.e. professionalism is most relevant appointment factor). The prominence of political connections in CEE supports the cartelization thesis (i.e. party-state interpenetration).

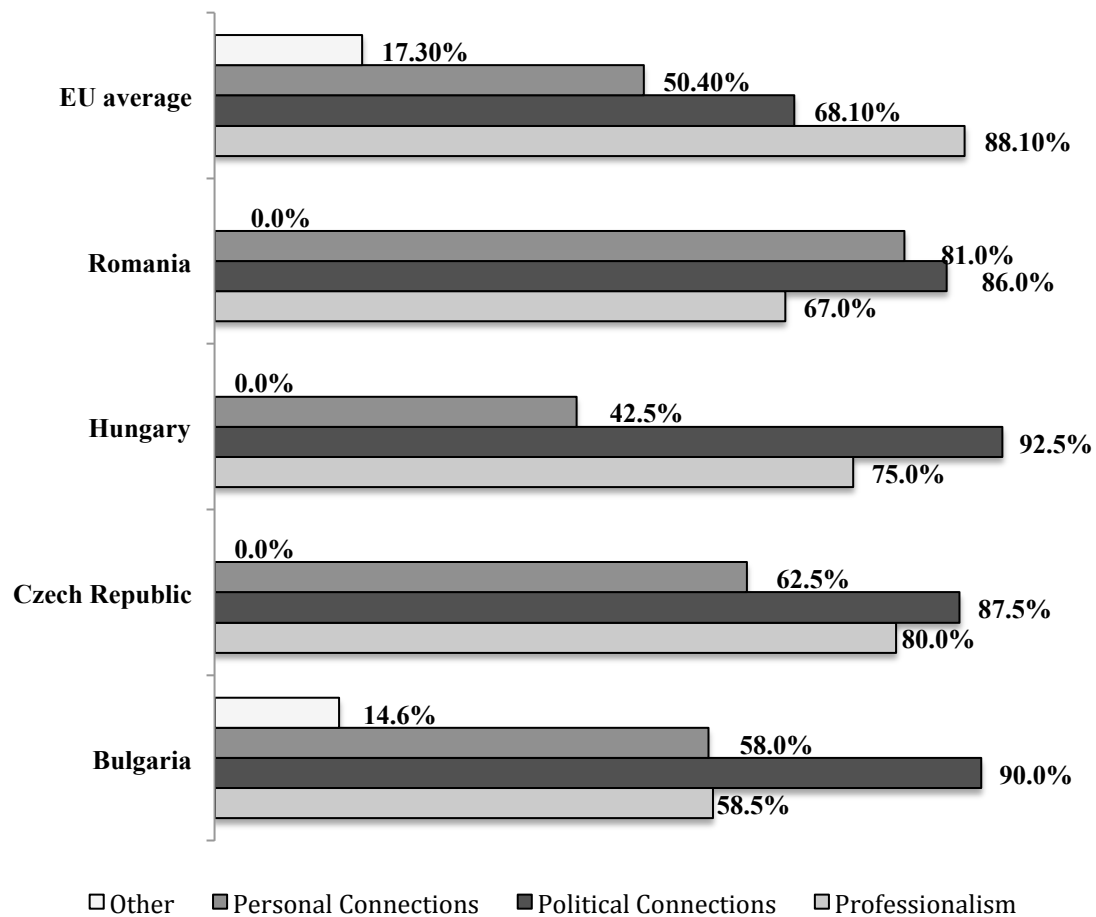
Another important dimension of researching the predominant functions of party patronage is to evaluate the motivations behind it—rewarding loyal supporters, as opposed to controlling those institutions reachable by political pressure. In the case of Romania, the vast majority of respondents—over 85%, considered both reasons to be central to party patronage. By comparison to the other post communist countries selected, a much higher percentage of respondents consider both the reward, and control motivations as concomitant drivers of party patronage. While in the Czech Republic, most of the respondents considered party patronage in their country to be motivated by the intention to control public institutions, in the cases of Hungary and Bulgaria, there was an even split between the power of reward and control motivations.

Figure 2. Comparative Overview of Policy Sector Scores of Party Patronage



Source: Kopecky et al (2012) and present research

Figure 3. Comparative Overview of Qualifications of Appointees

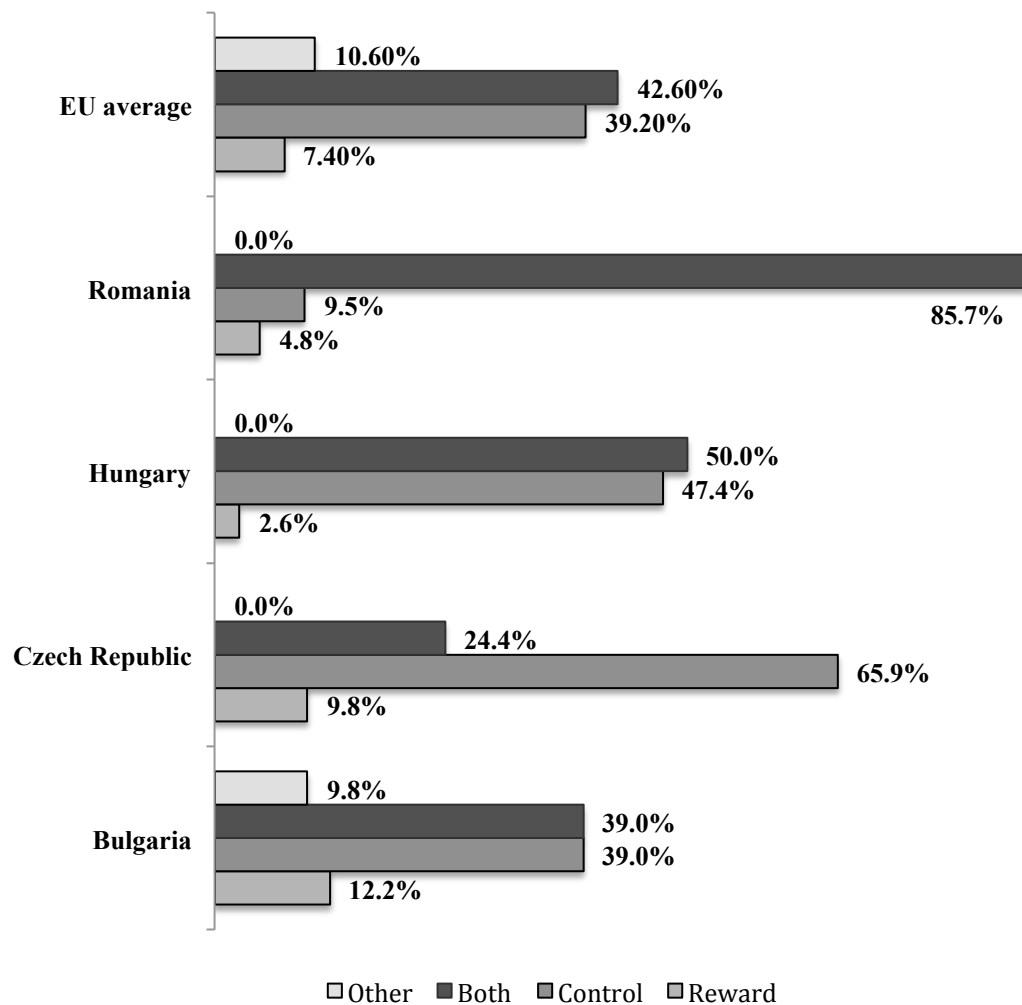


Source: Kopecky et al (2012) and present research

Both the control and the reward motivation may have different ignition points. They can emanate either from the party leadership, leading to a top-down imposition of personnel, or from the party's active members, leading to a bottom-up pressure to intervene in support of an appointment. Thus, much of the Romanian political patronage is based on an intersecting web of interests, in which the party leadership's personnel agenda meets the ambitions of different local power brokers. Either way, all the actors know that appointments are part of the perks of the political game in Romania, and they all expect to benefit to a certain extent from this resource—'Power is all about offices and positions'¹³.

¹³ Victor Adîr, policy advisor to the mayor of Bucharest, interview with the author, 18.01.2013

Figure 4. Comparative Overview of Patronage Motivation Scores



Source: Kopecky et al (2012) and present research

In terms of the reward motivation, political patronage may be offered as a reward to party members as well as party supporters (outside the party base). When an appointment is intended to reward party members, it is mainly an organizational strategy, as it strengthens their commitment to the party, and ensures their contribution—material or logistical, to the party activity. For example, a school director appointed through political influence, may be expected to mobilize the school personnel at party rallies, and to be actively and openly promoting the party by means of its new position¹⁴. When an appointment is meant to reward a non-member supporter, it aims at maintaining a network of useful connections loyal, and, as in the case of party

¹⁴ based on example from an interview, Mariana Popa, former school inspector, interview with the author, 30.01.2013

members, to ensure they are satisfied and continuously committed to supporting the patron electorally, and otherwise—‘you have to reward the people that put you there, otherwise you they may not help you next time’¹⁵. As I show in the last chapter of this thesis, given the cartelization process, the informal distribution of public resources often involves the acquiescence of non-affiliated party brokers.

The second motivation to extend patronage is to control the various institutions, departments and offices to which appointments are being made on the basis of political influence. One of the key elements of ensuring control of these institutions is to ensure that it will extend longer than the political cycle of power. In other words, parties strive to obtain control over institutions even after they lose elections. This is the basis for inter-party collusion—‘networks that transcend party organizations (*rețele transpartinice*) are especially powerful in the territory, where deals are usually made between local leaders, disregarding central party policy at times’¹⁶. Through such collaborations for the purpose of mutually reinforcing the patronage potential of the main political parties, different leaders ensure the endurance of their interests—economic or personnel wise, despite changing electoral cycles.

2.3. Cartelization and Clientelistic Linkages in CEE

One of the main elements of the cartelization model is the growing party-state interpenetration (Katz and Mair 1995). This can sometimes lead to state capture, as parties in office become discretionary managers of the public goods and prerogatives under their control. I consider political appointments, and discretionary allocations to be manifestations of this takeover of the state by parties in office.

Still, we have to account for the way the state interferes in the activity of the political parties, either at the party system level, or within the political party organizations. By looking at how much the state draws from the party-state interpenetration, we are able to understand the extent to which parties

¹⁵Victor Adîr, policy advisor to the mayor of Bucharest, interview with the author, 18.01.2013

¹⁶ Mircea Cintează, former Minister of Health Care 2004-2005, and National Liberal Party official, interview with the author, 10.12.2013

can expand towards exploitative strategies of state capture. In other words, this section will explore the contemporary constraints that the state is able to enforce on political parties in new democracies.

The party-state interpenetration layers of cartelization has been explored to date in several theoretical and empirical studies by looking at the extent of public funding for political parties (Hopkin 2004, Van Biezen 2000, Van Biezen and Kopecky 2008/2014, Krasovec and Haughton 2011, Haughton 2012, 2014, Casal-Bertoa and Van Biezen 2014). This approach allows us to understand the extent to which political parties are constrained and controlled through specific regulation. The premise is that whenever parties benefit from public subsidies, this would come with a greater or lesser cost of monitoring and regulation of their activities. From the point of view of the ability to exert patronage, within the political party, as well as outside the party organization, when in public office, we need to account for regulatory constraints. When looking at the time of the introduction of party regulation in the selected case studies, and at the changes it suffered throughout the past decades, we can assess the level to which it is able to constrain the activity of the competing political parties in these countries.

According to the existing literature, as well as the empirical evidence presented in this thesis, the time and timing of setting up political parties in new democracies is very important to the way these associations act, react, and perform in elections. As such, some of the successor parties in the region have been especially successful at the start of the new democratic period, as they had a certain level of territorial organization and mobilization capacity already in place (e.g. BSP in Bulgaria, and PSD in Romania). The time and timing of the legislative provisions that guide and constrain the activity of political parties matter greatly. The sooner the party regulation is set up, and the less it is changed, the more likely it is that those provisions will be institutionalized, and effectively serve as the framework for the respective party system.

In all these post communist case studies, the newly constructed, or heavily amended Constitutions introduced the multi-party system before, or on the occasion of the first democratic elections (see Table 4). As such, the most basic legal framework for the operation of a democratic party system was ensured. Still, as a second line of enquiry it is important to see the time of the introduction of dedicated party legislation, regulating both the external relations of the political party (e.g. electoral provisions), as well as the internal life of political parties (e.g. party financing).

Table 4. Party Regulation in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

	Introduction of multi-party systems	Party Laws
Bulgaria	New Constitution 1991	<i>Political Parties Act 1990</i> (subsequently amended in 2003)
Czech Republic	New Constitution 1992	<i>Law 424/1991 on association in political parties and political movements</i>
Hungary	Amended Constitution 1989 (changed again in 2011)	<i>Association Law 1989</i>
Romania	New Constitution 1991	<i>Political Parties Law 1996</i> (currently replaced by the <i>Law no. 14/2003 on Political Parties</i>) <i>Law 336/2006 regarding the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns</i> (currently replaced by <i>Law 113/2015 regarding the amendment of the Law 336/2006 regarding the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns</i>)

Source: compiled by the author based on the national legislation of the selected case study countries

In the Czech Republic and Hungary the first party laws, passed in 1991, and 1989 respectively, are still in force. This means that the political parties in these countries have been competing for the post communist period, on broadly the same rules. They both suffered changes, with the greater magnitude of change in the Czech Republic case (Casal-Bertoa and Van Biezen 2014), but the reference legislation has remained the same. In contrast, the Bulgarian and Romanian legislation on political parties suffered significant changes. The Bulgarian Political Parties Act from 1990 was substantially amended in 2003, while the Romanian legislation changed altogether.

Not only did the party laws in Romania come into force only at the time of the second democratic election (i.e. 1996), but they were radically changed throughout the following decades. Some of the latest changes in both party and electoral legislation in Romania, create unmistakable clear support for the main parties and their incumbent office holders, given such changes as one-off elections at the local level instead of two rounds, increased public financing for the parliamentary parties, and additional funding available for party affiliated foundations. Much like in the case of the Czech Republic, increased public funding for political parties, coupled with high thresholds for eligibility makes for a disproportionate political competition, in favor of existing political parties. The low electoral volatility score of the main political parties presented here in Table 1 show how the various new entrants in the party systems in CEE have had a modest electoral standing (Powell and Tucker 2014).

While in all the new European democracies the legislative changes had to account for the new plurality of a democratic party system, we find a different degree of the concern for other matters, such as party financing, or party organization. Furthermore, as in the case of Romania, electoral legislation changed several times over the past decade, which creates the suspicion of an instrumental use of the regulatory framework by the ruling parties. Such an inter-party collusion to keep outsiders or newcomers away

from power through artificial legislative barriers is again in line with the prescriptions of the cartel party model.

From the point of view of internal organizational constraints, it is useful to assess the territorial coverage of the main political parties in these countries. Using the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Dataset (DALP) we can see the extent to which the main political forces in these countries have a nationwide territorial presence. I use a compiled indicator of formal nationwide territorial presence, based on (1) the density and permanence of offices and paid staff at the local or municipal level¹⁷, and (2) permanent social and community presence¹⁸. For informal territorial presence I refer to the density of local intermediaries who operate of parties' behalf, but are not part of the party organizations¹⁹.

As we can see in Table 5, the expert survey data supports previous assessments of the organizational strength of successor parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, it is only the successor parties that have managed to be successful contenders in the post communist setting—the Romanian Social Democrats (PSD), the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), and the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP). For this category of parties, it is their pre-existing territorial networks that consolidated their nationwide presence. In addition to them, it is also the electorally successful newly established

¹⁷ Question a1: Do the following parties or their individual candidates maintain offices and paid staff at the local or municipal level? If yes, are these offices and staff permanent or only during national elections?; Codes for answers: [1] Yes, the party maintains permanent local offices in MOST districts, [2] Yes, the party maintains permanent local offices in SOME districts, [3] Yes, the party maintains local offices, but only during national elections, [4] No, the party does not maintain local office, [99] Don't know. Author's interpretation: Values in between 1 and 1.4 are labeled as nationwide.

¹⁸ Question a2: Do the following parties' local organizations maintain a permanent social and community presence by holding social events for local party members or sustaining ancillary social groups such as party youth movements, party cooperatives, or athletic clubs?; Codes for answers: [1] Yes, [2] No, [99] Don't know; Author's interpretation: Values in between 1 and 1.4 are labeled as nationwide.

¹⁹ Question a3: Do the following parties have local intermediaries (e.g. neighbourhood leaders, local notables, religious leaders) who operate in local constituencies on the parties' behalf, and perform a variety of important tasks such as maintaining contact with large groups of voters, organizing electoral support and voter turnout, and distributing party resources to voters and supporters?; Codes for answers: [1] Yes, they have local representatives in MOST constituencies, [2] Yes, they have local representatives in SOME constituencies, [3] No, they have almost no local representatives, [99] Don't know. Author's interpretation: Values in between 1 and 1.5 are labeled as nationwide.

Bulgarian (GERB) and Hungarian (Fidesz) populist parties that managed to develop both formal and informal nationwide coverage. For this category of parties, the territorial networks have been mostly built as parties in office. While the Romanian Democratic Liberals (PDL) have attempted a similar development strategy as GERB and Fidesz, they did not manage to maintain a nationwide informal presence.

Table 5. Territorial Presence of CEE Political Parties

		FORMAL TERRITORIAL PRESENCE	
		Non-nationwide	Nationwide
INFORMAL TERRITORIAL PRESENCE	Non-nationwide	PC, UDMR, DSB, NDSV, Attack, Green, SZDSZ, MDF, KNP	PDL, PNL, DPS, ODS, KDU-CSL, ODS, CSSD, KSCM
	Nationwide	-	PSD, BSP, GERB, Fidesz, MSZP

Source: compiled by the author based on the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP) 2008-2009 Dataset

Predictably enough, all smaller parties in the four case studies cluster as not having either a formal or informal nationwide territorial presence. The Romanian Conservatives (PC), and the Bulgarian Attack parties are heavily reliant on their founders' media reach. As such, these parties develop a more business-model party approach, than one developed on territorial presence and roots in society. In terms of parties representing ethnic minorities, we find the Bulgarian DPS achieving a nationwide presence, as its electoral base is more dispersed across the country, while the Romanian UDMR remains

bound to its stronghold counties (e.g. Harghita, Covasna, Mures). This is congruent with the subindicator values, as it has permanent offices and staff only in some districts, but maintains in those constituencies a permanent social and community presence.

Beyond the question of organizational capacity, these figures allow us to see the reliance of political parties in new democracies on informal networks of intermediaries, even when they have a dense network of offices and staff. The Social Democrats seem to be good confirmatory cases of this. As such, we can align the empirical evidence with the previously made assumptions of this thesis, that in the post communist setting, clientelistic networks have a dual identity. In the case of successor parties, we find them as inherited instruments of electoral mobilization. In the case of newly established or reformed populist parties, we find them as substitutes for roots in society that have been created from scratch via clientelistic channels of distribution.

The DALP dataset also allows us to see the extent to which political parties in Central and Eastern Europe engage in clientelistic exchanges. As showed in Table 6, most political parties deploy at least a moderate effort in deploying exchange mechanisms of mobilization. We use the full set of variables in the dataset, accounting for clientelistic exchanges involving: consumer goods²⁰, preferential public benefits²¹, public, employment²²,

²⁰ Question b1: Consider whether candidates and parties give or promise to give citizens consumer goods (e.g. food or liquor, clothes, cookware, appliances, medicines, building materials etc.) as inducement to obtain their votes. How much effort do candidates and parties expend to attract voters by providing consumer goods?; Answer codes: [1] A negligible effort or none at all, [2] A minor effort, [3] A moderate effort, [4] A major effort, [99] Don't know.

²¹ Question b2: Consider whether candidates and parties give or promise to give citizens preferential access to material advantages in public social policy schemes (e.g. preferential access to subsidized prescription drugs, public scholarships, public housing, better police protection etc.) as inducement to obtain their votes. How much effort do candidates and parties expend to attract voters by providing preferential public benefits?; Answer codes: [1] A negligible effort or none at all, [2] A minor effort, [3] A moderate effort, [4] A major effort, [99] Don't know.

²² Question b3: Consider whether candidates or parties give or promise to give citizens preferential access to employment in the public sector or in the publicly regulated private sector (e.g. post office, janitorial services, maintenance work, jobs at various skill levels in state owned enterprises with government contracts and subsidies, etc.) as inducement to obtain their vote. How much effort do candidates or parties expend to attract voters by

government contracts and public procurement ²³ , and regulatory proceedings²⁴.

The scale for each observation (i.e. type of clientelistic practice employed by a party) is between 1 (i.e. the respective party makes little if any effort in deploying that particular type of clientelistic exchange) to 4 (i.e. the respective party deploys a makes major efforts in deploying that particular type of clientelistic exchange). As such, 1 can be seen a very weak engagement in certain clientelistic practices, while 4 a major engagement with them. Based on these values, I also allocate in Table 6 a color code to represent the intensity of clientelistic engagement, with green representing low engagement (i.e. values lower or equal to 2.5), purple representing average engagement (i.e. values higher than 2.5 and lower or equal to 3.5), and pink representing the high engagement with a specific type of clientelistic practice (i.e. values higher that 3.5).

From the main political parties in the selected set of post communist countries, we find that major efforts to exert clientelistic transactions in the case of the Romanian Social Democrats (PSD), the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), and the Bulgarian Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS). The fact that organizationally strong parties, like the successor parties (i.e. PSD or BSP) are the main employers of clientelistic provisions falls in line with this thesis argument. Clientelism develops an informal system of public

providing preferential access to employment opportunities? Answer codes: [1] A negligible effort or none at all, [2] A minor effort, [3] A moderate effort, [4] A major effort, [99] Don't know.

²³ Question b4: Consider whether candidates or parties give or promise to give citizens and businesses preferential access to government contracts or procurement opportunities (e.g. public works. construction projects, military procurement projects without competitive bidding to companies whose employees support the awarding party) as inducement to gain their and their employees' votes. How much effort do candidates or parties expend to attract voters by offering them preferential access to government contracts or procurement? Answer codes: [1] A negligible effort or none at all, [2] A minor effort, [3] A moderate effort, [4] A major effort, [99] Don't know.

²⁴ Consider whether candidates or parties influence or promise to influence the application of regulatory rules issues by government agencies (e.g. more lenient tax assessments and audits, more favourable interpretation of fire and escape facilities in buildings, etc.) in order to favour individual citizens or specific businesses as inducement to gain their and their employees' vote. How much effort do candidates or parties expend to attract voters and the businesses for which they work by influencing regulatory proceedings in their favour?; Answer codes: [1] A negligible effort or none at all, [2] A minor effort, [3] A moderate effort, [4] A major effort, [99] Don't know.

provisions—meaning that clients get informally through party channels what they should have been able to receive from public service. This can be regarded as a similar process to Western democracies, where pork-barrel politics is a frequent form through which politicians and parties care for the interests of their constituencies. The more developed the party organization is (or the more stable the party supporters/clients base is), the more the patron party has to deploy clientelistic distribution of goods, services or regulatory favors. But, as I argue in Chapter 1, it is only through the party-state interpenetration that a patron party can ensure such a continuous and extensive flow of clientelistic provision.

When looking at the type of clientelistic transactions, the most predominant in our set of cases are: providing preferential access to material advantages in public social policy schemes, and government contracts or procurement opportunities. Indeed there is a big difference between the two, as the preferential access to public benefits, which is predominant in the case of Czech political patrons, is a functional aspect of clientelism, as it benefits the clients most. In contrast, public procurement schemes, which are predominantly employed by Bulgarian parties, are much more exploitative in nature, involving mostly private benefits for political elites and private contractors, rather than for the voters.

Only the Social Democrats (PSD) in Romania seem to rely most heavily on the provision of consumer goods (e.g. food or liquor, clothes, cookware, appliances, medicines, building materials etc.). This might be attributable to the fact that in this country we find the most sizeable electorate—twice as large as in the other cases, and the highest poverty thresholds. The size of the electorate influences your ‘spending’ capacity as a clientelistic patron: there are not enough public sector jobs, or public procurement contracts to win majorities. As such, we can see the heavy reliance of ‘cheaper’ clientelistic transactions in Romania, such as vote buying (for details see Gherghina and Volintiru 2016) or the provision of consumer goods, much like in other poor settings (see for example Auyero 1999/2000). The overall poverty levels, especially in the rural areas, make promises of

consumer goods much more attractive than such long term promises as social policy schemes. In contrast, in the Czech Republic, if political parties engage any type of clientelistic exchanges, their focus is on preferential public benefits.

Finally, while we find similar patterns in terms of overall inclination to use informal exchange mechanisms to ensure electoral victories, differences between countries persist. It seems that smaller, Central and Eastern European countries like the Czech Republic, are not as inclined to engage in extensive clientelistic exchanges. Fidesz and MSZP employ to a moderate extent electoral exchanges in Hungary, but the other parties not so much. For Bulgaria and Romania, clientelistic exchanges seem to be employed across the political spectrum by parties in office.

The variations across countries, as well as the variations within the same political system, across actors, suggest that the clientelistic phenomenon is best understood by in-depth assessments. As the following chapters will show, the same mechanisms have to be set up for the allocation of preferential public benefits—a functional usage of clientelistic channels, as well as for the preferential allocation of government contracts—a more exploitative usage of clientelistic channels. Different parties may employ different tactics in a predominant manner (e.g. consumer goods vs. public contracts), but the linkage mechanisms are the same, and they draw strength from the cartelization process.

Table 6. Clientelistic Provisions in CEE Political Parties

Country	Political Party	Consumer Goods	Preferential Public Benefits	Public Employment	Government Contracts and Public Procurement	Regulatory Proceedings
Romania	PSD	3.50	3.46	2.93	3.14	2.71
	PDL	3.00	3.00	2.43	3.00	2.71
	PNL	2.77	3.08	2.43	2.93	2.79
	UDMR	2.09	3.36	2.62	2.77	2.43
	PC	3.09	3.17	2.62	2.92	2.77
Bulgaria	BSP	3.15	3.31	3.62	3.69	3.23
	GERB	3.00	2.67	3.30	3.33	3.17
	NDSV	3.11	3.22	3.44	3.56	3.33
	Attack	2.43	2.00	2.33	2.20	2.00
	DPS	3.60	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.60
	ODS	2.22	2.13	2.67	2.44	2.33
	DSB	2.10	2.08	2.40	2.36	2.09
Czech Republic	KDU-CSL	1.96	2.58	2.04	2.29	2.14
	ODS	1.83	2.04	2.00	2.48	2.39
	KSCM	2.00	2.61	1.96	1.76	1.86
	CSSD	2.04	2.67	2.05	2.26	2.30
	Green	1.59	1.95	1.85	1.84	1.81
Hungary	KDNP	1.67	2.00	2.08	2.15	1.91
	MDF	2.09	2.69	2.45	2.42	2.22
	MSZP	3.00	3.29	3.15	3.29	2.92
	SZDSZ	2.17	2.57	2.54	3.08	2.50
	Fidesz	2.62	3.14	2.93	3.07	2.54

Source: Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP) 2008-2009 Dataset

Conclusion

The premise of this thesis is that informal linkages in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) develop in the prolific setting of institutional weakness, which is inherited from the previous regime, and enhanced by the transitional circumstances (e.g. weak regulation). In response to the poor institutionalisation of the party systems in this area, cartelization offered a solution of stabilisation. As I argue throughout the thesis, the cartel party is stabilised on the long term through clientelistic linkages that anchor patron parties in society. This chapter has explored these assumptions in the context of several post-communist European democracies: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania. While there are variations across party organizations, and across the institutional setting, we can see that the context has been similar in this set of countries, involving both a high reliance on party-state interpenetration (i.e. cartelization), as well as ample opportunities for discretionary use of public resources (i.e. clientelism).

Looking at the political parties in the selected case studies, we can see a certain similarity between successor parties (e.g. PSD or BSP) who benefited from a greater territorial penetration than their counterparts, but it relied heavily on informal linkages. As such, I show that all political parties in CEE had a similar incentive/opportunity to tap into public resources in order to fuel their weak or non-existing local organizations. The high stability of the main competitors (see Table 1) (i.e. low electoral alternation volatility) relative to the CEE context suggests that the anchoring of these parties in society has been successful. As I show here, the instruments of this anchoring in society have been to a large extent informal linkages (e.g. party patronage, clientelistic provisions of goods, services or regulatory favours).

Romania stands out in this set of cases as having: (1) the most stable major parties (i.e. lowest electoral volatility of vote shares), (2) the strongest concentration of administrative power in local governments (i.e. prerogatives, resources), and (3) it has the highest party patronage index score in the CEE set of cases (0.48), as well as the highest degree of institutional penetration (i.e. party patronage is not mainly deployed in Ministries, but also agencies,

and executive institutions). These circumstances recommend that the optimal setting for the in-depth investigation of informal linkage mechanisms is the case study of Romania, which will be analysed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3. Clientelistic Linkages and the Political Parties' Organizations in Romania

Political parties have become increasingly more reliant on the state for survival, either formally through public funding/subsidizing, or informally through state capture and clientelistic distribution of goods, services, or regulatory favors. In this context, the territorial political organizations are created/maintained through the discretionary allocation of public resources via clientelistic networks. This chapter shows that once we account for the variety of threats to the political survival of Romanian parties—from electoral and ideological volatility, to membership decline, we can see how cartelization and clientelism become needed responses to such organizational threats. I account for both the challenges residing in the party system (e.g. electoral competition) and within the party organizations (e.g. the balance of power between the center and the periphery).

The literature on party organization is generally focused on electoral performance and internal selection/nomination procedures. Nevertheless, much less concern is devoted to how the latter aspect (i.e. internal procedures) affects the party's performance (i.e. electoral and governing). In response to this, the present chapter looks at how the clientelistic methods deployed by ruling political parties are linked to the organizational, internal dynamics of those entities.

For electoral and political organizations data (i.e. electoral volatility, party membership, renomination rate, electoral shares), I have conducted a systematic coverage over the reference period ranging from 1992 to 2012, based mostly on already assembled data bases, and primary data from the Permanent Electoral Authority (AEP) in Romania. For the purpose of my assessment of the internal dynamics of power, and the control over clientelistic networks of resource distribution, I triangulated existing indicators, with an in-depth analysis of the composition of and selection procedures within the party leadership structures. I obtained this data from the parties official records (i.e. statutes, website repositories, decisions), as well as from in-depth interviews with party officials.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, clientelism can be both an inherited trait of a societal organization relying heavily on informal linkages (e.g. Southern Italy), or an inherited linkage system developed by the former party-state systems of the communist period. Romania meets both criteria. These relational mechanisms aim at maintaining stable support, and roots in society for party organizations. In Western Democracies such linkages have been developed over time, through formal channels of representation and interest aggregation (e.g. trade unions). In CEE countries, the way the party system was reformed over night left out the option of such consolidated chains of representation. As a result, we find much less pork-barrel politics, and much more personalized informal resource brokerage, and patronage.

3.1. Political Parties Formation and Evolution in Romania

Comparing political parties in the selected case study of Romania, to the broader context of European new democracies, we can see that Romanian parties are much more likely to resort to clientelistic exchanges to achieve electoral success. Expert surveys conducted under the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP)²⁵ (2011) show that Romania has the third highest regional score, after Bulgaria and Greece, for how much effort politicians and political parties make to induce voters with preferential benefits to cast favorable votes. The Romanian party system as a whole is judged to be steering major efforts in clientelistic exchanges, as opposed to more moderate stances taken by other European new democracy case studies, such as Spain, Portugal, or Italy.

As opposed to other Central and Eastern European countries, Romania does not seem to have changed its overall inclination for clientelistic linkages. According to the DALP data, Romanian politicians nowadays make the same efforts to provide preferential benefits to individuals or small groups of voters,

²⁵ Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP) 2008-2009 Dataset, Surveys for the collection were done in 2008 and 2009, Dataset collected under the auspices of the project "Political Accountability in Democratic Party Competition and Economic Governance", Principal Investigator Herbert Kitschelt, Department of Political Science, Duke University, Source <http://www.duke.edu/web/democracy>, last accessed on 4.06.2016.

as they did 10 years ago. In contrast, in Bulgaria, or Hungary, experts assess politicians make higher efforts today, than a decade ago to engage clientelistic linkages. The case of Romania thus stands out, as the relative stability of the clientelistic system suggests an early option for clientelism. Indeed, the Social Democratic Party (PSD)—the most successful successor party in the region, has been constantly a major political force in the post-communist period. Its ability to provide preferential benefits to individual and smaller groups has always been strong, given its dense territorial presence. I argue that it is because of the successful and early deployment of informal exchanges that this party has managed to effectively fend off competitors on the left wing spectrum (e.g. nationalist or extremist parties) in a manner that other cartels in CEE have not been able to do.

Even if some parties are older than others, in the short timespan of a new democracy, it might be misleading to attempt to characterize the organizational specificities of each political party, as they change substantially under contextual pressures. Some distinctive traits exist, largely based on the specific resources and electoral base of each party, but the cartelization process ensures a homogenization of organizational strategies (i.e. clientelism).

The main political parties, dominating the electoral competitions for the past two decades are the Social Democrats (PSD), the Democratic Liberals (PDL), and the National Liberals (PNL). The present research focuses specifically on the organizational dimensions of these three statewide parties. They have a national presence, and as such can be compared in terms of the inner-party dynamics, when in power. At times I account for another party—the ethnic party of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) which has been controlling a much smaller fraction of the electorate—up to 5%, but is a significant coalition partner²⁶ (i.e. holding important portfolios)

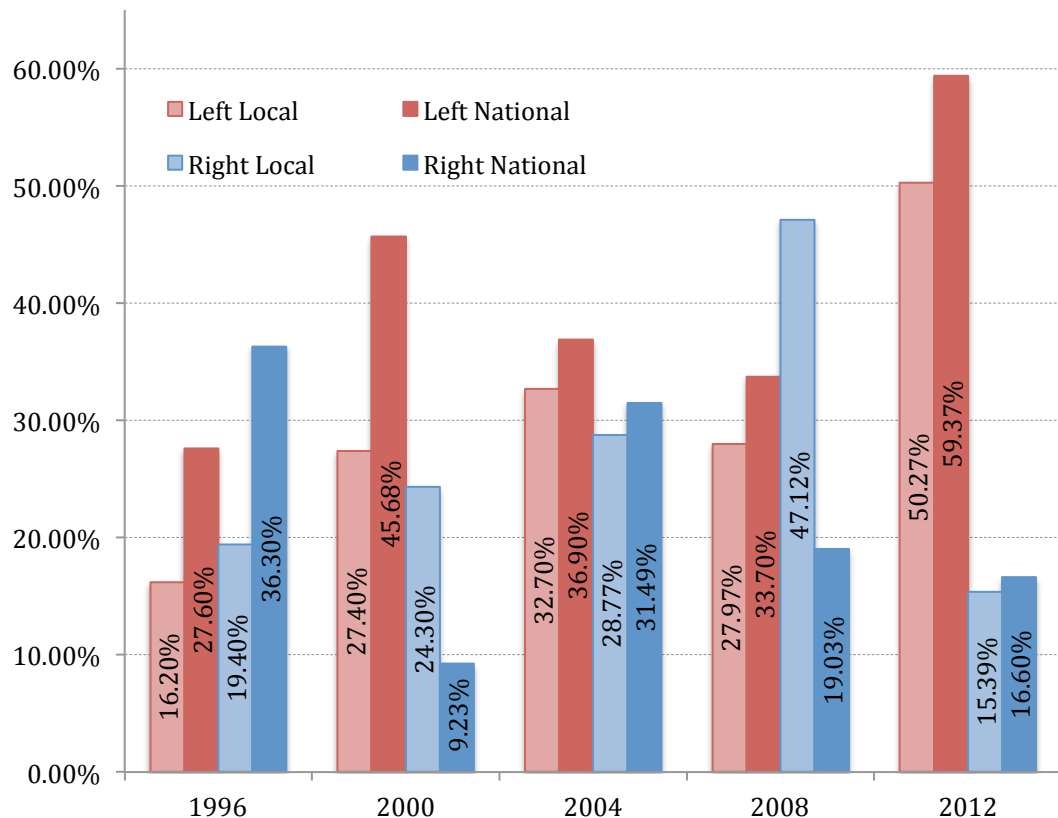
²⁶ Several interviewees have mentioned a popular joke in reference to this striking stability of UDMR in office: „Why are there Parliamentary elections in Romania? Because the UDMR needs to figure out with whom it will govern in the next cycle.”

since 1996. As such, their organizational and survival strategies will also be represented by some of the empirical evidence analyzed in this chapter.

The electoral performance of the main Romanian political parties shows a relatively stable electoral base for the leftist Social Democratic Party (PSD). On the left we can also see that the electoral scores are augmented from the late spring local elections to the late autumn national elections, at each cycle. As the Social Democrats have always had their alliances settled before the local elections, we can only attribute this increase to the mobilization efforts of newly elected local leaders. In contrast, the right wing does not present distinctive traits. Furthermore, beneath the umbrella of the Right, there is a multitude of parties, alliances and mergers. The fragmentation of the right, and the dominance of the left by a single major party make Romania an interested case study for strategies of political mobilization. Furthermore, in 2009, and 2012, some of the main right wing parties (i.e. PDL in 2009 and PNL in 2012) engaged with the left (i.e. PSD) in governing coalitions.

In terms of personnel and organizational networks, the Social Democrats have largely benefitted from the logistical inheritance of the former Communist Party. This party has continuously strengthened its local organizations, given a predominantly rural electorate, and the incumbency advantage of multiple local party leaders. As such, PSD is by all accounts the Romanian party with the strongest territorial presence, and the clearest ideological positioning. As shown in the DALP figures presented in the previous chapter, PSD is also the only political party in Romania to have an equally dense nationwide network of organizations (i.e. formal representatives) and brokers (i.e. informal representatives). Subsequently, it scores the lowest average electoral volatility, per ideological group, in the new democratic setting (Gherghina and Jigla 2011).

Figure 5. Electoral Scores²⁷ in Romania (1996-2012)²⁸



Source: Permanent Electoral Authority (AEP), <http://alegeri.roaep.ro/>, last accessed on 19.06.2016

²⁷ National election scores are the average of Senate and Chamber of Representatives results for each party

²⁸ **1996:** Left is PSD (under its former name of Party of Romanian Social Democracy (PDSR); Right is the Democratic Romanian Conventions, a coalition consisting of the historical Agrarian Party (PNȚCD), the National Liberal Party (PNL) and smaller fractions, including the Democratic Hungarian Alliance in Romania (UDMR) only for the national elections

2000: Left is PSD (under its former name of Party of Romanian Social Democracy (PDSR); Right is the sum of former coalition parties standing separately in local elections, Democratic Party (PD) (9.9%), Democratic Romanian Convention (CDR) (7.47%), and National Liberal Party (PNL) (6.9%). At the national elections only the Democrats (PD) (9.14%) and the Liberals (9%) passed the Parliamentary threshold, with the second largest Parliamentary party after the Social Democrats being the Great Romanian Party (PRM) (25.39%) a nationalistic Party driven by its presidential candidate Vadim Tudor.

2004: Left is PSD in alliance with the Conservative Party (PC); Right for the local elections is represented by the National Liberal Party (PNL) (15.98%), and the Democratic Party (PD) (12.79%) standing separately, and for the national elections standing together in the Truth and Justice Alliance (31.49%).

2008: Left is PSD in alliance with the Conservative Party (PC); Right is the National Liberal Party (PNL) (18.20% at local, and 18.7% at national), and the Democratic Party (PD) (28.92% at local, and 33% at national) standing separately.

2012: Left is the Social Liberal Union (USL) comprising the Social Democrats (PSD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL); Left is the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL, former Democratic Party) standing alone at local elections, and standing in coalition with the Agrarian Party (PNȚCD) at the national elections.

The Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) also traces its genealogy back to the National Salvation Front (FSN), but it is less of a successor party, in terms of organizational, or ideological inheritance. It has also been in power for multiple electoral cycles, under various coalitions. Given its genealogy and times in office, it also has a very well established presence in the territory. This latter trait is sooner the result of recent efforts to establish roots in society, rather than a prerequisite of the old regime, like in the case of PSD. It has the least coherent ideological positioning from all the statewide Romanian parties.

The National Liberal Party (PNL) is the only historical party with a consistent record in terms of electoral success. While it has never managed to win national elections on its own, it is collecting significant local victories, in key positions of mayors, county councils, and local councils, so as to have a strategic positioning in terms of informal resource allocation. It has been a ruling party, under various coalitions, but it has the least penetrating local networks from all the three major parties. One of the reasons for this is that it has a predominantly urban electorate, and has generally relied on a centralized organizational structure—a tendency that is currently tentatively changing. Much like the Social Democrats, PNL is also a relatively stable party from the ideological point of view, and as such, it also enjoys a low average electoral volatility over the past two decades (see Table 7).

The absorption of Liberal Democrats (PDL) by the National Liberals (PNL) in 2015 proved to be a poor electoral leverage. After the merger, the new National Liberal Party (PNL) saw its electoral rankings fall below the sum of the two parties standing alone. This can be explained by the shift of many of the traditional voters of the National Liberals (PNL) to newly established parties, embodying the “true liberal values, rather than that of populism”²⁹

Ideological orientation variation in Romania seems to be weak on the political spectrum, as political parties often enter electoral alliances or international affiliations that seem antagonistic to their platform. One of the

²⁹ Popescu-Tăriceanu, former party leader of the National Liberal Party (PNL)

most drastic ideological changes was that of the former Democratic Party (PD), renamed as Liberal Democratic Party (PDL), renounced its' affiliation to the Socialist International³⁰, to later become in 2005 a member of the European People's Party (EEP). Similarly, the National Liberal Party (PNL) joined forces with the leftist PSD in 2012, in a very successful electoral alliance (50.27% at local elections, and 59.37% at national elections). While this might seem to be a widespread tendency of crowding the middle or narrowing policy space, it is also a particular symptom of post-communist democracies. Throughout Eastern Europe empirical data collection like the European Values Survey or the World Values Survey point to a much smaller differentiation between left and right at the population level (Bădescu and Sum 2005, Voicu and Voicu 2007). Indeed, both self-placed people on the left and right wing expect public spending, and a powerful state, with the only variations appearing as to what sectors the state should concentrate its resources³¹.

The Romanian Party System has struggled to achieve institutionalization in the post-communist democratic setting. As such, the Romanian political parties had to overcome such issues as the instability of interparty competition, having shallow roots in society, and most of all, not having a clear ideological identification (Volintiru 2012b). The high frequency of organizational changes, such as alliances, or mergers between parties, as well as the high frequency of politicians switching their political parties (*traseism politic*), all prove to be salient challenges to the institutionalization process.

The challenges of the transition period are reflected in the highest levels of electoral volatility Romania recorded for the 1992 elections. The initial levels of volatility, some of the highest in Central and Eastern Europe, left the Romanian party system with the mark of 'extreme volatility', in the first

³⁰ The Democratic Party was accepted as a full member of the Socialist International in 1996, under the leadership of Petre Roman (Prime Minister 1989-1991). He was the son of Walter Roman (communist politician and fighter of the International Communist Brigades in the Spanish Civil War).

³¹ Survey data from the Willing to Pay? ERC project, data collected on Romania in 3 waves, 2013-2016

decade after the fall of communism (Epperly 2011, Dassonneville and Hooghe 2011). Some of the existing measurements of this indicator, based on the Pedersen Index, show that subsequent elections have seen a substantial improvement in terms of the stability of voting preferences, with only the 2004 elections seeing a slight surge in the overall trend (Epperly 2011, Dassonneville and Hooghe 2011). As I show in Table 1 (see Chapter 2), the electoral volatility scores for CEE are much lower once we account only for stable parties: Romania has the lowest electoral volatility of alternation (i.e. Type B) in CEE, scoring only 7. According to Powell and Tucker (2014: 143), the study of volatility in Central and Eastern Europe has long been a reflection of values primarily derived from party entries or exists from the party system:

Table 7. Electoral Volatility in Romania (1990-2008)

	1990-1992	1992-1996	1996-2000	2000-2004	2004-2008
Social Democrats	0.24	0.07	0.28	0.03	0.28
Liberals	0.07	0.12	0.08	0.44	0.01

Source: Gherghina and Jigla 2011

The volatility levels are usually recorded for a party system as a whole, but for the purpose of our analysis, in which we attempt to distinguish between the each political party's specific organizational challenges, it is more relevant to look at the level of electoral volatility at a more granular level. Compiling volatility indices for each major party in Romania is not feasible, as most of them went through major organizational changes throughout the past decades. For some of the parties that can be traced over multiple electoral cycles (i.e. the main political competitors) this exercise can be done. As such, as such, recent studies (Gherghina 2014: 65) show that Romania comprises some of the extreme scores of low volatility (i.e. up to 20) in Central and Eastern Europe for the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and for the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR).

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) has scored consistently around 35% of the votes, for list-based electoral competitions, either at the local (e.g. county or local council), or legislative elections (e.g. House of Representatives or Senate). Such list-based polls are telling of the parties actual level of support, based on organizational performance—developing and maintaining strong ties with the electorate. In contrast, success in personalized competitions can be driven by additional factors such as charisma, and are not necessarily telling of a political parties need or opportunity to resort to clientelistic linkages.

I refer to ideological families, to see the extent to which parties of a specific relative positioning face electoral volatility. Using Birch's (2001) methodology³² Gherghina and Jigla (2011) calculate this volatility in a relative manner, reporting the difference of vote shares to the total of votes received by the party in both elections. They find that Romania has reached a certain level of electoral continuity and stability in recent years, but the 'electoral support of each family is too fluid and makes it impossible to claim that the ideological families have strong roots in the society' (Gherghina and Jigla 2011).

This situation is reinforced by the discrepancies between rural and urban communities. While the rural electorate maintains consistent political options, most of which are supported through traditional clientelistic linkage, the urban electorate is both politically volatile, and predominantly targeted by short-term clientelistic exchanges (Volintiru 2012a). As such, the Romanian political parties show significant disparities from rural to urban environments, both in terms of their electoral support, but also in terms of their linkage strategies.

The organizational strength of a political party is partially based on its number of party members. While being a party member is not the same as

³² $V_j = \frac{V_{t_1} - V_{t_0}}{V_{t_1} + V_{t_0}}$, where:

V_j is party electoral volatility,

V_{t_1} is the share of votes obtained by party j at the most recent election (t_1),

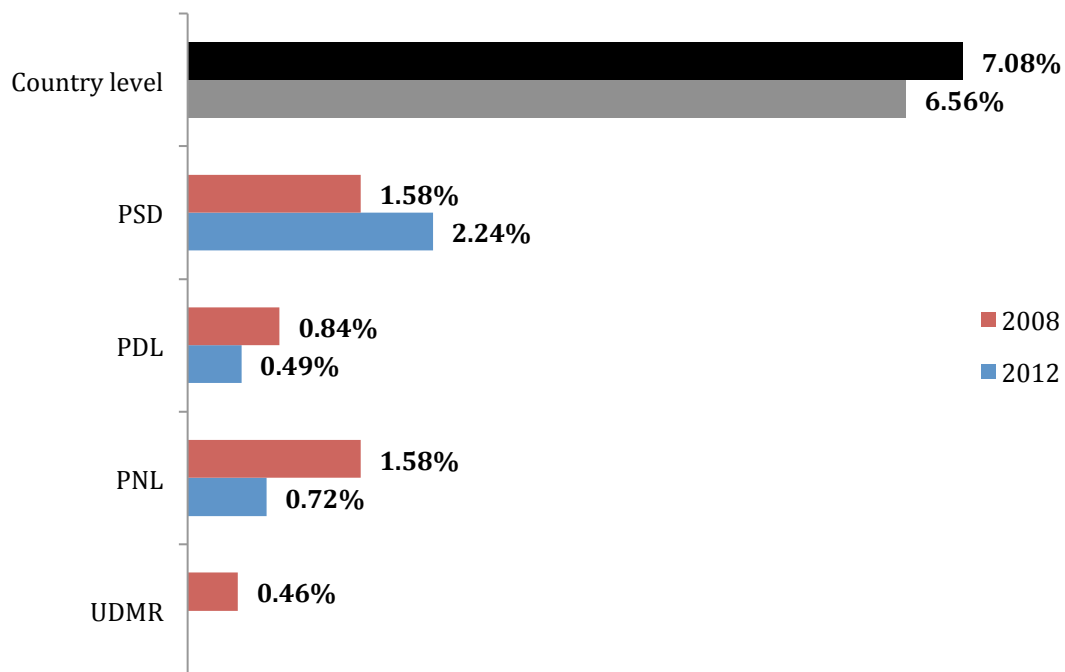
V_{t_0} is the share of the votes obtained by party j at the initial elections (t_0)

being actively involved in campaigning, in the absence of figures on the latter category, we look at membership numbers as proxies of organizational strength, from the human resource perspective. As such, we see an overall decreasing trend for the last two electoral cycles (see Figure 6). The only party that records an increase in its party members is the Social Democratic Party (PSD). Still, similar to all European democracies, the percentage of party members in the electorate is mostly marginal. As such, it is highly unlikely that the roots in society are developed on the basis of formal political activism.

These low numbers of party membership are sooner indicative of the informal linkages systems deployed by all the major Romanian parties. Still, the decreasing level of party membership falls well within the broader political trends at the European level, and within the predictions of the cartel party model. As such, parties become increasingly more reliant on a professionalization of the electoral competition—the business firm model (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999), as they loose the advantage of stable organizations—decreasing membership, and stable electoral support—increasing volatility.

Finally, another dimension of the main Romanian parties evolution throughout the past two decades is that they have displayed inclusive coalition formation patterns in the sense that each party joined a coalition with every other party. Additionally, the elite is relatively homogenous and rarely changes: a large amount of the members of Parliament (MPs) is re-nominated and re-elected in consecutive terms (Stefan et al. 2012). Even when new parties emerge, the majority of their candidates were previously members of one or several of the major political parties (Gherghina & Soare 2013).

Figure 6. Party Membership as Percentage of the Electorate in Romania (2008-2012)



Source: compiled by the author based on Official Party Registry in Romania (2012), similar to those reported in Gherghina (2012)

3.2. Distribution of Power Between the Centre and the Periphery

This process of cartelization generates a communicating vessels type of transfer of clientelistic strategies between the main political parties. As such, the organizational specificities of each party remain useful in distinguishing between the specificities of the linkage mechanisms (e.g. relying more heavily on local brokers/distribution of goods vs. relying more heavily on third party intermediaries/distribution of regulatory favors), but in general terms it can be asserted that all parties use clientelistic means to a certain extent.

Inner organizational dynamics of the competing political parties are frequently reflected in their electoral strategies. For example, the more centralized a party organization is, the more it relies on such specific drivers of electoral success as: charismatic leadership, external funding (i.e. donations from non-party members), or even logistic support (e.g. campaign

materials/events). The more powerful the local leaders seem to be within the party organization, the more they are able to organize their campaigns and ensure electoral success in their constituencies without relying too much on support from the central leadership.

Local Government leaders in Romania (e.g. mayors, county council presidents) are elected. In this electoral grid³³, all the main political parties discussed in this chapter have a dense territorial presence, judging by their organizational bases. The Social Democrats (PSD), are (and have always been) the best represented party in the territory; it accounts for 13.832 organizational bases in Romania, which means it has a dense capillary network down to village-level. The other two major parties, the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL), as well as the National Liberal Party (PNL) have, by all accounts³⁴, a substantial territorial networks as well, covering all the municipalities and towns in Romania.

As mentioned in the previous section, given the ever-diminishing number of party members, across the entire Romanian party system, political parties appear primed to employ clientelistic linkage strategies. In this context, the territorial organizations become key platforms for the clientelistic distributional system. Party members from territorial offices thus become brokers—intermediating the distribution of public resources to beneficiaries. The distributive politics has been well covered by the existing literature (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013, Stokes et al 2013), but it is important to distinguish between the local party leaders quality as brokers, and their potential quality as patrons. This latter status is specifically linked to their ability to produce, or distort in a discretionary manners flows of public resources.

³³ Formed of 42 counties, out of which one is the capital city of Bucharest. Bellow the county level, there are 103 municipalities, 217 cities, and 2856 communes, totaling over 3,000 Local Governments (LGs) in Romania. The electoral stakes at the county level target the positions of County Council President, and County Council members. For every other administrative sub-division—municipality, city, or commune, the electoral competition targets the positions of Mayor, and Local Council member. There are 12955 villages in Romania, forming communes, but they do not have any electoral stakes of their own.

³⁴ the central offices of these parties were unable to communicate the exact number of territorial organizations, but multiple sources confirmed that they have a statewide presence

If local party leaders are only distributors of clientelistic resources generated from above, then their power within the party organization will be limited. Reversely, if they are patrons in their own right (i.e. able to mobilize human and material resources which are then distributed for electoral purposes), then it is to be expected that their power within the party organization will be higher—sometimes even surpassing that of the central leadership. This latter distribution of power—higher local organizational strength than that of the central leadership, is generally reflected in the ability of local party bosses to influence central decision-making.

As both the central and the local party leaders are beneficiaries of the clientelistic system they uphold, I do not find evidence of open contestation from local leaders towards central leadership. Rather, there is ample evidence of pressures from local branches to have representation, and decision-making power at the national level. This ability is a key factor of their survival strategy. Firstly, local party leaders, in their elected capacities (e.g. mayors, county council presidents), can secure funding that consolidates their local patron function, and consequently, their electoral success. Secondly, they can exert patronage with more *largesse*, when they can offer central executive functions to their brokers, and supporters. As a consequence of appointing their people in central institutions, they also reinforce their chances to receive governmental transfers, thus extending their distribution capacity.

3.2.1. Party Leader Selection

When looking at the leadership selection procedure, it is useful to distinguish between the party leader—whose selection can be influenced by other factors such as charisma, and the central decision-making body—whose composition is dictated to a greater degree by party organizational rules and procedures. The selection procedure of the party leader contains certain representation features that are telling of how big a role can local party leaders, or local representatives play.

Based on party statutes, and official accounts of conventions Chiru and Gheghina (2012) compare the leadership selection regulation of the

Romanian political parties (see Table 8). This evidence shows that all the main parties in Romania have a similar procedure in terms of the presence of central representatives, and territorial delegates. But, this apparent equilibrium of representation is shadowed by the fact that most parties do not have a clear representative formula for delegates (see Table 8). In other words, it is still the central leadership that decides who will attend the selection convention, thus creating significant bias in favour of the leadership candidate supported from the centre.³⁵

Table 8. Leadership Selection Regulation of Romanian Political Parties

Provision	PSD	PDL	PNL	UDMR
Ex officio delegates (central leadership)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Territorial Delegates	✓	✓	✓	✓
Central leaders decide on the representation algorithm of delegates	✓	✓	✓	-
Clear procedure for the representation algorithm	-	-	✓	n.a.
Reserved mandates for youth members	-	-	-	✓
Delegates of corporate organizational	-	-	-	✓
The National Convention can dismiss the president	-	-	✓	✓
President elected with leadership team	-	✓	✓	-

Source: adapted by the author based on Chiru and Gherghina (2011)

Another important element of the selection of the party leader is whether he is tied to a specific team, or whether the other members of the central decision-making body will compete on their own. In the case of the

³⁵ PSD Statute 2001/2005/2006, PDL Statute 2001/2003/ 2005/ 2007, PNL Statute 2001/2002/2005, UDMR Statute 2003/2007

Democratic Liberals (PDL), and the National Liberals (PNL), the president of the party is elected on a list that comprises its selected leadership team (i.e. vicepresidents). The Social Democrats (PSD) do not require the leader to tie itself to any specific team, thus leaving more positions open for competition. This internal struggle for power influences clientelistic strategies deployment as well. The more hierarchically accountable a political party is, the more likely it is to see effective transversal clientelistic linkages. These would start with politicization of key appointments at the national level (e.g. state agencies), to the strategy of deploying political allocations to complement electoral strategies—forging political alliances, and further down to mobilizing human (i.e. voters) and material (i.e. donations) resources in the territory. A fractionalised internal party organization would not be in a similarly advantageous position to make use of the full extent of the clientelistic system.

Finally, the level of competitiveness in the leadership selection process is associated with critical junctures in the life of political parties, such as a poor electoral performance (Chiru and Gherghina 2012:530). Incumbent rate of success are high across the entire political party spectrum. In fact, it is mostly through electoral failures that party leaders lose their position, by having to step down. If in the case of the ethnic minority party (UDMR) the incumbent rate of success is 100% for the entire post-communist period, for the other three major parties it varies from 75% (Social Democrats, and National Liberals) to 83.3% (Democratic Liberals) (Chiru and Gherghina 2012).

Even when the leadership selection was more than a mere formality, it still was a rather ermetic confrontation, in which not more than two candidates had real chances of success. For the Social-Democratic Party (PSD) for example, from 18 Congresses since the '89 Revolution, only 4 had more than one candidate (Soare 2016). Moreover, even if contenders do announce themselves beforehand, they drop out of competing before the Congress dates. The turnout of delegates are equally impressive, as for the latest internal elections, the Social Democrats had at their Congress 435,172

members present, out of a total of 535,699 registered members (Soare 2016). Consequently, in the PSD we see a much bigger competition for 'second-tier', or middle leadership positions, than in the case of other parties. Largely attributable to its territorial network and stratachy organization, this trend is also explained by the custom of selecting leaders who previously held internal executive positions for several years (e.g. Adrian Năsatase, Victor Ponta, Liviu Dragnea). The specificities of the leadership selection procedures demonstrate a structural inclination to consolidate the dominance of the central leadership over that of various challengers—from local leaders, or from other contenders within the central party.

3.2.2. Party in Central Office: Representation in Party Leadership Forums

As mentioned before, a suggestive context of power distribution between central party representatives, and local party bosses is the national decision-making body, which traditionally comprises both the leaders of local organizations, and national politicians. It is labeled differently by the Romanian political parties: for the Social Democrats (PSD), and the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) the central decision-making forum is called the 'Permanent National Bureau' (*Biroul Național Permanent*), while in the case of the National Liberals (PNL) it is called the 'National Political Bureau' (*Biroul Național Politic*). The number of members comprised in such structures varies as well, with the National Liberals (PNL) making room for 32, while the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL), and the Social Democrats (PSD) settle for 22, and respectively 21 (see Table 9).

Table 9. Composition of the Parties' Leadership Forum*

Party	Centre Vice-Presidents		Regional Vice-Presidents		Total
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	8	Rovana Plumb (Labour Minister); Eugen Bejinariu; Dan Şova (Infrastructure and Investment Minister); Nicolae Bănicioiu (Health Minister); Titus Corlăţean (Foreign Affairs Minister); Corina Creţu (MEP); Dan Nica (Energy Minister); Ecaterina Andronescu (MEP)	12	Paul Stănescu (Olt); Olguţa Vasilescu (Craiova); Mircea Duşa (Harghita); Iona Călinoiu (Gorj); Ioan Rus (Cluj); Gabriela Firea (Ilfov); Ion Mocioalca (Caraş-Severin); Mircea Cosma (Prahova); Marian Oprişan (Vrancea); Robert Negoită (Bucureşti, S3); Constantin Niţă (Braşov); Marian Vanghelie (Bucureşti, S5); Gheorghe Nichita (Iaşi)	21
Democratic Liberal Party (PDL)	21	Cătălin Predoiu; Anca Boagiu; Liviu Negoită; Andreea Paul; Dorin Florea; Gheorghe Flutur; Radu F. Alexandru; Roberta Anastase; Alexandru Nazare; Sulfina Barbu; Alin Tise; Ştefan Gheorghe; Raluca Țurcan; Cristina Dobre; Romeo Raicu; Ioan Oltean; Ioan Bălan; Cezar Preda; Bogdan Cantaragiu; Marian Jean Marinescu; Alin Popoviciu	1	Mircea Hava (Oradea)	22
National Liberal Party (PNL)	14	Daniel Chiţoiu; Eugen Nicolăescu; Norica Nicolai; Varujan Vosganian; Puiu Haşotti; Dan Motreanu; Tudor Chiuariu; Ovidiu Silaghi; Florin Alexe; Mihai Stănişoară; Mircea Roşca; Marius Nicoară; Cristian Buican; Marius Obreja	18	Klaus Iohannis (Sibiu); Rareş Mănescu (Bucureşti, S6); Mihai Voicu (Dolj); Marcel Vela (Caraş-Severin); Cristian Adomniţei (Iaşi); Cristian Bîgiu (Buzău); Ilie Bolojan (Oradea); Aristotel Căncescu (Braşov); Ciprian Dobre (Mureş); Radu Filipescu (Călăraşi); Sorin Frunzăverde (Caraş-Severin); Mircea Moloţ (Hunedoara); Marian Petrache (Ilfov); Cornel Popa (Bihor); Nicolae Robu (Timiş); Marius Stan (Galaţi); Romeo Stavarache (Bacău); Florin Turcanu (Botoşani); Horea Uioreanu (Cluj)	32

Source: official party data on websites, last updates in April 2014

*Analysis focused on the three major parties

Other internal party structures can also play a role in increasing the influence of certain party members, even if it is more informally. For example, a 'shadow cabinet' system was developed in the PSD with specialised departments (*Departamente*) created under the National Council of the party, to analyse and develop sectorial public policies. While this organizational structure has been largely dismantled, when it was initially created by the former Prime Minister and party leader, Adrian Năstase, it was populated with some of his closest collaborators. The Liberal Democrats (PDL) attempted a similar system of designating 'portfolio specialists' within their organization, as a means to suggest who their nominations would be in a future Cabinet, and once again give them a boost of informal power.

Electoral victories, and strong administrative dominance in the territory (e.g. consecutive terms in office as local elected official) are amongst the elements that consolidate the power of local leaders *vis a vis* the center. Examples include Marian Opreșan (PSD)—4 consecutive terms as Vrancea county council president, or Romeo Stavarache (PNL)—3 consecutive term as mayor of the city of Bacău. Still, there are numerous powerful local party leaders who do not have a seat in this decision-making forum. In contrast, many 'newcomers' have a seat at the table. Such examples would include Olguța Vasilescu (PSD), former mayor of Craiova municipality, or Marian Petrache (PNL), Ilfov county council president. Such examples show the balance that is usually struck between bottom-up (i.e. local party leaders joining the national forum) and top-down (i.e. national leaders that have assumed offices in the territory) nominations.

Not only are the local leaders well represented in the national decision-making bodies in the case of the Social Democrats (PSD), and the National Liberals (PNL), but they are also majoritarian, covering approximately 60% of the vice-presidential positions. If we look at the political offices of the regional vice-presidents of the selected political parties, we find that the vast majority of them are mayors, or county council presidents in the counties where they are organization leaders. In other words, they have been the first hand beneficiaries of the organizational and political capacity they helped build or

support. This is an obvious element of electoral success, and a partial explanation of the incumbency effects that the political leader holding a public office will automatically develop; thus, strengthening its political organization, and reinforcing its chances of reelection.

The distribution of seats in these party leadership bodies is structured after the 2012 electoral cycle, which brought the union of Social Democrats (PSD), and National Liberals (PNL) to power, by ousting the Democratic Liberals (PDL). As such, one reasonable explanation for the majoritarian predominance of central politicians in the Permanent National Bureau of the PDL is that it does not have to govern, or win elections, with the help of local party leaders, as they no longer hold a significant share of the local elected offices, since the local elections of 2012.

Thus, beyond the strategic organizational tendencies of each political party, it is mostly the control of an elected public office that makes a political leader both semi-autonomous in terms of clientelistic resources (i.e. controls public resources through his own position), and subsequently influential with regards to the party leadership. Still, it is not an automatic condition to have representation in the national forums, as many powerful local leaders, with consecutive terms in office, and a stronghold over public resources can still be marginalized.

Such examples would include Radu Mazăre (former Mayor of Constanța) (PSD), or Tudor Pendiuc (former Mayor of Pitești) (PSD). As many other strong local leaders disenchanted with their relative power within the party, the latter ran in the 2016 elections as an independent, and lost to the PSD candidate. This example suggests that the local networks are hard to transfer outside the label of the party, even when they are managed by local bosses.

A first explanation for the exclusion of notable local leaders from central party leadership is intra-party patronage networks³⁶. When the leader of one of the main political parties changes (e.g. Victor Ponta took over the

³⁶ based on interviews with party officials, conducted between 2011 and 2014

PSD presidency from Mircea Geoană in 2011), the leadership forum will change subsequently. The leadership forum is essentially ‘nothing more than the leader’s camarilla’³⁷.

Another explanation of why certain powerful local leaders become marginalized is that they have been sullied by corruption allegations and investigations. The interesting part of such explanations is that the official prosecutions on their corruption deeds only came after they were marginalized from the party leadership (e.g. Radu Mazăre). It is therefore plausible to suspect that the party leaders knew about the local bosses exposure beforehand. In their desire to become increasingly more powerful within the party, many of the local bosses, from all the three major parties, created an ‘overload’ of the clientelistic system, dilapidating local public resources at an increasingly unsustainable pace. As the final chapter of the thesis will show, both the mechanisms for doing so, as well as the actors driving such spoliation at the local level can become liabilities to their party when they engage the clientelistic instruments for personal benefit. Merely excluding them from the party leadership is obviously a poor solution, but it can be regarded as a first step in an attempt to take distance from potential, and sometimes actual criminal offenders. Even worse from the party’s point of view, such disavowed brokers fail to comply with the goal of the clientelistic system: reinforcing the organization.

The importance of becoming part of the leadership team of a political party has much to do with becoming a semi-autonomous patron. As such, when a local party leader becomes a part of the national decision-making body he can develop his territorial base and political power not only by distributing public resources, but also by advancing the career of its clients. On one hand, patronage can be deployed with regards to appointed public offices, including those of civil servants (see Chapter 4 and 5). On the other hand, a political patron can much more easily deploy protection with regards to the political careers of its clients, specifically by supporting their nomination.

³⁷ Radu Magdin, political analyst and advisor to the Prime Minister (2014-2015), interview with the author, 6.10.2014

3.2.3. Electoral Candidate Selection

One of the elements that can be most informative on the issue of intra-party patronage, or how the power relations form within party organizations, is the renomination rate of candidates. Taking into account existing computations of the renomination rate of Members of Parliament (MPs) candidates (Gherghina 2015), I assess the different strategies of nomination the main Romanian political parties had throughout the past decades. I compare and contrast the renomination indicator for each party, for each legislative election since the fall of the communist regime, and up to 2008, with the electoral shares obtained by those parties. The electoral shares refer to both the number of votes each party obtained in the elections, and the total number of seats each party obtained in the same electoral round.

With every election in Romania, we can find various changes to the process by which parties compete. For example, the first electoral round had only minimal differences between the share of votes, and share of seats in the House of Representatives gained by each party. Subsequently, following legislative changes, the major parties were in an more advantageous position compared to the smaller parliamentary parties, as a marginal votes redistribution system enhanced their share of seats over their electoral performance. Still, in terms of the clientelistic network, the focus of the electoral process remains the same: increasing one's power to promote as many of 'his people' on eligible positions – either directly elected, or redistributed. The same process applies to local councils too.

In terms of the level of the renomination indicator, its yearly value can be explained to a great extent by each party's specificities, in terms of size and electorate, as well as its electoral strategy. While both the PSD and the PDL can be considered successor parties, as they both stream from the initial mammoth—the National Salvation Front (FSN), the latter's electoral performance is much less based on party organization, and territorial presence, as it is on mergers and electoral alliances.

Table 10. Renomination Rates for the Major Romanian Parties and their Electoral Shares (1992-2008)

		PSD	PNL	PDL	UDMR
1992	Renomination Rate	23	n.a.	34	32
	Electoral Share*	34.36%	n.a.	23.77%	8.39%
	Electoral Share**	28.29%	n.a.	20.16%	7.58%
1996	Renomination Rate	25	n.a.	37	40
	Electoral Share*	21.52%	n.a.	30.17%	6.64%
	Electoral Share**	26.53%	n.a.	35.57%	7.29%
2000	Renomination Rate	37	32	42	43
	Electoral Share*	36.61%	6.80%	7.03%	6.80%
	Electoral Share**	44.93%	7.83%	8.99%	7.83%
2004	Renomination Rate	37	36	23	42
	Electoral Share*	36.64%	n.a.	31.26%	6.20%
	Electoral Share**	39.76%	n.a.	33.74%	6.62%
2008	Renomination Rate	47	45	34	39
	Electoral Share*	33.10%	18.60%	32.40%	6.20%
	Electoral Share**	34.41%	19.47%	34.44%	6.59%

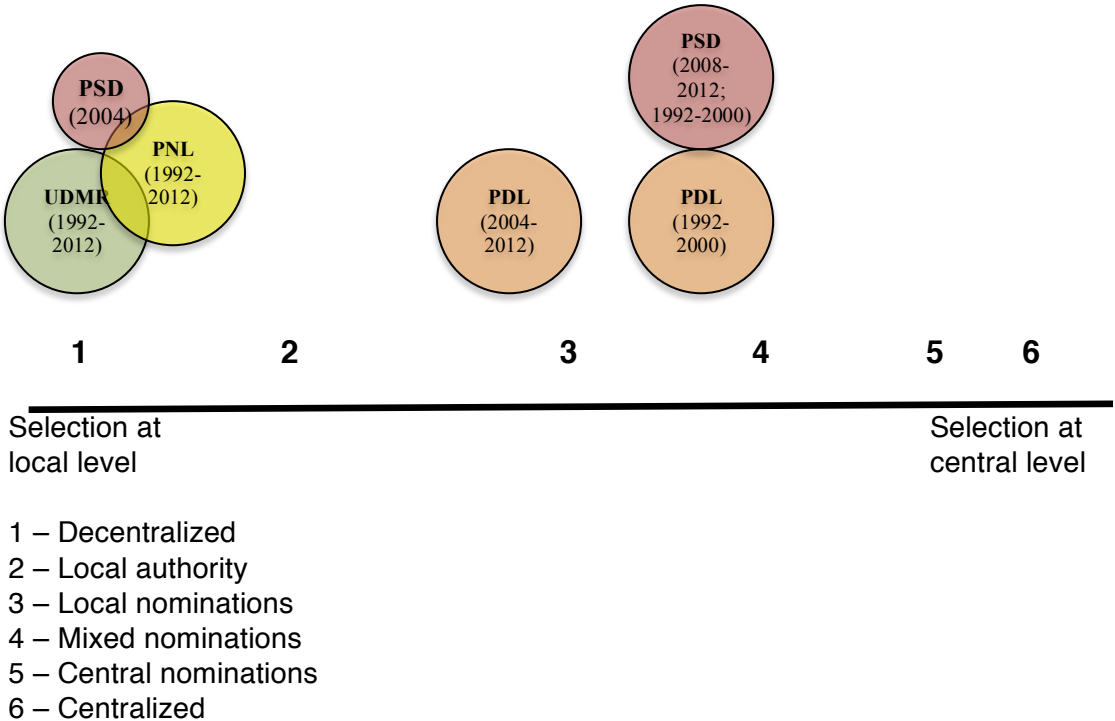
Source: based on Gherghina 2015, and Permanent Electoral Authority (AEP) data

The main coalition partner of the PDL has been the third biggest party in Romania—the PNL. These two parties ran on common lists for the legislative election in Romania in 1992, 1996, 2004, and have merged in the autumn of 2014, under the name of the National Liberal Party (PNL). Under common lists, it is harder to control the renomination process to the same extent. Still, PDL's rate of renomination remains high, with the exception of 2004, when it scored well below the regional average, due to internal power struggles, and divisions within the party leadership. On the smaller party spectrum, we see that the UDMR had a steadily high level of renomination, especially since it has a smaller number of potential candidates, being an ethnic minority party. This strategy proved to go very well with its relatively constant share of the votes, even if it is going through a slightly decreasing tendency lately.

The level of centralization in the decision-making process of candidate selection is telling of the general organizational approach of a political party. Expanding on previous scaling methods of candidate selection (Lundell 2004), Gherghina (2014) is customizing Romanian's political parties' level of

centralization regarding candidate selection. As such, we have a full spectrum of positions, ranging from the decentralized nominations (1), where selection of candidates is done at the local level, to centralized nominations (6), where selection is done by the party leader, or central decision-making organs. The specificity of this approach is that it accounts for the distinction between local nominations (3)—selection takes place at the local level, but the national level has final say over the candidate list, and mixed nominations (4)—internal algorithm of distribution (e.g. ½ or 1/3 of the candidates selected by the local organizations, and the rest by the central organizations).

Figure 7. The Index of Candidate Selection in CEE Political Parties



Sources: *Gheghina 2014*

This internal process of candidate selection is telling of how the organizational specificities of each party might impact on the personnel policies, or patronage endeavors of those parties once they access governmental power. The scale of mixed nominations (4) proves to be a highly relevant organizational structure, especially for the candidate selection and appointment procedures of broad coalitions. Thus, the Social Democrats (PSD) have demonstrated a general predilection for this form of internal candidate selection (see Figure 7), but as this thesis shows, this process has

been largely reproduced in terms of the central appointments after winning elections. More specifically, a certain proportion of candidates, or appointments is controlled, or are the prerogative of local party leaders. This reinforces the strength of local bosses, in terms of their patronage power, but it also links them more tightly to the central organization, as recipients of political favors.

We can observe the changes some of the Romanian parties attempted to do regarding their internal candidate selection procedures (see Figure 7). As such, we see shifts of positions in the case of the Social Democrats, in 2004, towards greater decentralization, which was promptly reversed by the next elections. We also see a more stable change of positioning in the case of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL), which also steered towards local nominations in 2004. In this latter case, the decentralization tendency seems to hold, suggesting there is greater support from the central leadership for such distribution of power in the internal selection procedures.

To connect the candidate selection procedure within the political parties under discussion with the clientelistic structures, we can look at the density level of local intermediaries, and the local power of selection in each case (see Table 9). Thus, we find that those all the statewide parties—Social Democrats (PSD), Democratic Liberals (PDL), and National Liberals (PNL), record a high density of local intermediaries. Inversely the significantly smaller parties of ethnic minority (UDMR), or the Conservative (PC) have a low density of local intermediaries. The density of local intermediaries is a very close reflection of the organizational capacity of each Romanian party. As such, it is easy to assume that organizational strength can be translated into clientelistic network capacity.

Table 11. Density of Local Intermediaries and Power of Candidate Selection in Romanian Political Parties

	Low Density of Local Intermediaries	High Density of Local Intermediaries
Low Local Power of Candidate Selection	UDMR (<i>Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania</i>)	PSD (<i>Social Democratic Party</i>)
High Local Power of Candidate Selection	PC (<i>Conservative Party</i>)	PDL (<i>Democratic Liberal Party</i>) PNL (<i>National Liberal Party</i>)

***Source:** adapted and interpreted by the author based on data from the ‘Project on Democratic Accountability and Citizen-Politician Linkages around the World’ (2013), Duke University³⁸*

Still, as this chapter set out to achieve, it is important to assess to what extent local clientelistic linkages influence the internal balance of power of a political party. In order to do so, we compare the density of local intermediaries with the local power of selection. In other words, I am trying to approximate to what extent the clientelistic activities in the territory can be capitalized as power leverage over the central leadership.

The more local power of candidate selection there is, the more important the local clientelistic networks are to the parties’ survival. Congruent with the previous estimates of centralization (Gheghina 2014), the Social Democrats (PSD) appear to value the least their local intermediaries, from all the three main parties analyzed here. In contrast, the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL), and the National Liberal Party (PNL) appear to be granting a higher candidate selection power to local leaders (see Table 11).

³⁸ expert-survey raw data, at the party level, for Romania, in the DALP dataset. The present analysis on the density of local intermediaries is based on the experts’ evaluation of the number and territorial coverage of political parties’ intermediaries in the field (variable a3).

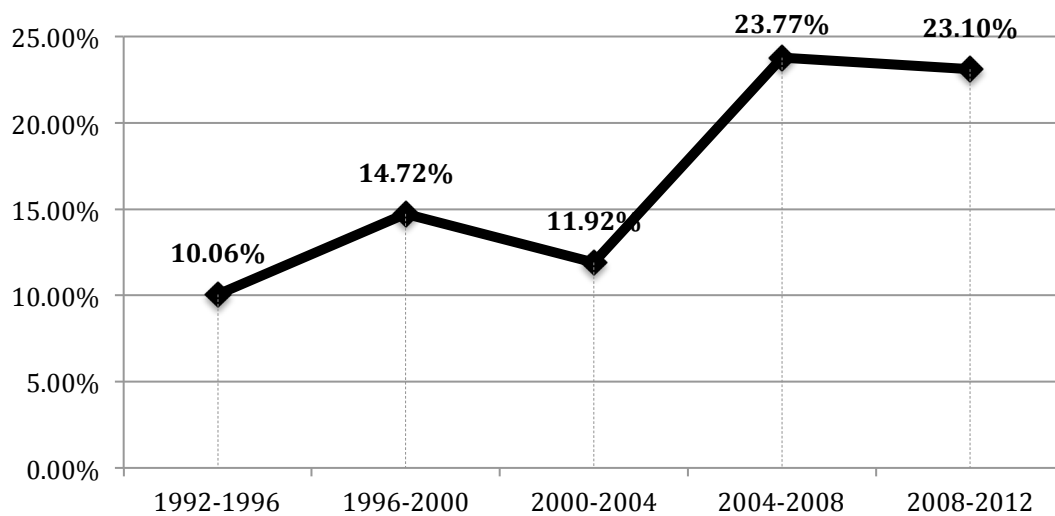
3.2.4. Party Switching

In terms of the subsequent behavior of the nominated candidates, we can see a high degree of instability. In contrast to the expectations of the consolidation theory, the frequency of changes of party affiliation by the members of the Romanian Parliament has not diminished, but doubled. Chiru (2013) shows that throughout the period 1992-2004, the number of party affiliation changes (*traseism politic*) would vary within the interval of 10-15% of the total number of Members of Parliament (MPs).

But, it is since 2004 that almost a quarter of the MPs have had at least one change of party affiliation (Chiru 2013). This trend of diminishing political loyalty is even further enhanced by some of the legislators' habit of party switching multiple times, during the same term in office. Still, at the legislators' level it is seldom the case of them being semi-autonomous patrons of their own patronage networks that they place at the service of a party, as opposed to local public officials. The party switching phenomenon at the legislative level is mostly based on the fact that throughout the past electoral cycles parliamentary majorities were not so much a reflection of the electoral results, as much as that of coalition negotiations. As such, additional MPs bought in with various prerogatives of public office are an easy way into power.

There are two main drivers of party switching in Romania: winning elections, and forming ruling coalitions. In the case of members of Parliament these two drivers converge much more than in the case of local representatives. As such, we can look at the high levels of party switching in Romania as a manifestation of both personal interests—winning a seat in Parliament, or benefitting from appointments to specific Parliamentary Commissions, as well as a proactive survival strategy of political parties. This latter aspect is directly linked to patronage and clientelistic exchange mechanisms, as it is mostly through them that elected MPs are usually convinced to change their party affiliation. The degree of autonomy of Romanian MPs vis-à-vis their local party boss is generally relatively low within major parties, as it is the organizational infrastructure of the local leader that pushes up their winning chances.

Figure 8. Parliamentary Party Switching in Romania per Legislative Term (1992-2012)



Source: Chiru (2013)

Still, notable exceptions of high autonomy are found in the case of the numerous MPs that “buy their way into Parliament”³⁹. These are candidates that either finance their own campaigns, even if they candidate within one of the major parties, or run under the umbrella of smaller popular, or personalistic driven parties (e.g. PPDD). In the first case, local leaders might allow such self-funded candidates if they do not have the organizational strength (i.e. resources, manpower), or if the electoral victory margin is slim. In the second case, the entire purpose of these top-down, barely formed parties is to recruit new leaders, with financial strength, and electoral ambitions. Such politicians might more often than not be motivated by the legal cover of immunity granted to MPs in Romania, or by the objective of tapping into the informal linkage systems covered by the present research project—“being an MP is not much in terms of power, but your in the ‘market place’ [i.e. meeting point of business interests, usually connected to public contracts]”⁴⁰. A detailed analysis on the clientelistic mechanisms behind party financing can be found in Chapter 6, in the present thesis.

³⁹ F.G., local campaign manager for the Liberal Democratic Party (PDL), interview with the author 28.10.2014

⁴⁰ B.D., Member of Parliament, interview with the author 25.09.2012

One of the most telling examples of the appetite and dynamics of party switching in Romania is the quasi-experimental situation created by the recent passing of an Emergency Ordinance (*ordonanță de urgență a guvernului*) (OUG). In August 2014, during the Parliamentary break, and in the heat of the campaign preparations for the presidential elections of the fall, Ponta cabinet passed an emergency ordinance (Emergency Ordinance No. 55/2014). According to its provisions, it allowed for a period of 45 days for elected officials, at the local governmental levels (i.e. mayors, deputy mayors, county council president, local and county councilmen), to change their party affiliation, if they wished, without losing their mandate. The current legislation allows for members of Parliament (MPs) to change their affiliation during their term in office, but it is forbidden for local elected officials to do so⁴¹.

The promotional argument behind this decision was the fact that the ruling coalition broke, leaving in power the Social Democratic Party (PSD), and the Conservative Party (PC), and in the opposition its former governing partner—the National Liberal Party (PNL). The coalition of these three parties—the Social Liberal Union (USL), won more than 80% of the total number of elected positions, both at the national, and at the local level, in 2012. Still, the exit from power of the PNL, and the merger with the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) supported the electoral victory of their presidential candidate—Klaus Iohannis, in the fall of 2014. This shift of sides was even more dramatic when coupled with splits from within all major parties: Democratic Liberal Party (PDL)—the Popular Movement Party (PMP), National Liberal Party (PNL)—the Reforming Liberal Party (PLR), and the Social Democratic Party (PSD)—the United Romania Party (PRU). While all of the splits are marginal from the point of view of Parliamentary mandates, they presented further supporting arguments in support of this limited period of freedom of “re-affiliation” at the local governmental level.

The predictable consequences of this “window of opportunity” was a major shifting movements: 1,500 local elected officials changed their party

⁴¹ According to Law 393/2004 regarding the status of local elected officials.

affiliation, out of which the vast majority went to the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD). The drivers for this migration belong both to realm of personal motivations, as well as that of survival strategy on the part of the political party leaders. On one hand, the local public officials (e.g. mayors, councilmen) go to the ruling party in order to get additional benefits (e.g. promotions for members of the family employed in public institution, public contracts through intermediaries).

On the other hand, the ruling political parties are willing to offer additional benefits to newcomers, even when they know these are not necessarily trustworthy, or would create tensions at the level of the local party organizations, with the sole purpose of consolidating their majorities in local forums. This is important especially in the frequently met situation in which the electoral cycle began with a coalition, which broke down along the way—the PSD and PNL won elections in 2012 on common lists, but currently PNL merged with PDL, and the fight for a new majority is led at the local forums, as well as in Parliament.

While the Romanian Constitutional Court currently contests the emergency ordinance, and the party switching may not be after all recognized, there is a remaining powerful proof on the volatility of elected officials in Romania. The party switching elected officials represent less than 10% of the total number of elected officials, but their numbers are still suggestive of the strength of political clientelism in Romania. This is because most of these switching mayors had the objective of securing and expanding their central transfers based on intra-party affiliations with the ruling government. As one interviewee put it: “it is no problem to get all your arrear payments from him [i.e. the Budget Minister], as long as you are red [i.e. the trademark color of the PSD]”⁴². The issue of local governments’ dependency on preferential budgetary transfers from the central government will be further discussed throughout the thesis.

⁴² M. I., employee in a public utility company, interview with the author, 27.10.2014

Coming back to the Parliamentary arena, even if the general level of party switching is telling of the level of relative instability of party organizations, and the openness towards clientelistic exchanges, it is not helping us discern between the organizational specificities of each political party. An analysis for the legislative term 2008-2012⁴³ shows that the Liberal Democrats (PDL) records the highest number of changes of party affiliation—56, followed by the Social Democrats (PSD)—43, and by the National Liberals (PNL) with only 20 MPs. In this assessment, I only considered those that chose to leave each of the major political parties in Romania, and not those that came in. In other words, I looked at outward party switches, because in fact, the destination of most of these MPs' change was still one of these three political parties. The high number of party switches from the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) is telling of its demise in 2012, after a Parliamentary impeachment vote. More than half of the party switchers chose to defect in the days preceding this impeachment vote. Thus, it is highly probable that it was not an ideological shift, but rather an interest driven, clientelistic one.

In contrast, the empirical evidence collected for the present research suggests that for the latest electoral cycles local elected officials shift their political affiliation in a much smaller proportion—an average level of 3% per year. A temporary hike can be associated with a legislative provision (i.e. Emergency Ordinance 55/2014) that was subsequently revoked, which attempted to protect those local elected officials that wanted to change their affiliation. Still, the overall diverging tendencies between national, and local candidates' loyalty towards the political party they represent are consistent with this chapter's assumption that local organizational ties can be stronger than central ones.

One explanation can be that local patronage networks (i.e. mayors, local councilmen, county councilmen) develop a higher loyalty (given personalized bonds), than national ones (i.e. parliamentarians, state secretaries, ministries). Bonds at the local level have been forged over longer

⁴³ <http://www.openpolitics.ro/noutati/homepage/parlamentarii-migreaza-cauze-consecinte-si-explicatii-comparative.html>, last accessed 02.06.2014

periods of time, and party activists at the local level are usually the last remaining relics of a time of professional party politics, while the ones in central government can be more easily suspected of a mercenary mentality. Still, it is hard to empirically prove such expectations due to the fact that the legislation is also more restrictive towards party switching at the local level, than it is at the central level.

Another explanation is that local party leaders enjoy the control of vaster public resources (be they conditional on executive decisions) than MPs or state secretaries. Therefore from an economic perspective, for an MP, switching the party is less costly (from the clientelistic perspective) than for the leader of a Local Government. The resource-conditioning logic is confirmed by the fact that no acting Minister (the only national function that controls more public resources than Local Government leaders) has ever switched parties in Romania.

When looking simultaneously at the candidate selection procedures of the main political parties in Romania, and the stability or loyalty of the party representatives in Parliament, I find that candidate selection at the local levels seems to yield fewer instances of party switching. The change of political affiliation is obviously linked to more contextual factors, than the mere selection procedure, but it seems likely that the stronger the linkages of the local organization are towards legislative candidates, the less likely they will engage in party switching.

3.3. Changing Roles: From Local Brokers to Political Patrons in the Romanian Clientelistic Networks

The analysis of various traits of Romanian political parties—from their evolution to their internal distribution of power, has been a useful contextualization exercise for the assessment of the clientelistic mechanisms that firstly take form within party organizations. This research project aims to uncover the emergence of such informal linkage systems, and how they spread throughout the public administration. Thus, I attempt to pinpoint the

structural elements of the incipient phases of clientelistic strategies emanating from within the party organizations.

One of these very important structural elements is the people that comprise the clientelistic pyramid of the distributing public goods and benefits. In much of the literature that covers contemporary incidences of clientelism, we find this hierarchical structure that is presided over by one or more party leaders, and reaches the clients (i.e. voters) in a cascade like system of mediation through intermediary layers of political brokers. This perspective is congruent with the characteristics of a nationwide party territorial organization. In the Romanian case study we find reminiscences of a mass-party in the case of the Social Democratic (PSD) successor party, and elements of catch-all party organizational approach in the case of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL).

Still, while clientelistic linkages can be traced to all of the major Romanian parties, we have very weak evidence on the type of hierarchical system described above—most notably found in Latin American, and South European new democracies. If we were to stop at this fractured exchange system within the party organizations, we might have to infer that clientelism is not a frequent, or well developed phenomenon in the Romanian case study. This is not the case.

The empirical evidence from the in-depth analysis of the Romanian case study shows how the internal balance of power of the nationwide parties is also a component of the form and size of clientelistic mechanisms. Furthermore, the reach of these informal linkage systems is also shaped by the administrative powers gained, and retained over multiple electoral cycles, by local party leaders. As such, we find a much more significant share of functions and attributions at the local government level, in this case study, than in the case of most of the other post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. This increase of administrative prerogatives, based partially on convergence with the EU principles of multi-level governance (MLG), and the leftist cabinet of Adrian Nastase's administrative reform intended to

reinforce the local organizations of the PSD, has lead to a growing strength of local officials starting with 2000.

After the electoral reform of 2008⁴⁴, Mihail Chiru finds that there was a „general move towards more local patronage-oriented recruitment, determined by the importance in this process of local party officials (presidents of county councils and mayors) as well as of private sponsors” (2010:4). As mentioned before, most of the institutional and legislative reforms in CEE have been developed by parties in office, according to their own survival interests. Cartel parties in Romania managed to develop a territorial presence through clientelistic exchanges. Therefore pushed for such an electoral reform that was placing an emphasis on their local organizations. Furthermore, these local organizations have been fuelled with central budgetary transfers (see Chapter 5) and as such were now expected to foot the electoral bill, or at least share the burden—parties „chose to delegate much of the campaigning costs” at that time (Chiru 2010:1).

As a consequence, we see a dual clientelistic system in Romania: one emanating from the central government, fueled by centrally controlled resources and prerogatives (via party-state interpenetration), and one emanating from the local government level, fueled by locally controlled resources and prerogatives. This dual patronage is the solution to the decreasing mass mobilization capacity of political parties, as local leaders take increasingly bigger responsibilities in ensuring electoral victories in their constituencies (for both local and national elections).

This is not to say that every local leader can turn from being a broker within the clientelistic pyramid of its own party, into a semi-autonomous political patron. The process is much more nuanced, as it is an evolutionary process that involves a self-enforcing gradual spiral of accumulating both administrative powers, and political powers within the party (e.g. becoming a member of the leadership forums of the political party). More importantly, the

⁴⁴ „Shifting from a complex proportional representation system based on county-level party lists to a complex uninominal system in which each district for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate elects one representative” (Marian and King 2010)

relative positioning in the clientelistic pyramid is very much based on the consolidation of any party leader in office—the number of mandates. The more a local leaders, or a national leader, stays in power, the more likely it is that she or he will be able to control effectively the necessary resources to develop one's own informal exchange networks.

In general, the central government remains the principal patron in the clientelistic linkage system, as it is through the process of cartelization that continuous access to public resources is granted to clientelistic channels of informal distribution. Furthermore, in the case of ruling parties, the party leader and prime-minister tended to be the same person. As such, the concentration of power over the state (and implicitly its resources) is clearly traceable to the party leader and close collaborators.

As will be further discussed in the other chapters of this thesis, clientelism employs various distributional schemes—from public employment, to development projects, or even discretionary capital transfers. This system works with the cooperation of local political elites that have also managed to secure elected official positions. From the national party leadership point of view, there are advantages and disadvantages to this rising prominence of local party bosses.

One of advantages is that they take upon themselves the organizational efforts of setting up the clientelistic exchanges and patronage networks. This is not only significant in terms of time and effort, but also in terms of exposure. As many of the informal exchanges on which clientelistic systems are founded are based on infringements of the legislation, the political patrons who use public resources in this sense are usually liable in the face of the law. In this sense, the more emancipated a local clientelistic system is, the more responsibility falls on the local party representative, and not the national ones. Also, in a context of political instability, judged by the level of party switching, then the local party leaders have a clear advantage in terms of the effectiveness of clientelistic linkages, given their better selection, and continuous monitoring system, within the smaller territorial organization.

In other words, if clients of local party leaders are more likely to be loyal, and less prone to party switching, and other forms of political desertion, then this is also a better clientelistic exchange for the party as a whole. Thus, from this perspective, not only can local party leaders change their status from political brokers to political patrons, but also they are more likely to be more efficient patrons than central party leaders. The efficiency of the local party patrons is in this case reflected by their enhanced ability to control or monitor their appointments. This line of argument is reflected in the empirical evidence in Romania, but it is also supported by the fundamentals of the clientelistic linkage theory, as Scott initially referenced it as a “dyadic bond” based on trust, between the patron and the client (1972). Therefore, a local patron can have a stronger connection with its protected appointee, than the central party leadership would.

Finally, the emancipation of local party leaders also presents some significant disadvantages. One of the main pitfalls of the clientelistic “subcontracting” system is that the organizational autonomy of local party leaders may allow them to change sides, switching to another party, and bringing his entire machine along (e.g. former county council president of Buzău, Victor Mocanu). Thus, losing a popular figure in the territory might be a big enough blow to the electoral standing of a nationwide party, but losing the organizational machine in the territory is generally fatal in terms of election outcomes. Still, the full transition of an organizational network from one party to the other is hard to achieve, and the local leader has to be at the height of its power, otherwise he becomes a victim of the political machine he helped built (e.g. former mayor of Pitești, Tudor Pendiuc).

Furthermore, as mentioned above, when local party leaders become members of the national party leadership forum they become part of the party patronage decision-making structure, as long as these are informal linkages upheld by the political party. As such, they earn the power to influence appointments and nominations at the national level, not just in their regional base. If a leader of a territorial organization will exert patronage and support one of its clients to a national position (e.g. Member of Parliament), then this

will not only be an extension of clientelistic powers, but also a better deployment, compared to centrally-driven patronage.

Conclusion

This chapter has showed how the main Romanian political parties share a set of common features. Firstly, the main political parties (i.e. PSD, PDL, PNL and even UDMR) are remarkably stable. I assert this based on the low volatility of alternation in the Romanian party system (Powell and Tucker 2014), as well as party-level “extremely low” electoral volatility, in the case of PSD and UDMR (Gherghina 2014). This is the main puzzle of this thesis, as the Romanian party system, like all the others CEE cases has been marked as highly volatile at the beginning of the transitioning period. Secondly, the main Romanian political parties are remarkably effective at combating new entrants, especially on the left wing spectrum which is dominated by the PSD for the entire post-communist period. Thirdly, these parties have engaged in frequent coalitions, across the ideological spectrum.

Such traits of the stability of the Romanian party system (judged mainly on the major parties) are furthermore contrasted in this chapter with the usual indicators of organizational decay or inherent weakness. Firstly, we see the same tendency of diminishing party membership, as in the case of all European political parties. Secondly, there are indicators that the Romanian parties did not have strong roots in society based on ideological positioning, formal party activities or representation of class interests. The poor ideological positioning appears both on the part of the political offer (i.e. main political parties), as well as on the party of the electorate.

Given the remarkably stable party system in Romania, and the presence of similar organizational traits as in Western party systems, it is this thesis argument that the process of cartelization has ensured the electoral success of the parties presented in this chapter. Nevertheless, as opposed to the theoretical prescriptions of the cartel party model, we find that there are no fringe competitors in Romania, and parties do enjoy a extended territorial presence (i.e. no stratarchy).

This chapter therefore also explores how the clientelistic linkages within the party have developed, maintained or integrated local party leaders as agents of systematic clientelistic exchanges. The predictability of the clientelistic exchanges (given continuous access to public resources through cartelization and state capture) has consolidated the local party organizations and local leaders. As such, on one hand, local organizations become key platforms of ensuring electoral victories given the weakening of mass mobilization (through both human and material resources they control). On the other hand, some local leaders have become semi-autonomous patrons of local networks.

Local leaders in Romania could achieve this because: (1) they are elected representatives, not appointed (see Chapter 2 for further comparative details), and (2) successive electoral and administrative reforms have enhanced their control over public resources and electoral role in both local and national elections. Consequently, this quasi-emancipation brings local leaders closer to the party leadership than in the cartel model prescriptions. Nevertheless, given that their positions rely on clientelistic exchanges, and they in turn rely on the continuous access to public resources provided by the Central Government, I find no evidence of challenges to the party leadership. This can also be attributed to the fact that in Romania, the leader of winning parties has always been the appointed leader of the executive concentrating both the political and the administrative power. Clientelism therefore should be seen as a complement to cartelization, as it ensures the partial mobilization of the electorate and the cooperation of local party leaders/territorial organizations.

Chapter 4. Party Patronage and Politicization: Civil Servants as the Linchpin of Clientelistic Linkages

The practice of party patronage in Romania has found its way from the ashes of the communist system to the organizational core of the new democratic political parties. Successor parties have initially relied on inherited networks of former elites. Gradually, given the process of cartelization, all parties in office have developed networks of appointees in the civil service and other public institutions. Through these channels of appointments, governing political parties have fueled their organizations with public resources, in the attempt to ensure continuous electoral success, and to develop their organizations. As gatekeepers of state resources, party line appointees are an invaluable resource for cartel parties. I argue that political appointments in the civil service (especially in Senior Civil Service positions) are the linchpin of clientelistic exchanges.

This chapter will explore in-depth the mechanisms through which Romanian political parties have been penetrating the public institutions and the state apparatus. Through political patronage, different employment and appointment procedures are manipulated to fit the best interests of the political patron—be it a party organization, or a party leader. For party patronage data, I have generated the data for the case study of Romania, based on Kopecky et al' (2012) methodology; it involved an expert survey over nine policy areas. The interviewees were selected based on their public reputation, familiarity with the current institutional processes, and availability; I conducted 37 in-depth interviews⁴⁵ with representatives of the academia, civil service, media, party officials, and private sector representatives.

The first section of this chapter provides evidence on the scope and goals of deploying patronage in the selected case study of Romania. The

⁴⁵ Some of the interviewees for the Party Patronage Index score on Romania are mentioned in the interviews list (see Annex 4) by name, and others who wished to remain anonymous are mentioned by name initials, rank and positions (where even the initials would have been indicative of their identity, I use only the rank and position). All the interviews for the present thesis (not only the Party Patronage Index expert survey) are labeled with the date on which the interview took place.

second section of this chapter looks at the context in which patronage manifests itself. I assess here the structural opportunities and constraints for political appointments in the Romanian civil service. Finally, the third and final section of this chapter focuses on the specific mechanisms of politicization, and the extent to which they fall within or outside the formal procedures.

4.1. Party Patronage in Romania

4.1.1. Perceptions and Figures on Public Employment

There is a continuous debate, in the Romanian public discourse, on the size and expenditures of the Romanian state administration. In 2010, based on the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through the state assistance programme, the salaries of state employees were cut by 25% across the board (Law no. 118/2010). Additionally, all the bonuses and performance rewards were cut, which implied a *de facto* reduction of up to 50% for most public employees.

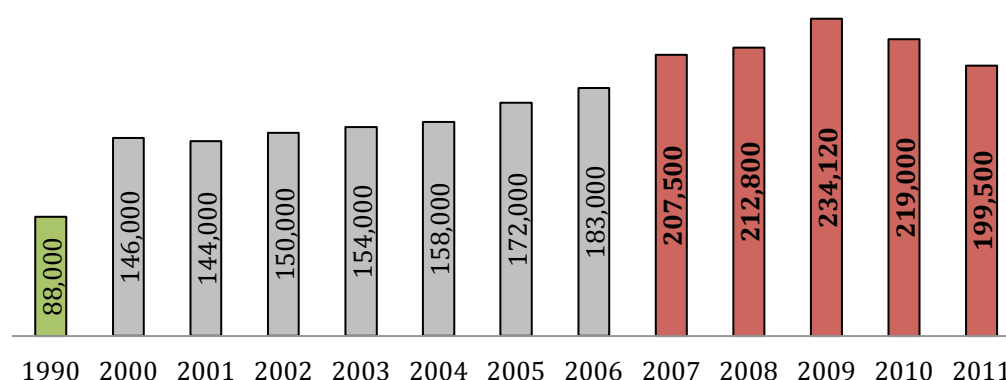
With the lowest salaries in the European Union for many of these categories, the wage cut reform was deeply contentious, and most of the measures were subsequently reversed through judiciary decisions. However disgruntled the targeted employees were, the interesting part of this process was that there was no noticeable wider societal outrage. This apparent lack of social solidarity is explained by the fact that the state apparatus is generally perceived in Romania to be oversized, wasteful, corrupt, as well as discretionary⁴⁶. These perceptions are often reflected by assessments on the wider set of new democracies: “a striking aspect of post-communist state exploitation is the discretionary expansion of state administration” (Grzymala-Busse 2007:133).

Public perceptions have been mostly focused on the size of the state apparatus. The empirical evidence however does not necessarily prove it. Over the past 5 years, the employees in the public administration represent

⁴⁶ According to the Global Competitiveness Reports (2007-2011) compiled by the World Economic Forum, based on expert opinion surveys, Romania scores consistently well below the international average, in such categories as: *diversion of public funds, government favouritism, and wastefulness of public spending*

9% of the total public employment, and only 2-2.5% of total employment in Romania.⁴⁷ The data for civilian state employment⁴⁸ show a total of 998,000 people in 2008, and 1,005,800 people in 2010, while the total state employment⁴⁹ is estimated by the Ministry of Public Finances to include 1,362,463 persons in 2010. In addition, the public sector also includes the personnel of the various non-departmental agencies and commissions (NDACs) and executing institutions, which are autonomous or quasi-autonomous. In this latter category, recent data estimates a total of approx. 400,000 employees. Technical assistance programmes have concluded that Romania 'is not a classic situation of an oversized system, but rather one that is inefficient and expensive'⁵⁰.

Figure 9. Number of Employees in the Romanian Public Administration



Source: National Statistics Institute (INSSE)

Still, with over 1,7 mil. employees in the public sector⁵¹, Romania is positioned amongst the countries with the highest share of public employees of the total labour force⁵². Furthermore, public sector jobs, in various forms, and especially the public administration (see Figure 9), have expanded over the years. Revealing to the present analysis is the exact number of

⁴⁷ according to INSSE data

⁴⁸ including public administration, healthcare and education, but excluding army, police and intelligence personnel

⁴⁹ including public administration, healthcare, education, AND army, police and intelligence personnel

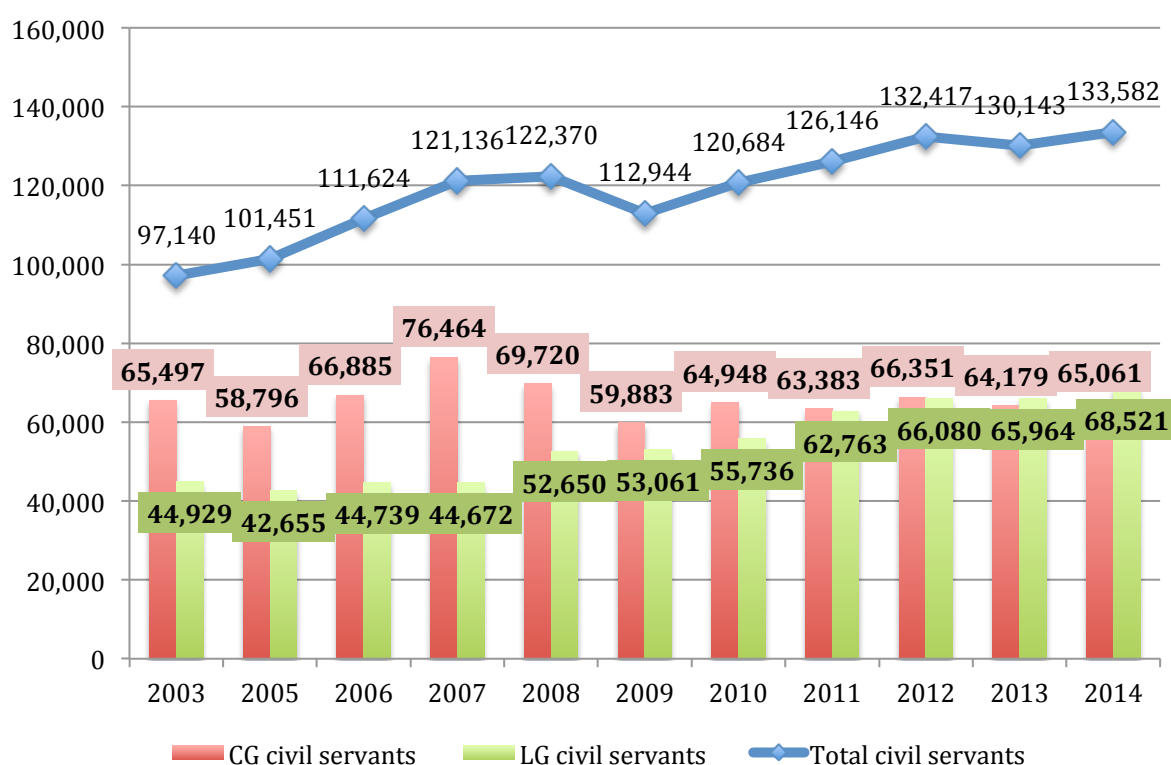
⁵⁰ Arntraud Hartmann, managing director of the World Bank mission in Romania, mediafax, 15.01.2010

⁵¹ UNECE estimates for 2008, 1.723 mil. persons in the Romanian public sector

⁵² Government at a Glance reports, OECD, <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org>

employees in the Romanian public administration is uncertain. While the number of civil servants, and civil service jobs (see Figure 10) is monitored and recorded by the National Agency for Civil Servants (ANFP), the rest of the personnel in public administration—contractual personnel, temporary appointments, transfers from other public institutions etc., are not recorded in a centralized, consistent manner⁵³.

Figure 10. Evolution of the Number of Civil Servants



Source: compiled by the author based on annual reports of the National Agency for Civil Servants (ANFP)

According to the official procedure, the local branches of the National Employment Agency (AJOFM) should register into the centralized digital system (REVISAL) of the Labour Inspection any new employment or dismissal. In practice, this data it is not however systematically correlated with the local governments as employers. According to officials from the Ministry of Finance: “for salaries, we make budgetary transfers based on their necessity estimates, we do not follow how many employees they have, or what is the

⁵³ according to an internal memo of the National Agency for Civil Servants (ANFP)—*Analiză a riscurilor privind administrația publică din România*, 2012

salary of each, as both quantitative quotas on numbers and wages are provided by the legislation”⁵⁴. As such, the head of local governments decide freely on appointments and rewards, as long as they comply with the legislative ceilings (established based on the population levels in each constituency).

This situation is extremely discouraging to public policies approaches towards assembling a coherent personnel policy, or informed analysis. And it is these poorly monitored offices that are the most prolific *reservoir* of politicized appointments. Estimates of the total number of employees in the public administration reflect a steady increase over the last couple of decades, in Romania (see Figure 9).

Consequently, the public expenditures with public administration personnel have grown: 5% of the GDP (2004), 8% of GDP (2008), and 6.7% of GDP (2011). Only the increased expenditures of 2007-2008 can be correlated with actual GDP growth. Furthermore, the data shows that as a general trend the increase of the personnel expenditure at the local level was double the one at the central level. This suggests a decentralization tendency, which is equally reflected in the growing share of local governments’ (LGs) available positions, within the total share of public administration available positions (see Figure 10).

As argued throughout the thesis, the clientelistic strategies vary based on the organizational structure of each ruling party, and on the broader governing context (i.e. whether it is part of a larger or smaller coalition). In 2010-2011 there was a growth of the central state apparatus⁵⁵, doubling its size from 9,656 civil servants in 2010, to 17,845 civil servants in 2011⁵⁶. This strategy was masked by the decrease of territorial offices of the Central Government (i.e. decentralized service). Thus in official records, there is a slightly negative comparative figure for the period. In fact, the predilection in

⁵⁴ Anca Iordache, official in the Ministry of Public Finance, interview with the author 20.05.2015

⁵⁵ state apparatus is here understood to represent the central public administration (CPA) without regional offices

⁵⁶ according to ANFP annual data

this period was to fuel the patronage networks of the party leadership—those that held governmental positions at the time, as opposed to fueling the territorial bases of the organization, or the networks of the local bosses. This trend is congruent with the dominant ruling party’s organizational composition at that time. In contrast to the Social Democrats who have a wide-developed territorial base of clients, the Populists had a much more pronounced centralized cartel organization.

The official policy of all governments since 2000⁵⁷ has been to reduce the size of the Romanian public administration, but in effect, the total number of available positions in the civil service has generally been increased. Formal limitations existed when an official rule of hiring only 15% of the vacated positions⁵⁸ (generally interpreted as 1 enters for 7 that exit the system) was applied in 2009. In practice, these austerity-led quantitative limitations did not have significant consequences on the organizational structure of the Romanian public administration apparatus as the eliminated positions were the ones that were already void and undesirable.

The appeal of civil service in Romania remains generally low, as it is poorly paid, and the available positions are not transparently open for competition: ‘the legislation and the [contest] organization norms have *lacunae*, making the employment contest a mere formality’⁵⁹.

The result is a decreasing occupancy rate of available positions, less than 2 candidates for a position at each employment examination⁶⁰, and a predominantly aged civil service body—almost 40% of civil servants are older than 50⁶¹. It is this opaque environment of quasi-null contestation that is most prolific for patronage and discretionary appointments—‘no one walks up to a job contest from the street’⁶².

⁵⁷ usually included in their government programs

⁵⁸ according to Government’s Emergency Ordinance (O.U.G) 34/2009

⁵⁹ Cristian Botan, governmental advisor, interview with the author 25.01.2013

⁶⁰ according to ANFP annual data

⁶¹ according to an internal memo of the National Agency for Civil Servants (ANAF)—*Analiză a riscurilor privind administrația publică din România*, 2012

⁶² C.P., director general of an executing institution of the Romanian local public administration, interview with the author 07.02.2013

The relatively few applicants to public administration jobs, especially in the Central Government is both a cause, and an effect of the proliferation of political appointments: 'I seriously doubt that candidates for an open position in the board of directors [of a public company] will have the courage to apply, without connections, even if we ensure adequate advertisement, and conduct the selection procedures with full openness and fairness'⁶³.

The circular mechanism starts with the poor attraction to such positions, mostly due to very low wage levels, as set within the framework of austerity-driven legal provisions (Law No 330/2009, and its subsequent modifications). Currently, there is widespread support on the implementation of the unitary wage system (Law No 284/2010), but this is not possible because of the fiscal stability engagements (Law No 69/2010) adopted by the Romanian Government, based on its agreements with the World Bank, IMF, and the European Commission.

In such circumstances, the competent personnel tends to be motivated by informal linkages. It is only after this second phase of the consolidation of informal linkages between political parties, and the public administration that the politicization phenomenon takes off. The more consolidated the party patronage networks are, the more politicized personnel decisions will be. This self-enforcing system of party patronage can be subsequently applied by the cartel parties over successive electoral cycles.

4.1.2. Scope and Functions of Party Patronage

The extent of party patronage in Romania was evaluated based on the expert interview methodology developed by Kopecký et al (2012). The collected evidence shows that Romania records the one of highest score of party patronage in the EU –0.48 (see Table 12). As it is to be expected, the Ministries are generally perceived as the main hubs for political appointments, even though most positions are procedurally outside political parties' reach. In effect, not only do political parties influence appointments at the top levels, but they are equally perceived of doing so at most hierarchical levels. Many of the

⁶³R.C., Ministry official, interview with the author, 16.02.2013

interviews experts think that all public offices are, to a greater or lesser degree, subjected to political patronage.

Table 12. Index of Party Patronage in Romania

Romania	Ministries	NDACs	Executing Institutions	Policy Area Total
Economy	0.83	0.56	0.56	0.65
Finance	0.33	0.44	0.11	0.30
Judiciary	0.33	0.11	0.25	0.23
Media	0.83	0.69	0.56	0.69
Military and Police	0.67	0.44	0.44	0.52
Health Care	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67
Culture and Education	0.50	0.56	0.28	0.44
Foreign Service	0.33	0.22	0.44	0.33
Regional and Local Administration	0.67	0.44	0.44	0.52
Country Total	0.57	0.46	0.42	0.48

Source: expert interviews conducted by the author between December 2012 and February 2013

Variation does exist amongst different public policy sectors, with the finance and judiciary being perceived as the least influenced by the political sphere. Conversely, the economic, media and health care sectors are regarded as the most heavily politicized. Overall, political patronage is relatively widespread in Romania, both in terms of scope, and in term of depth.

The judiciary records the lowest values of the Romanian patronage index. Firstly, because over the past years, a very public anti-corruption campaign has been fought against representatives of all political parties, thus

acquiring a general impression of integrity⁶⁴. Secondly, it has undergone an intensive institutional and procedural reform, under the EU accession and post-accession mechanisms, such as the Mechanism for Control and Verification (MCV). But, the reality is slightly more complex and confusing than the simple success story.

In effect, following persistent and pervasive political pressures, the judiciary protected itself by becoming more and more insulated. This resulted in apparent weaker politicization, but also in consolidating a poor accountability to any outside forces. Thus, the judiciary—like the police, intelligence services, the army, or foreign affairs office, acts under a ‘caste’-like system of staffing⁶⁵. This means that it is extremely hermetic—recruits and promotes only from within its structures, and there are no effective checks and balances. Consequently, the judiciary may be the public sector most resistant to patronage and political pressures, partly because ‘it has started to act like a party itself—magistrates’ party’⁶⁶

An interesting pattern emerges from the experts’ evaluation of patronage in executive institutions, in such areas as culture and education. According to their assessments, the institutions in this policy field are not often vitiated by political patronage. But, when they do fall prey to patronage, politicization touches most or all echelons. Also, while the ministries, and subordinated agencies and commissions (NDACs) are subjected to patronage appointments driven by party interests, executing institutions, such as universities, are better insulated from political appointments, given their autonomous status.

The relatively narrow field of public policy concerning the media is perceived as being successfully sought after by political parties. This study’s findings are consistent with Roper’s assessment: ‘media patronage is a special case because of the importance of the media during and between

⁶⁴ Cristian Ghinea, Minister of European Funding and former director of the Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE) think tank, interview with the author, 08.12.2012

⁶⁵ based on expert’s interviews, 2012-2013

⁶⁶ idem 19

electoral cycles (...), involves the appointment of individuals to the body that oversees the broadcast media, as well as appointments to state run media outlets' (2006:376). In terms of appointments in the cultural and media sectors, these serve mostly electoral goals, through various events and publications that support the patron party or its leaders⁶⁷.

For organizational purposes, patronage is deployed mainly in the field of regional and local administration. Although this policy area does not stand out in particular, in terms of its patronage scores, the values are nevertheless relatively high—0.52. The politicization of these structures is obviously effective in terms of allocating public funds to party strongholds, but also for providing a favourable regulation and implementation, during and in-between elections.

If the objective of patronage is narrowly confined to the value of controlled resources, the political appointments in the economic institutions of the state have a much more pronounced exploitative motivation. For example, with the restructuring of the Government in 2007, the National Liberal Transport Minister Ludovic Orban replaced the democratic liberal one, Radu Berceanu. As a result of this leadership change, in only 1 month, all the managers of the main companies in which the volume of investment is substantial were replaced, 11 in total (Andrei et al 2009). In all state-owned-enterprises in Romania, the discretionary appointments seem to be the norm, as the institutional restrictions remain weak:

“selection procedures for managers and board members often adhere to the letter but not to the spirit of the law. One such example is the dismissal of management and board members upon the arrival of a new minister, only to appoint interim managers and board members while a new lengthy selection procedure is started. The monitoring unit

⁶⁷ Raluca Groseanu, former coordinator of the Public Policy and Partnerships Department, Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile, interview with the author 23.01.2013

within the Ministry of Public Finance lacks proper enforcement tools as line ministers do not feel accountable to this unit.” (Marrez 2015:7)⁶⁸

This shows how certain Ministries have a much more strategic value than the mere number of available positions within their structure. State Owned Companies (SOEs) under the control of certain Ministries are equally important in party patronage for both capitalization and number of employees (Ennsner-Jedenastik 2014:402). Based on this aspect, the following chapter will explore in depth the patronage dynamics at the level of certain key Ministries.

With every political rotation in Romania, the winning party proceeds to fill the array of political appointments with party members, or supporters. Even when some positions are filled with technocrats (i.e. politically uncommitted persons), they still fulfill the promise of agreeable cooperation. This extensive appointment process is commonly referred to, in the sphere of public employees, as “cleaning up”⁶⁹. The problem with the process of *cleaning up* is that it surpasses the already wide range of political appointments, and transgresses into the realm of public sector employments. The various levels of civil servants are not political functions, and as such should not be directly constrained by the electoral cycles because it weakens the institutional capacity.

The use of the expression “cleaning up” (*sa facem curățenie*) is intentionally ironic of the frequent use of it in the anti-corruption discourse. Thus suggesting how the system is not yet inclined to self-regulate, and sees such efforts as ridiculous distractions from the constant pursuit of expanding political influence in all spheres of the public sector, and beyond. The evidence of the present study shows not only how and why the politicization of public office has gradually expanded, but also, how the general perception of it is has. Thus, it is not the incidence of patronage and clientelism that is

⁶⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/country_focus/2015/pdf/cf_vol12_issue1_en.pdf, last accessed 23.08.2016

⁶⁹ An often used Romanian expression describing personnel turnover: “to clean up” (*să facem curățenie*)

eroding Romanian institutions, but also, how such practices are perceived to be the norm, and even in the absence of political pressures, they continue to multiply and regenerate with ever growing financial stakes.

Many experts point out how in recent years, the political cycles create a rotation of personnel, down to the „cleaning lady level”. While *„changing everyone, down to the cleaning lady”* may be just an expression, actual examples start to turn up. One of the interviewees pointed out, that in one highschool in Timișoara, the candidates for the cleaning service job were in fact asked with what party they sympathise⁷⁰.

One of the main functions of placing people in key positions is to influence decisions and implementation procedures at every level. Consequentially, influence peddling has become a widespread practice. In this case, most of the benefits of such exchanges take the form of favors or preferential treatment, and not immediate material gains (i.e. payments). With formal channels of interaction poorly institutionalized in Romania, much of the inter-institutional interactions take the informal road of personal connection. Thus, a key element of influence peddling is the personnel network, usually constructed through patronage.

In exchange for appointments clients are also sometimes willing to pay sums that exceed by far their position’s legal revenues. According to interviewed experts this is because clients expect to be able to gain indirect material gains as well through appointment in key positions of the state structures, or through an elective position (e.g. County Councilmen, MP, Mayor). An investigation of the National Agency for Integrity (ANI) into local and county councils, for the period 2008-2012, revealed that 78 councilmen have a conflict of interests, participating in incompatible economic activities that brought them profits totaling 37,952,350 RON (approx. 8,510,000 €). Romanian MPs also have profits from business interactions with institutions of the state: a survey of the 2008-2012 MPs revealed that 48 out of the total 334

⁷⁰ Răzvan Orășanu, former State Secretary and Head of the Agency of State Assets (AVAS), interview with the author 27.12.2012

deputies, and 24 out of the total 137 senators have contracts, with various public institutions, of over 250 mil. €⁷¹.

Party patronage seems to achieve a greater depth in the local institutional setting than in the central state apparatus. This is especially true for those ruling parties that have a strong regional base, or focus on developing one. Over the past decade, the channeling of public funds to local public administrations has also been more pronounced in these two cases (Volintiru 2013). Thus, regional bases remain effectively controlled by local bosses, empowered by the discriminant resource distribution. The party patronage plays an important role in this situation, as it is through the politically controlled positions in the administrative apparatus that substantial flows of resources can be diverted to the party bases. The flows of resources are equally essential in electoral periods. The distribution pattern towards the electorate is heavily dependent on the level of control of the political patron over the regional party organizations.

Changing institutional leadership, based on political connections, generally involves deeper turnovers as well. Sometimes these are based more on personal, just as much as political connections—“Would you want to work with someone that gives you a dirty look every time you tell them to do something?!”⁷². According to expert interviews, the political and personal connections both play a key role in ensuring a job in the Romanian public institutions. This suggests that while the political umbrella is a necessary factor in making discretionary use of public jobs, it is ultimately the various ranks of party officials, and not just the party organizations, that actually establish the networks, populating them with personal contacts, which in turn do the same towards their subordinates, and so on, and so forth. Thus, the political strategy factor gets diluted the further down the institutional hierarchy you get.

⁷¹ Cât câștigă deputații noștri din contracte cu statul, CursDeGuvernar.ro, Emilia Șercan, 20.01.2012

⁷² N.C., Ministerial official, interview with the author, 18.01.2013

The pivotal element for channeling state resources in the public administration hierarchy is usually embedded in the middle management of the state apparatus. Political agents direct the patronage networks, but it is with the cooperation and contribution of these high ranking bureaucrats that the extractive system takes form. While the title of ‘local baron’⁷³ has long been used in the Romanian public discourse, a newer entry is ‘administration barons’⁷⁴ - persons who occupy leadership positions in the public administration, and who act as gatekeepers to the institution’s prerogatives and resources. While initially political appointments, the “administrative barons” have become useful to successive parties in office, and are currently in a position to both give and receive favors or financial rewards (e.g. well remunerated positions on the Managing Board of State Companies and Agencies).

The strength of such ‘administrative barons’⁷⁵ is that they no longer belong to the party patronage network, and create their own support structures from within the institutions they preside over. If such appointees survive multiple electoral cycles, it becomes harder to control the respective institutions without their support or approval—‘I like him [i.e. director of a executing institution of the Ministry of Internal Affairs], he’s young and smart, but he will not be able to stay long, because he was brought by the previous boss, from another organization, and the system will eject him—he simply does not have the support from below’⁷⁶.

Such gatekeepers of public resources are the product of cartelization, as they were initially placed in the Central Government, as the institutions were first constructed. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in the Romanian Party

⁷³ term describing regional party bosses, who’s firm grip, both organizational and electoral, in the territory, makes them extremely important to the party center leadership; usually attributable to the Social Democratic Party—the larges party organization, but more recently mentioned in relation to the Democratic Liberals, and less often to the National Liberals, as these parties have expanded their territorial presence too; determinant party actors

⁷⁴ Victor Alistar, executive director of Transparency International Romania, interview with the author 14.02.2013

⁷⁵ Victor Alistar, executive director of Transparency International Romania, interview with the author 14.02.2013

⁷⁶ Ion Cuhutencu., official in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, interview with the author, 30.01.2013

System, the party leaders are also occupying executive positions if their party wins elections or joins a ruling coalition, and therefore concentrates both political and administrative power. It is with the help of this direct/formal control that ruling political parties control the established senior officials in the Central Government. Given that the same parties have succeeded to power in the post-communist period (see low alternation electoral volatility in Romania, Table 1), such appointees will continue to support the political cartel that appointed them in the first place.

4.2. Senior Civil Service Positions: Procedural and Legislative Frameworks

The legislative framework of the Romanian civil service has steadily progressed from the vacuum of the communist regime, to a EU compatible level, at the present moment. The most important landmark has been the Law no. 188/1999, which has created the first coordinates for the function of civil servants, followed by a succession of laws and regulations consolidating the architecture of the civil service, and its responsibilities and attributions⁷⁷.

There are however several problems regarding the legislation that informs the activity of civil servants in Romania, starting with the selection and appointment procedures, and ending with the removal from office and other personnel policies. These problems emerge from three aspects of the current legislation: it may be too vague on certain issues, it makes omissions on certain aspects, and most importantly, it is not always implemented.

The first set of problems streams from what the legislation does not specify, or only too vaguely covers. Being pieced together over more than a decade, it does not always provide an encompassing, coherent framework to the everyday activities of civil service. For example, in the interrelated layers

⁷⁷ Legislative highlights on state employment: Law No. 161/2003 regarding measures to ensure transparency of the public functions and business environment, to prevent and sanction corruption; Law No. 571/2004 regarding the protection of the personnel employed in public office; Law No. 215/2001 of the local public administration; Law No. 7.2004 regarding the Code of Conduct of civil servants; Law No. 447/2004 regarding the Code of Conduct of contractual personnel working in public institutions; Law No. 340/2004 regarding the Prefect function and institution; Law No. 330/2009 regarding the standardization of salaries of the personnel paid from public funds;

of the Romanian public administration, the county councils and the prefectures are similarly structured and have overlapping responsibilities (Stan and Zaharia 2011), thus creating the opportunity for each to pick and chose its responsibilities and attributions, according to the various interests they hold.

The very attitudes of Romanian decision-makers seem to be at the core of this hunt for grey area in the legislation—‘Romanians are generally looking for what the law doesn’t specify, as opposed to what the law says’⁷⁸. Additionally, legal interdictions do not always involve automatic sanctions, which is often seen as a free pass by many public officials—‘he [i.e. the mayor] would always ask if there are any sanctions, whenever we pointed out a measure was in contradiction with the law; if there weren’t, he had no problem moving forward with his plans’⁷⁹.

Even if the legislation sets a coherent framework for certain activities, within public institutions, the details of implementation are left to the Organizational and Functional Regulations (*Regulament de Ordine și Funcționare*—ROFs), Internal Organization Regulation (*Regulament de Ordine Interioară*), and other internally devised methodological norms. These are effective means of leaving considerable leeway to each institution’s leadership. In broad terms, leaving the specificities to be detailed at the institutional level is the characteristic of a flexible and efficient legislation, but without proper channels of control and motorization, this flexibility creates opportunities for abuse of power, or manipulating the attributions of public office to serve special interests.

A second problematic aspect is the fact that sometimes the legislation and regulations are circumvented. Politicization of public office persists in Romania through a simple, yet effective measure: changing the institutional architecture. Each time a new political decision-maker—be it mayor, or minister, wants to make political appointments within the civil service, he or she proceed in creating a new institutional structure. Thus, not only they are

⁷⁸ A.D., former Dignitary in Local Government, interview with the author, 14.02.2013

⁷⁹ M.F., local councilmen, interview with the author, 16.01.2013

able to exercise extensive patronage with the new appointments, but also by constantly changing personnel and procedures, creating an immense instability within public institutions.

One of the measures taken to constrain the discretionary nature of appointments and revocations to public office was the Law No. 161/2003 regarding measures meant to ensure the transparency of public office. In effect, certain protective provisions were created. For example, civil servants who won their position through a public contest, act according to a mandate, and cannot be removed from office, without solid grounds, until the specified period expires. But, as mentioned before, in order to circumvent these protection provisions, some ministers have chosen to demolish the existing structures, and then re-create the institutions with a whole set of new positions to be appointed (Andrei et al 2009).

At the local and regional level, mayors, county council presidents, or prefects proceed by changing the institution's organization's chart, and thus creating new jobs, to be filled with new people. Ionita et al (2011) observe a 'way recently identified to shortcut legislation is seen in the proliferation of short-term contract appointments in senior government positions (directors of ministries, heads of agencies, prefects), as such contracts do not require open competition to fill in the office'. In fact, public officials sometimes candidly admit: 'if I open up a job for contest, anyone from the outside can come and apply. I do not open up the job, lest someone I do not like should occupy the position'⁸⁰.

Even though the legislation has attempted to restrain politicization, it has had to allow sufficient flexibility for changing governments to exercise their executive will. Thus, we cannot talk about legislative failures in constraining patronage and politicization of public office, but of an adamant inclination to make political appointments on the part of all post-communist governments. Institutions and departments are rearranged, with the purpose of eluding the legal protections of existing staff.

⁸⁰ Mihai Dima, human resource director of an executing institution of the Romanian local public administration, interview with the author 07.02.2013

Ministries themselves are subjected to cyclical changes. In 2000, after the enforcement of the Civil Servants Law (188/1999), 14 out of 22 Ministries have been changed, leaving more than 6.000 positions to be refilled (Ghinea 2001). This practice persisted, with every new government since changing at least a quarter of its Ministries, by renaming, recreating, or restructuring them—‘I fully expect the new Ministries to be filled with members of the ruling coalition, because that’s just the way it is’⁸¹.

The third, and most important problem of the Romanian legislation regarding civil service is that it is not always implemented. ‘From the legislative point of view we [i.e. Romanians] have all the major security nets! Why aren’t they enforced? Because, under the political pressure, they [i.e. public officials] protect their interests and their position’⁸². ‘We have all the rules and regulations, but no one applies it’⁸³. One of the most telling examples is the legislation regarding the standardized remuneration (Law no. 330/2009, abrogated by Law no. 284/2010). It is in effect since 1st of January 2011, yet not currently, or in the foreseeable future, applicable—‘it will never be applied because those who have obtained higher salaries, will not want to lose them’⁸⁴.

The legislative framework should be upheld by enforcement agencies, and this is where the vulnerability of the system lies. Such institutions, as the National Agency of Civil Servants (ANFP) or the National Integrity Agency (ANI), have been one of most important elements of progress in Romania, but they have not been more successfully insulated from politicization than the institutions they are meant to guard. Thus, once there is political will to politicize certain institutions, the monitoring and enforcement agencies

⁸¹ Victor Adîr, policy advisor, interview with the author, 18.01.2013

⁸² Victor Alistar, executive director of Transparency International Romania, interview with the author 14.02.2013

⁸³ dignitary, interview with the author, 14.02.2013

⁸⁴ Alisa Roman, civil servant in the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author 18.01.2013

themselves fall pray to this practice, 'and no longer serve their purpose as barriers of political discretion'⁸⁵.

Certain senior management replacement in public institutions are taken at any cost to the state budget, as disgruntled civil servants who have been unlawfully replaced, usually win their case in courts. This leads to paradoxical situations where several persons occupy the same office, at the same time. Such cases have been reported by interviewees at all institutional levels, from the ministries—Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economy, to NDACs—Agency for Payments and Intervention for the Agriculture (APIA), down to executing institutions of local governments (LGs), thus denoting the extent of unlawful replacements. As one interviewee put it, 'one signs, one decides, and the other is happy to be paid for not doing anything—one for each party'⁸⁶.

Civil Servants have been dismissed, with vague motivations such as disciplinary offences (*abateri diciplinare*), when the institution could not be restructured and/or renamed, or the organizational chart changed. This occurred usually in the case of decentralized agencies, or executing institutions⁸⁷. When they have been reinstated, extremely tense and inefficient work relations emerged⁸⁸. Other situations include substantial compensations being paid for leaving certain positions available to the party clientele, as in the case of Proprietatea Fund, when former manager received almost half a million euros when leaving the office before term.

According to the current official legislation, there are three categories of senior civil servants: (1) General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries, (2) Prefects and Underprefects, and (3) Governmental Inspectors. These are not very well institutionalized positions, as they have been created or adapted to the current form as a result of the reform pressures from the EU during the accession talks. One of the conditions for the integration of Romania in the

⁸⁵ Victor Alistar, executive director of Transparency International Romania, interview with the author 14.02.2013

⁸⁶ Nicolae Zlotea, president of a regional branch of the state agricultural agency APIA, interview with the author, 18.03.2012

⁸⁷ M.A., senior official in the Ministry of Public Administration, interview with the author, 16.02.2013

⁸⁸ Mariana Popa, former school inspector, interview with the author, 30.01.2013

EU was the depoliticization of the Romanian civil service and the creation of an elite group of civil servants. As such, the category of senior civil servants was introduced in the law.

General secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries in Ministries and Governmental Agencies were already professional civil service positions since 2005. Governmental inspectors became a senior civil service position in 2007, when this position was created. Prefects and Underprefects were previously political representatives of the ruling party—‘loyal party elites were often rewarded with prefectures by the centralized leadership of the Nastase Cabinet’⁸⁹. Since 2007, these too became the third category of senior civil servants.

Senior civil servants are the layer that comes immediately after the political functions of the Romanian Public Administration. Efforts have been made to insulate these functions from political control. One of the methods through which the recruitment process should forgo party patronage is the publicly advertised competition for the appointment. The National Agency of Civil Servants (ANFP) advertises on its website the openings for different positions of General Secretaries or Deputy General Secretaries within the Ministries or Governmental Agencies. These announcements also contain the background requirements to be eligible for these positions. In the case of general secretaries and deputy general secretaries this requirement, according to legal provisions of the Civil Servants Law (188/1999) is usually a 5 years previous activity within the public administration.

In contrast with the implicit aim of such conditions—to ensure a selection of candidates with a professional background, most of these documents⁹⁰ mention the acceptance of an alternative to the experience in the public administration: a full term served as a member of parliament. This is an obvious overlap with the political sphere. A member of parliament, having served a term in office with the support of a certain political party, will remain loyal to that party’s interests even after he or she enters a ‘professional’

⁸⁹ I.M, former prefect, interview with the author, 20.08.2013

⁹⁰ consulted by the author on www.anafp.ro

career path as General Secretary of Deputy General Secretary. Thus, even in the recruitment phase, governing political parties can evade the intended meaning of the legislative reforms of depoliticization.

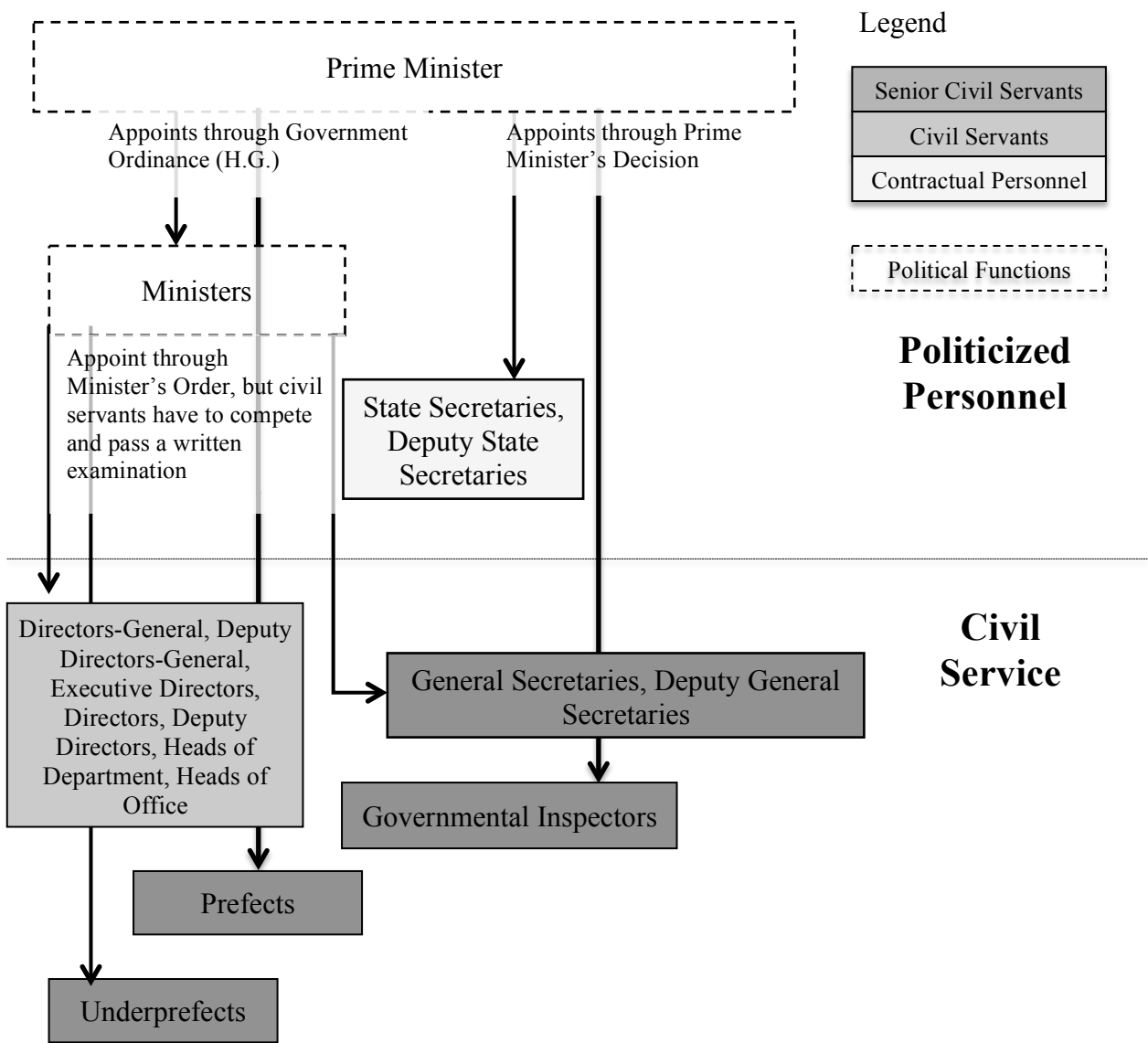
While there have been general revisions of the legislation and functions of civil servants—especially as a result of the integration process, these have failed to create a coherent framework that would effectively constrain politicization. Rather, the functions of senior civil servants have been formally designed outside the political control, while they remain very much imbued with party patronage and party loyalties. Existing studies confirm this tendency, as although ‘the legislations created an appropriate framework for ensuring stability regardless of political related changes (...), after each major political shift after parliamentary or local elections we can witness massive change of civil servants in managerial positions’ (Andrei et al 2010).

Attempts have been made at various stages to reverse even the legislative reform, as in 2009 a proposition for a new law was forwarded to the Parliament, envisaging the possibility of political appointments at the head of state agencies. The Boc (I) Cabinet argued that the heads of the decentralized institutions should be included in the civil service, and as such could be temporarily appointed through prime-ministerial decision. It was passed by the Parliament in early 2010, but later annulled through a decision of the Romanian Constitutional Court (CCR). One of the problematic aspects was the provision to hold the exam for permanent appointment after the prime-ministerial appointment decision, and not before as the Civil Servants Law (188/1999) prescribes. Such a setting would have empowered even further the prime-ministerial decisions on appointments. In the current framework, general secretaries and deputy general secretaries have to pass an appointment exam before they are validated through prime-ministerial decision.

As showed in Figure 11, the appointment system in the Romanian Central Public Administration aims at separating the openly politicized personnel from the civil service layers of employees. In terms of the

management of the central apparatus, the political personnel are either represented by political functions in the Cabinet—Ministries or Prime Minister, or by contractual personnel supporting the Governmental institutions—Ministries and General Secretary. The latter are a form of junior ministers, which are called state secretaries or deputy state secretaries. These secretaries are seen as the team of each Minister and it is not infrequent that they change simultaneously.

Figure 11. Appointment System in the Central Government (CG)



Source: the author

This administrative elite is only partly composed of the senior civil servants—General Secretaries or Deputy General Secretaries. It may also include managing civil servants like General Directors or Executive Directors. In contrast to their procedural powers, they have increasingly adopted a compliant attitude towards the political interests, as a strategy of survival. With a multitude of procedural routes for discretionary appointment, the General Secretary of a Ministry has a much bigger chance to survive if the political leader perceives him as being compliant to political orders⁹¹.

Because of their career pathway—usually within the ministerial bureaucracy, the General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries are the most likely to be co-opted, rather than supported by the party elite. In this sense, many of the interviewed persons in this category refer to a well-known Romanian proverb: ‘the sword will not cut a head that bows’⁹².

The General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries have to pass a public exam to be appointed to a vacant position. Afterwards they are validated through prime-ministerial decision. The political discretion in this case is based on various procedures to circumvent the examination phase (e.g.: temporary appointments), but also on the manipulation of exam conditions (e.g.: not publicly disclosing the date of the examination).

Prefects and Underprefects are an interesting category of senior civil servants, as they were not long ago exclusively politically appointed positions. Legislation on the professionalization of these functions has been drafted at the end of 2004—The Law on the Prefect Institutions (Law No. 340/2004), but it was not until late 2005 that provisions were made for its application.

Since 2007 *de jure*, these functions have been „depoliticized” and the appointees are expected to be professionals who are part of the senior civil servants body. In practice, most of the Prefects and Underprefects are former party members. Their appointment procedures tend to show that the

⁹¹ opinion expressed by multiple interviewees from the Central Public Administrative structure in Romania

⁹² ‘*Capul plecat sabia nu-l taie, dar cu umilință lanțul înconjoară*’—part of a Romanian poem by Dimitrie Bolintineanu, referring to the Romanians troubled relationship with the Ottoman Empire

professionalization reform has failed in creating an actual detachment between the bureaucracy and party networks.

Prefects and Underprefects are the governmental representatives at the local level. Every county has 'an elected council led by a president and a government appointed prefecture led by a prefect' (Stan and Zaharia 2011). The administrative problem is that the council and the prefecture 'are similarly structured and have overlapping responsibilities' (Stan 2003). It is debatable to what degree these senior civil servants are administrative agents, as opposed to politically motivated, ruling party agents. For example, they have the power to contest in Court any decision by an elected representative, which automatically leads to that act being suspended. Recent revision efforts of the Constitution attempt to limit this veto power of the prefects towards local representatives, transferring it to the subsequent judicial decisions.

The appointment procedures of the Prefects and Underprefects differ from the other senior civil servants categories. While the General Secretaries, the Deputy General Secretaries and the Governmental Inspectors are appointed through Prime-ministerial Decision, the Prefects and Underprefects have to be appointed through Governmental Decisions⁹³. This procedure should ensure a lower level of discretionary behaviour, because the entire Cabinet has to agree on the appointments. Through 'political algorithms' ruling coalitions divide these positions amongst themselves, based on each party's economic or electoral interests⁹⁴. We can frequently observe that 'changing political structure of the government caused a massive change in the prefects of the counties' (Andrei et al 2010:18).

The final category of senior civil servants in Romania is that of Governmental Inspectors. As opposed to the other categories that existed even before they were formally labeled as 'senior civil servants', the governmental inspector is a position created within the Governmental apparatus.

⁹³ for Underprefects it is also required the recommendation of the Minister of Internal Affairs

⁹⁴ Dan Baranga, former underprefect of Bucharest and former prefect of Ilfov, interview with the author, 10.08.2013

According to the legislation, its functions and attributions are to be settled by the Prime-Minister at the time of the appointment, or afterwards. In many cases, the task attribution does not happen at all. The Governmental Inspectors are appointed through Prime-Ministerial Decision, and they should have been previously validated as Senior Civil Servants thorough the competence evaluation exam. According to interviewees, the Governmental Inspector position is a sort of ‘purgatory’⁹⁵ for the career pathway of Senior Civil Servants, or even politicians. It has the least formal power within the senior civil servants categories.

Usually, the bigger the organization under the command of a Senior Civil Servant, the more coveted that position is. For Governmental Inspectors this is not the case, as they conduct their activities within the administrative apparatus of the Government. Most of the Governmental Inspectors from the reference period of this study are former Prefects or Underprefects redrawn from office, or former political appointees (e.g. Ministers, State Secretaries).

More importantly, by appointing someone to a position of Governmental Inspector may facilitate the transfer of a Senior Civil Servant, from a regional position—Prefect or Underprefect, to a national position—General Secretary or Deputy General Secretary, and vice versa. This rotation of senior civil service appointments tends to go the way of the coalition dynamics, as where the party leaders go, so do their networks.

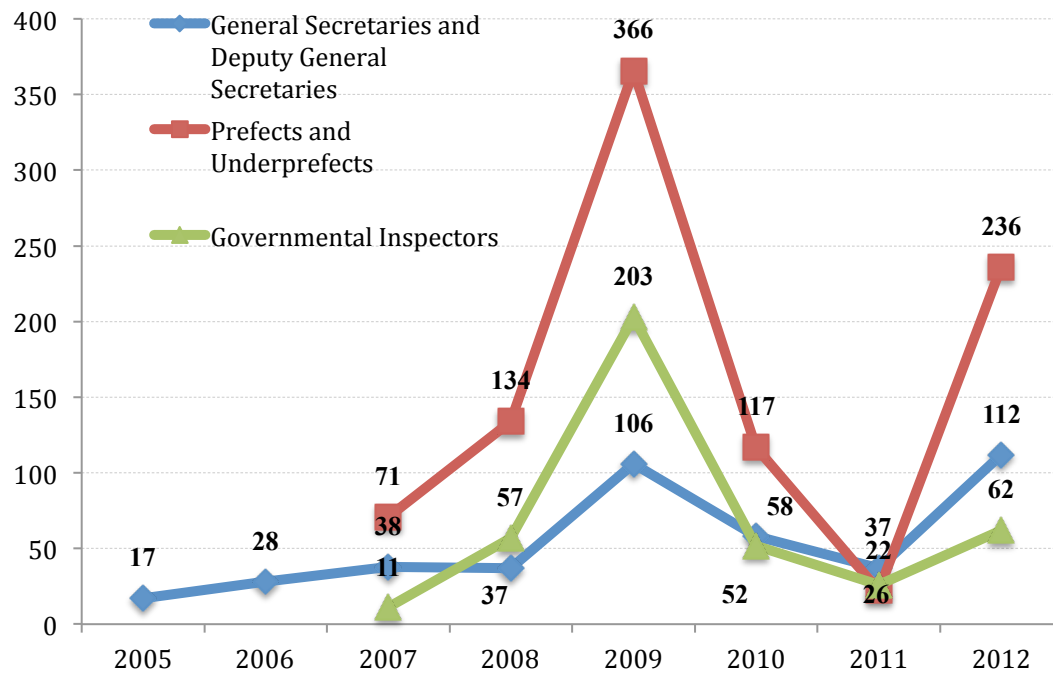
4.3. Mechanisms of Politicization of Senior Civil Servants

This study is generally concerned with the patterns of politicization in the Romanian public administration, and specifically focused on the category of senior civil servants. The first step in analyzing the personnel dynamics of this category is to look at the decisions regarding the three categories of senior civil servants in Romania. As previously explained, the General Secretaries, the Deputy General Secretaries, and the Governmental Inspectors are normally appointed through Prime-Ministerial decision, while the Prefects and Underprefects are normally appointed through Government

⁹⁵ Andrei Popescu, governmental inspector, interview with the author 7.10.2013

Decisions. These decisions can refer to the: appointment, dismissal, transfer, or suspension⁹⁶.

Figure 12. Number of Decisions on Senior Civil Servants in Ministries, Governmental Agencies and Prefectures (2005-2012)



Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial and governmental decisions in the period 2005-2012

Analyzing the dynamic of the decisions on senior civil service positions shows the level of change or instability in a certain period. As it is shown in Figure 12, the increasingly high number of decisions for every category of civil servants is telling of at least a discretionary behavior in appointments, if not necessarily politicization. This study asserts that in the absence of a discernable pattern of appointments that would benefit the ruling party organization, or the party leaders, we can only discuss the discretionary behavior of the government and not the politicization of the entire system.

Still, such patterns become obvious when we compare the dynamics of changes in these positions with the electoral timeline. One can easily see the highest instability in 2009 when the governing coalition has changed

⁹⁶ In the case of Governmental Inspectors, the Prime-Ministerial Decisions on this topic can also refer to the task allocation of the appointee.

completely. The appointment patterns of each cabinet will be discussed in greater depth in the following section, but we can already deduce that the senior civil service in Romania is going through the most drastic changes in the year following the change of the governing coalition. These tendencies support the hypothesis that the central administration is heavily politicized in this country.

The highest number of decisions regards the senior civil service positions of Prefects and Underprefects. The high volatility of these positions is explainable through the perspective of their previous political regime. Although these have become senior civil service appointments, the appointees continue to be *de facto* political agents. In many cases the Prefects and Underprefects are former party members, even local party leaders, who renounced their membership. This procedural requirement is no substitute for an actual disentanglement between the political and administrative spheres.

The available number of appointments is comparable between the Prefects, and Underprefects, on one hand, and General Secretaries, and Deputy General Secretaries, on the other hand. There are 42 Prefectures in Romania, ruled by one Prefect and two Underprefects. The appointments of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries can be for Ministries, and State Agencies. The available number of Governmental Inspector would normally be lower, but it has soared to 69 in 2012, according to official records.

As showed in Table 13, in 2009, an average of 8.7 changes were made in every Prefecture in Romania. Another spike is recorded in 2012, when 5.6 changes occurred in each Prefecture. Official records show that between 2007-2010, 140 persons were appointed as Prefect, which means an average replacement rate of 3.3 persons per position, or an average survival in office of only 18 months (Munteanu 2010). In the case of Underprefects we see a similar pattern of instability, as 200 persons were appointed in these positions,

meaning an average survival in office of 2 years, which shows a slightly more stable situation than for Prefects (Munteanu 2010).

Table 13. Average Yearly Changes in Romanian Prefectures (2007-2012)

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1.6	3.2	8.7	2.6	0.5	5.6

Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of governmental decisions in the period 2007-2012

One of the main indicators of politicization is whether the appointment of a senior civil servant is a permanent one, or a temporary one. A permanent appointment would require the candidates to pass through all legal procedures of evaluation and competition, whereas the temporary appointments are made by political executive decisions. In 2005, the Deputy General Secretaries were permanently appointed in most cases—71% of total decisions on Deputy General Secretaries. This shows that there is a much greater inclination towards continuity and stability at the level of Deputy General Secretaries, than in the case of General Secretaries (see Table 14). Such a pattern can be seen for Prefects and Underprefects too, as was previously mentioned. The appointment procedures suggest a focus on ensuring compliance at the senior level (i.e. Prefects or General Secretaries), leaving the administrative structures beneath to function with continuity.

One of the reasons temporary appointments have become more and more numerous throughout recent years is that they help patronage networks elude the increasingly difficult and transparent requirements to occupy a civil service position: public announcement of the vacancy, competence test, public competition etc. Senior civil servants are required to pass a general exam to be certified as such. When a person is temporarily appointed to a senior civil service position, it is not required to pass the exam. They just have to fulfill the job requirements in terms of experience in civil service or studies. In other words, in such situations, somebody who is not necessarily a senior civil servant himself occupies a senior civil service position. Thus, the

candidate pool is effectively opened up to most of the patronage network of a political party, with work experience in the field of public administration.

Table 14. Permanent Appointments of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (2005-2012)

	General secretaries	Percentage of total decisions on general secretaries	Deputy general secretaries	Percentage of total decisions on deputy general secretaries
2005	4	36%	5	71%
2006	10	45%	1	17%
2007	8	36%	5	31%
2008	5	20%	5	42%
2009	17	27%	8	19%
2010	9	26%	0	0%
2011	0	0%	0	0%
2012	1	1%	1	2%

Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial in the period 2005-2012

The temporary appointments also ensure the loyalty of the appointees, in an increasingly more volatile political and administrative environment—‘you never know what might happen; change of Minister, change of Government, restructuring of the institution, fusion with another department—all have happened in recent years every few months and those making long term career plans have been mostly left for a fool’⁹⁷. The extension of temporary appointments has to be made every 6 months, and as such the appointee is highly motivated to accommodate any requirements from his patron.

With the increasing frequency of sanctions applied by the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) or the National Audit Court (CCR) make many wary of assuming positions of high responsibility. From the senior civil service categories, the General Secretaries are the positions with the most complex set of tasks. As such, appointees are often reluctant to assume office for longer periods of time—‘with difficult positions like this, it’s usually a

⁹⁷ chief of department, Ministry of Development, interview with the author, 7.10.2013

temporary appointment, as you're not willing to assume full responsibility for all that is going on'⁹⁸.

Table 15. Temporary Appointments of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (2005-2012)

	Number of temporary appointments	Percentage of total appointments	Percentage of total decisions
2005	4	29%	22%
2006	11	48%	39%
2007	10	38%	26%
2008	15	54%	41%
2009	25	49%	24%
2010	11	35%	19%
2011	20	100%	54%
2012	54	92%	48%

Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial decisions in the period 2005-2012

As showed in Table 15, the temporary appointments for General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries have risen sharply in 2011 and 2012. The contextual explanation for this is the freeze on employment in the public sector implemented by the Boc (II) cabinet, in late 2010. This meant that no new appointments could be made. This did not however exclude transfers, temporary appointments, or application of professional mobility. The figures for 2011 show the complete absence of permanent appointments in that year. The public sector gradually opened up, especially in the second half of 2012, after the change of government. This explains the slightly lower figure of 92% temporary appointments in this category of senior civil servants, for the following year.

The use of temporary appointments in the case of Prefects and Underprefects follows a similar trend, as in the studied period we witness an increase of temporary appointments over permanent ones. The temporary appointment of a Prefect or Underprefect has more to do with the desire to control the appointee, than with procedural restrictions, as no open

⁹⁸ Radu Chiurtu, temporary appointed general secretary of the Ministry of Economics, interview with the author 6.12.2012

competition is necessary for these nominations. Temporary appointments also allow for persons who are not civil servants to occupy these positions, which might prove useful for political appointments.

The mobility of civil servants is another legislative provision used to construct and reinforce a patronage network within the Romanian civil service. The premise for the creation of the category of civil servants was to construct a category of specialized personnel, whose career pathways will be bound to the available civil service position. Only such accredited professionals would normally fill senior civil service positions. In this sense, the mobility provision allows for transfers from one hierarchically similar position to another, considering them all to be administrative functions, and as such largely interchangeable.

From the human resource perspective, a moderate mobility of personnel would add to the professional competence of the individual, through diverse work experiences, and would also prevent the institutionalization of a patronage system within public institutions. In contrast, when the level of this mobility becomes too high, the risk is of institutional instability and procedural inefficiency.

Table 16 shows the average survival period in office, based on a survey of more than 460 public administration employees. What the data obtained from this survey demonstrates is that there is a higher instability at the level of Local Governments than at the level of the Central Government. Moreover, with a civil service in which almost 40% of the employees are over 50⁹⁹, the average years of continuity are relatively low.

When turning to the specific situation of senior civil servants we can discern a growing pattern of mobility in these appointments, over the studied period. In table we show an analysis of the number of appointments through mobility, compared to the total decisions on the function. We look solely at the senior civil service position of Governmental Inspectors because through legal

⁹⁹ according to an internal memo of the National Agency for Civil Servants (ANAF)—*Analiză a riscurilor privind administrația publică din România*, 2012

provisions, it is only to and from this function that a senior civil servant can be transferred to another senior civil service position¹⁰⁰. This is the reason why we see a sudden increase from no transfers at all in 2007, to 40% appointment through the mobility provision. The gradual yearly increase of the transfer culminates with more than 61% such appointments out of the total in 2012. This is a situation where politicization is not based on personnel policies, but rather of excessive use of prerogatives.

Table 16. Mobility of the Romanian Civil Servants

	Average years worked in Public Administration	Average years worked in the same institution	Average years worked in the current job	Average years worked under the same supervisor
Central Government	9.4	8.1	6.1	4.4
Local Government	8.6	7.1	4.2	2.8

Sources: adapted by the author from the data collected in Andrei et al 2010

The mobility of senior civil servants is closely intertwined with the position of Governmental Inspector. The reason for this is that the legislation only permits the application of the provision on professional mobility (*aplicarea mobilității profesionale*) only from or to this senior service position. In other words, it is used to circumvent the fact that a government can not permanently appoint a person from the central administration to the regional administrations directly — ‘you cannot appoint a secretary general as prefect in Dolj, unless you pass him through the governmental inspector position first’¹⁰¹.

¹⁰⁰ Governmental Decision on the Organization and Career Development of Civil Servants (No 611/2008).

¹⁰¹ Radu Chiurtu, former general secretary of the Ministry of Economics, interview with the author, 5.11.2013

Inversely, the same applies to the appointment of regional senior civil servants (Prefects or Underprefects), who sometimes follow local leaders appointed as Ministers, to the central administrative apparatus.

Table 17. Mobility of Senior Civil Servants (to and from the position of Governmental Inspector)

	Mobility or transfer appointments	Percentage of total Decisions	Total decisions
2007	0	0%	11
2008	23	40%	57
2009	92	45%	203
2010	20	38%	52
2011	13	50%	26
2012	38	61%	62

Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial in the period 2007-2012

While the mobility of senior civil servants, as much as that of civil servants in general, is designed to further the development of these professionals, it is also used to vacate coveted positions. The transfer from a position of Prefect or Underprefect, of General Secretary or Deputy General Secretary, to a position as Governmental Inspector is widely seen as a step down in terms of power and privilege. Because senior civil servants can not be fired without proper cause—the Court ruled in their favour every time, and imposes reinstatement (e.g. General Secretary Gheorghe Pleșa, 2007)¹⁰², a transfer is the only way to vacate their position. Thus, ‘from a vehicle of modernization and efficiency, mobility is currently an elegant means to remove civil servants from their appointments’ (Munteanu 2010: 183). The alternative is a transfer to a position that the acting Prefects or Underprefect

¹⁰² When the appointment decision references „reintegration” it means the appointment is forced through a legal decision of the national High Court of Cassation and Justice (*Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție*). Senior civil servants who feel they have been unlawfully dismissed starting using this leverage since 2007, when the first general secretary—Gheorghe Pleșa, was restored due to a court ruling of the Section for Contentious Administrative and Fiscal Business, within the High Court of Cassation and Justice. Still, given the politicized environment, their comeback is usually temporary, mostly used as a leverage to negotiate a better position than was given to them in the first place.

refuses—‘they transfer you from Bucharest to a position in Rădăuți¹⁰³ which you willingly forgo, and you remain on the senior civil servants list, but you no longer have a position’¹⁰⁴.

Based on the available evidence, the employment dynamics in public administration seem to be characterized by an unpredictable and discretionary personnel policy, as well as a lack of transparency in all procedural aspects, such as entry examinations. This has led to a generally negative perception of public institutions, on the part of the population. Augmented by the anecdotal media coverage of various corruption cases, the trust in the civil service system is very low in Romania, despite relatively large efforts to reform the system¹⁰⁵.

It is within the functions of patronage systems that we find elucidating variance. Social Democrats (PSD) are more concerned with increasing the number of available public administration positions within Local Governments while in power. In contrast, Liberal Democrats (PDL), tend to focus on the Central Government structures. They thus achieve two goals: reward loyal supporters, close to the party leadership, and achieve discretionary control over public resources. In this sense, we see that the cartelization process has allowed for a diversification of the utility of employing political patronage. The following chapter will disentangle further inter-party variations in Central Government and the utility of patronage networks as gatekeepers of state resources.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked into the occurrence in Romania of such informal linkages as party patronage and politicization of civil service. I argue that it is the appointment of political clients or coopting the existing appointees that ensures the continuous access to public resources. Through the process of cartelization, ruling political parties have had the opportunity to design the institutional architecture, as well as the regulatory framework to best suit their

¹⁰³ Remote city in north-eastern Romania

¹⁰⁴ former secretary general of a Ministry, interview with the author, 8.10.2013

¹⁰⁵ according to a study regarding corruption in local public administration, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI)

organizational interest. This chapter addresses these aspects by showing the empirical evidence of such instances in the case study of Romania. Given the lack of regulatory barriers to politicization (i.e. permissive or ambiguous legislation) and the extent of the public sector in Romania, party patronage is a widespread phenomena (second highest value in the IPP for European democracies) and a linchpin of the clientelistic provision of goods, services or regulatory favours.

Through the expert survey assessment, this chapter engages with the range of the party patronage phenomenon in Romania: its scope (i.e. how many policy sectors are targeted), and depth (i.e. to what level of the institutional hierarchy is the phenomenon spread). As we can see from a triangulation of data sources (e.g. interviews, appointment decisions, official reports), party patronage is employed throughout various policy sectors (with the heaviest emphasis on economy, health care and media), and is targeting both managing and executive positions in the state apparatus.

Beyond the occurrence of party patronage in the public sector employment, I argue that it is through the specific case of Central Government bureaucratic positions—Senior Civil Servants, that state capture is achieved. If in the case of the broad category of public sector jobs, we could have confounded the reward and control motivations for appointments, in the case of Senior Civil Servants the control motivation is much clearer. Such positions are powerful, as they are the gatekeepers of a vast array of public resources, with the possibility to navigate the legislative provisions in favour of clientelistic distribution. Therefore, in the last section of this chapter, I provide an in-depth investigation into the mechanisms of Senior Civil Service politicization in Romania (i.e. mobility, temporary appointments, transfer of prerogatives).

Chapter 5. Going Down the Rabbit Hole: Appointment Procedures in Selected Ministerial Case Studies

This chapter uses a Rotation Index as a proxy measure of politicization, based on the number of personnel decisions. As a replaced General Secretary or Deputy General Secretary would normally require two decisions: one for appointment, and one for removal, the number of decisions should be double the number of individual appointments. In fact, for some Ministries, the number of decisions is much higher.

I look at the patterns of appointment and dismissal in Senior Civil Service as these are the linchpin of discretionary control over public resources. While cartelization offers ruling political parties the option of politicization, it is the control of such positions that offers in turn the possibility to deploy large-scale, systematic clientelistic exchanges. Assessing the context of such personnel turnover hikes helps us understand the utility of clientelistic networks, as well as the agency of the different political patrons. Between 2005 and 2013, the largest number of changes of Senior Civil Servants occurred in the following Ministries: Internal Affairs and Administration—57 decisions, Environment—47 decisions, and Economy—41 decisions. The explanation for the high turnover levels comes from two practices: cyclical appointments of the same persons, or consecutive sequences of temporary appointments.

This chapter is concerned with two important dynamics: the turnover levels of each Minister (for those Ministries with the highest turnover levels), and the turnover levels of each Cabinet. The empirical data suggests that Ministries with a wide spectrum of resources and regulatory proceedings under their jurisdiction have much higher politicization of appointments (see Table 18). Similarly, Cabinets of wide coalitions tend to accommodate higher turnover levels than narrow ones (see Table 26).

Table 18. Total Number of Senior Civil Service Changes (2005-2013)

Ministry	Nb. of Senior Civil Service Changes	No. of Senior Civil Servants (2013)
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration	57	3
Ministry of Environment	47	2
Ministry of Economy	41	3
Ministry of Education and Research	33	3
Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism	30	3
Ministry of External Affairs	23	2
Ministry of Justice	22	2
Ministry of Transportation	21	2
Ministry of Public Health	16	2
Ministry of Culture	15	2
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	15	2
Ministry of Public Finance	13	2
Ministry of SMEs, Commerce and Business	11	2
Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection	11	2
Ministry of National Defense	11	2
Ministry of Youth and Sport	11	2
Ministry of Communications and Information	8	2
Ministry of European Affairs	7	1

Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial and governmental decisions in the period 2005-2013

As showed in Table 18, the total number of appointments per Ministry suggest frequent changes of Senior Civil Servants. Within the Ministry of Economy, for 7 Ministers in the reference period, 22 General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries were appointed. Out of these, more than half—13, were temporary appointments, and 9 permanent. Given that a Ministry can have one general secretary, and two Deputy General Secretaries, the numbers suggest that on average, every Minister changed the entire senior civil service leadership of the Ministry. Within the Ministry of Environment, for 5 Ministers in the reference period, 30 Senior Civil Servants were appointed, out of which the majority were temporary—27. Similarly, in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, for 10 different Ministers in the reference period, 32 General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries were appointed, out of which the majority were temporary appointments—23.

Table 19. Appointments of Senior Civil Servants in Ministries (2005-2013)

Ministry	Total Number of Appointments	Temporary Appointments	Permanent Appointments
Ministry of Economy	22	13	9
Ministry of Environment	30	27	3
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration	34	25	9

Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial and governmental decisions in the period 2005-2013

Most official representatives of the Romanian public institutions explain the frequent use of temporary appointments and rotation of senior civil service personnel through contextual limitations: restrictions on public employments, budgetary constraints, or legislative provisions on enhancing the personnel

mobility and efficiency.¹⁰⁶ In reality, the mobility provisions ‘pass the control over Senior Civil Servants from the prime-minister to the minister’ through an evasive provision: ‘Mobility of the Senior Civil Servant will be deployed through prime-ministerial decision, at the solicitation of the manager of the public institution under whose command the Senior Civil Servant acts’—in most cases the Minister¹⁰⁷.

For the Ministries with the highest rates of Senior Civil Service personnel turnover, the predominance of temporary appointments is first and foremost explained by the relatively frequent governmental changes. When Ministers do not expect their term to last too long they are inclined to avoid the normal appointment procedure—consisting of an relatively time-consuming open competition, because the personnel changes must occur rapidly. Permanent appointments are ‘made’ as they go along, and competitions tend to ‘be usually won by the temporary appointees...’¹⁰⁸. Additionally, the same person is often the subject of multiple appointments, with the first one or two being temporary, and the final one indefinite or permanent.

The motivation of political leaders to condition as much as they can the activity of senior civil service appointees is congruent with the prescriptions of the political patronage theory. Whether it is in the interest of the party, or their personal interest, Ministers tend to deploy as many control tactics as they can. This level of control surpasses the normal, functional, administrative activity of a civil servant—which is already hierarchically controlled by the Minister, but rather aims at ensuring unquestioning obedience.

A former General Secretary whose career in senior civil service covers the entire democratic period of Romania is convinced of Ministers’ predilection for such appointments: ‘of course you temporarily appoint them because they remain loyal—your man 100%, he is personally obligated to you—he will

¹⁰⁶ From interviews with the author, current Minister of the Environment Rovana Plumb, former Minister of Internal Affairs Ioan Rus, former Minister of Internal Affairs Dan Nica, and former Minister of Internal Affairs Cristian David

¹⁰⁷ Former General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author, 29.01.2014

¹⁰⁸ Nicolae Nemirschi, former Minister of the Environment, interview with the author 06.02.2014

answer to your orders no question asked, and he doesn't have to pass an appointment contest'¹⁰⁹.

Still, even when these appointments are permanent, given the mobility provision of the legislation, they are just as replaceable as the temporary ones—only the procedures differ. Furthermore, some Senior Civil Servants claim they themselves do not want to be permanently appointed quoting multiple interconnected reasons. One former General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy explains that 'these jobs have just become too risky, here (i.e. the Ministry of Economy) it's not a linear task distribution, like in other Ministries, here you have to walk on thin ice—it's just not worth it'¹¹⁰.

Other Senior Civil Servants point to the fact that Ministers have increasingly tended to delegate the key attributions, such as that of *main credit release authority*, to whomever they want—'normally it was the General Secretary that held all administrative powers in the Ministry, now you can very well be left with all the responsibilities, and no attributions. At one point we didn't even know who was the 'main credit release authority' in the Ministry...someone he brought with him (i.e. the acting Minister)'¹¹¹.

5.1. Different Patterns of Personnel Change

The changes in senior civil service personnel have different patterns throughout the institutions studied here. On one hand, the Ministry of Environment presents a somewhat steady distribution of appointments, as can be seen in Figure 13. In this case, the hikes appear in the electoral years 2009, and 2012, when more ministers were changed than in-between elections. This suggests party patronage in senior civil service appointments in the Ministry of Environment. The number of yearly changes taking place in this institution suggests the stability of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries is quite low.

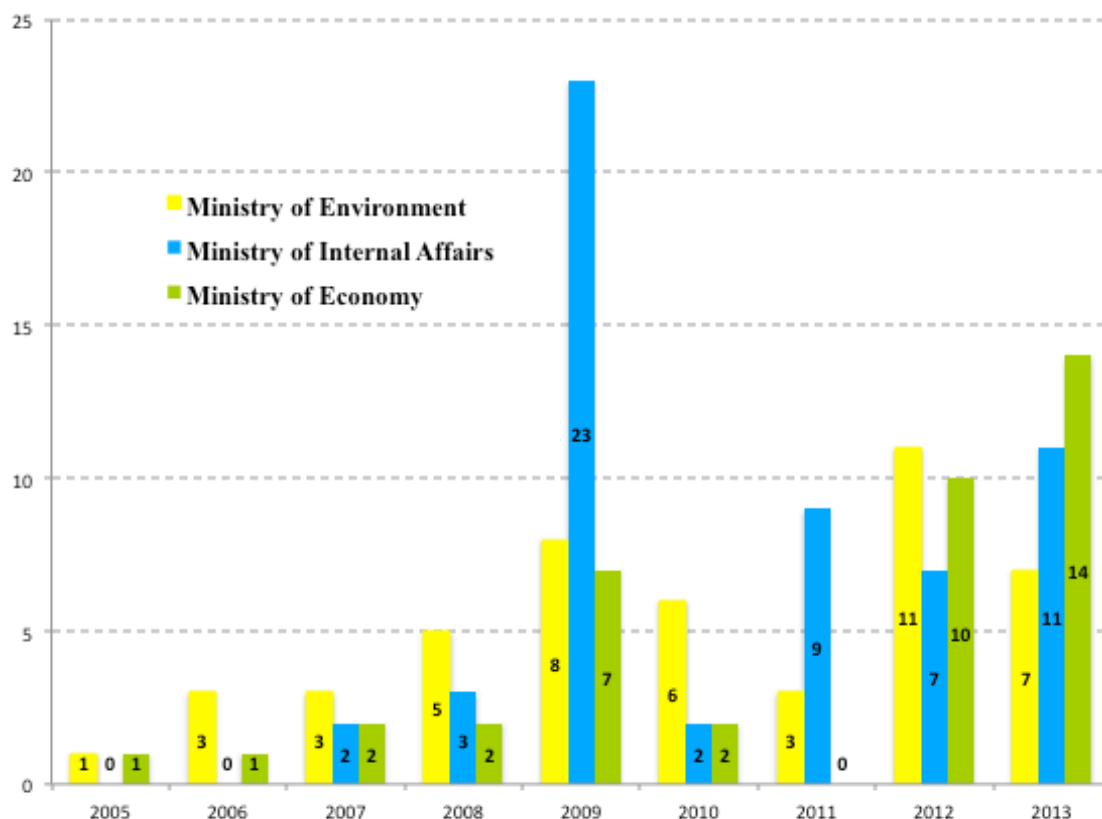
¹⁰⁹ Adrian Radu, former General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author, 06.02.2014

¹¹⁰ Radu Chiurtu, former General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author, 19.01.2014

¹¹¹ former General Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, interview with the author, 06.02.2014

In contrast, for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, as well as in the case of the Ministry of Economy, we see pronounced hikes in certain years, and relatively few changes in the rest of the reference period. The most dramatic hike for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration is recorded in 2009. It was not only an electoral year, but also one of numerous changes in the structure of the governing coalition. Within a total number of 23 prime-ministerial decisions on this ministry's senior civil service positions, 16 were appointments (9 temporary appointments, 6 permanent appointments).

Figure 13. Decisions on General Secretaries and Deputy General in Selected Ministries (2005-2013)



Source: compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial and governmental decisions in the period 2005-2013

The discrepant personnel policy of this institution over the years is especially striking, as in 2013, it comprised two distinct Ministries—one for Internal Affairs, and another one for Administration. Although this situation creates a double number of positions, the decisional pattern is not significantly

changed. The most powerful factor of influence in this case remains the national electoral struggle.

Finally, in the case of the Ministry of Economy, most senior civil service rotations have been recorded in 2012 and 2013. For the rest of the reference period, the Ministry of Economy seems have had much lower turnover levels. In the electoral year 2009, we see in this institution too a surge in personnel decisions, but it is much smaller than in the case of the other ministries.

These different patterns of personnel appointments are a telling demonstration of the small effect general contextual factors play in the politicization of the senior civil service in Romania. If contextual elements (e.g. general elections, budgetary cuts) were at play, as many claim they are, we would have seen a similar trend of appointments throughout various Ministries. Rather, each case is different, with different periods of hikes in rotations, and different predilection for changes over the reference period. This sooner points to the idea that it is the specificities of every Ministry, the internal stakes and processes that contribute to the occasional senior civil service instability. Thus, the analysis will further proceed with an in-depth analysis of each of the three Ministries under discussion.

5.2. The Stakes in Controlling each Ministry

Probably the single most important Ministry, both from the political, and administrative point of view, is the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. As the institution that presides over law enforcement, elections, local public administrations, and a part of the national intelligence services, it has powerful and stable internal hierarchies. It is only partially controlled politically, and most of its personnel is not covered by the Civil Service legislation, but by the Police Status Law, as they are police officers. Based on interview data, it is described as a “caste-like system”. Nevertheless, while it is not as easily politicized as other institutions, the opaque nature of its internal organization provides administrative patrons (i.e. Minister, Prime-Minister) with considerable leeway of appointments from within the existing personnel base (i.e. few outside appointments occur).

This heavy inclination of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration towards the specificities of the Internal Affairs system has led to the recent split of the institutions. In the beginning of 2013, two distinct Ministries emerged: the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI), and the Ministry of Administration and Regional Development (MDRAP). This move has created a much more homogenous area of activity, and institutional procedures.

The newly established Ministry of Administration and Regional Development (MDRAP) creates a new platform of powerful representation of the interests of the local governments (LGs). The Social Democratic Party (PSD) that initiated this institutional split is the party with the largest territorial network, and powerful local leaders. In this sense, it is easy to see the lineage between internal party organizational strategies, and institutional reforms conducted while in power.

For the entire post-communist period, the portfolio of Internal Affairs has seen most changes in its executive: 18 ministers for the total 14 cabinets, and an average term of a little over one year. In the reference period of 2005-2013, the highest turnover of Ministers was recorded, as 10 different persons occupied this position. Furthermore, for the reference period, the average term in office of an Internal Affairs Minister was only 9 months.

Two different typologies of ministers emerge in this case. On one hand we can see the 'fixtures'—political actors generally associated with this portfolio, occupying it for several times, when their party was in power (e.g. Vasile Blaga (PDL), Ioan Rus (PSD)). On the other hand, there are 'incidentals'—political actors of limited notoriety, or with limited political support in this field, occupying the minister chair for not more than a few months, or even days (e.g. Dan Nica (PSD), Gabriel Berca (PDL), or Mircea Duşa (PSD)). For this latter category it was however an important stepping-stone in their subsequent political carriers.

The Rotation Index is based on the compilation of all personnel decisions made by every Minister, holding the Internal Affairs portfolio in the reference period. This index is further developed as the ratio of the number of

personnel decisions of the Minister while in office, and the number of months he or she spent in office. Thus the result is an index of monthly average personnel stability. It is important to mention that it is an overall index of personnel turnover, accounting for both political appointments—State Secretaries and Deputy State Secretaries, as well as Senior Civil Service appointments—General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries.

Based on the data in Table 20, we can see that personnel policies vary in wide extent from Minister to Minister. The 2009 peak of rotations, mentioned in the previous section, is equally reflected in this detailed coverage, as we see in the case of Minister Liviu Dragnea a rotation index of 21. This is the highest value ever recorded, in the reference period, for any Minister. It is telling of the high determination to ensure control over the different echelons of this Ministry in the eve of elections. While in Romania elections are generally perceived to be free and fair (according to opinion polls), the organization of the elections is important mostly because of the territorial presence of party agents.

Table 20. Decisional Patterns in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (2005-2013)

Minister	Vasile Blaga* 12.04 – 04.07	Cristian David 04.07 – 12.08	Liviu Dragnea 01.09 – 02.09	Dan Nica 02.09-09.09	Vasile Blaga 12.09 – 09.10	Traian Igaş 09.10 – 02.12	Gabriel Berca 02.12 – 05.12	Ioan Rus 05.12 – 08.12	Mircea Duşa 08.12 – 12.12	Radu Stroe 12.12 – 04.14
Nb. of Months in Office	27	21	1	8	12	16	2	3	4	13
Rotation Index (Personnel Decisions per Nb. of Months in Office)	0.15	0.67	21.00	2.00	2.17	0.94	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.92
Total Personnel Decisions	4	14	21	16	26	15	6	9	4	25
Percentage of Decisions taken in the first three months of the term	n.a.	42%	n.a.	81%	80%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a	52%
Decisions on General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (Senior Civil Servants)	0	5	8	7	9	13	4	2	1	4
Percentage of decisions on Senior Civil Servants	0%	36%	38%	44%	35%	87%	67%	22%	25%	16%
Decisions on State Secretaries (Political Appointments)	3	7	10	4	15	2	0	5	1	16
Decisions on key** Departments in the Ministry	1	2	3	4	3	0	2	2	2	5
Percentage of decisions on political appointments	100%	64%	62%	50%	69%	13%	33%	78%	75%	84%

***Source:** compiled by the author based on public records*

*partial data analysed, as her term began one year earlier than the start of our reference period

** key Departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are considered to be: (1) Department of Intelligence and Internal Protection, and (2) Department of Order and Public Safety

Liviu Dragnea who is now the leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) was a key player in the internal organization of the party, as a General Secretary. A former County Council President in Teleorman, who migrated from the Democratic Party (PD) in 2000, made a reputation as the leader of local bosses. He was later indicted for electoral fraud, in 2015, as he coordinated a “complex digital system through which he was sending messages, orders and recommendations” to local intermediaries on order to “illegally increase the turnout by impersonations, or fictitious votes”.¹¹² Prosecutors also claimed for the purpose of increasing local turnout in the 2009 presidential referendum he used a local network of 74 persons who chaired voting sections.

The effective monitorization of the electoral procedures is important because: it can prevent any fraudulent attempts from other political agents, and it can exert a certain amount of influence on rural areas—where there is a much more compliant mentality. If the governing party is able to deploy resources and support logistically local bosses in prefectures, or local governments (LGs), it has a greater chance to rally rural voters. All these political survival mechanisms have been deployed for the past decade, through the institutional procedures under the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. Respondents tentatively confirm these findings—‘You have Internal Affairs (i.e. the portfolio of Internal Affairs and Administration), you have the keys to the kingdom’¹¹³.

Another important pattern presented in Table 20 is the high predominance of personnel changes in the first three months of office. While most Ministers did not survive in office for more than three months, those that did had much longer terms. Still, in their case too, over 80% of personnel changes are effected in the first three months of term. This suggests, once again, that it is not the contextual factors, or cyclical events that contribute to

¹¹² Excerpts from the National Anticorruption Agency (DNA) Statements, <http://www.agerpres.ro/justitie/2016/04/22/alerta-iccj-liviu-dragnea-condamnat-definitiv-la-doi-ani-de-inchisoare-cu-suspendare-in-dosarul-referendumul--14-41-45>, last accessed on 20.06.2016

¹¹³ former Deputy General Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, interview with the author, 08.02.2013

the personnel rotations, but rather the widespread practice of politicization and discretionary appointments in central administrative institutions in Romania.

Most personnel changes in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration were effected on political appointments—State Secretaries, and Deputy State Secretaries. The changes on Senior Civil Servants, while significant, remain smaller than the political changes. The one telling exception is the term of Traian Igaș who concentrated on Senior Civil Service personnel, with 87% of his decisions targeting this category. Firstly, he followed a Minister from his own party, so there was little incentive to change political appointments, as they belonged to the same governing coalition. Secondly, he was a relative outsider, having only served as a local councilman before.

Expert opinions also suggest differences in appointment decisions based on previous experience with the institution: „powerful, politically backed Ministers, do not feel the need to change everyone, it is usually the weak ones that do it like this”¹¹⁴. This seems to reinforce the prescriptions of the cartel party model that penetrates the state. It is usually the case of Ministers who have been previously in professional contact with the Ministry or some of its Senior Civil Servants, and have a means to control them without extensive personnel changes. If Ministers are powerful within the political organization, then they are also in a better position to control the administrative networks developed through party-state interpenetration over successive electoral cycles—„it’s all about how much political backing you’ve got”¹¹⁵.

Finally, another important function of this portfolio the control of part of the national intelligence services. This is the Department of Information and Internal Protection (DGIIPI), nicknamed ‘a quarter past two’ (*doi și un sfert*) after it’s name during communist times—UM215. The appointments here are heavily political, and more so, they are normally agreed upon within the

¹¹⁴ former Deputy General Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, interview with the author, 09.01.2013

¹¹⁵ N.C., Ministerial official, interview with the author, 16.02.2013

governing party leadership. In 2009, when a proposed Minister wanted to appoint a certain person, he felt was suitable, on this position, against the party leadership desires, his political support was redrawn. In this general setting, the rotation patterns in such key departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration do not coincide with the Ministerial changes, but rather with the broader, political changes. As such, these appointments are some of the few, directly linked to the political party's support, and not just the political leader himself.

The stakes in controlling the Ministry of Economy are less organizational, and more closely linked to regulatory proceedings and public contracts. It is here that the pervasive interest nexus between politicians, politicized civil servants, and private agents meets. Generally speaking, in the political negotiations jargon, the Ministry of Economy is “the wealthiest” or the “piggy-bank”. It is not necessarily because of a big budget, but rather because of the control over the privatization process and State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Thus, the key political interests in the Ministry of the Economy are ‘public procurement contracts, concessions, investments, privatizations, information regarding capital increases’¹¹⁶.

The Ministry of Economy is probably the single most scandal-ridden Ministry in Romania. In the reference period—2005-2013, out of 7 occupants of the Ministerial appointment, 4 have pending investigations on their activity. Most investigations deal with preferential treatment of economic agents, resulting in massive losses of public funds (e.g. Codruț Sereș, Varujan Vosganian, Adriean Videanu). In this sense, the cartel party model, of intertwinement between political parties and the state, is taken one step further, including the interest groups of economic agents.

It should be noted that many of the State Owned Companies (SOEs) are also massive employers, which in turn means that there can also be an electorally oriented clientelistic strategy. Some of the linkage mechanisms deployed within a cartel system for state capture are also using their leverage

¹¹⁶ Radu Chiurtu, former General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author, 19.01.2014

over such large scale employers to mobilize votes. Given the predominant profile of low-skilled workers, and the lack of employment alternatives, it is often much easier to mobilize votes in State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) rather than any other public institution.

The first investigation that took place in this period was labeled the ‘Strategic Privatizations’ Enquiry – a transnational interest group developing its economic activities on the basis of inside information from ministerial institutions in Romania. Between 2004-2007, the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Communications were involved in the process of privatizing such high value state enterprises as Electrica Muntenia Sud, Petrom, Romaero, Avioane Craiova, Poșta Română, and Romtelecom. Besides the Ministers of the two institutions at that time, there were several Senior Civil Servants indicted by the Court.

When looking at the personnel decisional patterns, the analysis is constricted by the ministerial rotation itself. More stable than the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, but less stable than the Ministry of Environment, the Economy portfolio was occupied by 7 different persons in the 9 years of the reference timeframe. This means that the average term was of 1 year and a half. Still, in attempting to establish a Minister’s discretionary powers and political support it is not entirely relevant the duration of a term. For example, at the helm of this institutions we find pillars of political parties, benefiting from great political backing, as well as somewhat peripheral political agents.

Table 21. Decisional Patterns in the Ministry of Economy (2005-2013)

Minister	Ioan Codruț Sereș 12.04 – 12.06	Varujan Vosganian 12.06 – 12.08	Adriean Videanu 12.08 – 09.10	Ion Ariton 09.10 – 02.12	Lucian Nicolae Bode 02.12 – 04.12	Daniel Chițoiu 05.12 – 12.12	Varujan Vosganian 12.12 – 10.13	Andrei Gerea 10.13 – 03.14
Nb. of Months in Office	23	24	20	24	2	7	7	14
Rotation Index (Personnel Decisions per Nb. of Months in Office)	0.74	0.75	0.90	0.17	0.50	2.00	3.29	0.43
Total Personnel Decisions	17	18	18	4	1	14	23	6
Percentage of Decisions taken in the first three months of the term	n.a.	22%	6%	50%	n.a.	79%	30%	n.a
Decisions on General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (Senior Civil Servants)	2	5	5	3	1	7	13	2
Percentage of decisions on Senior Civil Servants	12%	28%	28%	75%	100%	50%	57%	33%
Decisions on State Secretaries (Political Appointments)	15	13	13	1	0	7	9	3
Percentage of decisions on political appointments	88%	72%	72%	25%	0%	50%	39%	50%

Source: compiled by the author based on public records

*partial data analysed, as her term began one year earlier than the start of our reference period

It is in this Ministry that we find a rare situation for the Romanian executives of the last decade: the same person—Varujan Vosgianian, occupying this position in three different terms. This might suggest a distinctive support from his political party—National Liberal Party (PNL), in nominating him when they were ascribed this portfolio in ruling coalitions. Thus, a revealing analysis can be conducted on whether the return of the same Minister, at the same portfolio, in a fairly narrow difference of years, brings back the same people on the positions of General Secretaries, and more so state secretaries—purely political appointment. This comparison presents surprising results in terms of politicization, as not a single appointment, political or administrative, coincides between the two times in office.

While at first this would denounce the political patronage thesis—as it is reliant on an existing network of clients, the situation is much more complex. A compelling explanation is that the Minister, whoever he is, does not have as much control on who to appoint, as the legal framework allows it. In fact, it is the political party, or other supporting groups, that have the de facto power of nomination. From what this situation in the Ministry of Economy tells us, it is not as much a question of ‘all the king’s men’—minister’s political patronage, as it is one of party patronage, directly influenced by internal party strategies.

Most interviews with General Secretaries and State Secretaries reveal the issue of ‘political algorithm’ of distributing various positions in the central apparatus—political appointments, but also administrative ones, to clients of local party bosses. This is supported by the findings of a recent study on the appointments on the Board of State Owned Companies (SOE) in Austria. Ennser-Jedenastik (2014) showed how coalition algorithms of appointment play a statistically significant role in the nomination process, but also in their survival in office.

The limited role played by the Minister’s preferences is equally supported by a substantial increase in the number of senior civil service

personnel over the last two years of the reference period. As such, it seems it is much less a question of paradigm, as it is one of context. One explanation for this is that this two-year period of increased changes coincides with the government of a large coalition. As such, based on expert interviews, it seems there were difficult negotiations between the ruling parties, on the control of various political and administrative appointments. And while in smaller portfolios, the negotiations might stop at the ministerial level, with a highly strategic portfolio as this one, it is obvious that any position is desirable. Thus, the political allocation of functions runs over the administrative strata of the institution.

In this setting, it is again telling to compare the two terms in office of the same minister. In the first round, with a ruling coalition of smaller parties, Varujan Vosganian was less concerned with changes of Senior Civil Servants, 72% of his decisions targeting the political appointments of state secretaries, and only 28% concerning the administrative level (see Table 21).

Reversely, with the second term in office, in a context of much greater political struggles for power, the same person devoted much more of his attention to the changes of Senior Civil Servants—57%, as opposed to those of state secretaries—only 39%. Furthermore, while his first term records one of the lowest values for the rotation index—0.75, the second term records the highest—3.29. On a basic level, such quantitative evaluations show in this last example an average of more than three personnel decisions per month in office, concerning the management of this institution. This itself is a troubling pattern in terms of institutional stability, coherence and efficiency. But it also suggests, as mentioned before, that there is little evidence of a traceable effect of the Minister's preferences or attitude towards the personnel policies in his attribution.

Another revealing assessment is that on the number of decisions taken in the first three months in office. The politicization patterns are generally more pronounced at the beginning of a term. If changes occur in this time frame it is much more likely to assume they occur on the basis of personal, or

political preferences. In contrast, for the changes occurring later on during the term, it is harder to distinguish between a multitude of factors that can include poor performance on the part of the Senior Civil Servants, more attractive employment opportunities and so on.

In this sense, it is in the case of Minister Daniel Chițoiu that we find almost 80% of all of his management level personnel decisions taken in the first three months in office (see Table 19). He ruled this Ministry during an extremely tense political period leading up to general elections, and within the institution the perception was that he was well in charge—‘it was obvious that he knew what he was doing’¹¹⁷. As a result of his efforts, he subsequently gained the Finance portfolio, and Deputy Prime-Minister position. The methodical approach of this Minister towards personnel rotations is reflected in the fact that his decisions were equally split between the senior civil service positions, and the political appointments of state secretaries.

Since 1996, the Ministry of Economy has gone through 8 major reorganizations as a whole, and numerous other internal reshuffles. In this situation, it is hard to evaluate the institutional processes and connections between the Ministry and its subordinate agencies and departments. If at one point the most significant agencies were the ones related to the industry, this might not necessarily be the situation at this moment¹¹⁸. Key subordinated institutions connected to the Ministry of Economy have been the National Authority for Energy Regulation (ANRE) or the Office for State Participation and Privatization (OPSPI). As opposed to more prosaic clientelistic provisions of public goods or services, such Agencies are primarily a source of regulatory favours. Unmistakably, such favours would be highly valued by private sector agents, as I show with selected examples in the final section of this chapter. The favours targeting such private beneficiaries are still connected to clientelistic electoral goals, as they usually provide in return material assistance to the patron party in campaigns.

¹¹⁷ Radu Nicolae Chiurtu, former general secretary of the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author, 19.01.2014

¹¹⁸ State Secretary, interview with the author

The Ministry of Environment has seen a steadier string of Ministers. Since its creation, in 2000, it has been only been governed by 6 ministers, two of which have had a full 4 year term. In the reference period of 2005-2013, the average term has been smaller—1 year and 10 months, mainly due to the short life of two cabinets—Boc I, in 2009, and Ungureanu, in 2012. Thus, in general terms, we can say this Ministry is one of the most stable portfolios from the point of view of the political leadership. Nevertheless, not the same can be said about the intra-institutional personnel dynamics.

In contrast to the other two Ministries, this portfolio is less desirable for itself, as for the subordinate agencies—‘effective arms in controlling and influencing economic activities throughout the country’¹¹⁹. Target governmental agencies controlled by the Ministry of Environment: National Agency for the Protection of the Environment (*Agencia Națională pentru Protecția Mediului*) (ANPM), National Environment Guard (*Garda Națională de Mediu*), and the Environmental Fund Administration (*Administrația Fondului de Mediu*) (AFM).

As can be seen in Table 20, in the case of most Ministers of the Environment, the personnel decisions were focused on the political appointments. In other words, their personnel policy was not aimed at politicising the civil service, but rather using the political prerogatives of appointments. Furthermore, the shortest terms—the one month of Attila Korodi, and one year of Nicolae Nemirschi, are linked to lower rates of decisions regarding Senior Civil Servants—0%, and respectively, 18%. Conversely, the longer terms can be associated to higher rotations of Senior Civil Servants. As hypothesised by this study, the rotation patterns are taken to be a proxy for governmental leaders’ inclination to politicization.

Only in the case of László Borbély has the rate of decisions on Senior Civil Servants been greater than the rate of decisions on political appointments. There are two possible explanations for the 52% decisions on Senior Civil Servants in the case of Minister Borbély. On one hand, being a

¹¹⁹ Anne Jugănar, State Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment, interview with the author, 12.02.2014

representative of a minority coalition partner—the Hungarian Union (UDMR), this Minister's of the Environment political clout was limited. As such, he could not impose his, or his party's people, well beyond the direct jurisdiction of his institution.

In fact, most of the positions of state secretaries and Governmental Agencies presidents and vice-presidents are attributable according to a political algorithm, with the most powerful political parties in power gaining the most numerous positions. In this perspective, the political power and position of a Minister within his own party/coalition may be seen as a determining factor in its level of discretionary appointments.

On the other hand, still connected to the degree of political influence, the predominant focus on senior civil service positions might suggest a struggle to control the institution. As appointments within Governmental Agencies are sooner driven by reward motivations—placing loyal people in highly profitable positions, the Senior Civil Servants are the gateway to procedurally controlling the Ministry itself. As such, their manipulation is much more significant from the administrative point of view, than the political one.

Currently, almost 20% of the Romanian territory is classified as natural protected area, within the European wide network Natura 2000¹²⁰. According to experts, this massive inclusion of territories in protected jurisdiction is based on the fact that within those areas various European funding lines can be requested¹²¹. The National Agency for the Protection of the Environment (ANPM) is one of the main institutional pillars responsible with the management and funding for these territories. As such, it plays a determinant role in relation to local governments (LG) responsible for protected areas, but also towards economic parties interested in developing and managing these territories (see discussion on the decentralization strategy in Romania, Chapter 2).

¹²⁰ according to <http://biodiversitate.mmediu.ro/romanian-biodiversity/despre-arii-protejate>

¹²¹ based especially on the accounts of a State Secretary from the Ministry of Environment, interview with the author, 3.02.2014

Table 22. Decisional Patterns in the Ministry of Environment (2005-2013)

Minister	Sulfina Barbu* 12.04 – 04.07	Nicolae Nemirschi 12.08- 12.09	László Borbély 12.09 – 04.12	Attila Korodi 04.12- 05.12	Rovana Plumb 05.12- 03.14
Nb. of Months in Office	48	12	27	1	20
Rotation Index (Personnel Decisions per Nb. of Months in Office)	0.31	1.42	1.00	2.00	2.95
Total Personnel Decisions	15	17	27	2	59
Percentage of Decisions taken in the first three months of the term	n.a.	100%	52%	100%	34%
Decisions on General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (Senior Civil Servants)	4	3	14	0	17
Percentage of decisions on Senior Civil Servants	27%	18%	52%	0%	29%
Decisions on State Secretaries (Political Appointments)	3	4	5	2	14
Decisions on the National Agency for the Protection of the Environment (ANPM) (political appointments)	6	4	5	0	7
Decisions on the National Environment Guard (political appointments)	2	2	0	0	10
Decisions on the Environmental Fund Administration (AFM) (political appointments)	0	4	3	0	11
Percentage of decisions on political appointments	73%	82%	48%	100%	71%

Source: compiled by the author based on public records

*partial data analysed, as her term began one year earlier than the start of our reference period

ANPM also has an important role in regulating and implementing environmental protection actions. The significance of this institution in the Environment portfolio is reflected in the high level of changes in its leadership, surpassed only by the rotations of state secretaries (see Table 20). According to the signed testimony of an employee of this institution, there are various incidents of procedural misconduct, meant to serve a process of politicization

and proprietary use of institutional powers. Adriana Georgian aims to demonstrate that within this institution there is 'discretionary promotion of personnel, through rigged contests through discriminatory conditions, serving previously selected persons, willing to execute illegal orders, and thus becoming simple instruments in realizing his (a.n. the director's of ANPM) goals'¹²².

5.3. Career Pathways Analysis and Clientelistic Networks

Beyond the decision-making patterns of Ministers, it is relevant to assess who the appointees are, and where they come from. The career-pathway analysis is an effective way to discern to what degree personnel changes are only linked to institutional instability, and to what degree these changes are in fact representing effective politicization practices. So far in the analysis, I have considered the turnover levels themselves to be a proxy indicator of the level of politicization, but it is important to have additional support for my arguments.

There are significant background specificities between the three Ministries. In the case of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, most Senior Civil Servants appointed in the past decade have a police, and not an administrative career behind, while in the case on the Ministry of Environment, some have private sector experience, or in local agencies. The Ministry of Economy is probably the most coherent in terms of the predominance of career-pathways, with most of the appointees coming from the specific category of Senior Civil Servants. In the case of this Ministry, it is not only that various people occupy, through different appointment procedures (e.g. temporary appointments, mobility) the senior civil service positions, but that they are themselves Senior Civil Servants—a distinctive, professional category in which you enter through exam.

¹²² Adriana Georgian, letter to the Fapt Divers publication, 30.10.2013, accessible at <http://www.faptdivers.ro/social/7518-concursuri-trucate-si-controale-ilegale-la-agentia-pentru-protectia-mediului.html>

I look at two categories of senior civil service appointees: insiders and outsiders. Insiders are considered to be all those appointees that have previously held a position within the institution, at the time of their appointment. Outsiders are all those who did not hold for more than three months a position within the institution, at the time of their appointment. This analysis is significant because it shows the extent to which there is a limited politicization—promoting people from within the system, or unlimited politicization—promoting whomever the Minister wishes. This distinction has been dealt with in the public administration literature, as ‘bounded’ vs. ‘open’ politicization (Meyer-Sahling 2008)¹²³.

The findings of our career-pathway analysis in the case of the three selected Romanian Ministries shows confirms that the Ministry of Economy is an example of what can be called ‘bounded’ politicization. In this sense, we see frequent changes on the positions of General Secretary, or those of Deputy General Secretaries, but most of these persons come from within the institution, the ministerial apparatus. An in-depth look into their background suggests that it is mostly from the Human Resources or Judicial Departments that they get promoted. This pattern holds true also for the much fewer insiders in the Ministry of Environment, where only 37% of persons occupying senior civil service positions in the reference period come from within the system. In the case of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the proportion again is in favour of outsiders—58%, but it must be noted that these are not completely from outside the internal affairs system, but rather from local agencies and departments. Like in the case of many outsiders, the Minister or another regional political leader probably brings them to the central apparatus.

While there are two discernable categories—insiders vs. outsiders, the latter category requires more nuancing. Outsiders can be promoted on the basis of political patronage or personal patronage. Political patronage is

¹²³ According to Meyer-Sahling (2008), ‘bounded politicization’ assumes that new governments replace inherited senior officials and fill these vacancies by promoting lower-ranking officials into senior ranks; ‘open politicization’ assumes that new governments replace inherited officials and fill these vacancies by appointing officials who are recruited from settings other than the ministerial bureaucracy.

obviously based on the party support, but personal patronage seems to be even more pervasive. General Secretaries, or Deputy General Secretaries, with no discernable professional background in central, or regional administrative appointments, are found to be directly, or indirectly connected to the Ministers. As such, they form a limited, but most problematic category of appointments, because of the lack of qualifications for the position, and their unquestioning subordination to the political will.

Table 23. Career-pathway Analysis of Senior Civil Servants

Ministry	Insider Pathway (held previous positions in the Ministry)		Outsider Pathway (no previous position in the Ministry)	
	Nb. of Appointees	Percentage of Total nb. of Appointees	Nb. of Appointees	Percentage of Total nb. of Appointees
Ministry of Economy	10	59%	7	41%
Ministry of Environment	6	37%	10	63%
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration	8	42%	11	58%

Source: Personnel record from the Ministries' Human Resources Departments, and from the National Agency of Civil Servants (ANAF)

Another distinctive category of outsiders is that of 'professional' General Secretaries. These persons represent a limited category of people who have had previous senior civil service positions in other Ministries—“there is a certain class forming, with people (i.e. Senior Civil Servants) being moved around (i.e. different Ministries)”¹²⁴—while this is the very purpose of creating a professional class of Senior Civil Servants, it is hard to assess the basis of their transfer. Some of them are usually following a Minister that receives different portfolios (e.g. Vasile Blaga moved all the Senior Civil

¹²⁴ Radu Chiurtu, former General Secretary in the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author 19.01.2014

Servants from one Ministry to another, as he was changing portfolios, in 2009).

Others, are indeed ‘people of the system’, sought because of their experience with various parties, and know how to navigate both the political and the administrative seas, but they are less than a ‘handful of people’, and are not widely held in high regard—‘there are generally preferred people who apply any order they receive, and for this you need them to be either unknowledgeable, either extremely loyal’¹²⁵.

Beyond the simple dichotomy between people from within the administrative system, and people from outside, there is also a common denominator for successful careers in senior civil service appointments: intelligence service background¹²⁶. A successful tenure does not necessarily mean a long one, but rather one that is followed by an appointment that is at least as prestigious—proof of the continuous political support for that person.

For example, one Senior Civil Servant in the Ministry of Environment, rumored to have earned his position by personal connections to the Minister’s family, also graduated the Information College, suggesting an overlapping network of support. Another Senior Civil Servant in the same Ministry has a professional background that suggests a similar career-pathway. This is the type of multilevel background—political or personal patronage, coupled with administrative or intelligence support, that is most emblematic for the senior civil service positions in Romania. Thus, for any coding purposes, it becomes effectively impossible to ascribe clear background categories to most of the occupiers of Senior Civil Service positions. Most of them have been initially appointed in the Central Government via party patronage, but they are not necessarily clients of a single patron party, as they have survived over multiple electoral cycles.

¹²⁵ Adrian Radu, former General Secretary in the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author, 06.02.2014

¹²⁶ based on multiple conversations with general secretaries and State Secretaries from the studied Ministries

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I find the traits of the administrative networks to be a reflection of the cartelization process, and the party-state interpenetration of all major parties. For the present analysis this means that it is more elucidating to assess whether appointees come from within the institutions or from outside it. In terms of their ability to channel public resources for clientelistic purposes, if they have an insider background, it will be easier for them to do so (i.e. use legislative and institutional loopholes), than from outsider backgrounds.

Over the entire period of reference, insiders are much more likely to survive or return in multiple rounds to the senior civil service positions. The outsiders on the other hand, are much more likely to be political appointments, than in the case of hierarchical promotions from within the institutions. Outsiders come from such positions as Prefects, or Underprefects, and are generally imposed by the territorial party organizations—‘the current general secretary is from Giurgiu (i.e. supported by the party leaders of the county of Giurgiu territorial organization)’¹²⁷. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, one of the most striking and significant findings of the present research is the existence of a ‘political algorithm’ of distributing positions in the central administration. This effectively means that at least some of the outside appointees are benefiting from the patronage of local party bosses. The latter’s interest in placing these people in the central administration revolves around ‘protecting their local policy interests, or their personal economic ones’¹²⁸.

The control of the institution, both in terms of functions, as well as in terms of personnel, has to be subordinated to the political interests of the party that holds the respective ministerial portfolio. It is only through this deep penetration of the various institutional departments, amongst which the legal and economic departments appear to be most notable, that the exploitative clientelistic machine is able to circulate vast amounts of public funds. Both at

¹²⁷ Radu Nicolae Chiurtu, former general secretary of the Ministry of Economy, interview with the author 19.01.2014

¹²⁸ Anne-Rose-Marie Jugănar, State Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, interview with the author, 14.02.2014

the central, and at the local level, the criminal cases brought against party leaders, either Ministers or Mayors, included in the batch of defendants, the respective Senior Civil Servant—General Secretaries, of either central level, or local level institutions of public administration.

While the Rotation Index analysis presented before revealed in a proxy manner the high level of politicization of Senior Civil Servants in the Ministry of Economy, our anecdotal evidence on clientelistic networks also reveal a great interest devoted to this institution. On one hand, the clientelistic political leaders are focused on it as a means of ensuring the distribution of various favourable decisions, and resources, within informal linkages. On the other hand, we find party donors, like Ioan Niculaie that agreed to support financially the PSD, in exchange for favourable appointments at the head of state companies, which are subordinated to the Ministry of Economics. As the president of the biggest private company in the Agricultural sector in Romania—Interagro, Ioan Niculae paid high value, under the table party donations in order to maintain favourable appointees, of his own choosing in the Ministry of Economics, to be able to fix prices and subsidies in his industry. Furthermore, he sought to informally select appointments to the leadership of two state companies—SNTGN Transgaz and SNGN Romgaz SA, with whom he had business dealings.¹²⁹

Another cabinet portfolio that seems to be reserved to party elites devoted to ensuring financial stability to party supporters, as well as to the electoral campaigns is the Ministry of public works. It has gone through various changes of name and organization: Ministry of Transportation and Public Works (2000-2004), Ministry of Transportation (2004-2008), or Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (2009-2012). Still, the genealogy of this portfolio can be established based on certain lucrative contractual prerogatives, especially in the case of the National Company for Motorways and Roads (CNADNR).

¹²⁹ <http://www.hotnews.ro/ancheta-14560859-dosarul-mita-psd-gheorghe-bunea-stancu-ioan-niculae.htm>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

While for the recent period we find politicians negotiating with private contractors as stand-alone entities each, the line between the two categories was much more permeable throughout the first three post-communist electoral cycles. As such, before big fortunes were made, and strong clientelistic pyramids were built, electoral support from agents of the private sector often lead to patronage for a political career. Such an example is that of Florian Walter, formerly known as Florian Bucșe, who after supporting financially the electoral campaign of former Transport Minister, and Trade Union leader, Miron Mitrea, received in exchange a sinecure as a city councilmen in Bucharest. His private interests, in the SC Romprest SRL—a garbage disposal company receiving public contracts from the capital's administrative institutions, and other companies, continued to expand throughout a variety of public contracts, in the field of garbage disposal, all watched over from his public dignitary position.¹³⁰ This would only be a case of conflict of interests, and influence peddling if it were not part of a transversal clientelistic network.

During the cabinet of Adrian Năstase (2000-2004), the former Minister of Transportation Miron Mitrea, former trade union leader and one of the political agents in the Social Democratic Party (PSD) appointed Mihai Necolaiciuc as president of the National Railways Company (CFR). This is one of the biggest national companies in Romania, and is currently in a dire situation, with the international donors (i.e. IMF and World Bank) pressing for the privatization of the Freight division (*CFR Marfă*) to make up for some of the losses the company has incurred throughout the years. In this context, Mihai Necolaiciuc was found guilty of producing damages of over 18 mil. EUR to the company by inflating the price of the public procurement contracts the company was granting.¹³¹ He is currently in jail, under a previous sentence for mismanagement of 4 years. Before he was arrested, another member of the patronage network of Miron Mitrea helped him escape the country—the

¹³⁰ <http://www.amosnews.ro/pionii-din-spatele-politicienilor-2015-06-10> , last accessed on 21.06.2015

¹³¹ <http://anticoruptie.hotnews.ro/ancheta-8493405-dosarul-achizitii-lux-1-mihai-necolaiciuc.htm>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

aforementioned Florian Bucșe.¹³² While Miron Mitrea is currently serving a 2 year sentence in jail, for kickbacks received in the form of a renovation to his mother's house, it is easy to see that his patronage networks touched upon all the different exchange mechanisms I here consider under the umbrella of the clientelistic phenomenon.

The National Liberal Party (PNL) never had the territorial presence or the mass mobilization capacity of the other two major parties. It has been traditionally positioned as a party of elites for the elites and members of the private sector. As such, it neither extended large clientelistic schemes, especially not the ones that put down roots in society, nor did it support extended patronage schemes. In compensation, it managed to secure a position in most of the post-communist cabinets, through coalitions and alliances, and as such many of the party leaders accessed important positions as ministers, or state agency presidents. From these positions, it was their own responsibility to fund and support the party. An example of this situation would be former Minister of Transportation Relu Fenechiu. Together with his brother, he engaged in various privatization schemes before becoming Minister, and for the case of the state owned company Electrica Moldova (SISSE) to which he sold used transformers, 99% of which were never used, for 7.5 mil. RON he was tried and sentenced to 5 years in jail since 28th of June 2012.¹³³ Relu Fenechiu was one of the major donors of the National Liberal Party, giving individually over 70,000 RON each year to his organization, and financing through his companies with over 1 mil. € the 2009 presidential campaign of the former PNL president—Crin Antonescu.¹³⁴

As in previous examples, the PDL shows clear evidence of clientelism both at the local, and at the central level. The way mayors were involved in this party's exchange system was seen above in the case study of Elena Udrea pyramidal patronage system. As such, we can see that in comparison

¹³²<http://www.digi24.ro/Stiri/Digi24/Actualitate/Politica/Marirea+si+decaderea+finantatorilor+de+partide>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

¹³³<http://anticoruptie.hotnews.ro/ancheta-14554882-dosarul-transformatorul-relu-fenechiu.htm>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

¹³⁴<http://www.digi24.ro/Stiri/Digi24/Actualitate/Politica/Marirea+si+decaderea+finantatorilor+de+partide>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

to PSD and PNL, the local party bosses of PDL were heavily dependent on central patronage, and as such they were sooner brokers to the party's overall clientelistic system, than patrons in their own right. In contrast, next to the PNL, the PDL shows the strongest appetite for party patronage in appointments to the management of state owned companies (SOE). Furthermore, they use these appointments not only to extract material resources, but also to satisfy the electoral mobilization that some of their territorial organizations are too weak to do.

Constantin Roibu, long lasting CEO of the state owned company Oltchim, is an illustrative example of how political appointments in such positions accomplish the double function of mobilizing votes from employees, as well as funneling public funds for private interests. On one hand the judicial investigations reveal the extent of damages created by the management of Constantin Roibu—over 20 off-shore companies set up with the explicit purpose of discretionary channeling approximately 700 mil. € in between 2009 and 2012. Throughout the same period, the company recorded annual losses of 100 mil. €, currently lingering on in state of insolvency, after a privatization attempt failed last year.

On the other hand, the same politically appointed management was supposed to politically control the vast workforce of the company—over 3,000 dependent employees, so that the electoral outcomes in local, and national elections, in the city, and county of Râmnicu Vâlcea would be favourable to the party leadership, under whose patronage he remained in office¹³⁵. Mr. Roibu patrons in this case were the Minister of Economy, and leading figure of the party leadership, Adriean Videanu (PDL), and a former MP from the region, Cristian Boureanu (PDL). The latter is currently investigated for several incidences of influence peddling in state owned companies, amongst others in the case of the public procurement contracts that he signed, as a member of the Board in the National Lottery Company, bringing a total

¹³⁵ http://www.realitatea.net/roibu-asigura-pdl-ului-pesto-3-000-de-voturi_1057245.html, last accessed on 21.06.2015

damage of 126 mil.€¹³⁶. He is also investigated for electoral clientelism, as he unsuccessfully attempted in 2012 to gain an MP seat in one of the poorest counties in Romania—Vaslui, which is a traditional stronghold of the Social Democratic Party (PSD).

Overall, the rotation index values do not suggest a clear influence of electoral periods on all Ministries' personnel policy. Rather, it is the stability of the ruling coalition that seems to play a bigger role in certain Ministries' level of personnel turnovers. Different patterns emerge. In the case of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a discernable hike in the number of decisions on Senior Civil Servants is recorded in the electoral year of 2009. This is again traceable to the instability of the governing coalition in this period, with the presidential elections at the end of the year. In the case of the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Environment it is only in the last two years of the reference period that we see a spike in personnel turnover. While political leaders attempted to explain these patterns on the basis of 'budget allocations for salaries', or 'variations in the intensity of the task allocation, given processes of structural funds absorption'^{137,138}, there is no particular evidence to suggest such claims.

5.4. Different Parties, Different Methods: Maximizing Political Discretion and Appointments in Relation to Parties' Interests

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, without connecting the specific discretionary appointment procedures to the political strategies and fluctuations, it is hard to demonstrate the actual politicization intent on the part of the ruling parties. As such, this section is concerned with the differences between parties, as represented through the perspective of the various Cabinets. Although we do not have figures on Senior Civil Servants during the

¹³⁶ <http://www.gandul.info/stiri/deputatul-boueanu-anchetat-pentru-informatizarea-cu-ghinion-a-lui-6-49-2584363>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

¹³⁷ Structural funds are given from the European Union for various projects, such as infrastructure expansion, or rural development, which are mostly managed by the national authorities (i.e. Ministries)

¹³⁸ From interviews with the author, former Minister of the Environment Rovana Plumb, former Minister of Internal Affairs Ioan Rus, former Minister of Internal Affairs Dan Nica, and former Minister of Internal Affairs Cristian David

Năstase cabinet, as this function was not legally defined then, it is included in the tables, because it is included in the general research framework of this project.

In terms of appointments, I present a turnover index, calculated as the number of decisions concerning a certain senior civil service position divided by the number of days spent in office by that government. This helps us construct a realistic image of the inclination towards politicization, or at least the degree of discretionary appointments realized by every cabinet. Furthermore, looking at each senior civil service position at a time, we can see the different patterns of politicization—higher in the case of Prefects and Underprefects, and lower for General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries.

Some of the lowest turnover scores are recorded in the Boc (II) cabinet. It can be explainable in different ways. On one hand, it is a consecutive cabinet of the same ruling coalition, and in this sense, we can safely assume, it had no interest of fundamentally changing the previous appointments. On the other hand, as an austerity measure, it implemented a freeze on employment in the public sector. This freeze was previously discussed, as it is a direct cause for the sharp increase in temporary appointments, as opposed to permanent ones.

One of the highest turnover ratio is in the first year of the Boc (I) Cabinet, when a new ruling coalition took power. In accordance with the previous assessment of the higher stability of Deputy General Secretaries compared to general secretary positions, this cabinet often preferred to promote the lower ranks of personnel, rather than completely replace the leadership. This might suggest that its patronage network was not as massive as other parties, aiming more at efficiently controlling the governmental institutions, than rewarding numerous party supporters. On the other hand, it was part of the previous ruling coalition for a while—Popescu-Tăriceanu (I), and the promoted Deputy General Secretaries, might well have been survivals of the previous wave of political appointments exerted by this party.

Table 24. Changes of General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries (per Cabinet)

Cabinet Leader	Period	Decisions on General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries	Days in Office	Rotation Index
Adrian Năstase	2000 (28, December) – 2004 (29, December) (elections)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (I)	2004 (29, December) - 2007 (5, April)	51	827	0.06
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (II)	2007 (5, April) – 2008 (28, December) (elections)	70	633	0.11
Emil Boc (I)	2008 (22, December) – 2009 (23, December)	106	366	0.29
Emil Boc (II)	2009 (23, December) – 2012 (9, February)	100	1096	0.09
Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu	2012 (9, February) – 2012 (27, April)	19	78	0.24
Victor Ponta (I)	2012 (27, April) - 2012 (9, December) (elections)	88	226	0.39

***Source:** compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial decisions in the period 2005-2012*

This would imply a pattern of survival for appointed personnel, when a political party does not spend too much time in the opposition. Thus, one would expect, the longer the period spent in opposition, the greater turnover will be necessary when returning to power. In the case of the Ponta (I) coalition cabinet this hypothesis seems to hold, as it records the highest turnover ratios in General Secretaries and Deputy General Secretaries. As it regained control of the government after 8 years, notwithstanding a less than a year coalition with the Boc (I) cabinet, the patronage exercise of this cabinet demonstrates a virulent pattern of politicization.

For General Secretaries, and Deputy General Secretaries we can see in the appointment or dismissal decisions the interest in specific Ministries. It is within the Ministries that have to be very tightly controlled that we see most changes. For example, in 2009, most of the appointments—permanent or temporary, or dismissals occurred in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This is connected to the ministerial changes in this portfolio. After successive nominations and resignations, the Minister for Regional Development, Vasile Blaga, returned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, bringing most of the managing administrative staff with him, which he transferred the first time he left for the Ministry of Regional Development.

In the case of Prefects and Underprefects (see Table 25), we cannot really deduce a preference for certain counties of each Cabinet, as usually a massive turnover of most Prefects and Underprefects in every county takes place when the government changes. This is a strategic action to control the territories. In terms of Prefectures, they are of equal importance from the governmental point of view. This is not to say that all local public administrations have the same value, as the importance of town halls or county councils is the same. In contrast to the Prefectures, which are similarly designed in terms of resources, organization, and functions, the institutions of elected representatives have proportional budgets, sizes and significance to their districts. Thus, while political parties have differentiating strategies

towards elective local public administrations, the Prefectures are seen as being a single prize—a means to control the entire local network¹³⁹.

In contrast, the central administrative apparatus—Ministries and state agencies, are also differentiated in size, resources and importance. Frequent changes occur in such portfolios as Economy and Commerce, Internal Affairs, Transportation, Environment, Development, or Justice. The general secretary or Deputy General Secretaries positions in these Ministries are highly coveted by political parties for different strategic purposes. In the case of such portfolios as Economy, Transportation or Regional Development, we can find some of the highest budgetary allocations, which are to be deployed in public projects. The greater the public procurement capacity of a institution, the greater potential for preferential resource allocation to the ruling party clientele.

In the case of Internal Affairs or Justice, there is a powerful motivation to control the functions and organization power these institutions possess. For example, the Internal Affairs Ministry has been throughout the studied period in charge of not only the police system, but also local public administrations. In this capacity it is in charge of the organization of elections and all the current institutional processes of the territorial public administration (including Prefectures). The Justice Ministry is of obvious importance for the control and potential interference with the more and more visible and disconcerting activities of the anticorruption agencies.

¹³⁹ from an interview with a former general secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, interview with the author 5.10.2013

Table 25. Changes of Prefects and Underprefects (per Cabinet)

Cabinet Leader	Period	Decisions on Prefects and Underprefects	Days in Office	Rotation Index
Adrian Năstase	2000 (28, December) – 2004 (29, December) (elections)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (I)	2004 (29, December) - 2007 (5, April)	15 (since 2007)	94	0.16
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (II)	2007 (5, April) – 2008 (28, December) (elections)	190	633	0.30
Emil Boc (I)	2008 (22, December) – 2009 (23, December)	366	366	1
Emil Boc (II)	2009 (23, December) – 2012 (9, February)	142	1096	0.12
Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu	2012 (9, February) – 2012 (27, April)	49	78	0.63
Victor Ponta (I)	2012 (27, April) – 2012 (9, December) (elections)	180	226	0.80

***Source:** compiled by the author based on the public records of governmental decisions in the period 2007-2012*

The highest levels of turnover in all senior civil service positions are found in the case of Prefects and Underprefects. For many reasons, previously exposed in this chapter, these are probably the most politicized

function in the Romanian senior civil service. The highest turnover is found in the case of the new coalition government Boc (1), when an average of one decision per day was taken with regards to Prefects and Underprefects in the Romanian counties. Ponta (I) coalition Government scores the second highest turnover, where a decision on Prefects and Underprefects was taken every working day of the week on average. This latter cabinet has publicly assumed what all the other coalition governments have done: an algorithm of distribution amongst the coalition partners of the Prefect and Underprefect positions in the territory¹⁴⁰. While legally these are not political appointments, 'they are constantly included in the appointments algorithm of governing political parties, the institutional politicization descending even further down the hierarchical level than the leadership of Prefecture'¹⁴¹.

The nature of some of the political parties process of survival and organization in the transitional context has generated 'local bosses'—highly influential and powerful leaders of the local party organizations. The best example of such a situation is the Social Democratic Party (PSD) that has a well-established territorial presence, but a centrifugal tendency of the power distribution. When such parties win elections, the local party leaders often become elected representatives—Mayors, County Council Presidents. As such they are sometimes harder to condition by the central government, given a decentralized structure of the public administration in Romania. Thus, Prefects and Underprefects are a means to regain control over elected leaders of Local Governments. Nevertheless, as I show in the following chapter, the most effective control over local leaders is that of resource conditioning, as their budgets rely heavily on central budgetary transfers.

Under the national-liberal cabinet of Popescu-Tăriceanu (I), the government has passed a decision¹⁴² to specify the particular prerogatives Prefects and Underprefects should have. Incidentally, the ruling party of the

¹⁴⁰ press article, Gândul, 08.05.2012 (<http://www.gandul.info/politica/algoritm-ul-impartirii-prefecturilor-psd-a-luat-23-de-județe-pnl-va-pune-prefectul-in-bucurești-9598646>), last accessed on 20.06.2016

¹⁴¹ Codrin Dumitru Munteanu, former Prefect and Underprefect of Covasna, as well as General Secretary of the Defense Ministry, public statement, 2010

¹⁴² Government Decision No. 460/2006.

coalition government—the National Liberal Party (PNL), had a weak territorial presence, and the strengthening of these governmental representatives' role gave a better territorial control to the government. The provisions of this decision included the ability of Prefects to monitor and verify how decentralized institutions ¹⁴³ allocate public funds, to assist in the implementation of various reforms of the administrative system, to represent in Court the Government when the decentralized institutions could not, and more significantly, to manage public procurements for the Prefecture, as well as for common projects of the decentralized institutional. The attributions of the Underprefect are very similar to those of the Prefect, but depend to an extensive degree on the willingness of the Prefect to delegate responsibility to each of the two Underprefects—'if the Prefect wants to keep all the power, this function is mostly concerned with the administration of the Prefecture, rather than actual power of consequence in the region',¹⁴⁴.

The turnover of governmental inspectors has little to do with the intention to fulfill the actual governmental inspector positions. Rather, these are intermediary appointments in the transfer chain, or refuges for 'retrograded' Prefects or Underprefects. An appointment as governmental inspectors of a loyal supporter is solely designed to offer a refuge in a privileged position, but not actual power in the ruling party's exploitation scheme. As such, I would sooner refer to the reward motivation of patronage, rather than the control one (Kopecky et al 2012).

In this sense, governmental inspectors can at most be liable of influence peddling rather than direct involvement in clientelistic transactions, as they do not have power over resources. The lack of powers is sourced in the lack of responsibilities. Most of these positions have vague and inconsequential attributions—'my job responsibilities consist of inspecting the roads for black spots and checking the rodent damage on the dams',¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Institutions that provide public services in the territory, on behalf of the Ministries, the Governmental Office (*Secretariatul General al Guvernului*) and other institutions of the Central Public Administration

¹⁴⁴ Paul Dodea, former Underprefect, interview with the author 7.10.2013

¹⁴⁵ public interview, 17.07.2013

explains a governmental inspector Ion Ghica, who previously served as a Underprefect of the Neamț county. In a long tradition of façade bureaucratic work, the governmental inspectors often become the epitome of an oversized apparatus, rather than of an efficient professional elite: 'we often questioned ourselves what was the use of the reports we forwarded to the Ministry of Transportation every month'¹⁴⁶.

After analyzing the prime-ministerial decisions on the attribution of tasks to governmental inspectors, we can assess that most of these deal with monitoring the maintenance status of the infrastructure and governmental assets. These are not seriously consequential tasks, as they overlap with specialized institutions on one hand, and have no enforcement power, on the other hand. Few governmental inspectors, do receive some significant tasks in terms of governmental representation, delegated cooperation with different Ministries, or even project management. Task allocation is the main vehicle of discretionary power. Appointing loyal supporters to different high ranking positions within the state apparatus is both reward and control driven, but it is not until the tasks are allocated that an agent can become truly empowered to take advantage of his or her position and to be able to act beyond the specifications of the patron.

The turnover index values for the appointments of governmental inspectors are generally low. This is mostly based on the fact that this is the least coveted function of the senior civil service. Still, there are once again sharp increases in the terms of the Boc (I) cabinet and the Ponta (I) cabinet. As the qualitative analysis of the decisions shows, most of these were applications of the career mobility provision to and from the position of governmental inspector. Most of the transfers to this position were the result of the new Governments desire to vacate the Prefect and Underprefect positions. The highest turnover ratio, during the Boc (I) Government, is 0.55, or 1 decision on governmental inspectors every other day. The score is mostly based on the removal of local Prefects and Underprefects appointed by the

¹⁴⁶ Lucian Simion, former governmental inspector, public interview 17.07.2013

Popescu-Tăriceanu (II) cabinet. Most of these individuals remained governmental inspectors until 2012, when the national liberal party returned to power in the coalition cabinet Ponta (I). At this point, some have been reinstated, while others were dismissed. To understand the underpinnings of these decisions I account for additional contextual evidence.

Table 26. Changes of Governmental Inspectors (per Cabinet)

Cabinet Leader	Period	Decisions on Governmental Inspectors	Days in Office	Rotation Index
Adrian Năstase	2000 (28, December) – 2004 (29, December) (elections)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (I)	2004 (29, December) - 2007 (5, April)	0	827	0
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (II)	2007 (5, April) – 2008 (28, December) (elections)	68	633	0.11
Emil Boc (I)	2008 (22, December) – 2009 (23, December)	203	366	0.55
Emil Boc (II)	2009 (23, December) – 2012 (9, February)	80	1096	0.07
Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu	2012 (9, February) – 2012 (27, April)	7	78	0.08
Victor Ponta (I)	2012 (27, April) – 2012 (9, December) (elections)	53	226	0.23

***Source:** compiled by the author based on the public records of prime-ministerial decisions in the period 2007-2012*

The career pathway of the Popescu-Tăriceanu (II) Prefects and Underprefects is telling of the general appointment dynamics in the Romanian senior civil service, as it is not only inter-party politics that plays a role, but also intra-party or intra-coalition struggles for power. For example in Ponta (I) government, the consensus was that where there are County Council Presidents from one party, there should be a Prefect from the other¹⁴⁷. This arrangement aroused some suspicion, as the county council president is an elected function, while the Prefect is a nominated position, but was mostly reflected in the nominations. In this context, it is highly surprising that most of the governmental inspectors, who were Prefects and Underprefects of the liberal cabinet of Popescu-Tăriceanu up until 2009, have been dismissed, instead of being reinstated. Through the governmental decisions 278-337 from 2013, no less than 59 governmental inspectors have been dismissed, through the dissolution of their positions. At this point, these persons remain Senior Civil Servants, but lack an appointment to a senior civil service position. While the Government justified this action with an austerity driven governmental emergency ordinance¹⁴⁸, the inspectors claimed it was a political maneuver, which infringed their constitutional rights.

The political underpinnings are multiple. On one side there is a tacit struggle for party networks of appointments between the coalition parties, and it could be seen as an assault by the Social Democrats on liberal protégées. On the other hand, within the liberal party, there is a power struggle between the 'old guard' of the Popescu-Tăriceanu patronage networks and the new leadership's patronage networks of the new leader—Crin Antonescu. From this perspective it may very well be that the liberals themselves supported the mass dismissals as a way to destabilize the party members' support for the previous party leadership.

Conclusion

This chapter has accounted for appointment procedures of Senior Civil Servants in Central Government institutions (i.e. Ministries). I argue that the

¹⁴⁷ Bogdan Pintileasa, party official, interview with the author, 7.10.2013

¹⁴⁸ Emergency Government Ordinance No. 77/2013

main motivation of politicization in Central Government position is not that of rewards (i.e. clientelistic provision of public jobs) (as is the case for party patronage in the public sector in general), but that of controlling the institutions (i.e. ensuring further distribution of clientelistic provisions). As such, Senior Civil Servants are linchpins of the clientelistic distribution of public resources, services or regulatory favours.

For the civil service Rotation Index, I analyzed all the Ministerial decisions of appointment, dismissal or transfer of senior civil servants for the period 2003 to 2014. I then triangulated this data with various official documents and legislation, as well as in-depth interviews with civil servants, and party officials. I also did a systematic coverage of press outlets' news on the Ministers, and appointees, to be able to reassemble their background, and political or personal connections. For career pathways analysis I also analyzed each Minister's and Senior Civil Servant's CV, and other sources of personal information (e.g. personal webpages, blogs, profile pieces).

As we can see variations in terms of the proxy index of politicization—the Rotation Index, I explore with an in-depth enquiry the reasons, specificities and implications for each of the most heavily politicized Ministries in Romania (i.e. Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Environment). This chapter deals with both the opportunities to appoint “your people” (e.g. loose legislative provisions), and with the incentives to do so (e.g. overseeing the organization of elections, key regulatory Agencies).

Several findings emerge as particularly relevant to the present analysis of cartelization and clientelistic exchanges in Romania. Firstly, there is a clear tendency to (re)place Senior Civil Service personnel, especially in Ministries with wide prerogatives. This confirms the party-state interpenetration, and the ability of ruling parties to impose their appointees even in administrative functions.

Secondly, we can see that insiders (i.e. people with previous experience in the institution or similar institution) are preferred to outsiders (i.e. people with no similar institutional experience). This suggests that while there is a certain amount of favoritism or personal patronage, party patronage

is a key element of selection. As the same political parties have succeeded to power (sometimes even the same Ministers), insiders are much more likely appointments along cartel party lines and/or ruling coalition algorithms of appointment.

Finally, we find a dual utility of politicization. On one hand there is the incentive to control the Ministries and their prerogatives. This political control can ensure the policy-making goals of the ruling political party, as well as the clientelistic distribution of public goods and services. On the other hand, I present here evidence of regulatory favors through appointees in State Owned Companies or Regulatory Agencies. These favors include private sector beneficiaries that either are or subsequently become party donors and supporters. Both of these means to use political appointees will be further explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 6. Clientelism and State Capture in Romania

This thesis shows how the cartel party is reinforced by clientelistic linkages fuel territorial organizations, and constituencies. This achieves a political stability that the political parties would not otherwise be able to do in the context of weak mass mobilization. In the new democracy setting there are often much more complex clientelistic schemes of state *largesse* deployment, given the opportunities of state capture provided by the party-state interpenetration.

This chapter looks at one of the most important linkage instruments of a clientelistic system: resource distribution channels. The distribution of power within ruling political parties influences the destination and extent of public resource flows, streaming from the Central Government (CG) to Local Governments (LGs). As such, these are cases of state *largesse*, or pork-barrel politics, that do not only target electoral mobilization, but also acquiescence of local party leaders and consolidation of local party organizations. Thus, it is not only important to channel resources to their constituencies, but also to dimension these political allocations in a manner that ensures their continuous allegiance.

The first type of distribution channel is that of the proprietary lump sum allocations to Local Governments (LGs). The analysis focuses on Discretionary Governmental funds—the Reserve Fund, and the Intervention Fund. The nature of these funds makes them less constrained by institutional, or procedural limitations. Furthermore, in the absence of monitoring from the opposition parties it is highly likely that the allocations will be predominantly designed to serve the political interests of the ruling parties.

The second type of distribution channel is that of regional development projects funding. These are projects that have a big electoral impact—based on how fast their effects would be registered by the citizens, and based on how important they are for the population. Selected programmes include: thermic rehabilitation, public housing, and infrastructure. In each case there is evidence of politicization.

Finally, the public procurement contracts involved in implementing such projects are themselves a topic of interest in this chapter, as many private contractors working with central or local governments fuel the clientelistic system. As the process of cartelization leads parties increasingly dependent on public resources, we look at the clientelistic channels of informal resource allocation. Thus, the evidence presented in this chapter links back private contractors benefiting from preferential access to government contracts and procurement to formal, or under the table, party donations.

For the budgetary data of Local Governments, I have covered the entire post-communist period, based on official records (formally solicited to the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, and to the Ministry of Finances). For the analysis of the Government Discretionary Fund allocations, I have compiled data from the Ministry of Public Finances with provisions from Governmental Decisions on funding from these budgetary sources. For these evaluations I covered the period ranging from 1999 to 2012. I triangulated all the financial allocations from these funds, with the political background of the local dignitaries (i.e. Mayors, or County Council Presidents), based on the electoral records of 2008, and press coverage of subsequent formation or dissolution of political alliances.

For party donations, I have systematically covered every party's annual declaration of donations, which is published in the Official Gazette in Romania. I have then compiled these lists, as some parties would publish county-level data on donations. This analysis covers the period 2009 to 2015, as it was not until 2009 that the national legislation required parties to disclose their donations. I then triangulated the donors from the party lists with the public procurement contracts in the public online database—SEAP. Furthermore, I analyzed official records of various public agencies specialized in this field (e.g. National Authority for Regulating and Monitoring Public Procurement, National Council for Solving Complaints, Unit for Coordination and Verification of Public Procurement). I analyzed the financial records of various categories of donors and public contractors through the online registry of private companies in Romania. Finally, I triangulated the data on donations

and public contracts with criminal cases on campaign financing, based on the National Anticorruption Agency's (DNA) records, which were then contextualized through press coverage

6.1. Political Allocations and the Linkages with Local Party Leaders

In order to apply a clientelistic logic of action to political allocation these need to be specifically designed to benefit a local party leader. Looking simply at the amounts transferred to the each County, we find a relatively balanced distribution of funds, and the clientelistic channels remain obscured. In contrast, if we look at each Local Governments (LGs) —at the city, and commune level, as the present analysis has done, we find a much clearer picture of politicization of financial allocations. This supports the assumption that the clientelistic exchanges have the highest electoral efficiency in local settings, or in direct exchanges.

Furthermore, the present analysis traces the flow of discretionary funding from the Central budget to various LGs, but this is also contextualised within the broader political and administrative power relations. As mentioned in the previous chapters of this thesis, we consider clientelistic linkages to have a heavy influence on the relationship between the Central Government (CG) and Local Governments (LGs).

From the point of view of the inner-linkages, preferential allocations reinforce each level of the clientelistic party organization. On one hand the incumbent local party leaders, in their position of intermediaries, or public resource distributors, remain effective electoral agents. On the other hand, the elected local officials (e.g. Mayors, County Council President) gain more power, in their position of patrons towards their territorial base.

This latter aspect is problematic from the point of view of the political party, or the central leadership. Allocating public resources in a preferential manner to a local public official might hold him satisfied and loyal, but it might also fuel a dominant position over the central party leadership. As previously discussed in this thesis, the stronger the local party leader is, the more

influence she or he can exert over central decision-making. This influence can be exerted directly—within inner-party decision-making forums, or indirectly—within the governing coalition. Thus, political allocations from the centre can be seen as both a means of reinforcing political loyalty, on the part of local officials, as much as they can be a means of emancipation, for this latter category. Because of this risk, and because of reasons external to the party organization (e.g. procedural constraints, or opposition monitorization), the majority of political allocations remain limited in terms of absolute value. Thus, this section follows incidences of disproportional allocation, and attempts to correlate political strategies with discretionary spending patterns.

Many of the discretionary transfers explored here require different layers of cooperating clientelistic agents—from within Ministries, State Agencies, and Local Governments. At each institutional level, it is the party state interpenetration, and inter-party collusion that makes public resources available to political patrons. Nevertheless, civil servants willing to convert such transfers into political capital are the linchpins of the informal distribution system. Not only in the case study of Romania, but also in other post communist settings, such as Bulgaria, we find evidence of the connection between a ruling political party's central allocations, and local officials of the same political affiliation (Marinov and Nikolova 2015). As such, we find the direct link between party patronage networks and politicization within multiple layers of the public administration, and the preferential allocation of central funding to certain party bases.

6.1.1. Local Governments (LGs) Budgetary Dependency

In Romania, local budgets are constituted only partly on their own revenues. A substantial part of their budgets (usually averaging to more than 50%) is received from the Central Government. Given this reliance of local budgets on the central allocations, a continuous 'lobby' activity has to be made by Mayors and County Council Presidents. If we look at Local Governments' (LGs) financial situation for the entire post-communist period (see Table 27), we can discern an enormous reliance of these institutions on

central allocations. In terms of national average, we can see the lowest level of autonomy in income, in 2004, when only 19.21% of LGs budget was constituted from own tax collection.

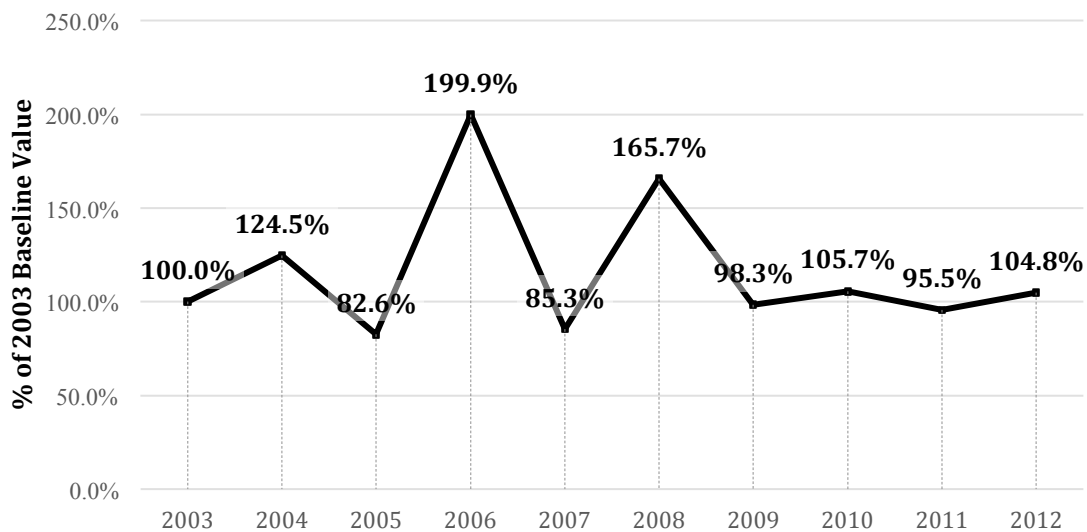
Table 27. Local Governments' (LGs) Financial Situation (1999-2012)

Year	Total Income (in national currency)	Autonomous Income (in national currency)	Percentage Autonomous Income
1999	22.242.526,20	9.888.248,60	44,46%
2000	6.212.395,49	2.278.434,53	36,68%
2001	71.185.235,39	15.477.440,83	21,74%
2002	93.227.720,43	20.534.228,39	22,03%
2003	130.780.745,57	27.291.786,78	20,87%
2004	159.562.852,67	30.759.622,70	19,28%
2005	19.480.864.263,35	8.697.491.665,00	44,65%
2006	27.708.584.983,43	12.152.103.660,05	43,86%
2007	36.805.163.013,40	17.317.436.303,12	47,05%
2008	43.629.115.432,00	20.587.707.747,00	47,19%
2009	43.526.070.486,00	21.117.607.538,00	48,52%
2010	43.922.200.747,00	21.251.403.599,00	48,38%
2011	44.803.868.892,00	21.968.906.756,00	49,03%
2012	45.419.275.145,00	21.622.553.877,00	47,61%

Source: compiled by the author based on data from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP)

Beyond the reliance on central transfers, we also see a decrease of the available financial resources for investments, as non-earmarked revenues (NER) on capital expenses of the Romanian LGs have remained generally low after 2008 (see Figure 14). The NER are important to LG because they can be used for various bottom-up needs (e.g. infrastructure damages), and problems can be more swiftly resolved than through centrally planned programmes. The little room to manoeuvre with budgetary allocations, on the part of local officials, makes them even more reliant on central transfers than before.

Figure 14. Non-Earmarked Revenues (NER) for Capital Expenses in Romanian LGs



Source: World Bank dataset

As this chapter will further detail, it is often the smaller administrative units that are most dependent on political favouritism, as their autonomous budgets can be as low as 5%. The budgetary empirical evidence shows in contrast the much better positioning of larger, and richer LGs, such as the subdivisions of the capital city of Bucharest, and other cities in Romania, whose own income is generally the same as the transfers from the centre. Thus, the relative power of the local party leaders in these constituencies is much higher. In such cases we see fewer lump sum transfer, like those from Governmental Discretionary Funds, as much as we see infrastructure, or housing developments.

The high reliance of LGs on Central allocations, especially in a EU driven tendency of prioritising national, integrated projects, makes them reliant on informal linkages with the ruling coalition at the national level. The local officials are highly determinant elements in the clientelistic system, as it is them that are the main drivers of electoral mobilization. As such, it is much easier for the central party leadership via central government, to capacitate them in a 'stick and carrot' system of compliance, then to create a genuine alignment of interests and goals. This is especially true in the growing

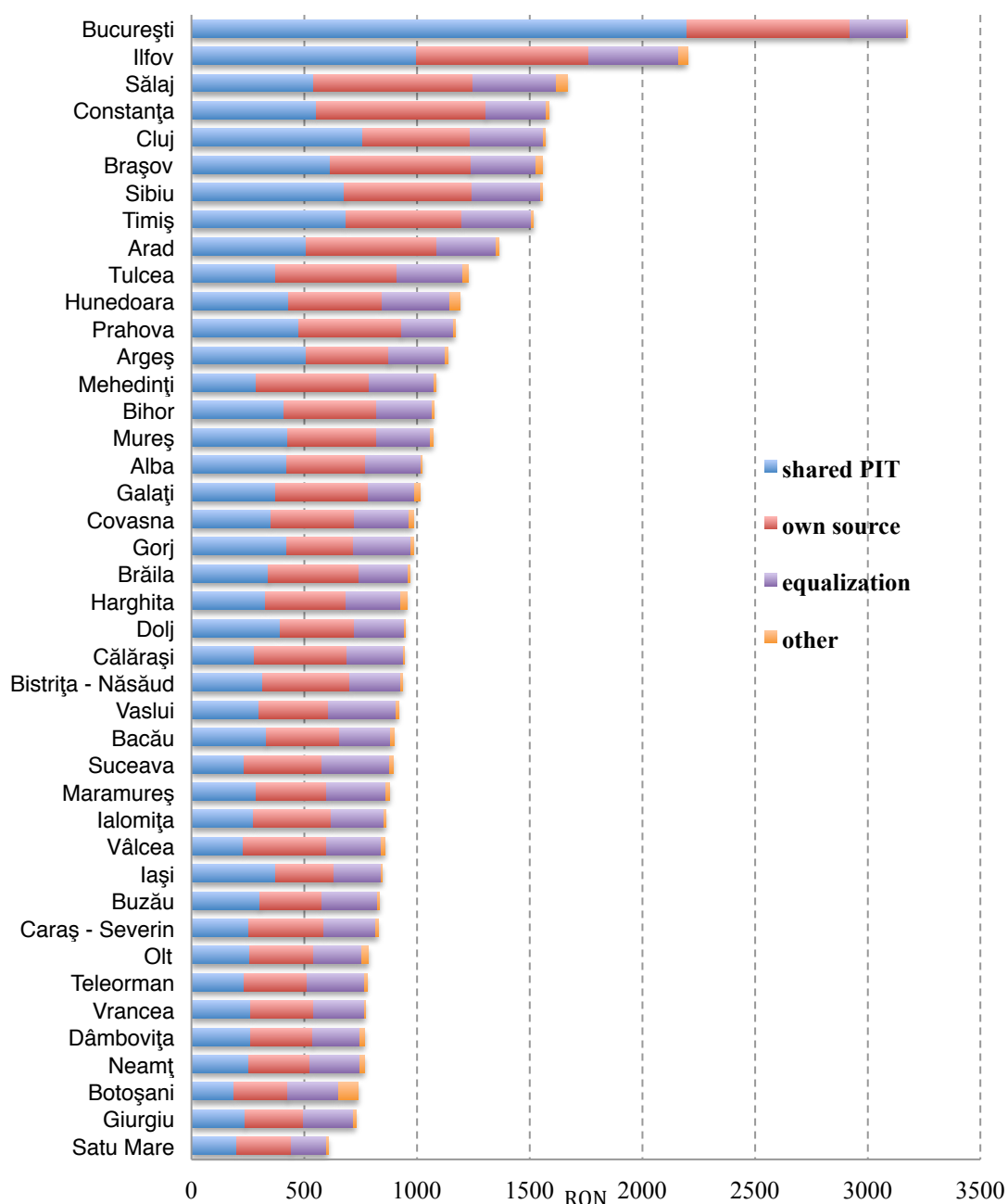
instability of the Romanian political scene, which sees high levels of party switching, and coalition changes.

As we can see in Figure 15, if we compare the budgetary situation of Local Governments in Romania, we do not find significant variation. It is clear that the capital city of Bucharest, and few of the main municipalities (i.e. Constanța, Cluj, Brașov, Sibiu) have much more discretionary revenues at their disposal. Still, most of the 42 counties in Romania remain largely dependent on Central Budgetary transfers, and as presented in Table 27, have a very small fraction of their budgets derived from own revenues.

The clientelistic system in Romania is systematically deployed at the level of local governments because: (1) it is here that it is most effective in developing roots in society and thus anchoring a cartel party in society, and (2) it is the level at which it is easiest to deploy the direct/traceable transfer of goods and services to political clients. As mentioned before in chapter 2 and 3, the local governments in Romania enjoy more extended prerogatives than local governments in other CEE countries, given the public administration architecture. Nevertheless, they remain reliant on central budgetary transfers to exert all of these prerogatives.

“Local governments in Romania are important. They are the primary providers of a range of infrastructure services, including local road construction and maintenance, solid waste management, and, in larger cities, urban transport and district heating. Through their shared ownership of regional utility companies, they provide water supply and sanitation. They also play a major role in the social sectors. They are the paymasters for teachers’ salaries and are responsible for the maintenance of primary and secondary school buildings, the administration of certain social assistance programs, and the operation of regional hospitals and residential facilities for the disabled. All in all, they account for roughly one-quarter of total government expenditure.”
(World Bank Romania, Romania Decentralization Process Final

Figure 15. Discretionary Revenues in Local Governments (per capita)



Source: World Bank Romania, Romania Decentralization Process Final Report on Romania's Local Government, February 5, 2016

6.1.2. Discretionary Governmental Funds Allocations

An evocative example of discretionary use of public funds lies in the process of establishing and allocating the special funds at the government's disposition, such as the Reserve Fund or the Intervention Fund. These funds

have been designed to cover “urgent or unexpected events” such as natural calamities (Law no. 500/2002). In practice, they have been increasingly used to supplement the budget of electoral strongholds of the governing parties, or those local party leaders that need be motivated to remain loyal to the central government (e.g. local officials from minority partners in the ruling coalition).

These funds are discretionary tools that through their nature serve well in supplementing the different public institutions’ budget over the year. From the point of view of the proprietary use of public funds and clientelistic linkages, it is interesting to evaluate the connection between governmental allocations and the political affiliation of the recipient LGs. In this regard, two problematic patterns emerge in the management of these special funds: an obvious politicization of the allocations, and an exponential increase of their value over consecutive years.

The analysis of the distribution patterns of the Reserve Fund shows that there is a clear bias in favour of the ruling party’s mayors. Approximately 45% of these special allocations went to National Liberal Party’s (PNL) mayors in 2008, when this party was in power. Between 60-70% of the Reserve Fund were then annually channelled to the Democratic Liberal Party’s (PDL) mayors, after 2009, when this was the main ruling party. If we account for the fact that PDL had only achieved a 28.55% electoral score in the 2008 local elections, we can see that the politicization of these allocations surpasses by over two-folds what would have been the expected pattern of distribution.

Table 28. Evolution of Sums Allocated through Government Resolutions (H.G.) from the Reserve Fund and the Intervention Fund

Year	Total supplementary funds (RON)	Total supplementary funds (€)
1999	13,543,000	8,310,848
2000	164,626,000	82,495,521
2001	79,158,000	30,413,930
2002	263,482,000	84,300,078
2003	1,338,972,000	356,528,021
2004	2,665,112,000	657,531,029
2005	3,631,797,000	1,002,317,437
2006	6,229,067,000	1,767,361,895
2007	3,306,693,000	990,828,814
2008	3,892,618,000	1,057,001,113
2009	4,841,953,000	1,142,697,708
2010	2,812,369,000	668,037,008
2011	1,889,167,000	445,779,042

Source: compiled by the author based on official data from the Ministry of Public Finances (MFP) and average annual exchange rates established by the National Bank of Romania (NBR), available at: <http://www.bnr.ro/Cursul-de-schimb-3544.aspx>

Some of the many issues related to the constitution and allocation of these funds, have been mentioned in the Romanian Court of Accounts' Audit Report (2009b). According to it, between 2007 and 2008, over 3.5 mil. RON of the allocations from the special governmental funds, were illegally spent by local administrations. Some of the illegal utilisations mentioned in the Report were: changing the destination of the funds, deducting payments for public works that were never made, employee bonuses. Thus, 'no actual monitorization or control of how these allocations are used exists at the central level' (2009:35). Additionally, many of the beneficiary public

administrations did not make any formal requests for the allocation of supplementary funds, and most of the recipients of funds for ‘current capital expenses’ or non-earmarked revenues (NER) actually had surplus budgets. These findings, together with the absence of any official ranking or inventory of needs, strengthen the inference that transfer from these funds to local administrations were based on political affiliation.

Another problem with the supplementations of the special governmental funds is the timing when big sums are allocated—at the end of the year, when little else than bonuses, or other such current expenses can be made. An analysis of overall budgetary rectifications called this the ‘December effect’ (SAR 2009b). According to it, spikes correspond yearly to the month of December, when funds that were not used are redistributed to any fast spending purposes (e.g. direct acquisitions of goods and services, salary bonuses) so that the budget for the next year will not be diminished. In 2010, with only three days left until the end of the year, 177 mil. RON (approx. 42.1 mil. €) was sent to selected Local Governments (LGs) for “current capital expenses”, based on the Government Decision No. 1379/2010, passed on the 28th of December.

The Reserve Fund allocations have also been a stepping-stone in toppling Mihai Razvan Ungureanu’s short-lived government, on the 27th of April 2012. The subject of the debate was represented by allocations made to local administrations, shortly after assuming office, through a Government Decision No. 255/2012. Then opposition leader, Victor Ponta, argued they had committed abuse in office and grave damages to the interests of the citizens of the county Gorj (his Member of Parliament base since in 2008), where from 70 localities, only the 19 with mayors from the ruling coalitions received supplementary allocations from the central government.

That allocation Decision was thus one of the three arguments made for the impeachment of the Government in the joint motion titled *„Oprîți guvernul șantajabil. Așa nu, niciodată!”* (Stop the blackmailing government. Never like this!). This was the second impeachment motion ever to pass in the

Romanian Parliament. It argued that the government decision was illegal, because in one round, it distributed 648.2 mil. RON (approx 150 mil. €) to LGs, even if the budgeted value of the Reserve Fund for the entire year was only 224. mil RON (approx. 52 mil. €).

The preferential distribution of funds is clear when comparing the list of allocations with the political affiliation of the leaders of the beneficiary LGs. These are in proportion of 95.15% granted to mayors or county council presidents affiliated to the ruling coalition, comprising PDL, UDMR, UNPR and the parliamentary group representing ethnic minorities (see Table 29). The top beneficiary, the Dâmbovița County Council—a PDL stronghold, receives 10 mil. RON (approx 2.20 mil. €)—more than all LGs controlled by opposition leaders, which received in total only 8 mil. RON.

Table 29. Political Distribution Reserve Fund before Local Elections in 2012 (allocations of over 1,000,000 lei)

	Funds Allocated (thousand lei)	Electoral Share (2008 General Election)	Funds Allocated (percentage)
Ruling Coalition Parties (PDL, UDMR, UNPR, ethnic minorities)	158,442	42.88%*	95.15%
Opposition Parties (PSD, PNL, PC)	8,070	57.12%	4.85%
Total	166,512	100%	100.00%

Source: compiled by the author based on official data from the Government Decision (H.G.) 255/2012, the Permanent Electoral Authority (AEP), Centralizator Rezultate Finale Alegeri Locale 2008

* The electoral share results do not account for the UNPR share of the votes, as this party only split from PSD in 2010, and as such its electoral share was subsumed to that of the PSD.

More than 25 mil. RON (or over 15% of the allocations on the top values list), were given to recently converted local political leaders to the ruling parties¹⁴⁹. With local elections two months away, these transfers seem

¹⁴⁹ Călărași, Voluntari, Craiova, Deva, Bănești, Bihor County Council, Tibănești, Dolhasca, Calafat, Iași County Council, Huși

to have served as incentives for party switching. The infusion of additional funds into selected local budgets is an efficient way to strengthen the linkages between the party leadership, controlling central executive positions, and the party's territorial network. In turn, the mayors and county council presidents receiving such funds have a better resource base to attract voters through clientelistic exchange channels, thus improving theirs and the party's electoral chances.

Some of the most generous allocations of the Government Decision No. 255/2012 went to localities or counties ruled by ethnic minorities—55 mil. RON (approx. 13 mil. €). The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) represented the Hungarian minority in the Parliament, and Government. The other beneficiaries of allocations, such as the UBBR (Bulgarian Union from Banat Romania), the FEDGR (Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania), or the ZHR (Croats Union in Romania), can be linked to the parliamentary group of ethnic minorities, also part of the ruling coalition at that time. Still, at the impeachment motion, the ethnic minorities group rallied with the opposition parliamentarians in voting against the Ungureanu Government.

Finally, while the allocations from the discretionary governmental funds are relatively small, compared to the total value of most local budgets, the lack of transparency and favoritism makes them highly contestable. Also, given their constitution as instruments in case of emergency, we can find stringent examples where such allocations were needed but not granted—Brad locality was left without heating in winter, after the prices tripled, and the local budget was unable to subsidize them anymore¹⁵⁰. In contrast, a recent penal investigation conducted by the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) on the former mayor of Cluj, Sorin Apostu, revealed that in exchange for kickbacks of minimum 10% of the allocated sum, any project could obtain financing from the Reserve Fund.

¹⁵⁰ Neagoe, L., 2011. Primarul din Brad a intrat în greva foamei, *România Liberă*, 22nd of November

Certain estimates suggest that in 2008, when the clientelistic allocations were highest due given the local and national elections taking place that year, that the sum of the aforementioned discretionary allocations represented over 70% of all the investments done through local budgets¹⁵¹. In other words, in a cartelized system, in which the parties in office could discretionary control the public resources, the local party branches of those parties benefited in a substantial manner from material resources distributed through the inner clientelistic linkages of the party organizations.

Apart from the Government Reserve and Intervention Funds, over the period 2004 and 2011 there were other funds available for politicized allocations, but these were smaller in size, and fell under the control of various Ministries. For example, in between 2008 and 2011, there was an Environmental Fund managed by the Ministry of Environment to develop sewage infrastructure, and green spaces in LGs. Similarly, in between 2007 and 2011 the Ministry of Education managed a school fund that permitted ministerial allocations for investments, as well as maintenance or capital investments to LGs. Other special funds like the one set up on the occasion of massive floods in 2006, continued to exist until 2012, permitting opaque transfers to LGs directly from the Prime Minister. These funds were reorganized by subsequent governing coalition, and since 2013, all local development investments (e.g. sewage infrastructure, roads, bridges, school maintenance, public building construction and maintenance) are financed through the National Local Development Programme (PNDL)¹⁵².

6.1.3. Centrally Controlled Development Projects Serving Electoral Purposes

As previously mentioned, in the case of larger, more developed constituencies, where the discretionary fund allocation is harder to justify, or would make only a marginal impact, the clientelistic linkages employ other public policy instruments. This section will address some of the regional

¹⁵¹ Clientelistic Index, Expert Forum Study <http://expertforum.ro/en/clientelism-map/>, last accessed on 22.11.2015

¹⁵² Emergency Government Decision No 28/2013

development projects that could have been subjected to the most discretionary concentration of resources, and also served very well for electoral mobilization purposes: thermic rehabilitation, public housing, and infrastructure.

The first references to an insulation and recladding programme for apartment buildings dates back to the social-democratic government of Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, being mentioned in the Government Decision No. 29/2000, and later the Law No. 325/2002. Little evidence exists on who were the beneficiaries and on what basis funds were being allocated. This is mostly because only marginal sums were channeled through this programme. A first tentative surge in the programme is recorded under the center right coalition government of Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, when a first list of only 11 beneficiary buildings emerges¹⁵³. Still, it is not until the consecutive Cabinets of Prime Minister Emil Boc, that this programme achieves a size worthy of consideration, both in terms of funds—85.7 mil. € in 2009, and in terms of spread—79 localities in 2009.

The insulation and recladding programme is intended for the numerous apartment buildings in the municipalities and cities of Romania. Most of these have been built under the extensive urbanisation projects of the communist regime. The financing algorithm of the programme instructs that 20% of the total cost of the renovation works will be paid by the owners' associations, and the remaining 80% will be divided between the local authorities (30%) and the MDRT (50%). Nevertheless, many local administrations opted to pay from the local budget the remaining half of the costs, that the Ministry is not paying for, thus creating a completely free scheme of thermic rehabilitation to their electorate.

The official explanation for the implementation of the fully-funded scheme was that the owners' associations gathered with great difficulty their share of the costs, as these apartment buildings usually have very heterogenic socio-economic profiles of owners. Still, unofficially the electoral

¹⁵³ Government Decision No. 805/2005

motivation inevitably surfaces, as local administrations that had previously applied the initial partially-funded scheme, have opted for the fully-funded scheme in 2012, when local elections are taking place. Additionally, with the fully-funded scheme there is far lesser public scrutiny of the costs and the tender procedures, thus allowing for greater space of maneuver for preferential allocation of public contracts.

There are different aspects regarding the way in which the thermic insulation and recladding scheme that are problematic. On one hand, the evidence suggests preferential treatment in the public procurement procedures. One of the arguments supporting this inference is that there are significant variations in terms of prices per unit. In Bucharest, the same company—SC Tehnologica Radion SRL, charges public authorities in the 6th sector on average 78€ per square meter, in the 1st sector, it charges on average 93€ per square meter, and in the 3rd sector it charges 126€ per meter¹⁵⁴. This constitutes a variation of 48€ between different local authorities of the capital city that is not explained by variations in the works—all apartment buildings included in the program have very similar specifications (e.g. construction date, size).

Tehnologica Radion is not only the biggest receiver of public contracts in the period 2009-2010, but also subject to several investigations on fixed tenders led by the Competition Council. The same company is at the center of a formal notification of the European Commission regarding improper awarding proceedings. Furthermore, by looking at the market prices of such thermic rehabilitation works, we see considerable differences from the public authorities bills. PVC window profiles for example cost between 35€ and 75€ per square meter, while in the 3rd sector of Bucharest, the authorities pay 126€ per square meter.

While the preferential treatment in awarding procedures implies certain clientelistic connections between private contractors and local authorities, it does not however demonstrate a direct impact on electoral outcomes. The

¹⁵⁴ Lăcătuș, G., 2010. O afacere secretă pe bani publici, *România liberă*, 4th of June, available at: <http://romaniailibera.ro/special/investigatii/o-afacere-secreta-pe-bani-publici-190026>

electoral motivation, which is central to the clientelistic apparatus, is much more directly served by the selective allocation of funds to LGs. Thus, the recipients of supplementary central funding have a better chance to satisfy their electorate with more public works.

As was mentioned above, the thermic insulation and recladding programme has become a significant platform of public funds distribution only recently. For this reason this analysis is focused on the years 2009, 2010, and 2011. Thus, the official data on funds allocation from the Ministry of Regional Development (MDRT) is compiled with the political affiliation of each recipient local authority representative, as derived from the Permanent Electoral Authority's records, and press articles regarding electoral officials switching their political affiliation during their term in office. If the political affiliation had only been determined based on the electoral results from the last local elections in 2008, a distorted image would have resulted. This is because many mayors, elected from the opposition parties, had subsequently become important recipients of public funds after they switched to parties from the ruling coalition. Many times, this was not an official party membership change, as this would have conducted to the invalidation of their mandate, but rather public declarations of affiliation and engagement to run for office at the next elections from another party.

The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 30. We can see a clear politicization of the allocation of thermic rehabilitation funds, as 82.1% of these went to the ruling coalitions' mayors in 2009, 68.5% in 2010, and 82.79% in 2011. Throughout this period, the main ruling party was the PDL, but the composition of the ruling coalition changed after the presidential elections at the end of 2009. At that point, PSD and PC joined the ranks of the opposition, while UDMR and UNPR gained representation in the Boc II cabinet. These changes might explain why in 2010 there is a smaller indication of the influence of political criteria in funds allocation. Thus, it is also interesting to see that when the cabinet structure is clearly and swiftly divided between political parties, as in the case of cabinet Boc I (2009), there is greater inclination for pork-barrel politics, than in situations of political

uncertainty at the executive level. Also, the total value of the programme was greater in 2009, which was an electoral year, suggesting again the electoral calculus behind the implementation of such programmes.

Table 30. Thermic Rehabilitation Allocations (2009-2011)

	Political Affiliation	Total Funds Allocated (Lei)	Electoral Share (2008 General Election)	Total Funds Allocated (%)
2009	Ruling Parties (PDL, PSD, PC)	295,552,218	42.88%*	82.10%
	Opposition Parties	64,447,782	57.12%	17.90%
	Total	360,000,000	100%	100.00%
2010	Ruling Parties (PDL, UDMR, UNPR)	102,885,884.45	42.88%*	68.59%
	Opposition Parties	47,114,115.55	57.12%	31.41%
	Total	150,000,000.00	100%	100.00%
2011	Ruling Parties (PDL, UDMR, UNPR)	124,182,963.70	42.88%*	82.79%
	Opposition Parties	25,817,036.30	57.12%	17.21%
	Total	150,000,000.00	100%	100.00%

Source: compiled by the author based on official data from the Ministry for Regional Development and Tourism (MDRT)—Centralizatorul fondurilor alocate pe unitati administrativ-teritoriale in anul 2010, the Permanent Electoral Authority (AEP)—Centralizator Rezultate Finale Alegeri Locale 2008, and press articles regarding elected officials switching their political affiliation during their term in office

* The electoral share results do not account for the UNPR share of the votes, as this party only split from PSD in 2010, and as such its electoral share was subsumed to that of the PSD.

In 2011—82.79% of funds went to the ruling coalition, which is indicative of a consolidation of the new cabinet structure. What is interesting to observe is that preferentialism was not only exerted towards the main party—PDL that counts amongst its leaders the Minister of MDRT, Elena Udrea. Judging by the allocation pattern, there was a strong preoccupation to fuel the territorial network of parties with a weak territorial presence—UNPR and UDMR. This supported their declarations of standing together at the next

local elections in 2012. The subsequent disintegration of this coalition is indicative of the low efficiency of such clientelistic strategies for governing purposes (i.e. holding coalitions together). In contrast, the survival in office of the most of the smaller parties' local leaders, in the 2012 local elections, suggests a much larger impact in the territory, even if it is mostly constrained to local efficiency.

The organizational challenges of the coalitions partners were different. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) is only a strong presence in the counties of Covasna and Harghita, where the Hungarian ethnic minority is numerous. It has some electoral strongholds in the Mureş county too, but it is much more important to prove administrative capacity here, than the simple ethnic identification, as the electorate is more heterogenic. Thus, either to consolidate or to extend its position, the thermic rehabilitation programme served as a good platform.

The National Union for Romania's Progress (UNPR) on the other hand, is a newly established political party, formed in 2010 with deputies and senators that left the Social Democratic Party (PSD). It achieved parliamentary representation under the PSD electoral sign, and needed to build a new organizational network by the 2012 elections. For both of these parties' organizational challenges, the allocations from the thermic rehabilitation programme, like the ones from the discretionary funds, are an important instrument in supporting their local officials. This in turn, preserves the latters' loyalty towards the party leadership.

The different housing programmes developed by the National Housing Agency (ANL) respond to a heightened need for affordable housing in a country where very little public housing has been built after the collapse of the communist regime. Further more, exploiting this tension between the demand and the supply, the real estate market in major cities in Romania has known a bubble similar to that of the rest of the world. Thus, in the face of a meager market supply, and very poor price per quality ratio, any public housing programme is a powerful electoral magnet. The most widespread in recent

years have been youth and social housing projects. Another interesting category has been represented by schemes dedicated to professional, such as resident doctors¹⁵⁵, or army personnel¹⁵⁶. The general housing developments appear to address the entire electorate, attracting support for any party that implements them. Meanwhile, the professionally targeted schemes are much more likely to be, at least partially, a reward system for different parties' specific electorate.

The evidence suggests that there is a very high degree of politicization in youth housing programmes allocations. Judging by the official records, we can see that both in 2009, and in 2010, allocations made from the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism under this programme, were directed mainly at localities where the mayor belonged to one of the ruling parties. Out of the top ten recipients of funds for this housing programme, in 2009 eight belonged to the ruling parties PDL or PSD, and in 2010, seven belonged only to the main ruling party PDL.

Again private contractors play a role in the clientelistic system, as there are unjustifiably big variations between the prices to build one apartment in Maramureş County for example—on average 170,777 RON (approx. 40,000 €), and Gorj County—on average 7,755 RON (approx. 1,800 €). Furthermore, based on the lack of transparency of how the final beneficiaries lists are compiled, numerous scandals emerge of political clients receiving apartments through these housing schemes¹⁵⁷.

The National Infrastructure Development Programme (PNDI) is a programme of public investment in infrastructure established in 2010, as part of the wider Programme of Investments from Public Funds. Although it was established for developments in public infrastructure, especially roads, the PNDI quickly became the center of political debates and contradictions. The

¹⁵⁵ Agerpress, 2008. *PDL acuză PNL că foloseşte locuinţele ANL pentru capital electoral*, 28th of May

¹⁵⁶ NewsIn, 2011. *Oprea: 2500 de locuinţe ANL din Ghencea vor reveni personalului MapN*, 18th of March

¹⁵⁷ Gândul, 2009, *Locuinţele ANL, o superofertă guvernamentală pentru „tinerii” descurcăreţi*, 5th of May

most pertinent questions about this programme were raised by Jeffrey Franks, the IMF representative in Romania, who claimed that ‘PNDI is not captured in the yearly budget’, which leads to the risks of funds being spent without proper oversight and a total lack of investment prioritization¹⁵⁸¹⁵⁹.

The opposition representatives, claim that PNDI’s ‘sole purpose is to distribute electoral bribes’¹⁶⁰. These allocations were sizeable, with 2.25 bil. RON (approx. 527 mil. €) in 2012¹⁶¹. The politicization of this programme’s allocations is suggested by the fact that 250 mayors from the ruling party—PDL, received financing in 2012, but only 85 mayors from the opposition—PSD and PNL.

A recent corruption sentence against former MP Alin Trăsculescu revealed how the clientelistic networks feeding from such projects involved various strata of the parties and the administration. According to prosecutors, in between 2010-2012, he used his position at the national level for influence civil servants from the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism to certify allocations from PNDI to Vrancea county, where he was the leader of the local party organization of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL)¹⁶². Subsequently he would persuade the contracted companies to subcontracted parts of the project to companies from whom he would solicit kickbacks. As such the programme itself was not furthering public works, but fueling a local party network.

Additionally, the program’s objective to rehabilitate 10,000 km of public roads is overshadowed by the significant discrepancies, recorded in official documentation, in the costs involved by these projects: the Teleorman County Council manages road rehabilitation works for approx. 21.4 mil. €, the Mureş County Council conducts the same works for approx. 771,600 €, and Timiş County Council rehabilitates and modernizes its public roads for only 234,000

¹⁵⁸ Jeffrey Franks, IMF Mission Chief for Romania, interview in *Hotnews*, 7.02.2012

¹⁵⁹ Cristian Petrescu, minister of MDRT (2012), interview in *Mediafax*, 2.03.2012

¹⁶⁰ Rovana Plumb, MEP PSD, interview RTV, 16.03.2012, 20:47

¹⁶¹ Andreea Vass, economic councilor of Prime Minister Emil Boc, *Ziarul Financiar*, 14.12.2011

¹⁶² Evenimentul Zilei, <http://www.evz.ro/magistratii-cab-i-au-redus-drastic-pedepsele-fostului-deputet-pdl-alin-trasculescu.html>, last accessed on 25.06.2016

€. Although these discrepancies may be partly explained by the variation in the specificities of each rehabilitation project, the price variation tends to be related to the strength of local party leaders with regards to private contractors. The stronger the incumbent party leader (i.e. Mayor, County Council President) is, the bigger the prices are, as the rationale of clientelistic party elites is not to drive public costs down, but up. As a Romanian civil servant puts it: ‘the higher the prices, the higher the share for the politician or his party’¹⁶³.

The PNDI programme was dismantled through the International Monetary Fund partnership agreement because of the lack of transparency in allocations. It was however transformed into the National Regional Development Programme (PNDR) under the mandate of the Social Democrat, Liviu Dragnea, at the reorganized Ministry of Administration and Regional Development (MDRAP)¹⁶⁴. The central allocations to LGs through PNDR programme were substantial, starting with approximately 85 mil. € in 2013, to 171 mil. € in 2014, and an estimate of more than 3 bil. € for 2015-2018. Furthermore, while the PNDI allocations were Governmental Decisions, the PNDR allocations have been solely ministerial decisions. The transfers consolidate the dependency relationship between the center and the periphery within the Social Democratic Party: “the allocations are too small to be able to finish a project in due time, and as such you remain dependent on the central leader for the annual transfers... you’re never sure you’ll be covered”¹⁶⁵.

6.2. Clientelistic Nexus: Public Procurement and Party Financing

The clientelistic linkages are intrinsically dependent on the availability of resources. Through cartelization, these channels use predominantly public resources. Still, there is an underexplored link on how public funds reach the party organizations. As we find empirical support for political allocations in Romania, we also need to see the mechanisms through which they become

¹⁶³ M.D., interview with the author 14.05.2015

¹⁶⁴ Emergency Government Ordinance No. 96/2012

¹⁶⁵ Marcel Prună, Mayor of small LG (Pipirig) in Neamț county, interview with the author 07.05.2015

more than pork-barrel politics. Public procurement becomes an important clientelistic tool as both at the national, and local level, political leaders holding office use it to fuel their electoral campaigns. Furthermore, local party bosses who manage to ensure through intra-party power dynamics, preferential allocations from the central government, are able to fuel their own patronage networks.

Still, the legislation on party financing, and electoral expenses in Romania¹⁶⁶ is one of the most detailed in the Central and East European setting (Casal-Bertoa and Van Biezen 2014). Although there is significant leeway in the possible sources of collection (e.g. private donors, anonym donations, membership fees), political organizations, whether local, or national, have to have declare all sources of income.

In this context, we find the link between public procurement contracts, with national or local public institutions (e.g. road infrastructure development, cleaning services) and donations to the patron political parties. The evidence presented in this chapter establishes the direct link of registered party donations from companies that benefitted from public contracts engaged by the same party's representatives. Still, we should consider this to be only a proxy measure of the overall transfers of resources from public procurement contracts, to party benefactors. The majority of such transfers are however done in an informal manner, and lest of corruption investigations, we cannot systematically investigate their value, or usage.

The preferential interaction of public officials with private economic agents is generally explored by the research concerned with the corruption phenomenon. The research shows why this is frequently a conceptual error, as most of these instances are not merely examples of corruption, but rather phases of the clientelistic linkage system.

In this setting, private companies that benefit from preferentially allocated public contracts become intermediaries or brokers, helping ruling parties and politicians to transfer public resources into party funds (Gherghina

¹⁶⁶ Law no 14/2003 regarding the functioning and organization of political parties

and Volintiru 2015). This sort of transfer becomes significant only in the context of elections, when clientelistic distribution of resources is important to mobilize the voters. This is not to say that public officials do not engage in this sort of linkages for personal gains. But, within the clientelistic model, it is important to go beyond wasteful public expenditure. In the Romanian case study, we can trace back party donations to preferential access to government contracts or procurement.

From the internal organizational point of view, the literature on party politics has made comprehensive assessments of why party financing is plagued by multiple issues in the context of decreasing party membership in most democracies (Hopkin 2004). This problem is significantly augmented in the post-communist new democratic setting, where political parties are even worse organizationally equipped to support their logistical necessities (Gheghina et al 2011). Thus, clientelistic strategies of fuelling political parties appear to be an effective compensation for such deficiencies. Still, the existing research on party finances failed to completely unveil the specific mechanisms through which ruling political parties manage to fund their organizations.

6.2.1. Public Procurement as a Facilitator of Clientelistic Transfers

The empirical evidence presented here looks at private contractors that receive payments through public procurement contracts, and can also be found on the top donors list of the major Romanian political parties. The size and problems of public procurement make it easy to transform public funds into private funds. The European Commission estimates the average value of public procurements in the EU Member States at 18% of the country's GDP, while Romania allocates approximately 10% of its GDP¹⁶⁷. The procurement budget is not included in the annual national budget as a stand-alone

¹⁶⁷ *Public procurement in Europe Cost and effectiveness, A study on procurement regulation.* Prepared for the European Commission, March 2011, London Economics, Ecorys, and PWC, http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/docs/modernising_rules/cost-effectiveness_en.pdf, last accessed on the 26.06.2016

category, but as part of each public authority's budget making it extremely difficult to investigate it rigorously.

There are two major categories of problems regarding public procurement procedures in Romania. First, there is the issue of proper control mechanisms. Although the Electronic System for Public Procurement (SEAP) is active since 2006, over the past years, only an annual average of 16% of Romanian enterprises opted to access tender documents and specifications in the electronic procurement system, compared to the EU average of 21%¹⁶⁸. It is common practice for the open advertisements on SEAP to be discussed, or negotiated in person between a representative of the contracting authority and the winning economic operator:

‘it’s been over 3 years since I’ve posted my offers on SEAP, and I have dozens of contracts with local authorities annually (...) but I’ve only been contracted once without having “discussed” in advance, face to face with the person responsible. And that one wasn’t even a profitable (i.e. the contract)’¹⁶⁹.

While official standards have been set to establish the framework for each contracting authority throughout the year, there are large difference between these principles and what happens in practice. Most of these refer to the allocated budget for different procedures, and to the disregard for the initial inventory of necessities (Ministry of Public Finance 2010/2011, Romanian Court of Accounts 2008/2009/2010/2011). Second, there are preferential criteria set in the tender book with the purpose of favouring certain contractors, in contradiction to legal provisions¹⁷⁰. Another way to exert positive discrimination for certain economic operators is to change the selection criteria during the procedure, leaving ‘unwanted’ applicants with insufficient time to comply.

There are a number of institutions charged with the continuous verification and, if necessary, the sanctioning of the assignment procedures—

¹⁶⁸ Eurostat, last accessed on 26.06.2016

¹⁶⁹ private contractor G.V., interview with the author 03.03.2012

¹⁷⁰ Government Decision No. 34/2006

National Authority for Regulating and Monitoring Public Procurement (ANRMAP), National Council for Solving Complaints (CNSC), or the Unit for Coordination and Verification of Public Procurement (UCVAP) within the Ministry of Public Finances (MFP), but these are mostly understaffed: 350 employees in total in 2010. Given the volume of annual public procurement proceedings—approximately 80,000 per year, the number of contracting authorities (ministries, county councils, town halls, public institutions etc.)—approximately 11,000, and the value of such contracts—approximately 22 bil. € per year, it remains a vastly undersized monitoring apparatus.

Due to the limitations of the control system, multiple problems arise. One of which would be the instrumental use of complaints. According to a former ANRMAP's director, Cristina Trailă, 'In Romania, complaints have become a national sport, given that they are cost-free, (...) there are companies established with the sole purpose of contesting public procurement procedures'¹⁷¹. Indeed, the number of decisions on complaints managed by the responsible authority—CNSC, has risen from only 338 in 2006, to 6000 in 2011. This trend may well be interpreted as a maturing system that evolves in establishing its checks and balances. But, the empirical evidence suggests that the growing number of complaints, intentionally or not, only leads to blockages in the open tender procedures, opening the way to direct awarding procedures while the investigations take place.

According to CNSC, the economic operators' complaints amounted to 39.92 bil. RON (approx. 9.4 bil. €) in 2010, which led to rectifications for contracts of 28.4 bil. RON (approx. 6.8 bil. €) and the annulment of tenders of 11.48 bil. RON (approx. 2.7 bil. €)¹⁷². Despite the fact that fewer decisions were passed by CNSC on complaints in 2011, compared to 2010, the value of the procedures under question rose to 57.61 bil. RON (approx. 13.6 bil. €)¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ quoted in Anghel, I, 2010. Romania la raport—Piața achizițiilor publice, 12 mld. € pe an. Contracte cu dedicație și o factură umflată de cel puțin 20%, *Ziarul Financiar*, 5th of May

¹⁷² data made available to the author by CNSC, in response to formal requests based on the law no. 544/2001 regarding free access to public information

¹⁷³ data made available to the author by CNSC, in response to formal requests based on the law no. 544/2001 regarding free access to public information

One of the main functions of contesting an awarding procedure is to stall the open tender procedures and to prolong direct or interim appointments.

For example, in 2009, a private contractor, PA&CO International SRL forwarded complaints on two open tender procedures conducted by the National Company for Motorways and National Roads in Romania (CNADNR) for maintenance works on the motorways A1 and A2¹⁷⁴. While these complaints were being analysed by the monitoring institutions, the initial tender was suspended, and an intermediate contract of over 1 mil. € was directly awarded to the very same company that forwarded the complaints in the first place. CNADNR is on ANRMAP's top penalties list yearly¹⁷⁵, and is also the contracting authority with the highest budget in the period 2009-2010—over 1.3 bil. €. PA&CO International—a frequent winner of public works, is currently under investigation by the Romanian Competition Council on several allegations of fixing tenders, along with other companies that won the highest values of public contracts in recent years.

Such linkages between public institutions, and private contractors would not be possible without party patronage, and appointments to key civil service positions within the public administration apparatus. That is why illegal or unethical conduct in public procurement procedures are not mere examples of corruption, but rather sequences of the contemporary clientelistic system, which grows highly more reliant on state capture, and because of this deploys multiple layers of clientelistic linkages—patronage, preferential allocations, discretionary public contracts etc. But, all the clientelistic layers serve the central purpose of reinforcing the chances of surviving in power, through informal exchanges.

The unnecessary level of bureaucracy is another issue connected to the control system. To a certain extent, it may be regarded as a side effect of the aforementioned problem of numerous complaints. In this sense, many public servants are tempted to cover themselves with piles of documentation:

¹⁷⁴ CNADNR Ongoing Public Procurement Works, ID 91/92, documentation available at http://www.cnadnr.ro/proceduri_derulare.php?show=2&step=5

¹⁷⁵ ANRMAP, 2007/2008/2009/2010/2011. Raport Anual de Activitate

‘the more signatures there are, the more diluted the responsibility is’¹⁷⁶. This often means that inefficient and otherwise unnecessary procedures and guarantees are established just in case of an investigation. While proper control mechanisms require a detailed documentation and specific selection criteria, a study analyzing the many examples of irrelevant requests asserts that: ‘bureaucratic obstacles (disproportionate requests for useless documentation) are either symptoms of professional insecurity, or means to manipulate tenders’ (SAR 2009). Additionally, significant disruptions occur in the tender scheduler due to the time consuming nature of the filing and checking all the documents required.

Each contracting public institutions has to develop an Annual Public Procurement Plan (*Planul anual de achiziții publice*) (PAAP). Discrepancies are often signaled regarding the disregard for the initial inventory of necessities. The modification of the PAAP requires the consent of the legislative forum, which is the County or Local Council, for LGs. The discretionary nature of this modification procedure reveals the strength of the local party leader to mobilize support from members. We see over 50 amendments to the PAAP (e.g. Dolj County Council in 2010), or surpassing the initial budget by over 500% (e.g. Arges County Council in 2010).

Similar to the discrepancy between procurement plans and procurement activity, Romania also faces the problem of great variations in acquisition prices. The variations may be the result of differing circumstances, quantity of order and other such pricing factors, but they are significant even in cases when no other factors vary. For example, the same type of litterbin costs on average 240 RON (approx. 56.73 €) to be put on the streets of Arad, while in Brașov it costs on average 1,353 RON (approx. 319.32 €)¹⁷⁷.

Another similar practice that signals clear intentionality: the wide spread practice of using addenda (*acte adiționale*) to extend initial awarding conditions. By analyzing the content of such modifications to the initial contracts, two principal reasons for elaborating an addendum arise: to extend

¹⁷⁶ Cristina Trăilă, former director ANRMAP, interview in *Gândul*, 25.09.2011

¹⁷⁷ *Institutul pentru Politici Publice* Data Research 2012, last accessed on 11.05.2013

the deadline, or to increase the value of the contract. The problem with the addenda is that they end up creating substantially different conditions for the private contractor than were stipulated in the initial agreement (Romanian Court of Accounts 2011). This means that the tender procedures and the selection criteria become a showcase that can easily be ignored—‘I prefer settling the conditions beforehand, but if there’s “trouble” (i.e. competing offers), I accept whatever conditions I have to in order to secure the contract and we’ll modify them afterwards so that everyone is happy’¹⁷⁸. An evocative example in this case is a public works contract of approx. 41.3 mil. € awarded by the Ilfov County Council in 2010, that was afterwards modified through 10 addenda, through which it allocated an additional 45.8 mil. € to the private contractor, thus more than doubling the initial value of the contract.

Other ways to circumvent legal constraints and deliver public contracts to the preferred clients include manipulations of the framework agreement. The framework agreement is usually signed between a contracting authority and several private contractors ranked according to their prices (lowest to highest), and the public works are offered in cascade. Thus, if the first company on the list declines, the offer goes to the second and so on. The “client company” may be positioned somewhere in the middle of the list, so that the ranking of prices is respected¹⁷⁹. As the arrangements go, the companies with lower prices usually turn down the offer, the “client company” is granted the contract at higher prices, and then outsources the actual work to the higher ranked companies, with lower prices, that have already officially declined the offer¹⁸⁰. Thus, the “client company” turns profit just by intermediating, and the other companies are satisfied to get the contract¹⁸¹.

Finally, the empirical evidence has revealed an interesting practice regarding the manipulation of the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV)

¹⁷⁸ private contractor G.P., interview with the author 06.03.2012

¹⁷⁹ private contractor B.P., interview with the author 22.02.2012

¹⁸⁰ private contractor B.P., interview with the author 22.02.2012

¹⁸¹ Fining decisions of the Competition Council of Romania against colluding private contractors for road infrastructure works,

http://www.consiliulconcurentei.ro/uploads/docs/items/id8121/amenzi_marcaje_noiembrie_2012.pdf, last accessed on 26.06.2016

codes¹⁸² too. It involves directly awarding contracts of values under the tender limit (less than 15,000 €) to private contractors for multiple CPV codes, thus raising the sum allocated to what would have well been a tender contract. This practice is problematic when it ends up attributing different contracts for the same procedures, just to raise the total value of sums awarded. For example an interviewee claimed that another private contractor had been awarded contracts for both the main CPV category—“service and maintenance”, as well as the sub-categories—“service” and “maintenance”¹⁸³.

Contracting authorities help by either choosing to look away, or by taking part in different preferential awarding schemes. In fact, it is the political interventions that most Romanians see as the primary incentive for fixing tenders—44%, and they attribute the blame in a distant second place to the control mechanisms—22%¹⁸⁴. Consequently, Romanians blame the political appointees that rule public institutions—79%, and a vast majority believe contracts to be awarded on political criteria—92%¹⁸⁵.

In terms of the competitiveness of the award process, Romania is amongst the lowest scoring EU members, with an average of only 3.8 offers per procurement (when the legal limit is often 3), as opposed to the top group countries, such as Spain, Germany, and Portugal, who receive an average of 7 or more bids per procurement¹⁸⁶. Preferential selection is ensured through the criteria of the tender book with the purpose of favoring certain operators/contractors, in contradiction to legal provisions¹⁸⁷. Another way to exert positive discrimination for certain economic operators is to change the selection criteria during the procedure, leaving ‘unwanted’ applicants with insufficient time to comply.

¹⁸² single classification system for public procurement describing the subject of the contracts

¹⁸³ private contractor A.V., interview with the author 23.04.2014

¹⁸⁴ *Institutul pentru Politici Publice* Data Research 2011, last accessed on 11.05.2013

¹⁸⁵ *Institutul pentru Politici Publice* Data Research 2011, last accessed on 11.05.2013

¹⁸⁶ European Commission, SEC (2011) 853, Evaluation Report

Impact and Effectiveness of EU Public Procurement Legislation, accessible here

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/2/2011/EN/SEC-2011-853-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>, last accessed on 26.06.2016

¹⁸⁷ Government Decision No. 34/2006

The European Commission called on Romania to apply procedural transparency and ensure equal treatment for applicants in connection with a public works contract for the modernization of road infrastructure. The contract was worth approx. 110 mil. € and was awarded by the municipal authorities of Sector 3, in Bucharest. According to the Commission's press release, 'the authorities could not have performed an objective evaluation of the bids', because 'during the procedure they made changes to a number of mandatory conditions in the procurement notice, including the selection criteria', and the contract was awarded to 'an applicant whose bid included a large number of anomalies in terms of prices and deadlines tendered'¹⁸⁸.

6.2.2. Party Financing through Private Donations

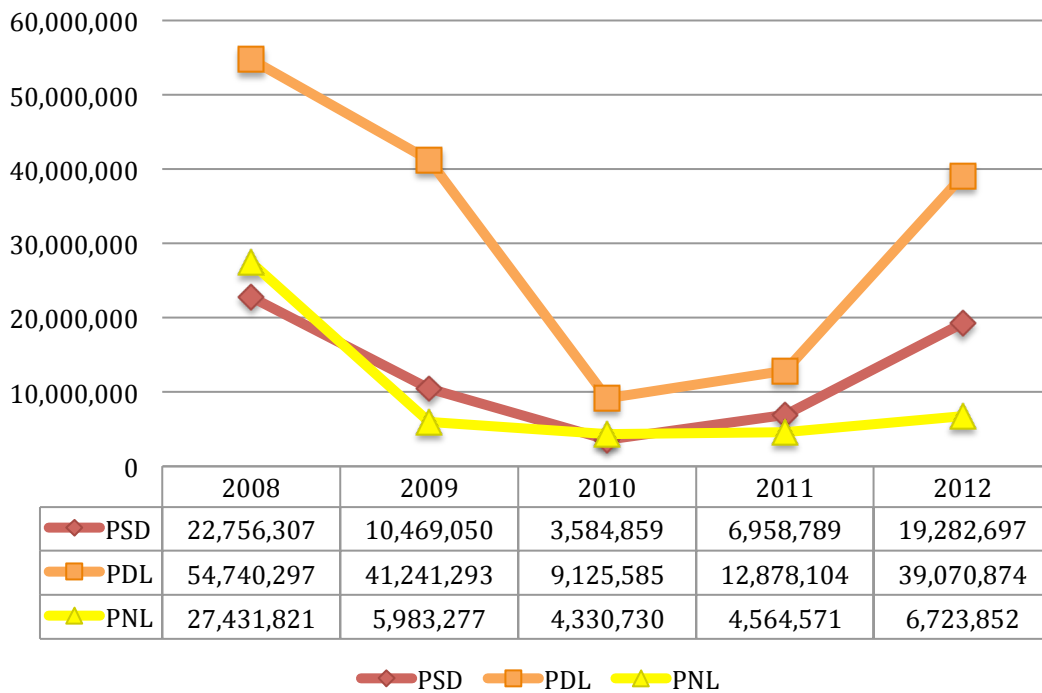
Given the current context of decreasing political participation and party membership, the fees are a marginal source of income to contemporary political parties. The most important source of party funding is currently represented by donations, as public funding in Romania is lower than in Western democracies. As the donations represent large sums of money, it is important to assess their source, and implicit purpose. It is unlikely that in a context of political disenchantment, contributions to political parties are driven by ideological values. A more plausible alternative explanation would be the charismatic force of political leaders that can drive up partisan support. As the general trend of collections, for all the major parties remain proportionally similar (see Figure 16), it seems that this is not the main explanation for party donations in Romania either.

If we look at the overall level of party donations for the three main political parties in Romania, we see that for the entire period 2008-2012, the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) managed to accumulate the distinctively largest annual values. The Social Democrats (PSD), and National Liberals (PNL) have not been able to accumulate similar levels of party donations. Within this timeframe, the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) was both the

¹⁸⁸ IP/12/73, Public procurement: the Commission acts to safeguard procedural transparency and ensure equal treatment of applicants in connection with a public works contract for the modernisation of road infrastructure in Bucharest

governing party, and controlled a substantial number of local governments (LGs). As such, the evidence is consistent with this chapter's assertion that it is the discretionary distribution of public resources, through public contracts, that will increase the value of donations from private contractors.

Figure 16. Party Donations in Romania (2008-2012) Total Value (RON)



Source: compiled by the author from the Official Gazette (2009-2013)

The overall value of party donations is predictably correlated with electoral periods: all three major parties record substantially higher levels in election years. There is also a higher level of donations in years with local and parliamentary elections (i.e. 2008, and 2012) as opposed to presidential elections (i.e. 2009). The level of financial resources obtained through donations seems to have more to do with the level of mobilization of the local leaders, rather than that of central party leadership. In the presidential election year, we see a consistently higher collection rate on the party of the incumbent president, supported by the ruling party of that time—the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL). The local organizations/local party leaders need to show their utility to the party leadership by means of producing such formal revenues. In contrast, as I show in the final section of this chapter,

presidential campaigns frequently involve large funding off the books, in return for various regulatory favors or appointments. Those however are measurable only in as far as they constitute the subject of an investigation.

Table 31. Private Donations Received by the Romanian Political Parties (mil. €)

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Premium Donations	Normal Donations	Premium Donations	Normal Donations	Premium Donations	Normal Donations	Premium Donations	Normal Donations	Premium Donations	Normal Donations
PDL	5.35	8.35	3.30	7.00	0.05	1.10	0.02	1.30	0.21	6.70
PNL	2.15	6.85	0.85	1.50	0.005	0.45	0.002	0.28	0.30	1.30
PSD	4.50	5.90	2.50	2.90	0.07	1.85	0.13	0.16	1.20	4.50
UDMR					0.003	0.10	0.006	0.20	0.001	1.00
PPDD										1.10

Note: In 2012, there is an additional 4.10 million € for the USL (PSD+PNL).

Source: Gherghina and Volintiru 2014, based on data from the Official Gazette (2009-2013), for the source database see Annex 1

Table 31 summarizes the amounts received by each party between 2008 and 2012. It can be easily observed that the amount of both premium and normal donations is considerably high in election years (2008, 2009 and 2012) compared to non-election years (see both Figure 16, and Table 31). Given that we look at party donations from the perspective of the clientelistic phenomenon, these hikes in funding during electoral years can be linked to the costs involved in campaigning and Election Day activities (e.g. vote-buying). As the three major parties have had relatively good chances to end up in the government coalition (with the exception of 2012), the received amounts are substantial.

**Table 32. Share of Financing Sources for the Romanian Political Parties
(2003-2010)**

	Year	State Funding		Member Fee		Donations		Total Revenues
PSD	2003	2,266,310	17.51%	7,256,352	56.08%	969,501	7.49%	12,939,590
	2004	2,266,310	5.45%	25,311,878	60.87%	7,503,087	18.04%	41,580,817
	2007	2,924,200	22.83%	5,698,889	44.50%	3,793,656	29.62%	12,807,638
	2008	2,924,200	7.09%	19,098,942	46.33%	18,879,601	45.80%	41,226,272
	2009	2,651,208	12.61%	10,309,590	49.03%	8,065,707	38.36%	21,026,505
	2010	2,284,258	34.99%	3,584,859	54.92%	389,505	5.97%	6,528,003
PDL	2003	812,027	35.65%	212,710	9.34%	1,113,792	48.91%	2,277,459
	2004	812,027	15.62%	1,099,322	21.15%	3,180,240	61.19%	5,197,553
	2007	1,599,130	10.45%	2,304,802	15.06%	11,159,289	72.93%	15,302,363
	2008	1,599,130	2.77%	21,375,888	36.97%	33,374,071	57.72%	57,821,701
	2009	2,636,000	6.05%	13,266,235	30.46%	27,655,223	63.49%	43,557,458
	2010	2,281,636	20%	4,349,937	38.13%	4,465,291	39.14%	11,407,221
PNL	2003	1,125,095	45.37%	491,497	19.82%	667,896	26.93%	2,480,064
	2004	1,125,095	13.38%	1,555,784	18.50%	4,962,015	59.01%	8,408,174
	2007	1,589,366	10.83%	2,877,868	19.61%	9,925,276	67.62%	14,677,061
	2008	1,589,366	3.50%	9,801,581	21.56%	33,198,234	73.03%	45,459,233
	2009	1,534,487	13.72%	3,384,632	30.26%	5,983,277	53.50%	11,183,458
	2010	1,322,125	16.90%	4,330,730	55.36%	1,835,019	23.46%	7,823,312
UDMR	2003	746,945	26.14%	567,169	19.85%	633,403	22.17%	2,857,472
	2004	746,945	16.16%	728,627	15.76%	3,019,316	65.32%	4,622,351
	2007	722,269	20.45%	638,939	18.09%	2,148,688	60.85%	3,531,119
	2008	512,422	6.33%	1,088,878	13.44%	6,475,613	79.95%	8,099,504
	2009	80,123	2.76%	636,608	21.94%	2,184,684	75.30%	2,901,414
	2010	20,882,660	94.32%	724,111	3.27%	431,896	1.95%	22,140,396

Source: Popescu and Soare 2015, Preda and Soare 2011, Ionaşcu and Soare 2011, Mateescu 2011, based on published data from the Permanent Electoral Authority

Party funding from private sources can take two forms: premium and normal donations. A premium donation refers to a supersized contribution. The average value of a regular fee / month is 2 € and all fees that exceed the value of 10 minimum wages should be declared (i.e. premium donations). Normal donations are constituted from money coming from private individuals and firms. The present analysis lumps them because quite often managers make individual donations in addition to their firm's contribution. This procedure masks the real donation made by a private firm.

The empirical data shows us where the top donors are located. Their territorial dispersion brings evidence linking them to clientelistic linkages. Each of the three major parties counts on extensive private contributions in those counties where they already have strong organizational bases, largely due to consecutive terms in office of local party leaders. The Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) has a large amount of donations in Bucharest (around 30% of top donations) and Cluj (10%-20% of top donations). The National Liberals' (PNL) benefit from substantial contributions of private companies based in Bucharest (around 27% of top donations). The Social Democrats' (PSD) have substantial donations from companies in Teleorman (40%-51% of top donations) and Constanta (17%-97% of top donations).

In most cases, the large coverage of party funding from one or two territorial organizations reflects their relative power to the central leadership. In the case of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) the Teleorman county has been directly, and more recently indirectly, under the control of one of the main political actors of this party, Liviu Dragnea. Furthermore, the county of Constanta is one of the richest and most strategically important counties in Romania. It has been under the control of Radu Mazăre, who was mayor of Constanța municipality from 2000 until 2015. In the case of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) the donations sourced in Cluj can also be linked to a prominent local party leader—Emil Boc, who has been strengthening his party's territorial base here, either as the Mayor, or as Prime Minister.

Table 33. Party Financing from Private Contractors

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
PSD (Social Democratic Party)					
Main Regional Concentration of Top Donors	Teleorman (40%)	Teleorman (51%)	Constanta (62%)	Constanta (97%)	Timis (26%)
PDL (Democratic Liberal Party)					
Main Regional Concentration of Top Donors	Bucharest (40%)	Bucharest (28%)	Bucharest (31%)	Bucharest (60%)	Bucharest (28%)
PNL (National Liberal Party)					
Main Regional Concentration of Top Donors	Bucharest (27%)	Bucharest (52%)	Bucharest (21%)	Bucharest (31%)	Bucharest (24%)

Source: Romanian Legislation (Monitorul Oficial) 2009-2013

Even if we can identify some party funding ‘champions’, whose ability to mobilize donation is largely based on their local administrative power, we can also see that there is still large dispersion of top donations provenience. Furthermore, those donations sourced in the capital city of Bucharest are unlikely to be signs of local organizational power, but rather yet another example that there is a strong centralization tendency with regards to party funding. This inference is reinforced by the trajectory of those few local party leaders, mentioned above, whose political career has intertwined local power with national-level influence.

The problematic aspect of party funding delivered by private contractors is signaled even in the accountancy books submitted by the political parties to the Bucharest Court every year, in March. While we observe smaller parties submitting a single list of party donations for each year (e.g. Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR), or the Greater Romania Party (PRM)), the three major parties submit multiple lists, from multiple local organizations, in incompatible digital formats, so that the

processes of tracking down the actual donors, to the actual amounts becomes a sinuous, difficult process.

This lack of transparency becomes an obviously purposeful measure especially in the case of ruling parties. On the party donors lists of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) premium donations (i.e. exceeding 10 minimum wages) are split in multiple payments falling just under this level. This practice is effective on two accounts. On one hand, the categories of the Official Gazette announcements make the distinction between premium donations, and normal one. The latter list being considerably longer—in electoral years amounting to dozens of pages long, it is much easier for recurrent public procurement beneficiaries to hide out. On the other hand, the few interested investigative journalists, or watchdog organizations, do not have the resources to analyze the party donors lists in depth, and generally looking only at the top donors¹⁸⁹.

It is necessary to match the donations of private contractors with their benefits from private procurement. In this case, the benefits come from direct allocation of public contracts, or from open contest public procurement procedures. Table 34 includes 10 examples for each major party whose activity is mostly based on the direct allocation of public contracts (i.e. the fastest and safest procedure of employing private contractors by public institutions). The complete list of matches between public contracts and party financing is considerably longer.

The activity profiles of these companies indicate the extent to which their revenues are based on public procurement contracts. All three parties have many top donors with business activities in the fields of constructions, infrastructure, and energy distribution. Only for National Liberal Party (PNL) it was harder to establish the profile of all donors, as it receives donations from investment companies. Publicly known companies often prefer to reroute their donations so that they are not directly linked to the party¹⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁹ Emilia Seican, investigative journalist, interview with the author 3.03.2014

¹⁹⁰ private contractors, B.P., interview with the author

Table 34. Top Donors with Public Procurement Contracts (amounts in €)

Party	Company	Value of Donation	Year of Donation	Nature of Activity
PDL	Grup Salubrizare Urbana SA	90,000	2008	Cleaning Services
PDL	Transilvania Construct	65,000	2008	Constructions
PDL	Proserv	60,000	2008	Constructions
PDL	SC Victor Construct	25,000	2008	Constructions
PDL	Industrial Montaj Grup	25,000	2008	Infrastructure
PDL	Transilvania Construct	110,000	2009	Constructions
PDL	Criseni SRL	25,000	2009	Constructions
PDL	SC Victor Construct	25,000	2009	Constructions
PDL	Conrec SA	5,000	2010	Constructions
PDL	Euro Grup DG Transport	6,000	2011	Constructions
PDL	Compact Industrial SA	5,000	2011	Labor Protection
PDL	Pro-Consul Prod SRL	25,000	2012	Constructions
PNL	Carpati Proiect SRL	12,500	2008	Constructions
PNL	SC Universal SA	12,000	2008	Constructions
PNL	M&D Cons Investitii SRL	9, 000	2008	Financial Services
PNL	International SA	40,000	2009	Constructions
PNL	SC Electrosistem SRL	10,500	2009	Electrical Components
PNL	Elita Construct	12,500	2010	Constructions
PNL	M&D Cons Investitii SRL	12,500	2010	Financial Services
PNL	SC Simultan SRL	25,000	2012	Food Delivery
PSD	Modul Proiect SA	125,000	2008	Engineering and Infrastructure
PSD	SC Simca SA	125,000	2008	Constructions

PSD	General Concrete SRL	40,000	2008	Constructions
PSD	Deep Serv 2000 SRL	9,000	2008	Cleaning Services
PSD	SC Artego SA	12,500	2008	Rubber Products
PSD	SC Proinvest SRL	50,000	2009	Constructions
PSD	Argenta SRL	10,000	2010	Infrastructure
PSD	SC Simultan SRL	25,000	2012	Food Delivery
PSD	SC Victor Construct	16,000	2012	Constructions
PSD	SC Tehnodomus	9,300	2012	Constructions

Source: *Official Gazette (2009-2013) and Public Procurement announcements*

Many donors also have indirect benefits from public policy choices that do not necessarily involve direct payments—as in the case of public procurement contracts. A special interest in favourable regulation and policies is found in the case of companies from sectors such as energy distribution, agriculture, or cargo activities. While not as intensely employed as preferential public benefits distribution, or government contracts and public procurement, regulatory proceedings are another clientelistic provision of Romanian political parties (see Chapter 2). Survey data from Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP) suggests that the main political parties in Romania deploy a moderate effort to influence or promise to influence rules issued by government agencies

Some private firms contribute to the campaign of more than one party (e.g. SC Victor Construct in Table 34). This is congruent with the current clientelistic phenomenon, in which the political parties become increasingly more focused on resource accumulation, than general popular support. Since private contractors bear little interest in vehicles of electoral mobilization, they supply more parties with resources to maximize their chances of getting public procurement. In addition, this procedure is consistent with the earlier discussed cartelization of political parties in Romania. There is a high likelihood of inter-party cooperation at county levels – the place where most public procurement activity is deployed.

Another important aspect to be considered is that the party donations represent the tip of the iceberg in terms of the actual return delivered by private contractors back to patron political leaders, or party organizations.¹⁹¹ In general terms, 'a "fee" for public contracts ranges between 10% and 30%, and usually it is delivered in cash to whomever made it happen'.¹⁹² As such, official donations remain obviously a necessary instrument for official expenses – the real value of private contractors' contribution to political party is probably ten-fold higher, according to respondents¹⁹³.

A close look at these donors' economic activity over time reveals two relevant aspects for the clientelistic nexus. Many top donors record significant hikes in their activity during electoral years. For example, most donors of the PDL have a turnover increase by ten-fold in the electoral years of 2008-2009 (when the PDL was in government next to the PSD or alone). Also, in the case of the PNL, turnovers of top donors expand significantly during election years and some of the companies cease to exist after these years. The latter may suggest an instrumental use of private companies with the purpose to channel public funds into party organizations.

The framework of party financing, like most of the political parties' regulations, set up from the very beginning either the polarization, or fragmentation trajectories of evolution for a political system. The way the party financing system is constructed in Romania, at the present moment, leaves a wide range of private sources of finance to political parties. As mentioned throughout this chapter this ultimately leads to the situation in which political parties finance their electoral campaigns, and other organizational necessities, through donations from private contractors, gaining income through public procurement contracts.

While not excluding the cases of personal gains, or corruption, there are notable high-ranking prosecuted cases, in which senior politicians (i.e.

¹⁹¹ Social Democratic Party (PSD), party leader, A.D., interview with the author

¹⁹² private contractor, A.V., interview with the author

¹⁹³ Bogdan Pintileasa, Campaign manager and local party official (PSD), interview with the author 25.01.2013, G.F. Campaign Manager for the Liberal Democratic Party (PDL), interview with the author 28.10.2014, D.F. Local Councilmen, interview with the author, 16.01.2013

prime ministers, or ministers) are under criminal investigation, or have been already sentenced to jail for such clientelistic linkages, as described in this chapter. As such, public contracts allocated through their high-ranking positions in the central administration have been turned into direct, or indirect electoral financing leverages.

6.3. Cost-Benefit Analysis of Cartelization: Electoral Outcomes and Judicial Sanctions

Yearly reports of the Romanian Audit Court mention how discretionary governmental funds effectively constitute a parallel budget that is not subjected to Parliamentary control. The national audit authorities also point to that fact that the lack of transparency in the allocation criteria suggest that these are in fact politicized financial instruments. Based on the evidence presented in this chapter, we can see how political affiliation seems to be the most significant allocation criteria, and that the ruling parties generally use these funds to uphold preferred constituencies, through budgetary supplements.

The issue that remains to be addressed is the envisaged outcome of creating these preferential leverages. To what extent the artificial expansion of local budgets brings electoral success to incumbents? The clientelistic logic behind the preferential transfer mechanisms leads us to believe that they will at least enhance the electoral chances of the local candidates. In order to assess the electoral efficiency of these clientelistic financial allocations—be they through discretionary funding instruments, or through national development projects, we compared the electoral results of two rounds of local elections.

Looking at the elected position of County Council President, we see that the majority of them maintained their position, by gaining a consecutive term—20 out of 41. Such electoral victories show the strength of “local barons”, and their semi-autonomous control over a vast array of funds and attributions, at the LG level in Romania. Still, their positive performance might also be a result of development projects and investments, spanned over a

longer period of time, or capital expenses in the eve of the electoral period (e.g. Government Decision No. 255/2012). Furthermore, 5 of the county council presidencies remained with the same party, but the winner was a different person. Finally, as many as 16 out of 41 counties changed their president and the local government's ruling party (i.e. county council majority).

While the most numerous category was that of incumbents holding on to their positions, once we look at the political party affiliation for each of the incumbent county council presidents, we see that the opposition party—Social Democrats (PSD), and not the ruling coalition for the previous term gained the majority of these victories. We consequently see contrasting situation in terms of electoral outcomes, by comparison to the preferential distribution schemes. This would suggest that the clientelistic mechanism is flawed, and the electoral outcomes are not affected in any way by the central transfers along party lines. Still, we have to account for the fact that the counties are relatively sizeable constituencies, and the small scale of preferential transfers—either allocations, or local investment projects, are not enough to change the sentiments of the electorate across an entire county.

Therefore, we can safely infer that the mechanisms presented in this chapter, linking the central patrons (i.e. government members) with local beneficiaries, do not work at the mezzo level of the 41 counties in Romania, because of the autonomy of resources that local government leaders already possess. This point is further supported by the fact that many of the surviving county council presidents (see Annex 1, marked in red) are going through criminal investigations on the proprietary use of public procurement contracts, which hints towards autonomous clientelistic networks at the county level. As described in Chapter 3, the more resources a local leader controls on his own, the more likely it is that he will become a semi-autonomous patron, rather than an intermediary in the clientelistic system.

In contrast, it is at the smaller locality level—small town and communes, that the lump sum allocations, or development projects (e.g. swimming pools) have the highest impact. Our analysis shows that the vast majority of such

recipients, from the governing coalition, maintained their mandates—over 60%. This would thus tentatively suggest that the fundamental aspects of efficient clientelistic exchanges—control, monitoring, clients' captivity, were very much present in Romanian relationship between preferential central allocations, and electoral outcomes.

Currently there are 22 out of a total of 41 county council presidents in Romania that are investigated, undergoing trial, or have been already sentenced for corruption-related offences. Still, not all of these cases are connected to the clientelistic machine in full. While the financial standing of many of them contributed to the party organization's finances in those territories, this is not enough to be considered part of a clientelistic machine. Rather, of interest are those instances where the local and the national levels of the party leadership colluded in creating and supporting informal channels of distribution.

The recent investigation into the Prahova County Council President Mircea Cosma (PSD) is an illustrative example of how public procurement cases in infrastructure development have been a frequent means of financing the party organizations. According to official records of the testimony of the private contractors, 10% of the value of the contract would go to the leading figures in the county council (i.e. budget committee presidents).¹⁹⁴ Based on official testimonies, Mircea Cosma was explicitly concerned with 'bringing money to the party'¹⁹⁵. As such, even the distribution of the kick-back money, amongst the county councilmen, was an act of informally fueling the strength of the PSD Prahova party organization, and its leaders, who were public officials at that time. Furthermore, the fact that he maintained his position for three consecutive mandates leads us to assume that the clientelistic practices were perfected over time; as these linkages fueled and consolidate the local organization and mobilize party supporters, they subsequently become efficient in terms of the electoral objectives as well.

¹⁹⁴ <http://dosareachizitiilor.hotnews.ro/achizitie-17309834-dosarul-cosma-10-din-licitatiile-publice-pentru-partid.htm>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

¹⁹⁵ idem

A similar mechanism seems to have been set up by the mayor of Sector 1, in Bucharest, Andrei Chiliman (PNL). The charges brought against him, and his collaborators, both within his administration, as well as within the party organization, reveal kickbacks on various public procurement projects. The most significant are the thermic rehabilitation works for apartment buildings. According to the official prosecutors' files, the clientelistic network surrounding and involving mayor Andrei Chiliman was financing the entire activity of the Bucharest organization of the National Liberal Party (PNL). He was apparently soliciting kickbacks, of 7%-15% of the value of the public procurement contracts granted by his administration, but only 30% of the alleged kickbacks went to the mayor, and administrative staff, and the rest going directly to the party organization.¹⁹⁶ As such, one of the co-defendants in this trial is Vlad Moisesescu, head treasurer of the PNL Bucharest party organization.

After surviving several electoral cycles in power, local party leaders become powerful enough to project nominations at the central level. Candidate nomination for MPs is one of the easiest victories for local party bosses, as it is their party organization that is responsible for electoral victories at the national level too. Again we find empirical evidence to support the much greater organizational strength at the local level of Social Democratic leaders, than in other parties, as some of the local leaders (e.g. Mircea Cosma, Prahova County Council President, or Victor Mocanu, Buzău County Council President) have successfully supported the nomination and electoral win of their sons as Members of Parliament (MPs). In contrast, it is much more difficult to exert patronage over key appointments in central government. Furthermore, the autonomy and power of local bosses is often based on inter-party collusion at the local level (e.g. Nicolae Mischie (PSD)

¹⁹⁶ http://sorinamatei.blogspot.ro/2015/06/dosarul-bomba-al-dna-ploiesti_20.html?m=1 , last accessed on 21.06.2015

and Ionel Manțog (PNL) in Gorj county, or Relu Fenechiu (PNL) and Gheorghe Nichita (PSD) in Iași county¹⁹⁷).

One of the most significant electoral campaigns for a nationwide party is the presidential election. As such, within the party leadership echelon, especially in the case of party leaders that concomitantly occupied cabinet positions (i.e. prime-minister, minister) there is a stringent involvement in ensuring a presidential victory for their party. As both candidates (e.g. Adrian Năstase 2004, Elena Udrea 2014), or as members of the candidate closest circle, the measures undertaken through informal means to ensure an electoral victory make use of the power within both their public office, as well as their clientelistic network. The latter comprises as much party members, as non-members (e.g. private contractors, civil servants).

The main challengers in the presidential competition have been, throughout most of the post communist period, the main contenders from the right and from the left of the political spectrum. It was only in the presidential campaign of 2000 that the Social Democratic candidate, former president Iliescu, faced an opponent from a nationalist party (PRM)—Vadim Tudor. As can be seen in Table 30, all the presidential electoral campaigns of the last decade, in between 2004 and 2014, can be linked to a trial or sentence regarding the use of public funds, or governmental decisions, to attract funding to the campaign. It is not a self-imposed assessment timeframe, but rather a contextual circumstance.

Since 2004, we find two candidates from the Social Democratic Party—Adrian Năstase, and Mircea Geoană, and the two candidates from the right—Traian Băsescu, and Elena Udrea. In some cases the candidates were directly involved, and trailed for the clientelistic deployment of public resources to the benefit of their campaign (e.g. Elena Udrea, Adrian Năstase), and in other cases, members of their close, personal circle were tried and sentenced (e.g. Monica Iacob-Ridzi, Bunea Stanciu).

¹⁹⁷ http://adevarul.ro/news/politica/cum-confiscat-baronii-locali-romania-oamenii-incredere-liderilor-politici-judet-impanzit-institutiile-statului-1_5360c0d20d133766a83a0c1b/index.html, last accessed on 26.06.2016

Table 35. Presidential Campaigns and Clientelistic Exchanges

Presidential Candidate	Prosecution File Name	Sentences	Electoral Outcome
Traian Băsescu (PD-L) 2009 campaign	„Microsoft” (Microsoft licences)	- Pending final ruling	Won
	„Ziua Tineretului” (Youth Day Celebration)	- Former Youth Minister Monica Iacob-Ridzi is currently serving a 5 year jail sentence, since 16 th of February 2015	Won
Elena Udrea (PMP—splinter party of PD-L) 2014 campaign	„Gala Bute” (Boxing Gala for Super Middleweight Champion Lucian Bute)	- Pending final ruling	Lost
Adrian Năstase (PSD) 2004 campaign	„Trofeul Calității” (Quality Trophy)	- Former Prime Minister and Presidential candidate Adrian Năstase served two years in jail, starting on the 20 th of June 2012	Lost
Mircea Geoană (PSD) 2009 campaign	„Bribes for PSD” (Campaign Donation)	- Agriculture magnate Ioan Niculae, serves two and a half years in jail, starting 4 th April 2015 - Bunea Stanciu, Braila party boss, serves three years in jail, starting 4 th April 2015	Lost

Source: Official records of the National Anticorruption Agency (DNA), and press coverage

The case of Adrian Năstase was not one of extensive clientelistic reach, as mentioned before his party was organizationally strong, and he conducted a series of administrative reforms during his term in office, as Prime Minister (2000-2004) that further empowered local party bosses. As such, he did not need to deploy to a great extent resource accumulation

through public contracts, as the party machine was electorally competitive. Furthermore, his term in office covered the entire pre-accession to the EU negotiations, and as such there were many restrictions on institutional processes and allocation.

He was trailed and sentenced for, along with other public employees, but not any party leadership figure for competition called “Trofeul Calității”. This was a ceremony organized by the State Inspectorate for Construction, for private companies in the construction sector. These companies paid a hefty tax for participation, and all the revenues went into electoral materials (e.g. flyers, brochures) for the presidential campaign. While apparently it is fundraising system, the problem was that the companies were paying the participation fee to a public institution, under the control of the then prime minister, and the public institution was then channeling the funds to the benefit of the candidate.

The other left wing candidate involved in such clientelistic prosecutions was Mircea Geoană, party leader and presidential candidate in 2009. He was not directly involved in the case, but one of the main local party leaders of the time was. Bunea Stanciu was the long standing County Council President of Braila. From this position he had a good relationship with Ioan Niculae, who is the president the biggest private company in the Agricultural sector in Romania—Interagro, and one of the richest men in Romania. The businessmen donated 1 mil. € to the presidential campaign, in exchange for selecting appointmentees to the leadership of two state companies—SNTGN Transgaz and SNGN Romgaz SA, with whom he had business dealings.¹⁹⁸

The two cases of the candidates from the right wing—Traian Băsescu and Elena Udrea, are still in very incipient phases of the trial. While Elena Udrea has been in jail for 3 months, while awaiting trial for „Gala Bute” and „Microsoft”, Traian Băsescu has not yet been involved in any clientelistic investigation. Monica Iacob-Ridzi on the other hand, is serving 5 years in jail for using the buget of the Ministry of Youth over which she presided in 2009,

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.hotnews.ro/ancheta-14560859-dosarul-mita-psd-gheorghe-bunea-stancu-ioan-niculae.htm>, last accessed on 21.06.2015

for the purpose of supporting the electoral campaigns of the Băsescu family. In the spring of 2009, former president Băsescu's younger daughter, Elena Băsescu was running for the European Parliament. After an internal scandal in the PDL over her candidacy, at 28 years of age, and previous professional experience in modelling, she ran as an independent. Being a close friend with Minister Iacob-Ridzi, her electoral trail was usually doubled by expensive concerts and festivities organised by the Ministry. Elena Băsescu won 5% of the national votes at that election, as an independent candidate, and after the results were public she was welcomed back in PDL, by Monica Iacob-Ridzi and Elena Udrea. Some of the kickbacks recorded in the tenure of the Minister of Youth have allegedly went on to finance the presidential campaign of Traian Băsescu in the fall of 2009, but the damages of 600,000 € could not be found in the official records.

Finally, Elena Udrea's involvement on both sides of the clientelistic machine is more straightforward. As depicted in the previous chapter, as a Minister of Regional Development and Tourism she deployed substantial financial allocations to various local strongholds of the PDL, or to those of the coalition partners'. In the "Microsoft" case we find an transversal clientelistic network, involving her husband, as a representative of her financial interests, her protégées from the political party, at both central level—Minister of Communication, Gabriel Sandu, and local party leader and mayor of Piatra Neamț, Gheroghe Ștefan, as well as private contractors benefiting from public procurement contracts. Vasile Blaga, former president of the PDL, after defeating Elena Udrea in internal elections is also alleged to be a beneficiary of the kickbacks obtained by Gabriel Sandu, and then redistributed to the party organization. According to testimonies, Blaga's failed electoral campaign for the Bucharest City Hall, in 2008. He went on to be Internal Affairs Minister in the same cabinet as Elena Udrea, and Gabriel Sandu.

Some of the highest kick-backs from public procurement contracts are predictably recorded at the central level, where budgetary capacity is bigger. What distinguishes cases of corruption from clientelistic components in our case study is the fact that the latter have a specific political usage—generally

assessed based on the involved parties' own statements. According to official transcripts of the National Anticorruption Agency, former country manager for Fujitsu Siemens Romania made an official statement in court mentioning that former and current dignitaries, and high party officials were taking bribes from public contracts for personal or political usage. These bribes were requested by party officials, in support of former president Basescu's presidential election in 2009, which he won. The denouncements were against the husband of the former Minister of Regional Development and Tourism Elena Udrea—approximately 9 mil. €, the former Minister of Communications and Information Society, Gabriel Sandu—2.7 mil. €, and incumbent mayor of Piatra Neamt municipality, Gheorghe Stefan—3,996,360 €. All denounced recipients of the bribes were high-ranking members of the PDL. All of the political actors in this network are currently imprisoned.

Both at the local, and national elections, the risk of judicial investigations seem to outweighed the benefits of resource accumulation through donations from private contractors. Electoral success is influenced in a positive manner by long-standing informal distributional channels. Still, such channels consolidate the power of local leaders, rather than the central party leadership. The local political organizations are the main beneficiaries of political allocations, and local leaders are careful to fuel the party networks, especially in the case of the Social Democratic Party (PSD). This is one of the main reasons why the electoral success of this party is outstanding from other regional counterparts, as well as Romanian competitors. Still, right-wing ruling parties (e.g. PDL, PNL) have managed to achieve an important territorial penetration through political allocations while in power.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the evidence on how clientelistic channels of resource distribution fuel local party organization, thus stabilizing a cartel party and anchoring it in society. Whether it is through central budgetary transfers, political allocations, or developmental projects, the captured state delivers to the local governments the necessary resources to maintain the clientelistic system in the territory. Furthermore, I show here how public

procurement contracts are subsequently used to finance the party organization as the beneficiaries become party donors.

There are two elements that distinguish the present thesis from previous studies on state capture or proprietary use of public resources. Firstly, I show here that it is predominantly the electoral or organizational goals that determine political allocations, and not personal gains. I trace most of kick-backs and profits from extractive practices back to campaign financing and party organizations. This is not to say that corruption is not part of such mechanisms of extraction as those described here, but rather that the access to public resources, and preferential distribution are set up by cartel parties primarily to deploy in a systematic manner clientelistic exchanges.

Secondly, I show that the electoral efficiency of clientelistic exchanges is clear only in: the case of small local communities, or the case of larger LGs (i.e. county) with continuity in office. The explanation for the latter is that the informal distribution of goods and services needs time to consolidate and become referential to the electorate. Nevertheless, through the clientelistic resources described here (e.g. budgetary expenditures, public works, housing, infrastructure) the patron party develops a presence and recognition at the local level that anchors it in society. Even if the electoral outcome is not a win, the clientelistic system ensures its continuous presence in the territory and in the legislative bodies at the local level. Thus, as this thesis argues, the clientelistic exchanges help stabilize a cartel party in the post-communist setting.

Given that the puzzle addressed in this thesis is the electoral stability of the main Romanian political parties, the metric normally used to measure party strength is mainly that of voter support at the ballot box. It is nevertheless difficult to draw a direct and convincing causal arrow from the choices of individual voters to party success (or failure). The key indicator of political survival is indeed winning elections, but I also argue that cartel political parties with roots in society (maintained mainly via clientelistic linkages), can also survive electoral cycles in opposition. The evidence in the Romanian case study supports this proposition, as we can see that cartel

outsiders do not indeed manage to survive successive electoral cycles, especially if they are not in power. Whether this is due to the lack of access to public resources, or the fact that they do not engage with informal linkages is besides the point. The Romanian context shows the wider significance of the cartel-plus-clientelism survival strategy: not only winning elections, but also (and more importantly) creating resilience on the long term and a semblance of partisan support.

Conclusion

Contribution to the Existing Literature

The topic of this thesis is the symbiosis between cartel parties and clientelism in post-communist Europe. There is a striking puzzle in the case of these new democracies, as despite their high instability after transition, we find their party systems relatively stable decades later. While the gradual process of consolidation might be seen as a partial answer, we have to account for the fact that political parties here faced numerous challenges at the time of their formation (e.g. scarce territorial presence, high electoral volatility, legislative and institutional engineering). The research question addressed here is therefore: **how can a stable party system emerge in a post-communist setting given the weakness of mass mobilization?**

The argument of this thesis is that there are 2 layers of stabilization whose contingency we need to account for. The first layer of stabilization is similar to most of the contemporary democracies: political cartelization. In the face of organizational challenges, parties aim to survive through collusion and state penetration (i.e. cartel party thesis). The existing literature signals that cartelization however creates a different set of problems, as leaders detach from the lower ranks of the party (i.e. stratarchy), and outside challengers may arise.

A second layer of stabilization can thus ensure the survival of cartel parties: clientelistic distribution of goods and services. Clientelism can act as a facilitating factor both for the establishment of the cartel, and its survival. Clientelistic linkages provide a further layer of stabilization in the party system, as they compensate the weakening or poorly developed roots in society. Due to the simultaneous development of the party system and the public administration in CEE, the party-state interpenetration achieved through cartelization can often lead to state capture, thus fueling clientelistic channels of informal distribution on a larger scale than in western democracies.

The present thesis makes a contribution to two main fields in the academic literature: party politics and public administration. It is the argument

of the present study that informal linkage mechanisms like party patronage and clientelistic exchanges can not be fully understood if explored under the conceptual framework of either field alone. Under a process of party-state interpenetration, administrative functions and political interests become part of the same linkage mechanisms.

There are certain gaps in the existing party politics literature that this study has tried to fill. Firstly, this thesis engages with the framework of the cartelization process. Its main limitation is that the model was developed on the basis of case studies from Northern European democracies. It did not address the issue of how sustainable cartel parties are on the long term, and it was not widely applied or tested in the context of new democracies. In terms of theory confirmation, this thesis shows that the cartel party model does indeed apply to Central and Eastern European parties, as it does to their Western counterparts. More importantly, it traces the circumstances under which the cartelization process can increase their stability.

The contemporary political parties are subjected to numerous contingent challenges from the moment of their formation and throughout their subsequent evolution. Not only are there notable differences between the old and new democracies, but additional contextual differences shape the evolution of political organizations within the set of cases of new democracies, and even within party systems. The empirical contributions from the party politics literature have had a limited coverage of these contingencies, and how certain phenomena like cartelization and clientelism relate differently to one another in the setting of post-communist democracies. Therefore, the present thesis adds to the literature by generating new empirical evidence on Central and Eastern European party politics. Based on a comparative analysis of CEE party systems, and an in-depth analysis of the case study of Romania, I test the roles fulfilled by informal mechanisms in a post-communist context.

The literature on political parties in Europe has developed ample comparative studies on the formal traits of party organizations (e.g. party membership, territorial coverage). What is has not managed to do in a

systematic manner is to give us an understanding of the impact or effects of informal traits (e.g. clientelistic linkages, patronage appointments) on party organizations. Does clientelism harm or help the political parties that deploy it? To answer such a question, researchers first need a better conceptual framing of the clientelistic phenomena, with both its strengths and weaknesses as a survival strategy.

The main limitation of the existing literature on clientelism is that it is generally studied as a stand-alone political phenomenon, and little attention has been given to its role in the overall evolution of political party organizations. The present thesis makes a theoretical contribution by arguing that clientelism is not only an informal means of electoral mobilization, but (can be) a system of anchoring political parties in society, and within the state (when they no longer have the capacity to do so). We can thus assess how clientelism helps, when it does indeed help, political organizations.

Since Linz and Stepan's 1996 benchmark study on the transition to democracy and consolidation challenges, there has been an ensuing plethora of studies on this topic. One of the key issues in the European post-communist democracies has been that of managing the extensive public resources of the former communist state (see an early coverage of the issue in Stark and Bruszt 1998). The privatization process in itself offered ample opportunities for state capture, but more importantly the party-state interpenetration and proprietary use of public resources survived the transition. This allowed major political parties to develop both cartelization and clientelism in a systematic manner. The informal networks evolved and consolidated simultaneously with the new administrative systems.

The present thesis has showed the mechanisms through which informal networks of capture (through cartelization) and redistribution (through clientelism) contribute to the political survival of major parties. Still, there are unaccounted for effects on the party system as whole and the quality of democracy. Neither cartelization, nor clientelism contribute to the core premises of democracy such as: political competition, accountability,

representativeness. In addition to this, the contemporary context places an additional burden on the democratic systems in Central and Eastern Europe as the electorate is widely disengaged and disenchanting. Either at the hands of cartels, or anti-establishment parties, “the idea that democracy is backsliding in East-Central Europe is fast becoming consensus view” (Dawson and Hanley 2016: 21).

There is an intrinsic link between the quality of democracy and the quality of governance in any democratic country. As the quality of governance decreases or is low to begin with (as in the case of post-communist European democracies), the appeal of clientelism is higher. People can thus get a chance to timely access goods and services that they otherwise would not, given poor administrative capacity. But, the occurrence of informal practices does not only have a corrosive effect on state capacity, it also affects democratic practices and accountability relationships.

Based on the case study of Romania that has been covered in-depth in this thesis, I argue that the corrosive effects of informal linkages on democracy are twofold. Firstly, the principal-agent relationship is inversed. Cartelization disengages the party as an agent of either internal (i.e. party members) or external (i.e. voters) principals. In turn, through its characteristic conditionality, clientelism makes the beneficiaries of patronage (both within and outside the party ranks) become agents of the politicians, tasked with ensuring effective electoral mobilization and support.

Secondly, the social contract that should guide the relationship between the parties in office and the citizens becomes void of meaning. In a context where both state capture and clientelism are deployed at large, the core social relationship is not with the state, but with the political elites able to fuel informal exchanges. A wide variety of personalistic and preferential relationships thus structure social interactions. This affects the electoral process that is no longer driven by accountability and representativeness, but by the promise of inclusion in a particularistic benefits system. Nevertheless, such particularism in accessing public goods or services is not solely linked to

informal exchanges, as many public policies can be designed to be similarly restrictive or preferential. In a global context of rising inequalities and economic disparities, informal exchanges are not the only culprit that menaces the quality of democracy.

The clientelistic practices that appear in the Romanian case study could be regarded as a low quality, but functional form of democratic representation. Firstly, as mentioned before, the context of poor institutionalization and consolidation made for a poor administrative capacity throughout the transition period and even afterwards. Clientelistic exchanges compensated for these state weaknesses, even if they also prevented them to improve. Secondly, informal exchanges that reach out into society compensate the detachment that cartel parties usually have, allowing a mutual engagement and communication of needs. This is an essential contribution to the quality of democracy, as in the absence of stable linkages between the state and society (mediated by representative parties), democracies become vulnerable to instability and takeover (Innes 2002 in Tavits 2005:283). Thirdly, within a cartel-plus-clientelism situation, at least some of the captured public resources find their way back to the citizens (conditional upon political support).

Clientelistic linkages play an essential role in connecting cartel parties with the electorate. By developing or maintaining roots in society for political organizations, clientelistic exchanges ensure their long-term survival. In the absence of large-scale, inclusive informal redistribution mechanisms, cartel political parties remain state-oriented, and lose over successive cycles their grassroots presence.

The empirical evidence collected in this thesis shows that even when clientelistic linkages fail to deliver electoral victories to the local or national political patrons, they nevertheless fulfill an important role of consolidating local organizations. Given the process of cartelization, political parties have the leverage (e.g. political algorithms of appointments) to continue to obtain supporters' loyalty through conditional benefits.

By analyzing appointments in the civil service and funding allocations from the public budget, this thesis also contributes to the field of public administration. The empirical evidence collected in this project helps us see that clientelistic distribution of goods and services is based on networks of loyal appointees in key positions of the state apparatus (i.e. party patronage). It is through institutional analysis (e.g. civil service regulation, administrative architecture, budgetary ceilings) that we can link public appointments and political interests (i.e. politicization). Thus, the objects of the present investigation are public institutions, as much as party organizations.

Chapters 2 and 3 show how administrative measures influence party politics (e.g. prerogatives of local governments, party regulation, electoral legislation), while chapters 4 and 5 show how political interests shape administrative functions (e.g. appointments in public institutions). Finally, in chapter 6 we see the full spectrum of the party-state interpenetration, as public money can be traced from central government structures, to local governments, to private contractors, and back to political patrons, as party donations. To my knowledge, there is no other study to date that has covered the full political process involved in deploying clientelistic exchanges.

Relevance of the Empirical Findings

The present research furthers our understanding on the utility of informal linkages and their contingency. I will briefly go through the relevance of the main findings from each section of this thesis.

While structured as an in-depth case study research on the intertwining of two political phenomena (i.e. cartelization and clientelism), the present thesis also contains a comparative section. It is designed to establish the baseline of the development of cartelization and the deployment of informal linkages (e.g. clientelistic exchanges, patronage) in Central and Eastern European democracies. Chapter 2 reveals how post-communist European countries provided a favorable context to the (further) development of informal linkage mechanisms: the political parties faced organizational challenges, and the institutional context was permissive.

Clientelism becomes an effective tool for developing and maintaining roots in society when political parties had little time to develop territorial networks and mobilization capacity. The context of post-communist countries presents distinctive conditions for clientelistic linkages. Multi-party systems in these countries have reappeared/developed suddenly, at the same time as the democratic governing system. Consequently, the party-state interpenetration has been more profound, building upon previous legacies (i.e. Communist party-state), as well as these transitional circumstances.

Given the cartelization process, political actors were permanently tapped into the state resources (e.g. policy favors, public goods and services), and these resources were in themselves much more abundant than in Western democracies, given the centralist/nationalist economic model of the previous regime. A much more substantial property share was in the hands of the state, at the time of the transition, in post-communist democracies than in any of the Western democracies at the time. Clientelism developed in this context much more systematically than in older democracies, mirroring an institutional system of redistribution. The wealth of the state allowed for a bigger flow of resources to be distributed through informal channels, and thus contributed to the survival of a cartel party system. Its reliance on state resources makes it inherently unstable when the institutional context is less permissive for state capture (e.g. Western democracies). In contrast, in the setting of post-communist new democracies, we find high levels of patronage, as well as clientelistic linkages.

Chapter 3 is the first section of the in-depth case study of the Romanian party system and its informal linkage mechanisms. It looks at the main political parties, their genesis, subsequent evolution and internal party power distribution. Most of their current challenges are similar to those of established parties in the old democracies (e.g. decreasing party membership, narrowing policy space) and favor the process of cartelization. But, CEE parties also faced specific challenges of their own: “weak societal roots of parties do not allow for party identification or voter alignment, the unclear patterns of competition make the policy dimension not very relevant,

and the lack of elite continuity reduces leadership continuity” (Gherghina 2015:3). How have party systems in post-communist Europe nevertheless managed to achieve a relatively high level of stability, given their inherent weaknesses? Cartelization supported by clientelistic networks (both within the party organization and outside it) offer parties this stability in the Romanian case.

Another relevant aspect revealed in this chapter is that there is variation across parties in Romania. The main successor party (PSD) had from the beginning a much stronger territorial presence than any of the other parties. Its competitive advantage was diminished after the spread of clientelistic exchanges across parties in office: whoever controlled state resources managed to develop a territorial presence. This is significant because we find that the complementarity between cartelization and clientelism holds both for parties with preexisting organizations that they need to maintain, and for parties with no preexisting organizations, which they need to develop.

With weakening mass mobilization, the access to and control of public resources is the determining factor in building the local branches. Clientelistic linkages are deployed within the party organizations—from central or local elites to members and activists, and within society—from central or local elites to voters and supporters. Another relevant aspect here is that local leaders who control enough resources to fuel their local networks do not seek autonomy from central leadership (i.e. stratarthy), but try to impose their will on the national leadership (e.g. MP nominations for national elections, seats in the Leadership Forum). In this aspect, clientelism might empower competition to party leadership from within its ranks. But, as we see in the following sections, local leaders remain largely dependent on central transfers to fuel their networks, and the internal party hierarchy is usually maintained, with a higher inclusiveness than prescribed initially in the cartel party thesis.

Chapter 4 brings presents the values for Romania of the Index of Party Patronage (IPP) (Volintiru 2015 in Kopecky et al 2016). This was an original

data compilation by the author, based on a previously developed methodology (i.e. Kopecky et al 2012), which added the new observation/case study of Romania to the overall Index. Given the background analysis of contextual and organizational factors that favour informal linkages, it is not surprising that Romania scores the second biggest overall value in Europe, surpassed only by Greece. Relevant to the present analysis is the variation across policy sectors, with economic, media and health sectors being perceived as having the biggest levels of party appointees. These sectors are indeed good anchors for clientelistic mobilization, as in the Romanian case they concentrate both material resources and regulatory powers that can serve cartel parties.

Another relevant empirical finding in this chapter is the comparative analysis of the appointment procedures for all Senior Service positions in Romania (i.e. General Secretaries, Deputy General Secretaries and Governmental Inspectors, Prefects and Underprefects). Firstly, there is a sharp increase in the number of appointment and dismissals in these functions in electoral years, suggesting that new governments systematically appoint their own people in civil service positions. The highest turnover is for the category of Prefects and Underprefects who are governmental representatives in the territory. Furthermore, this chapter presents an in-depth investigation of the mechanisms that allow parties in office to exert political patronage over Senior Civil Service positions, such as temporary appointments, mobility provisions. These findings allow us to grasp the mechanisms through which the political dominates the administrative in terms of personnel appointments. Relevant is not only the will of the political patrons to have loyal people on the ground (e.g. Prefects and Underprefects), but also the opportunities for patronage embedded in the institutional framework (e.g. legislative provisions).

Chapter 5 develops the subject of appointments in the Senior Civil Service further through a comparative analysis of the Ministries with the highest personnel turnover within the period of analysis (2005-2013). The purpose of this comparison is to identify: variation across Ministers and

Cabinets, stakes in controlling each of these institutions, and what is the connection between patrons and appointees (i.e. career pathway analysis).

Targeted public resources differ from one ministry to another. This analysis is relevant because it allows us to move beyond the fact that every institution of the Central Government has a range of public contracts it can attribute to private contractors, and the personnel has higher salaries than in most of the other public institutions. As the findings show, the real stakes of controlling these institutions tend to lie with their regulatory capacity (e.g. Ministry of Environment), subordinate agencies and companies (e.g. Ministry of Economics) or electoral role (e.g. Ministry of Internal Affairs).

Chapter 6 shows the full process of party-state interpenetration, clientelistic distribution of benefits, and electoral outcomes. The argument of this thesis is that clientelism is as much an electoral resource, as an organizational one—it contributes to the survival of cartel parties by developing territorial organizations and roots in society. The capital transfers from the Central Government to the Local Governments exemplify the mechanisms through which clientelistic networks consolidate local party organizations. Public procurement to private contractors who are also party donors shows the mechanisms through which clientelistic networks help finance cartel parties.

The premises of the present thesis have been largely confirmed by political events that occurred after the studied period. Firstly, the 2016 national elections reconfirmed the advantage of the major political parties employing a cartel-plus-clientelism model: the Social Democrats (PSD) won a sweeping majority in Parliament, followed by the merger of the other two main political parties (i.e. National Liberals and Liberal Democrats merged in 2014 under the name of PNL). Secondly, their reliance on party-state interpenetration was confirmed by the ruling coalition's move to decriminalize conflict of interest which is the legal term characteristic for the proprietary use of public resources described in Chapter 6 (e.g. proxies of the elected officials win public contracts). Thirdly, new parties have not managed to effectively

counteract the ruling majority, either in elections or in power, thus confirming the strength of the Romanian cartel in fending off outsiders.

One of the limitations of the conceptual model presented here is that it does not account for the degree to which informal practices can be effectively contested or counteracted. As defection from the cartel is unlikely (see Blyth and Katz 2005 for the same argument), and newcomers do not have very good odds of surviving, the general public's reaction seems to be the only avenue of contestation. The largest street protests since the '89 Revolution took place at the beginning of 2017, in opposition to the easing of anticorruption measures. Arguably, street protests would de-stabilize the cartel parties, while the Romanian party system as a whole might in contrast benefit from a stronger opposition and more powerful check and balances. They did not.

The role that the (waves of) mass mobilization to contest governmental (discretionary) decisions was not necessarily disruptive or threatening to the *status quo* of the main Romanian parties. While apparently the urban electorate of the capital city of Bucharest might not be the core electorate of the ruling Social Democrats, the party did in fact win the city hall of Bucharest with a wide majority just the previous year, in the spring of 2016. Additionally, PNL as the main opposition party did little by means of procedural or institutional measures to stand in line with the public's position. As such, we can see that even if there is a critical mass of protesters and public contestation, the electoral results or policy output might not change. In contrast, the vigorous manifestations acted very much like an informal checking or accountability mechanism which led to the repeal of the legislative provisions by the very Cabinet that adopted them in the first place, in order to deescalate the situation. Still, it is unlikely that every funding or appointment decision could pass through a public scrutiny in the near future. Therefore, the cartel is likely to continue and thrive, as long as it maintains a wide redistributive function.

Avenues for Further Investigation

The present thesis showed the mechanisms of resource extraction/accumulation via state capture, and the system of informal redistribution set up by Romanian political parties. As we see in Chapter 2, both exogenous (i.e. institutional context) and endogenous (i.e. party organization) variables suggest that clientelism can play a stabilizing role in CEE political cartels. This conceptualization is confirmed by the existing comparative datasets on clientelism (Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP), Kitschelt 2015) and on party patronage (Index of Party Patronage (IPP), Kopecky et al 2016). However, a systematic comparison of the different sequences of the clientelistic system is yet to be realized. I believe that this research lays the foundation for such an analysis, by conceptualizing the relationship between cartel parties and clientelism in CEE, and also by disentangling the relational and environmental mechanisms involved in the process.

Therefore, as an avenue of further investigation, I would propose such a structured comparison over a larger set of cases from CEE on certain key aspects: (1) Party Organizational Challenges (i.e. party system vulnerabilities, internal balance of power, changes over time) (2) Appointments in key positions (i.e. institutional appointment procedures in Central Government, Senior Civil Service, and other key positions of the state apparatus), (3) Public Funding (i.e. regulation and trends of public funds transfers from the Central Government to Local Government), and its correlation to Electoral Outcomes, and finally (4) Party Financing (i.e. party donations—regulation, sources). The layers of such a structured comparison are informed by the original research developed in the present thesis for the case study of Romania. Without an in-depth exploration of the way these linkage mechanisms functions within the state apparatus, our avenues of inquiry into cartel parties and clientelism would remain limited.

A second avenue of investigation is the further analysis of linkage pattern variation in the present case study. The present research could inform a within-case comparison of the clientelistic channels of resource distribution.

This thesis has explored the mechanisms that link (1) cartel parties to (2) political appointments (i.e. party patronage and politicization), and finally to (3) discretionary resource allocation. The latter aspect however, can be further investigated. A systematic comparison of discretionary allocations to private contractors from all public institutions would provide us with a better understanding of the informal mechanisms of funding cartelized political parties. More specifically, the link between political appointments and institutional spending can be particularly revealing in the case of State Owned Companies and other Non-Departmental Commissions and Agencies that manage large budgets and/or regulatory powers.

In conclusion, the present thesis has addressed two gaps in the existing literature. On one hand, it has engaged with the cartel party model, developing new insights in its potential variations. As it can be seen from the present case study of Romania, the CEE context provides ample opportunities for cartelization, yet leaves such parties open to the similar and indeed greater challenges as their Western counterparts (i.e. organizational weakness, challenges from new party entrants). A second layer of stabilization can thus be provided by clientelism, given continuous access to public resources (through party-state interpenetration). Therefore, this thesis has also addressed the existing gap in the literature regarding the role clientelism can play for party organizations. Based on the present research, I argue that the clientelistic systems of informal distribution are as much electoral instruments of partial mobilization, as they are means of organizational consolidation.

Bibliography

Andrei, T., Matei, A., and Roșca, I. (2009). *The Corruption—An Economic and Social Analysis*. Economica Publishing, Bucharest

Andrei, T., Profiroiu, M.; Oancea, B., Turtureanu, M. and Matei, A. (2010) *Analiza unor aspect legate de mobilitatea si politizarea functiei publice in administratia publica din Romania*, MPRA Paper No. 25957

Auyero, J. (1999). "From the Client's Point(s) of View": How Poor People Perceive and Evaluate Political Clientelism. *Theory and Society*, 28(2), 297-334.

Auyero, J. (2000). THE LOGIC OF CLIENTELISM IN ARGENTINA: An Ethnographic Account. *Latin American research review*, 35(3).

Auyero, J. (2001). *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita*. Duke University Press.

Ban, C. (2016). *Ruling Ideas: How Global Neoliberalism Goes Local*. Oxford University Press.

Beyme, K. (1996). Party Leadership and Change in Party Systems: Towards a Postmodern Party State?. *Government and Opposition*, 31(2), 135-159.

Birnir, J. K. (2010). Where are the Disgruntled Voters? Voter—Party Relations under Cartelizing Conditions. *Party Politics*, 16(1), 29-49.

Blondel, J., Muller-Rommel, F. and Malova D. (2007). *Governing New European Democracies*. Palgrave Macmillan

Blyth, M., and Katz, R. (2005). From Catch-all Politics to Cartelization: The Political Economy of the Cartel Party. *West European Politics*, 28(1), 33-60.

Bolleyer, N. (2009). Inside the Cartel Party: Party Organisation in Government and Opposition. *Political Studies*, 57(3), 559-579.

Bolleyer, N. (2012). New Party Organization in Western Europe: Of party Hierarchies, stratarchies and federations. *Party Politics*, 18(3), 315-336.

Brun, D.A., and Diamon, L. (2014) *Clientelism, Social Policy, and the Quality of Democracy*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Brady, H. E., and Collier, D. (Eds.). (2010). *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Calvo, E., and Murillo, M. V. (2004). Who delivers? Partisan clients in the Argentine electoral market. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(4), 742-757.

Calvo, E., and Murillo, M. V. (2013). When Parties Meet Voters Assessing Political Linkages Through Partisan Networks and Distributive Expectations in Argentina and Chile. *Comparative Political Studies*, 46(7), 851-882.

- Carty, R. K. (2004). Parties as Franchise Systems: The Stratarchical Organizational Imperative. *Party Politics*, 10(1), 5-24.
- Casal Bértoa, F., K. Deegan-Krause, and T. Haughton. (2012). *Splitting the Difference: Assessing the Degree of Stability and Volatility of Party Politics in Post-Communist Eastern Europe (1990–2010)*. Elections, Public Opinion and Parties (EPOP) Annual Conference, University of Oxford, 7–9 September 2012.
- Casal Bértoa, F., and van Biezen, I. (2014). Party Regulation and Party Politics in Post-communist Europe. *East European Politics*, 30(3), 295-314.
- Casal Bértoa, F. (2014). Party Systems and Cleavage Structures Revisited: A Sociological Explanation of Party System Institutionalization in East Central Europe. *Party Politics*, 20(1), pp.16-36.
- Casal Bértoa, F., and Spirova, M. (2017). Parties Between Thresholds: State Subsidies and Party Behaviour in Post-communist Democracies. *Party Politics*, 1354068817710221.
- Chehabi, H. E. and Linz, J. J. (Eds.). (1998). *Sultanistic Regimes*. John Hopkins University Press.
- Chhibber, P., and Kollman, K. (2004). *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Britain, Canada, India, and the United States*. NJ: Princeton University Press
- Chiru, M. (2010). *Legislative Recruitment and Electoral System Change: The Case of Romania* (Doctoral dissertation, Central European University).
- Chiru, M. (2013) Instituționalizarea Parlamentului României—un proces neterminat?, in Gherghina, S. and Mișcoiu, S. (eds.) *Instituții și comportament politics în România și noile democrații europene. Perspective comparate*, Efes Publishing: Cluj-Napoca
- Chubb, J. (1981). The social bases of an urban political machine: the case of Palermo. *Political Science Quarterly*, 107-125.
- Chubb, J. (1982). *Patronage, power and poverty in southern Italy: a tale of two cities*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cinpoș, R. (2015). Political Culture and Participation. *Post-Communist Romania at Twenty-Five: Linking Past, Present, and Future*, p.107.
- Collier, D., Mahoney, J., and Seawright, J. (2004). Claiming Too Much: Warnings About Selection Bias. In Henry Brady and Paul Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 105-121.
- Crabtree, C., and Golder, M. (2015). Party System Volatility in Post-Communist Europe. *Available at SSRN 2612626*.

- Cross, W. (2016). Understanding Power-Sharing Within Political Parties: Stratarchy as Mutual Interdependence Between the Party in the Centre and the Party on the Ground. *Government and Opposition*, 1-26.
- Dalton, R. J., and Wattenberg, M. P. (Eds.). (2002). *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. *Comparative Politics*. Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Dassonneville, R. and Hooghe, M. (2011) 'Mapping Electoral Volatility in Europe: An Analysis of Trends in European Democracies since 1945'. Paper presented at the first European Conference on Comparative Electoral Research, Sofia, Bulgaria, 1–3 December.
- Dawson, J., and Hanley, S. (2016). The Fading Mirage of the " Liberal Consensus". *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 20-34.
- Detterbeck, K. (2005). Cartel Parties in Western Europe?. *Party politics*, 11(2), 173-191.
- Díaz-Cayeros, A., Magaloni, B., & Ruiz-Euler, A. (2014). Traditional Governance, Citizen Engagement, and Local Public Goods: Evidence from Mexico. *World Development*, 53, 80-93.
- Dimitrov, V., Goetz, K. and Wollman, H. (2006). *Governing After Communism: Institutions and Policy*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers.
- Duverger, Maurice (1954) *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. Methuen: Wiley.
- Enns-Jedenastik, L. (2014). Political Control and Managerial Survival in State-owned Enterprises. *Governance*, 27(1), 135-161.
- Enns-Jedenastik, L. (2014b). The Politics of Patronage and Coalition: How Parties Allocate Managerial Positions in State-Owned Enterprises. *Political Studies*, 62(2), 398-417.
- Epperly, B. (2011). Institutions and Legacies: Electoral Volatility in the Postcommunist World. *Comparative Political Studies*, 44(7), 829-853.
- Evans, G., and Whitefield, S. (1993). Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe. *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(4), 521-548.
- Evans, G. and Whitefield, S. (1995). Economic Ideology and Political Success Communist-Successor Parties in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary Compared. *Party Politics*, 1(4), pp.565-578.
- Ferejohn, J. (1974) *Pork Barrel Politics*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gallagher, T. (2005). *Modern Romania: The End of Communism, the Failure of Democratic Reform, and the Theft of a Nation*. NYU Press.

- Geddes, B. (1990). How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics. *Political analysis*, 2, 131-150.
- Gherghina, S., Chiru, M., and Casal Bertoa, F. (2011). *State Resources and Pocket Money: Shortcuts for Party Funding in Romania*. The Legal Regulation of Political Parties, Working Paper No. 8
- Gherghina, S., and Jiglău, G. (2011). The Ideological Institutionalization of the Romanian Party System. *Romanian Journal of Political Science*, 11(1).
- Gherghina, S. (2011). Does Government Performance Matter? Electoral Support for Incumbents in Six Post-Communist Countries. *Contemporary Politics*, 17(3):257-277
- Gherghina, S. (2014). *Party Organization and Electoral Volatility in Central and Eastern Europe: Enhancing Voter Loyalty*. Routledge.
- Gherghina, S. and Soare, S. (2013). From TV to Parliament: Populism and Communication in the Romanian 2012 Elections. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. Available at: <http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2370006> [Accessed February 4, 2014].
- Gherghina, S., and Chiru, M. (2013). Taking the Short Route: Political Parties, Funding Regulations, and State Resources in Romania. *East European Politics and Societies*, 27(1), 108-128.
- Gherghina, S. (2013). Going for a Safe Vote: Electoral Bribes in Post-Communist Romania. *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, (ahead-of-print), 1-22
- Gherghina, S., and Volintiru, C. (2017). A New Model of Clientelism: Political Parties, Public Resources, and Private Contributors. *European Political Science Review*, 9(1), 115-137.
- Ghinea, C. (2001). *Politizarea Administrației. Perseverență în greșeală*. Paper No. 23, Romanian Academic Society.
- Giugăl, A., Johnston, R., Chiru, M., Ciobanu, I., & Gavriș, A. (2017). Gerrymandering and Malapportionment, Romanian Style: The 2008 Electoral System. *East European Politics and Societies*, 0888325417711222.
- Gledhill, J. and King, C. (2008). *Romania since 1989: Living Beyond the Past*. In Wolchik, S. and Curry, J. (eds.) *Central and east European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gledhill, J. (2011). Three Days in Bucharest: Making Sense of Romania's Transitional Violence, 20 years on. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63(9), 1639-1669.
- Gledhill, J. (2012). Competing for Change: Regime Transition, Intrastate Competition, and Violence. *Security Studies*, 21(1), 43-82.

Grosescu, R. (2004). The Political Regrouping of Romanian Nomenklatura during the 1989 Revolution. *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, 4(1), 97-123.

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2002). *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2007). *Rebuilding Leviathan: Party Competition and State Exploitation in Post-communist Democracies*. Cambridge University Press.

Gunther, R., Montero, J. R., & Linz, J. (Eds.). (2002). *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges: Old Concepts and New Challenges*. OUP Oxford.

Hanley, S., Szczerbiak, A., Houghton, T., and Fowler, B. (2008). Sticking Together: Explaining Comparative Centre—Right Party Success in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe. *Party Politics*, 14(4), 407-434.

Hanley, S., and Sikk, A. (2016). Economy, Corruption or Floating Voters? Explaining the Breakthroughs of Anti-establishment Reform Parties in Eastern Europe. *Party Politics*, 22(4), 522-533.

Houghton, T. (2004). The Party in Public Office, the Party Central Office and the Locus of Power in Political Parties in Slovakia. *Ol'ga Gyárfášová and Grigorij Meseznikov (eds) Party Government in Slovakia: Experience and Perspectives*, 89-100.

Houghton, T., and S. Fisher. 2008. "From the Politics of State-building to Programmatic Politics: The Post-Federal Experience and the Development of Centre-Right Party Politics in Croatia and Slovakia." *Party Politics* 14 (4): 435–454.

Houghton, T. (2012). A Law Unto Themselves: Money, Regulation and the Development of Party Politics in the Czech Republic. *The Legal Regulation of Political Parties Working Paper Series*, 20.

Houghton, T. (2014). When Permissiveness Constrains: Money, Regulation and the Development of Party Politics in the Czech Republic (1989–2012). *East European Politics*, 30(3), 372-388.

Houghton, T. (2014). Exit, Choice and Legacy: Explaining the Patterns of Party Politics in Post-communist Slovakia. *East European Politics*, 30(2), 210-229.

Houghton, T., and Deegan-Krause, K. (2015). Hurricane Season: Systems of Instability in Central and East European Party Politics. *East European Politics and Societies*, 29(1), 61-80.

- Hopkin, Jonathan (2001). A "Southern model" of Electoral Mobilization? Clientelism and Electoral Politics in Post-Franco Spain [online]. London: LSE Research Online.
- Hopkin, J. (2002). The Emergence and Convergence of the Cartel Party: Parties, State and Economy in Southern Europe. Paper prepared for panel on "The New Political Economy of European Political Parties" at the Conference of Europeanists, Chicago.
- Hopkin, J. (2003). Political Decentralization, Electoral Change and Party Organizational Adaptation A Framework for Analysis. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 10(3), 227-237.
- Hopkin, J. (2004). The Problem with Party Finance Theoretical Perspectives on the Funding of Party Politics. *Party politics*, 10(6), 627-651.
- Hopkin, J. (2006). Clientelism and Party Politics. In Richard Katz and William Crotty (eds.) *Handbook of Party Politics*. Sage Publications.
- Hopkin, J., (2012). Clientelism, Corruption and Political Cartels: Informal Governance in Southern Europe. In T. Christiansen and C. Neuhold (eds.), *International Handbooks on Informal Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Huntington, S. P. (1993). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Vol. 4). University of Oklahoma Press.
- Hutcheson, D. S. (2013). Party Cartels Beyond Western Europe: Evidence from Russia. *Party Politics*, 19(6), 907-924.
- Innes, A. (2002). Party Competition in Postcommunist Europe: The Great Electoral Lottery. *Comparative politics*, 85-104.
- Innes, A. (2014). The Political Economy of State Capture in Central Europe. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(1), 88-104.
- Innes, A. (2016). Corporate State Capture in Open Societies The Emergence of Corporate Brokerage Party Systems. *East European Politics & Societies*, available online.
- Ionita, S., Nutu, O., Stefan, L. și Mungiu-Pippidi, A., (2011). Beyond Perception. Has Romania's Governance Improved After 2004?, In *Romanian Journal of Political Science* 11(1).
- Ishiyama, J., (1999). The Communist Successor Parties and Party Organisational Development in Post- Communist Politics. In *Political Research Quarterly* 53: 87-112.
- Katz, R. S. (2001). The Problem of Candidate Selection and Models of Party Democracy. *Party politics*, 7(3), 277-296.

- Katz, R. S. and Peter M. (1995). Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party. In *Party Politics* 1: 5-28.
- Katz, R. and Mair, P. (2002). *The Ascendancy of the Party in Public Office: Party Organisational Change in Twentieth-Century Democracies*, in: R. Gunther, J. R. Montero & J. Linz (eds) *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*, Oxford University Press.
- Katz, R. S., & Mair, P. (2009). The Cartel Party Thesis: A Restatement. *Perspectives on politics*, 7(04), 753-766.
- Kawata, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Comparing Political Corruption and Clientelism*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Kemahlioğlu, Ö. (2012). *Agents Or Bosses?: Patronage and Intra-party Politics in Argentina and Turkey*. ECPR Press.
- Krašovec, A., and Haughton, T. (2011). Money, Organization and the State: The Partial Cartelization of Party Politics in Slovenia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 44(3), 199-209.
- Kriesi, H. (1997). *The Transformation of Cleavage Politics*, Stein Rokkan Lecture, ECPR Joint Sessions, Bern.
- Kitschelt, H., Z. Mansfeldová, R. Markowski, and G. Tóka. (1999). *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation and Inter-Party Cooperation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitschelt, H. (2000). Citizens, Politicians, and Party Cartelization: Political Representation and State Failure in Post-industrial Democracies. *European Journal of Political Research* 37(2):149-179.
- Kitschelt, H. and Wilkinson, S.I. (eds.) (2007) *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kopecký, P. (2006). Political Parties and the State in Post-Communist Europe: The Nature of the Symbiosis. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. 22(3): 251-273.
- Kitschelt, H., and Kselman, D. M. (2013). Economic Development, Democratic Experience, and Political Parties' Linkage Strategies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 46(11), 1453-1484.
- Kopecký, P. and Scherlis, G., (2008). Party Patronage in Contemporary Europe. *European Review*, 16(3):355-371.
- Kopecký, P. (2011). Political Competition and Party Patronage: Public Appointments in Ghana and South Africa. *Political Studies*, 59(3), 713-732.

- Kopecký, P., and Spirova, M. (2011). 'Jobs for the Boys'? Patterns of Party Patronage in Post-Communist Europe. *West European Politics*, 34(5), 897-921.
- Kopecký, P., Mair, P. and Spirova, M., (2012). *Party Patronage and Party Government in European Democracies*. Oxford University Press.
- Kopecký, P., Meyer Sahling, J. H., Panizza, F., Scherlis, G., Schuster, C., & Spirova, M. (2016). Party Patronage in Contemporary Democracies: Results From an Expert Survey in 22 Countries from Five Regions. *European Journal of Political Research*, 55(2), 416-431.
- Kreuzer, M., & Pettai, V. (2003). Patterns of Political Instability: Affiliation Patterns of Politicians and Voters in Post-communist Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 38(2), 76.
- Krouwel, A. (2003). Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-all Party. *West European Politics*, 26(2), 23-40.
- Lewis, P. G. (1998). Party Funding in Post-communist East-Central Europe. *Funding democratization*, 137-57.
- Light, D., and Phinnemore, D. (2001). *Post-communist Romania: Coming to Terms with Transition*. Macmillan Palgrave.
- Linz, J. J., & Stepan, A. (1996). *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-communist Europe*. JHU Press.
- Lopes, F. F. (1997). Partisanship and Political Clientelism in Portugal (1983–1993). *South European Society and Politics*, 2(3), 27-51.
- Loxbo, K. (2013). The Fate of Intra-party Democracy: Leadership Autonomy and Activist Influence in the Mass Party and the Cartel Party. *Party Politics*, 19(4), 537-554.
- Lundell, K. (2004). Determinants of Candidate Selection The Degree of Centralization in Comparative Perspective. *Party Politics*, 10(1), 25-47.
- Lyrantzis, C. (1984). Political Parties in Post-junta Greece: A Case of 'Bureaucratic Clientelism'?. *West European Politics*, 7(2), 99-118.
- Mair, P., and Van Biezen, I. (2001). Party Membership in Twenty European Democracies, 1980-2000. *Party Politics*, 7(1), 5-21.
- Marian, C. G., and King, R. F. (2010). Plus ça change: Electoral Law Reform and the 2008 Romanian Parliamentary Elections. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 43(1), 7-18.
- Marian, C. G., and King, R. F. (2016). Political Opinion and the Trends in Romanian Government Expenditures. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 12(48), 54-65.

- Meyer-Sahling, J. H. (2006). The Rise of the Partisan State? Parties, Patronage and the Ministerial Bureaucracy in Hungary. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 22(3), 274-297.
- Meyer-Sahling, J.H. (2008). The Changing Colours of the Post-communist State: The Politicization of the Senior Civil Service in Hungary, *European Journal of Political Research*, 47:1-33.
- Meyer-Sahling, J. and Veen, T. (2012). Governing the Post-communist State: Government Alternation and Senior Civil Service Politicization in Central and Eastern Europe. *East European Politics*, 28(1): 4-22.
- Müller, W. C. (2006). Party Patronage and Party Colonization of the State. *Handbook of Party Politics*, 189-195.
- Munck, G. L. (2004). Tools for Qualitative Research. In Henry Brady and Paul Collier, *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*, 105-121.
- Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2002). The Romanian Postcommunist Parties. In Andras Bozoki and John Ishiyama (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*. ME Sharpe
- Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2006). Corruption: Diagnosis and treatment. *Journal of democracy*, 17(3), pp.86-99.
- Munteanu, C. D. (2010) *Administrația publică teritorială*. Editura Universul Juridic: București.
- Nikolova, E. and Marinov, N. (2015) *Do Public Fund Windfalls Increase Corruption? Evidence from a Natural Disaster*. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Working Paper No. 179.
- O'Dwyer, C. (2004). Runaway State Building: How Political Parties Shape States in Post-communist Eastern Europe, *World Politics*, 56(4): 520-553.
- Renwick, A. (2010). *The Politics of Electoral Reform: Changing the Rules of Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Piattoni, S. (ed.) (2001) *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pinto-Duschinsky, M. (2002). Financing Politics: A Global View. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(4), 69-86.
- Pop-Eleches, G. (1998). Separated at Birth or Separated by Birth? The Communist Successor Parties in Romania and Hungary. *East European Politics and Societies*, 13(1), 117-147.
- Pop-Eleches, G. (2007). Historical Legacies and Post-communist Regime Change. *Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 908-926.

- Pop-Eleches, G. (2008). A party for all seasons: Electoral adaptation of Romanian Communist successor parties. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 41(4), 465-479.
- Powell, E. N., and Tucker, J. A. (2014). Revisiting Electoral Volatility in Post-communist Countries: New Data, New Results and New Approaches. *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(01), 123-147.
- Preda, C. (2015). Eclectic, dar Stabil. *Sfera Politicii*, 23(3), 12.
- Radu, A., and Buti, D. (2015). Inginerii Electorale în România Postcomunistă. *Sphere of Politics/Sfera Politicii*, 28(3).
- Roniger, L. (2004). Political Clientelism, Democracy, and Market Economy. *Comparative Politics*, 353-375.
- Roper, S. (2006). The Influence of Party Patronage and State Finance on Electoral Outcomes: Evidence from Romania. In *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. 22(3): 362-382.
- Sandri, G., and Pauwels, T. (2010). Party Membership Role and Party Cartelization in Belgium and Italy: Two Faces of the Same Medal?. *Politics & Policy*, 38(6), 1237-1266.
- Scarrow, S. E. (2006). Party Subsidies and the Freezing of Party Competition: Do Cartel Mechanisms Work?. *West European Politics*, 29(4), 619-639.
- Schefter, M. (1994). *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Schmitter, P. (2001). "Parties are Not What They Once Were", in Larry Diamond, and Richard Gunther (Eds.). *Political Parties and Democracy*. JHU Press. pp.67-89.
- Seawright, J., and Gerring, J. (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 294-308.
- Sikk, A. (2003). A Cartel Party System in a Post-Communist Country? The Case of Estonia. In *ECPR General Conference, Marburg* (pp. 18-21).
- Sikk, A. (2006). From Private Organizations to Democratic Infrastructure: Political Parties and the State in Estonia. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 22(3), 341-361.
- Spirova, M. (2007). *Political Parties in Post-communist Societies: Formation, Persistence, and Change*. Springer.
- Stan, L. (2003) *Leaders and Laggards: Governance, Civicness and Ethnicity in Post-communist Romania*. Boulder, CO: Columbia University Press.
- Stan, L. and Zaharia, R. (2011). Romania. *European Journal of Political Research*, 50:1108-1117.

- Stan, L. and Vancea, D. (2015). *Post-communist Romania at Twenty-Five: Lining Past, Present, and Future*. Lexington Books.
- Stark, D., and Bruszt, L. (1998). *Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stefan, L., Gherghina, S. and Chiru, M. (2012) We All Agree That We Disagree Too Much: Attitudes of Romanian MPs Towards Party Discipline. *East European Politics*, 28(2), pp.180–192.
- Stokes, S. C., Dunning, T., Nazareno, M., and Brusco, V. (2013). *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Szczerbiak, A. (2001). Cartelisation in Post-communist Politics: State Party Funding in Post-1989 Poland. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 2(3), 431-451.
- Szczerbiak, A. (2006). State Party Funding and Patronage in Post-1989 Poland. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 22(3), 298-319.
- Tavits, M. (2005). The Development of Stable Party Support: Electoral Dynamics in Post-Communist Europe. *American Journal of political science*, 49(2), 283-298.
- Tavits, M. (2012). Organizing for Success: Party Organizational Strength and Electoral Performance in Postcommunist Europe. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1), 83-97.
- Tavits, M. and Letki, N. (2013). From Values to Interests? The Evolution of Party Competition in New Democracies. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(1), pp.246-258.
- Tilly, C. (2001). Mechanisms in Political Processes. *Annual review of political science*, 4(1), 21-41.
- Tismaneanu, V. (1989). The Tragicomedy of Romanian Communism. *East European Politics and Societies*, 3(2), 329-376.
- Tismaneanu, V. (2003). *Stalinism For All Seasons*. University of California Press.
- Trantidis, A. (2014). Reforms and Collective Action in a Clientelist System: Greece During the Mitsotakis Administration (1990–93). *South European Society and Politics*, 19(2), 215-234.
- Trantidis, A. (2015). Clientelism and the Classification of Dominant Party Systems. *Democratization*, 22(1), 113-133.
- Van Biezen, I., and Kopecký, P. (2001). On the Predominance of State Money: Reassessing Party Financing in the New Democracies of Southern

and Eastern Europe. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 2(3), 401-429.

Van Biezen, I. (2003). *Political Parties in New Democracies: Party Organisation in Southern and East-Central Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Van Biezen, I. (2004). Political Parties as Public Utilities. *Party Politics*, 10(6), 701-722.

Van Biezen, I. and Kopecký, P. (2007). The State and the Parties: Public Funding, Public Regulation and Rent-Seeking in Contemporary Democracies. *Party Politics*, 13(2):235-254.

Van Biezen, I. V., and Kopecký, P. (2014). The Cartel Party and the State: Party–State Linkages in European Democracies. *Party Politics*, 20(2), 170-182.

Van Biezen, I., and Rashkova, E. R. (2014). Deterring New Party Entry? The Impact of State Regulation on the Permeability of Party Systems. *Party Politics*, 20(6), 890-903.

Volintiru, C. (2012a). Clientelism: Electoral Forms and Functions in the Romanian Case Study. *Romanian Journal of Political Sciences*, (01), 35-66.

Volintiru, C. (2012b). The Institutionalisation of the Romanian Party System. *Sfera Politicii*, (172), 134-146.

Volintiru, C. (2013). How Public Spending is Fueling Electoral Strategies in Romania. *Sudosteuropa*, 2: 268-289.

White, S., & Webb, P. (2007). *Political Parties in New Democracies: Trajectories of Development and Implications for Democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Whitefield, S. (2002). Political Cleavages and Post-communist Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5(1), pp.181-200.

Wolinetz, S. B. (2003). Beyond the Catch-All Party: Approaches to the Study of Parties and Party Organization in Contemporary Democracies. In Gunther, R., Montero, J. R., & Linz, J. (Eds.). *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges* (pp. 136-165).

Young, L. (1998). Party, State and Political Competition in Canada: The Cartel Model Reconsidered. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, 31(2), 339-358.

Institutional Reports and Online Databases:

Database of the 'Project on Democratic Accountability and Citizen-Politician Linkages around the World' (2013), Duke University

DNA (National Anti-Corruption Directorate). 2010. Activity Report

Ministry of Public Finance (2010) *Raport privind activitatea de audit intern din sectorul public* (Report about the Activity of Internal Audit in the Public Sector). Available at: http://discutii.mfinante.ro/static/10/Mfp/audit/Rap_anual_audit2010.pdf, (last accessed on May 10, 2014).

Ministry of Public Finance (2011) *Raport privind activitatea de audit intern din sectorul public* (Report about the Activity of Internal Audit in the Public Sector). Available at: http://discutii.mfinante.ro/static/10/Mfp/audit/Rap_activit_auditintern_sectorpublic_2011.pdf (last accessed on May 10, 2014).

Romanian Court of Accounts, 2008. *Raportul Public Anual* (Annual Public Report). Available at: www.curteadeconturi.ro/sites/ccr/RO/default.aspx (last accessed on May 10, 2014).

Romanian Court of Accounts (2009) *Raportul Public Anual* (Annual Public Report). Available at: www.curteadeconturi.ro/sites/ccr/RO/default.aspx (last accessed on May 10, 2014).

Romanian Court of Accounts (2010) *Raportul Public Anual* (Annual Public Report). Available at: www.curteadeconturi.ro/sites/ccr/RO/default.aspx (last accessed on May 10, 2014).

Romanian Court of Accounts (2011) *Raportul Public Anual* (Annual Public Report). Available at: www.curteadeconturi.ro/sites/ccr/RO/default.aspx (last accessed on May 10, 2014).

Annex 1. Romanian Cabinets 2000-2012

CABINET LEADER	PERIOD	GOVERNING PARTIES
Adrian Năstase	2000 (28, December) – 2004 (29, December) (elections)	Social Democrats: PDSR (renamed PSD), PSDR (which merged into the PSD in 2001), 30 portfolios; Conservatives: PUR (renamed PC) until 2002, 1 portfolio
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (I)	2004 (29, December) - 2007 (5, April)	National Liberals: PNL, 6 portfolios; Democrats: PD (renamed PDL), 6 portfolios; Hungarian Union: UDMR, 1 portfolio; Conservatives: PUR (renamed PC), 1 portfolio
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (II)	2007 (5, April) – 2008 (28, December) (elections)	National Liberals: PNL, 12 portfolios; Hungarian Union: UDMR, 3 portfolios;
Emil Boc (I)	2008 (22, December) – 2009 (23, December)	Liberal Democrats: PDL, 9 portfolios; Social Democrats: PSD, 8 portfolios
Emil Boc (II)	2009 (23, December) – 2012 (9, February)	Liberal Democrats: PDL, 8 portfolios; Hungarian Union: UDMR, 3 portfolios; National Union for Romania's Progress: UNPR, 1 portfolio
Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu	2012 (9, February) – 2012 (27, April)	Liberal Democrats: PDL, 9 portfolios; National Union for Romania's Progress: UNPR, 2 portfolios; Hungarian Union: UDMR, 4 portfolios;
Victor Ponta (I)	2012 (27, April) – 2012 (9, December) (elections)	Social Democrats: PSD, 6 portfolios; National Liberals: PNL, 8 portfolios; Conservatives: PC, 1 portfolio