Clientelistic Linkage Mechanisms in Post-Communist Democracies 2009-2023. DALP Evidence

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Abstract

This paper presents initial findings from the expert survey data collection conducted as part of the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP) during 2022-2024, with a focus on post-communist democracies. The study examines the prevalence and interplay of political clientelism and programmatism—two key partisan mobilization strategies—across the region. Utilizing data from DALP I (2008-2009) and DALP II (2022-2024), the paper explores the progression of these strategies over time. Additionally, the analysis investigates partisan reliance on different sub-strategies of clientelism—specifically electoral and relational—and their relationship with various voter groups, drawing on data from DALP II. The study also considers the roles of negative inducements and clientelistic signaling in shaping party-voter linkages, offering insights into the complex dynamics of political mobilization in post-communist democracies. The findings reveal significant variation in the mobilization profiles of both party systems and political parties, with some major parties effectively combining clientelism and programmatism. Notably, relational clientelism emerges as the dominant form of linkage in clientelistic politics within the post-communist space, overshadowing the more globally researched exchange of benefits for electoral services.
Key words: clientelism, programmatism, post-communist democracies, DALP

Introduction

This paper reports initial findings from the expert survey data collection conducted as part of the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP) between 2022 and 2024. Focusing specifically on post-communist democracies included in DALP, the paper should be read in conjunction with other paper-reports featured in the 2024 APSA Annual Meeting and Exhibition panel, "Political Partisan Linkages in Competitive Party Systems: DALP II 2022-24 Survey," which examine other regions or provide a global perspective. The primary goal is to assess the level of political clientelism—a partisan mobilization strategy that relies on the exchange of material benefits for political support—and to compare it with the level of programmatism, which involves mobilizing voters through issue-based positions, while using party system and party level data drawn from expert evaluation of political parties. Additionally, the paper attempts to identify any changes in the extent of the application of the two general linkage strategies over time, from the first data collection in DALP (2008-2009) to the present one. Furthermore, the paper evaluates the extent to which parties rely on the two main sub-strategies of political clientelism, electoral and relational, while addressing several key themes in the contemporary literature on political clientelism.

Over more than three decades of multipartism, the post-communist space has seen the development of a vibrant landscape of diverse accountability linkage mechanisms and corresponding mobilization strategies, encompassing both clientelistic and programmatic approaches. Although the study of clientelism in political science has traditionally focused on regions such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia—regions also highlighted in the APSA panel—post-communist countries have also attracted attention in this context. Research has examined various aspects, such as political patronage driving state expansion (O'Dwyer 2006), clientelism resulting from state extraction by political parties (Grzymala-Busse 2007), the interplay of benefits and threats in clientelistic strategies (Mares and Young 2019), party characteristics associated with clientelism (Ghergina and Volintiru 2020), and the engagement of citizens in clientelistic practices (Bliznakovski 2020). A common theme in these studies is the extensive use of state resources in clientelism—perhaps rooted in the communist legacy, where the state traditionally played a central role in both social provision and employment.

This paper focuses specifically on post-communist democracies, generally excluding countries with strong authoritarian tendencies in the region. However, the countries considered here exhibit significant variation in their political and economic contexts. For instance, some are classified as consolidated democracies by Freedom House's *Nations in Transit* report for 2024 (e.g., the Baltic states, Czechia, Slovakia), while others are categorized as semi-consolidated democracies (e.g., Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Croatia) or transitional/hybrid regimes (e.g., Hungary, the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia) (Freedom House 2024). Economically, these countries also differ: most are classified as high income countries by the World Bank in 2023, with the exception of the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Mongolia, which are categorized as upper-middle income (World Bank 2023). Additionally, their political affiliations vary, with some countries being members of both the EU and NATO (e.g., the Baltic and Visegrad countries, Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia), others striving to join either organization with varying prospects, and some being NATO members while

awaiting EU accession (e.g., parts of the Western Balkans). Mongolia, however, stands apart, with no prospects of joining either of these international organizations, reflecting a markedly different contextual situation compared to the European post-communist countries. The group of democracies examined thus varies significantly across several key macro indicators.

These initial observations provide essential context, setting the stage for a more detailed examination of the interplay between clientelism and programmatism, as well as the efforts made by political parties in the two main sub-strategies of clientelist linking: electoral and relational. The paper also addresses related themes that are relevant to the contemporary study of political clientelism. The next section, "Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations," lays the groundwork by explaining the key issues covered in the subsequent analysis and their relevance. The second section presents the data and methods used in the descriptive exploration. The third section discusses the findings, grouped by themes. Finally, the paper concludes by summarizing the findings and addressing the broader research question concerning the character of clientelism and its interplay with programmatism in the post-communist context.

1. Theoretical and conceptual considerations

This paper aims to provide an empirical analysis of the use of clientelistic and programmatic linkage strategies by political parties across the post-communist space under conditions of democratic competition. It seeks to assess the efforts of political parties, nested in their respective party systems, directed toward nurturing clientelistic linkages, as well as the effectiveness of these efforts. The analysis also examines the incidence of various clientelistic sub-strategies for voter mobilization, the use of "negative inducements" (threats and sanctions) against clients, the distribution of small-scale benefits as a means of "clientelistic signaling," and the types of voters most commonly targeted by clientelistic benefits. Regarding programmatic politics, this paper evaluates its presence relative to other linkage strategies, including clientelism, and investigates potential shifts in party programmatic orientation over a decade and a half, from the first DALP expert survey (2008-2009) to the second (2022-2024).

To achieve this, a few conceptual and theoretical clarifications are necessary. Most importantly, since clientelism is widely regarded as the antithesis of programmatic politics (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Stokes et al. 2013: Chapter 1), we should generally expect a negative relationship between the two across the post-communist space. In this theoretical context, it is crucial to determine whether such a relationship holds, and even more intriguing, if it does, whether exceptions exist—such as political parties or party systems that invest significant effort in both programmatic and clientelistic political mobilization. Additionally, given that this paper draws on data from two distinct time points, it is important to assess whether the expected relationship persists over time or whether significant changes emerge as democratic experience deepens in the region. This paper will empirically investigate these questions, aiming to determine whether the hypothesized negative relationship between programmatism and clientelism holds in countries that successfully transitioned from communism to multiparty democracy beginning in the early 1990s.

Additionally, we seem to know very little about how programmatism, clientelism, and other strategies of political party mobilization—such as charismatic politics, descriptive representation,

and populism—coexist within the overall mobilization portfolios of political parties. This issue is relevant not only for post-communist countries but globally as well (Kitschelt 2000). While there is limited theoretical and empirical work on this topic, it is evident that parties often rely on a mixture of strategies in their mobilization efforts. This paper will provide an initial assessment of how various mobilization strategies are combined across the post-communist space.

Moving to clientelistic political mobilization exclusively, the distinction between electoral and relational political clientelism, as discussed in contemporary literature (Gans-Morse et al. 2013; Nichter 2018; Yıldırım and Kitschelt 2020), emerges as a significant topic worth exploring. Initially framed as a variation of clientelistic ties based on their durability over time (Scott 1972), contemporary political science has further disaggregated political clientelism into two subtypes. Electoral clientelism is characterized as a one-shot exchange relevant to specific electoral cycles, typically occurring during and around election campaigns, where clients provide strictly electoral services (such as voting, turnout, or abstention) in exchange for material benefits provided by political parties (see Gans-Morse et al. 2013). In contrast, relational clientelism involves repeated exchanges that extend beyond specific electoral cycles, with clients continuously providing both electoral and broader political services in return for a steady flow of material benefits from political patrons (see Bliznakovski 2021). In essence, electoral clients might be viewed as "loosely" attached to clientelistic parties and candidates, while relational clients are more durably connected, aligning with Scott's early observation that clientelism may vary according to the durability of ties.

The distinction between electoral and relational clientelism, however, extends beyond the issue of durability. In electoral clientelism, where the services performed by clients are limited to the immediate electoral needs of political parties and require relatively less effort by clients, the corresponding benefits tend to be of lower material value, such as small amounts of cash or consumable goods (for this conceptualization of vote buying, the most common electoral clientelistic strategy, see Nichter 2014). On the other hand, more substantial clientelistic benefits, such as access to employment, positions within the state apparatus, continuous public social services, procurement contracts, and similar advantages, are more characteristic of relational clientelism (Ibid.; see also Bliznakovski 2020, Chapter 3). Additionally, services requiring more significant effort from clients, such as participation in party mobilization activities (i.e., "extra-electoral" services), are more typical of relational clients. This distinction in services highlights the observation by Kopecký and Mair (2012) that political parties may utilize patronage either as a resource in the electoral arena or as a resource in party organization. Relational clientelism, therefore, plays a crucial role in building and maintaining party organizations.

These distinctions are particularly important for studying clientelistic linkages because they reveal divergent strategic calculations by the involved actors, influenced by the one-shot versus iterative nature of the exchanges, the synchronic transactions in electoral clientelism versus the asynchronous transactions in relational clientelism, and the idea that these different types of clientelism serve distinct purposes for the involved actors. For these reasons, empirically addressing this distinction is a pressing issue in the study of clientelism.

This paper will attempt to empirically assess the relative effort that political parties invest in each of the two subtypes of clientelism, introducing an important conceptual innovation. Drawing on available DALP items, the paper will further disentangle relational clientelism by the

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type of clients involved—individual or collective. In individual (relational) clientelism, clients are individual citizens or voters who engage in clientelism by forming a direct relationship with political patrons. Conversely, collective (relational) clientelism involves a relationship between a collective entity and a political patron (i.e. the flow of benefits and services is mediated through a collective). Examples of such collectives include employees of private companies who might receive various concessions from political patrons, such as government procurement contracts or regulatory favors, in exchange for delivering political services from the company's employees. Similarly, residents of a particular locality might receive infrastructural benefits in return for services from that locality. Given that individual and collective clients may have divergent strategic calculations, this distinction warrants exploration. The "collective" type of clientelism remains categorized under relational clientelism rather than electoral clientelism in the conceptualization adopted in this paper, primarily due to the substantial nature of the exchanged benefits and services, as well as the durable, iterative, and often asynchronous character of the exchanges between collectives and clientelistic parties.

The present paper will thus seek to disentangle the relative effort that political parties across the post-communist space invest in each of the three subtypes of political clientelism: electoral, individual relational, and collective relational. Additionally, the paper will attempt to empirically determine which of these three subtypes contributes most to the effectiveness of clientelism across the region, starting from the premise that not all types of clientelistic linkages provide equal utility to political patrons.

In addition, given that we theoretically expect divergent strategic calculations for the actors involved in each of the three subtypes, this paper will attempt to empirically assess whether different types of voters are targeted with specific subtypes of political clientelism as a consequence of the patrons' strategic calculations. This has been one of the "hot topics" in clientelism research in political science over the past two decades. Scholars have argued that clientelistic targeting is disproportionately directed toward the poor or socio-economically disadvantaged (Auyero 2001; Brusco et al. 2004; Stokes 2005; Jensen and Justesen 2014; Çarkoğlu and Aytaç 2015; Kamp Justesen and Manzetti 2023) because these voters tend to value the distributed benefits more highly. Moreover, it is argued that clientelism is more prevalent where monitoring of client behavior is less costly (Brusco et al. 2004; Stokes 2005; 2007; Szwarcberg 2013; Lareguy et al. 2016), such as in smaller rural communities, where clients' residence in such communities serves as a proxy for the possibility of heightened clientelistic monitoring. However, the cited studies dominantly focus on electoral clientelism, particularly on vote buying. Given the distinctions between electoral and relational clients—where the former are conceptualized as recipients of relatively modest clientelistic benefits and the latter as recipients of more substantial benefits—the question of which socio-economic profiles are targeted by specific strategies is ripe for exploration. Similar arguments regarding divergent targeting strategies, such as vote buying and turnout buying, have been made in the context of electoral clientelism research and have received empirical support (e.g., Nichter 2010), as well as in studies examining different types of benefits directed at voters with varying levels of allegiance to political parties (Albertus 2012). Additionally, Corstange (2017) argues that heightened electoral competition prompts parties to target "more expensive" voters.

Finally, this paper will address two of the most novel issues in the study of clientelistic politics in political science. The first issue concerns the application of so-called "negative inducements" in clientelism, which include threats to cut access to benefits and actual sanctions that restrict access (Mares and Young 2016; 2018). Beyond the insight provided by Mares and Young (2018), who argue that core voters are more typical targets of pre-election entitlements and election-time threats, we still know very little about how political parties combine positive and negative inducements in their overall clientelistic mobilization efforts. The second issue relates to the distribution of small-scale benefits as a means for voters to learn about a political party or candidate (Muñoz 2014; Kramon 2016). Similarly, we have limited understanding of how political parties and candidates employ such strategies. This paper will attempt to assess the extent to which both of these practices (negative inducements targeting and signaling via the distribution of benefits) are present in the post-communist space.

2. Data and analytical approach

This paper utilizes data from the expert survey conducted within the framework of the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP), collected in two waves: the first during 2008-2009 (DALP I) and the second from 2022 to 2024 (DALP II). DALP I covers 19 post-communist party systems and 118 political parties, while DALP II encompasses 20 post-communist party systems and 139 political parties. Although both datasets provide aggregated data at the level of political parties and party systems, based on experts' scores of political parties across various characteristics related to their mobilization strategies, there are notable differences in the political parties included in each iteration. These differences—primarily due to changes in party systems and the relevance of particular political parties—complicate direct comparisons. Therefore, when discussing changes over time, the analysis will rely exclusively on party system-level data, while party-level data will be analyzed solely using the DALP II dataset. The party systems (countries) included in the analysis and the corresponding number of parties in each iteration of DALP are listed in Table 1 in the Appendix.

To achieve the goal of comparing DALP I and II, I utilize two additive indexes available in both datasets. At the party system level, I rely on an additive index of clientelism (variable: b15nwe), which includes measures of parties' efforts in clientelist targeting through consumable goods (B1), social service benefits (B2), employment positions (B3), government contracts and procurement opportunities (B4), and manipulation of regulatory rules (B5). Additionally, I use an index of programmatism developed by Kitschelt and Freeze (2010) (variable: cosalpo_4nwe), which assesses programmatism through several items in the DALP survey, focusing on four key issues within a party system. Both variables are weighted by the recent electoral size of political parties, providing party system-level measures that are sensitive to party size.

At the party level, using data exclusively from DALP II, I employ five distinct measures of clientelism, tailored to the specific analysis: one is an additive index representing general clientelistic effort, another approximates general effort based on direct expert assessment, and the remaining three correspond to specific subtypes of targeting strategies. Given the inclusion of an additional variable (B6) in DALP II, which measures effort through the provision and maintenance of infrastructure, I create an additive index comprising all B1 to B6 variables to

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account for general clientelistic effort (B_additive variable). To measure electoral clientelism, I use the B1 variable. For individual relational clientelism I rely on an average index composed of B2 and B3 (mean_B2_B3 variable). To measure collective relational clientelism, I use an average index composed of B4 to B6 (mean_B4_B5_B6 variable). Additionally, I utilize the E3 variable, which represents a single expert assessment of a party's overall effort in political clientelism, as provided in the DALP II dataset. The use of these different variables—some directly from DALP II and others specifically established for this study—enables an assessment of how different measures align with theoretical expectations. The choice of variable depends on the specific goals of each analysis, as detailed throughout the text when presenting findings.

To measure programmatism at the party level, I use two different measures available in DALP II: a simple evaluation of programmatic effort derived from experts' opinions (E2) and the more refined cosaldi_4 measure developed by Kitschelt and Yıldırım (this panel). As with the measures on clientelism, the choice of which variable to use depends on the particular analysis being conducted.

To account for other types of party mobilization efforts, I utilize the available DALP measures: E1 for charismatic politics, E4 for mobilization through party identification/loyalty, E5 for mobilization based on the general competence of the political party, E6 for club goods politics, E7 for constituency service, E8 for descriptive representation, and E61 for negative campaigning as a voter mobilization strategy. Additionally, I create a specific measure for populist politics by combining two DALP variables: D6, which measures anti-elitism, and D7, which measures people-centrism. This composite measure effectively captures two dimensions of populist politics according to the ideational approach of conceptualization (see Mudde 2017).

To account for negative clientelist inducements at the party level, I use DALP's B9 variable, and for clientelistic signaling, I rely on the B10 variable. To measure clientelistic effectiveness, I utilize B13, a variable based on experts' assessments of how effective a particular political party is in clientelistic targeting in terms of actual voter mobilization outcomes. To measure the longevity of clientelistic linkages, I establish an additive index of two variables available in the data set: the first measuring the duration of the relationships between the party and its brokers (C2) and the duration of the relationship between parties and voters (C3). Finally, to identify the voter groups typically targeted by clientelism, I rely on DALP's items for rural voters (B11_1), urban voters (B11_2), ethnic groups (B11_3), poor voters (B12_1), middle-income voters (B12_2), and wealthy voters (B12_3).

All variables are coded in the same direction, from low to high, facilitating easy interpretation of the findings. The variables used, along with the concepts they measure and basic descriptive statistics—such as minimum and maximum values, mean values, and corresponding standard deviations—are presented in Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix.

The analyses that follow are primarily based on simple descriptive statistics. To assess potential changes over time between DALP I and DALP II, I examine the distribution of party systems across variables related to clientelism and programmatism, graphically plot the party systems, and discuss the observed changes. Additionally, I plot the relationship between clientelism and programmatism to explore how it manifests in the post-communist region.

Moving to the party-level data of DALP II, I examine how other mobilization strategies are utilized alongside clientelism and programmatism. I begin by estimating the prevalence of each

available strategy and then present a simple correlation matrix that includes all strategies listed in part E of the DALP II dataset. This approach allows for conclusions on the relationships between clientelism, programmatism, and other strategies within the overall mobilization portfolios of political parties.

To disentangle the relative prevalence of different clientelistic sub-strategies, I use plotted estimations of mean points for each party system, which reveal interesting idiosyncrasies between party systems as well as overall regional trends. Next, I perform OLS models with clustered standard errors at the party system level to assess which of the available sub-strategies contributes most (or least) to clientelistic effectiveness. Marginal effects of each strategy on clientelistic effectiveness are reported. To further explore whether electoral or relational clientelism yields more benefits to parties, I also plot the relationship between the measured longevity of clientelistic linkages and effectiveness.

To assess parties' efforts in the application of negative inducements and clientelistic signaling, I plot simple means with confidence intervals at the party system level, and next, I plot the relationship between the overall clientelist effort and both these variables.

I conclude the overview of findings by reporting the marginal effects of different clientelistic sub-strategies on the targeting of various voter groups, derived from OLS regression models with clustered standard errors by party systems. The plotted effects offer a clear and immediate overview of the main strategies employed in targeting different voter groups.

The combination of simple descriptive statistics at the regional, party system, and party levels, along with the application of OLS modeling where appropriate, will provide an initial understanding of the application of both political clientelism and programmatism across the post-communist space.

3. Findings

This section presents an initial descriptive analysis of clientelistic linkages in the post-communist region. We begin by examining the differences in clientelistic and programmatic efforts between DALP I and DALP II, followed by an analysis of how various mobilization strategies are combined by political parties in DALP II. The focus then shifts exclusively to political clientelism, where we discuss the application of different sub-strategies, negative inducements, and clientelistic signaling. The section concludes with an analysis of which voter groups are targeted with clientelistic benefits in post-communist countries.

3.1. How much (if, at all) programmatic and clientelistic effort changed between DALP I and DALP II?

A visual inspection of the distribution of data at the party system level for two key variables from the DALP surveys—cosaplo_4nwe (programmatic effort) and the b15nwe additive index (clientelistic effort)—reveals intriguing changes over time. Notably, the overall spread of the programmatic distribution has significantly narrowed between the two survey waves, as shown in the boxplots in Figure 1. This change is most pronounced in the upper end of the distribution,

specifically in the fourth quartile: in DALP I, several party systems scored around 0.5 on the cosaplo_4nwe index, whereas in DALP II, none of the party systems surpasses the 0.4 mark. This suggests an incremental decline in programmatic effort at the regional level over the decade and a half between the surveys. While the differences in median and mean values are incremental and, in the case of the means, not statistically significant (not shown in the graph), the overall distribution of the variable provides insight into the direction of programmatic effort during this period.

FIGURE 1.
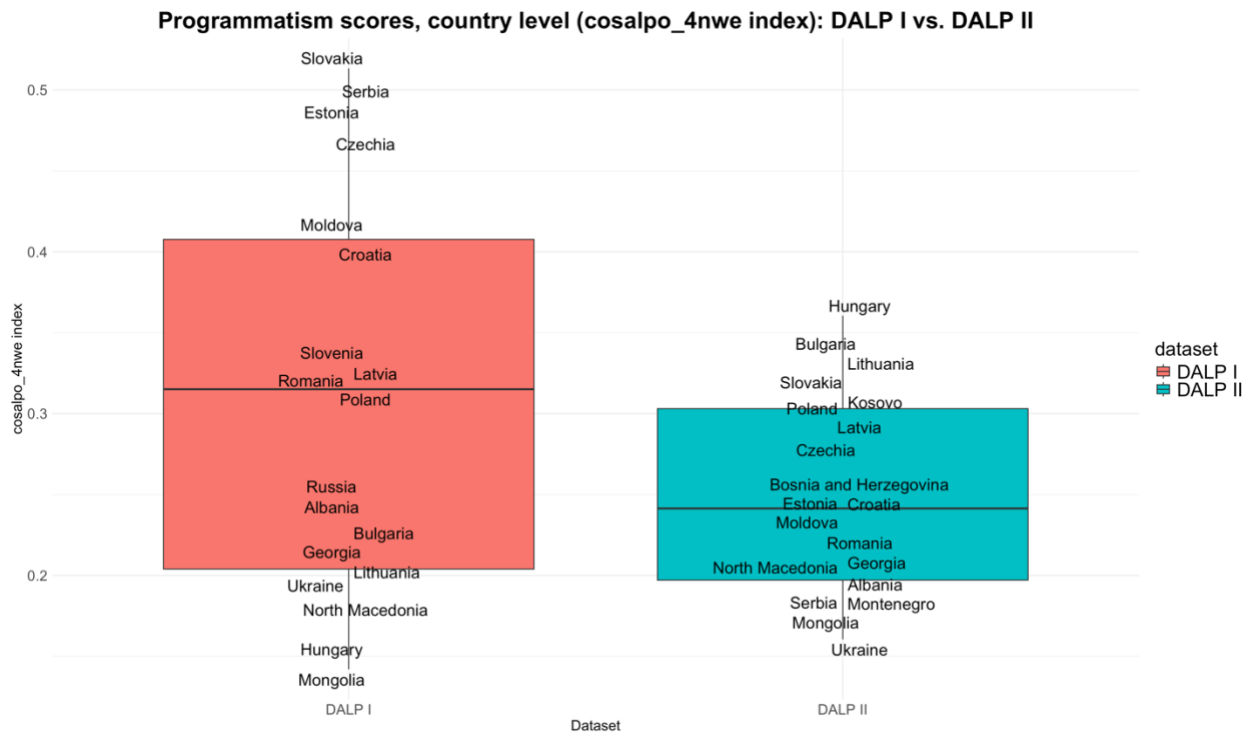
Similarly, the distribution of the b15nwe index, which measures overall clientelistic effort and is comparable across the two surveys, also reveals noteworthy changes over time (see Figure 2). The distribution in DALP I is noticeably more skewed toward the upper values than in DALP II, where a further decline in clientelistic effort is evident, particularly among the countries that were already measured as least clientelistic in DALP I. As with the programmatic index, the clientelistic aggregated means at the regional level do not show statistically significant differences (not shown in the graph). However, the comparison of the distributions of these two variables between the survey waves suggests a general tendency toward a decline in both clientelistic and programmatic efforts.

In addition, the findings suggest that some countries have completely altered their linkage "profiles" between DALP I and DALP II. Lithuania and Hungary are prime examples of a resurgence in programmatism over the decade and a half, while Serbia illustrates an opposite trend. In DALP I, Lithuania and Hungary were placed in the lowest (first) quartile of the cosaplo_4nwe distribution, whereas in DALP II, they shifted to the fourth and highest quartile. Conversely, Serbia, which was a frontrunner in programmatism in DALP I, is now positioned in the lowest quartile of the cosaplo_4nwe distribution in DALP II. Slovakia, however, shows "stability," maintaining its position in the fourth quartile across both surveys, while Ukraine, North

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Macedonia, and Mongolia also remain "stable," but in the lowest quartile. Other countries exhibit changes, though less pronounced; for instance, Bulgaria moved from the second quartile in DALP I to the fourth in DALP II, while Croatia declined from near the top of the third quartile in DALP I to the median in DALP II.

FIGURE 2.

Clientelism scores, country level (b15nwe index): DALP I vs. DALP II
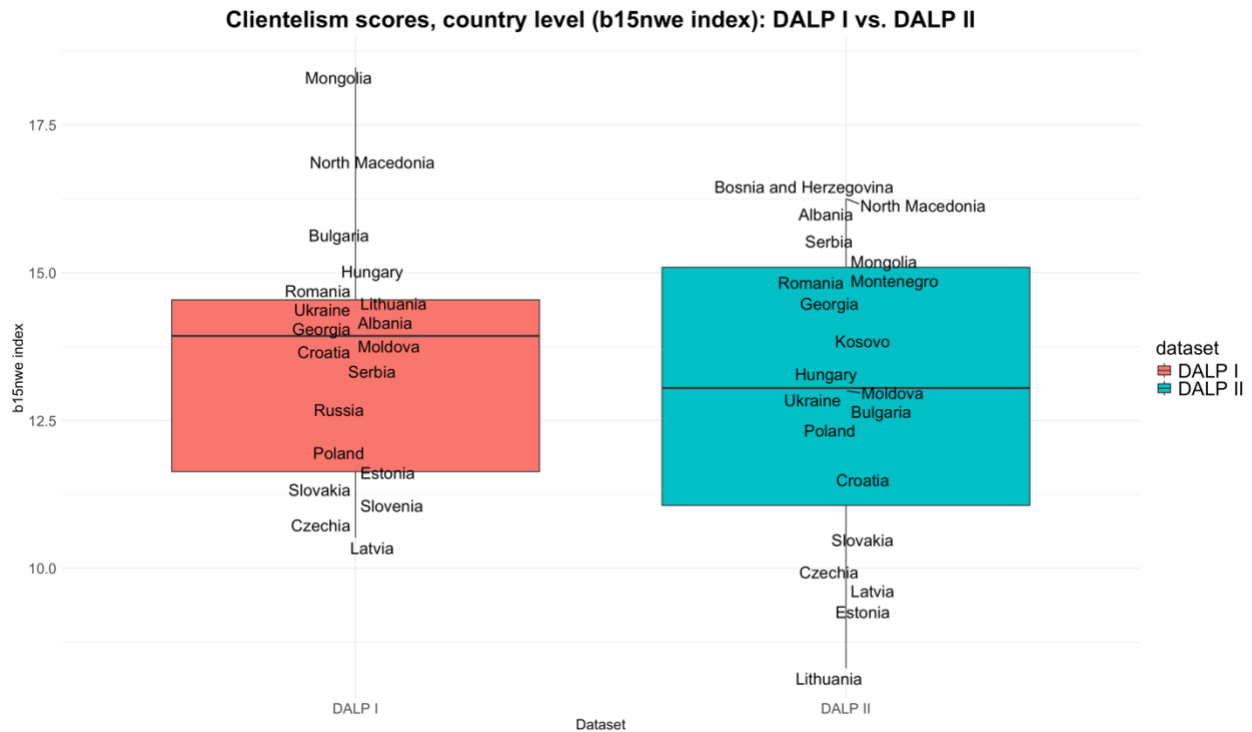
Similar shifts are observed at the party system level regarding clientelism. The most notable change is in Lithuania, which moved from the third quartile of the b15nwe distribution in DALP I to being the country with the least clientelistic effort in the post-communist region in DALP II. A similar, though less pronounced, decline in clientelism is seen in Bulgaria and Hungary, both of which moved from the fourth quartile to positions near the median. On the other hand, Serbia and Albania shifted from below the median in the second quartile to the top quartile, indicating a relative strengthening of clientelistic efforts in these countries between the two surveys.

The "tighter" spread of the distribution in the programmatism cosalpo_4nwe index and the "broader" spread in the b15nwe index between DALP I and DALP II result in a steeper negative relationship between the two indexes over time (see Figure 3). While a negative relationship between programmatism and clientelism was already observable with DALP I data, in DALP II it even more pronounced, with programmatism more strongly depressing clientelism. This trend appears to be driven by the lower levels of programmatism in several post-communist countries, coupled with even lower levels of clientelism in those same countries between DALP I and II. Examples include the three Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), as well as Czechia, Slovakia, Croatia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Conversely, the Western Balkan countries measured in both waves (Serbia and Albania) show a decline in programmatic effort and a rise in clientelistic effort between DALP I and II, or they remain relatively stable (North Macedonia). The same trend

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is observed in Poland and Georgia. Romania maintains a similar level of clientelism but shows reduced programmatism compared to DALP I. Hungary and Bulgaria, on the other hand, exhibit higher levels of programmatism and lower levels of clientelism between the two surveys. Mongolia has significantly reduced its clientelism score while maintaining a similar level of programmatism. The "newcomers" in DALP from the Western Balkans generally display low levels of programmatism and high levels of clientelism (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro), with Kosovo being an exception, scoring relatively high in programmatism alongside a moderately high score in clientelism.

FIGURE 3.

Programmatic and clientelist effort, country level: DALP I vs. DALP II
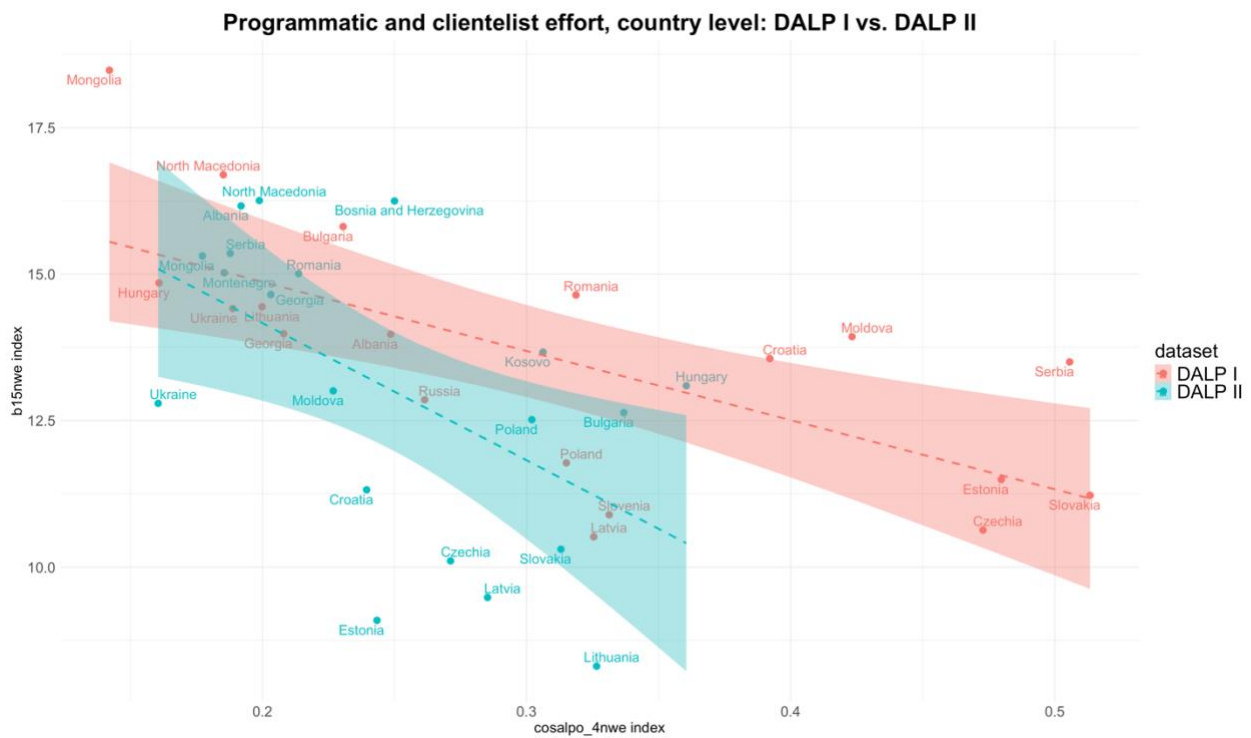
The presented data indicates that both programmatism and clientelism are currently practiced across the region, with various specificities between countries. Additionally, there appears to be an even stronger negative relationship between these two linkage strategies in DALP II compared to DALP I. With this in mind, we now turn to an examination of political mobilization using party-level data available in DALP II.

3.2. Clientelism and programmatism at party level

Figure 4 plots the relationship between clientelism and programmatism at the level of political parties, once again revealing a negative relationship, though less steep than the one observed at the party system level. The figure labels political parties with their acronyms and their vote share from the most recent general elections, allowing us to identify intriguing party-level trends.

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First and foremost, several major parties in the region combine strong clientelist and programmatic efforts—Fidesz in Hungary, the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland, and GERB in Bulgaria are prime examples. This pattern is followed by most of the major political parties from the Western Balkan countries, Georgia, and Moldova, which exhibit high clientelist and more moderate programmatic efforts. Additionally, some parties show relatively high programmatic and more moderate clientelist efforts, such as SMER-SD in Slovakia, LVV in Kosovo, and BSP in Bulgaria.

However, the plot is generally populated by parties that either demonstrate strong clientelistic efforts with relatively lower programmatic efforts, or the opposite—higher levels of programmatism with low levels of clientelism. There is also a substantial number of parties that demonstrate low effort in both linkage strategies. Notably, the figure clearly shows that many of the larger parties (in terms of vote share) engage significantly in clientelism, and some of the most successful in recent years—like Fidesz, PiS, and GERB—effectively combine both clientelism and programmatism. This variation in how parties combine these two main linkage strategies suggests promising avenues for further research on linkage mechanisms in the region.

FIGURE 4.

Clientelism and programmatism at party level, DALP II data

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3.3. Which other strategies are mixed with clientelism and programmatism?

Given the observed general decline in both programmatic and clientelistic efforts between DALP I and II, it becomes crucial to identify which alternative strategies or variations of these main linkage mechanisms may be filling the space within the overall mobilization portfolios of political parties. Figure 5 plots the distribution of nine different strategies from part E of the DALP survey, displaying the medians, as well as the mean levels of each strategy alongside the results from paired t-tests comparing clientelism, programmatism, and other political mobilization strategies measured in part E.

FIGURE 5.

General party mobilization effort in the post-communist space, party level, DALP II

Paired T-tests | Significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001
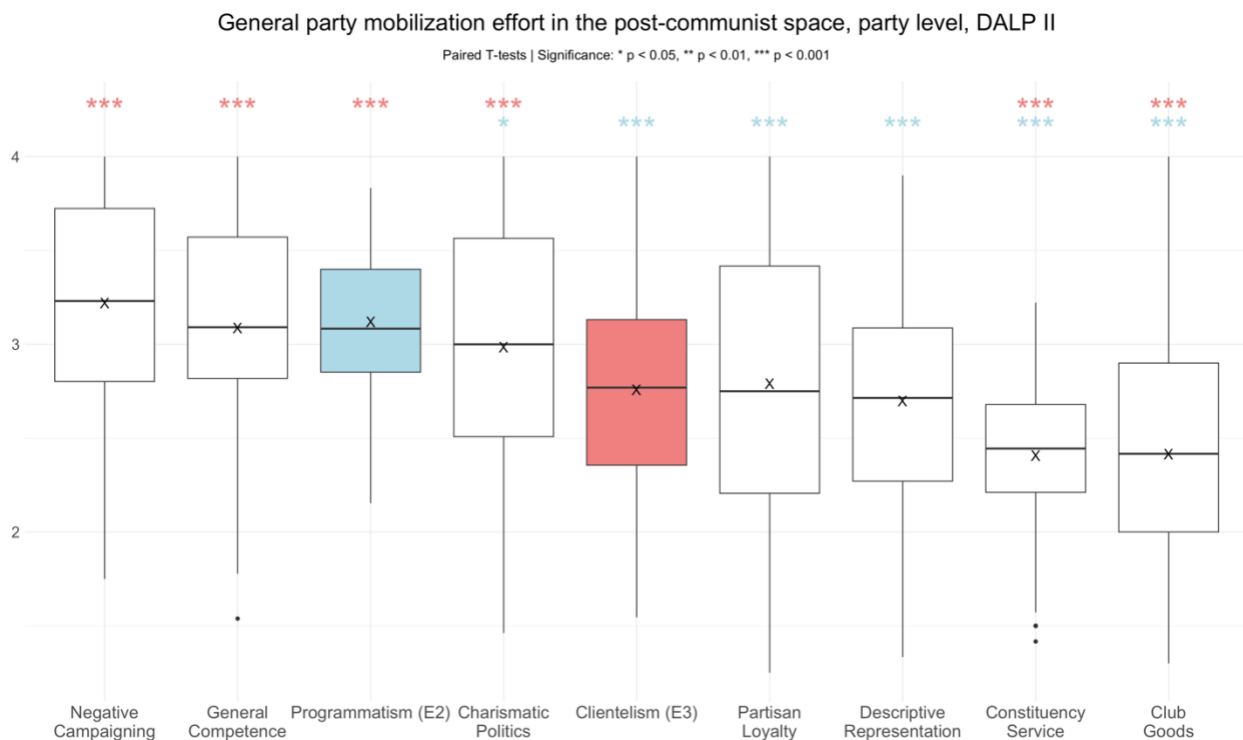
From the graph, we can conclude that the mean level of programmatism is statistically significantly higher than that of clientelism across the region, by approximately less than half a unit on a 1-4 scale. This data also indicates that programmatism is practiced more frequently than charismatic politics, party identification mobilization, descriptive representation, constituency services, and club goods (with statistically significant differences), and at similar levels to negative campaigning and general competence mobilization. Clientelism, on the other hand, shows similar and statistically indistinguishable mean levels to party identification mobilization and descriptive representation. However, it is practiced at statistically significantly lower levels compared to negative campaigning, general competence, and charismatic politics, but higher than constituency service and club goods mobilization strategies. In general, clientelism appears to occupy a mid-point in terms of effort among these mobilization strategies.

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Figure 6 presents a correlation matrix for all nine strategies available in part E, with programmatism and clientelism measured by the more refined cosaldi_4 and the B1-B6 additive index, respectively. The matrix reveals that clientelism correlates significantly with all other strategies (at $p < .05$). Notably, it correlates positively with club goods ($r = .82$), descriptive representation ($r = .63$), and party identification ($r = .53$). Clientelism also shows positive correlations with general competence mobilization ($r = .42$), negative campaigning ($r = .40$), charismatic politics ($r = .38$), and populism ($r = .19$). Conversely, clientelism correlates negatively with constituency service ($r = -.24$) and, as expected given earlier findings, with programmatism ($r = -.17$). No other strategy in the matrix exhibits such widespread correlations, suggesting that political clientelism is rather "strong" in its potential for combination with other mobilization strategies. Programmatism, in contrast, only correlates positively with charismatic politics and negative campaigning (each at $r = .19$).

FIGURE 6.

Correlation Matrix: Effort via Different Strategies, DALP II
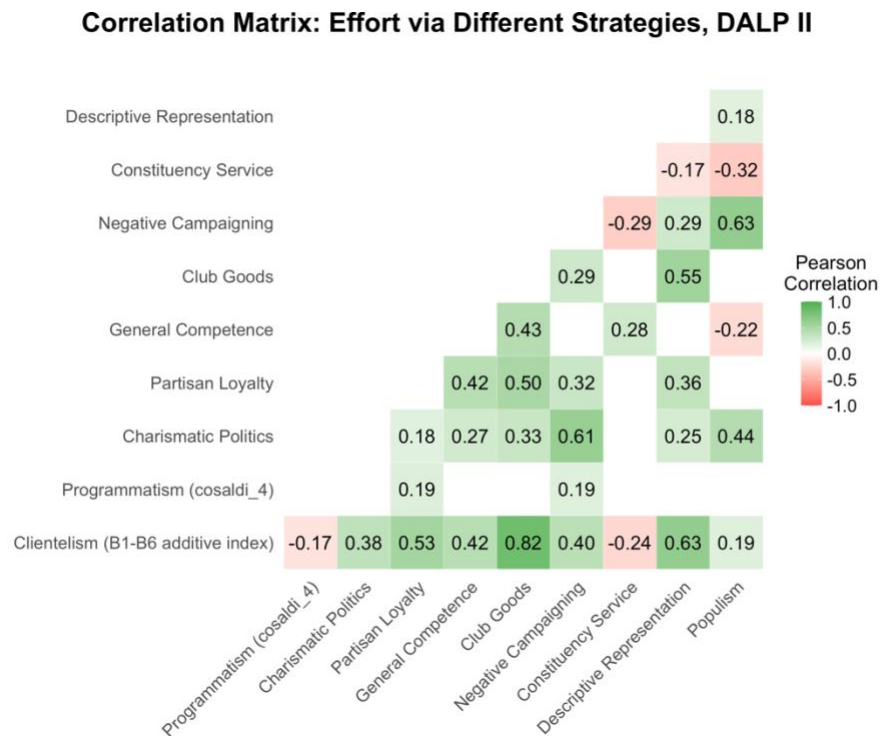
These findings suggest that political clientelism in the post-communist space rarely functions as a stand-alone strategy of political mobilization. Instead, it is frequently combined with other strategies as part of a party's overall mobilization portfolio. This stands in contrast to programmatism, which appears to be much less systematically combined with other mobilization strategies.

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3.4. Disaggregating clientelism and the effects of different clientelistic sub-strategies

An important aspect of clientelistic politics is the prevalence of different sub-strategies of mobilization at various levels of analysis. This subsection attempts to disentangle this issue within the post-communist region, using party-level data from DALP II.

To begin, Figure 7 displays the boxplot distribution of three distinct clientelistic targeting strategies: electoral clientelism, individual relational clientelism, and collective relational clientelism. It also presents the results of paired t-tests on the mean differences, revealing that collective relational clientelism demonstrates the greatest effort at the regional level, followed by individual relational clientelism and then electoral clientelism, with all differences between means being statistically significant. Although electoral clientelism is often considered the "classic" variant of political clientelism globally, in the post-communist region, it seems to be overshadowed by relational clientelistic efforts, both with individuals and collectives. But how does this manifest in specific party systems across the region?

FIGURE 7.

Clientelist Strategies in the Post-Communist Space, party level, DALP II

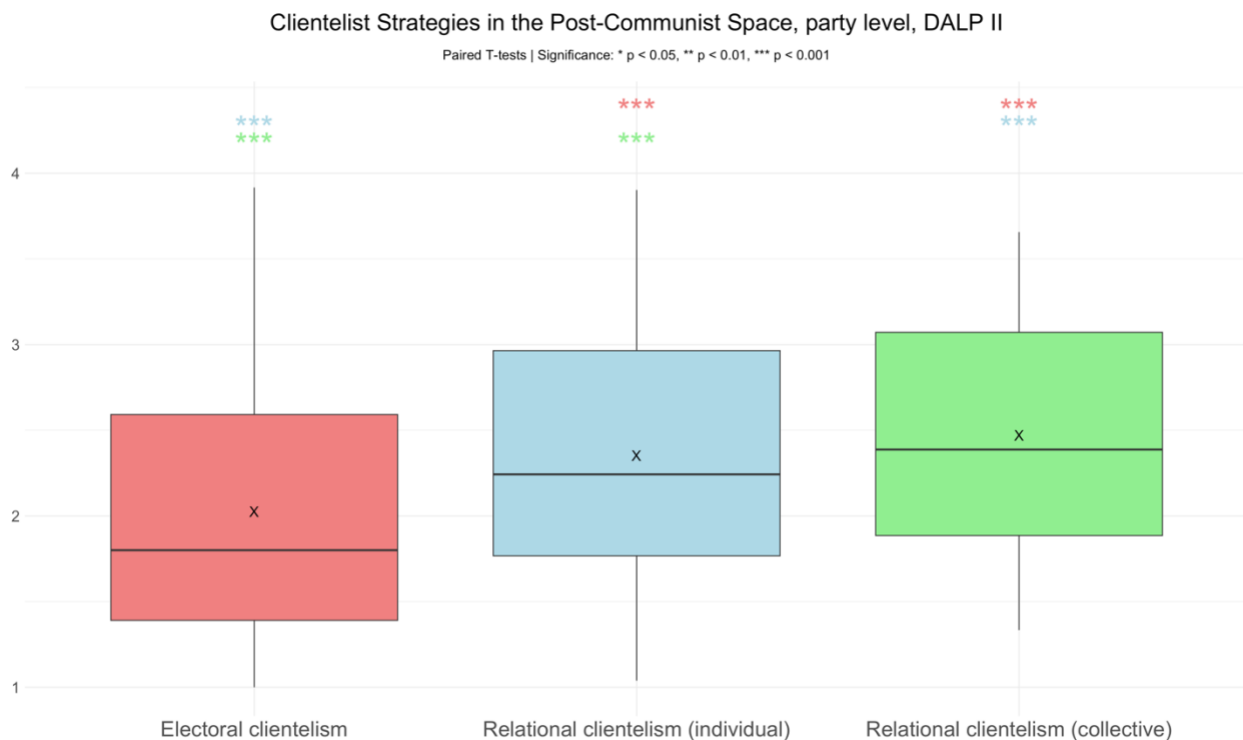Paired T-tests | Significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Figure 8 further illustrates the mean levels of these variables at the party system level, revealing the predominance of relational clientelistic mobilization over electoral clientelism in most of the observed party systems. In fact, electoral clientelism surpasses other forms only in Hungary, Moldova, Mongolia, and Ukraine. In all other countries, relational clientelism, either in its individual or collective forms, appears more prominent. There are, however, some notable differences.

For instance, individual relational clientelism is most prominent in the Western Balkan party systems (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia) and Georgia, which also shows a relatively higher mean in electoral clientelism. Collective relational clientelism, on the other hand, dominates in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, with significant variability in the levels and the gaps between the measured means of collective relational clientelism and other forms.

The findings allow us to categorize countries based on the predominance of one clientelistic sub-strategy over others: i) countries where electoral clientelism is most prevalent (Ukraine, Moldova, Mongolia, and perhaps surprisingly, Hungary); ii) countries where individual relational clientelism is more dominant (the six Western Balkan countries, plus Georgia, which has a similar score for electoral and individual relational clientelism); and iii) countries where collective relational clientelism is most prominent (the EU members, excluding Hungary). It is important to note that overall clientelism levels vary significantly within these groups.

FIGURE 8.

Clientelism disaggregated, by type and by party system
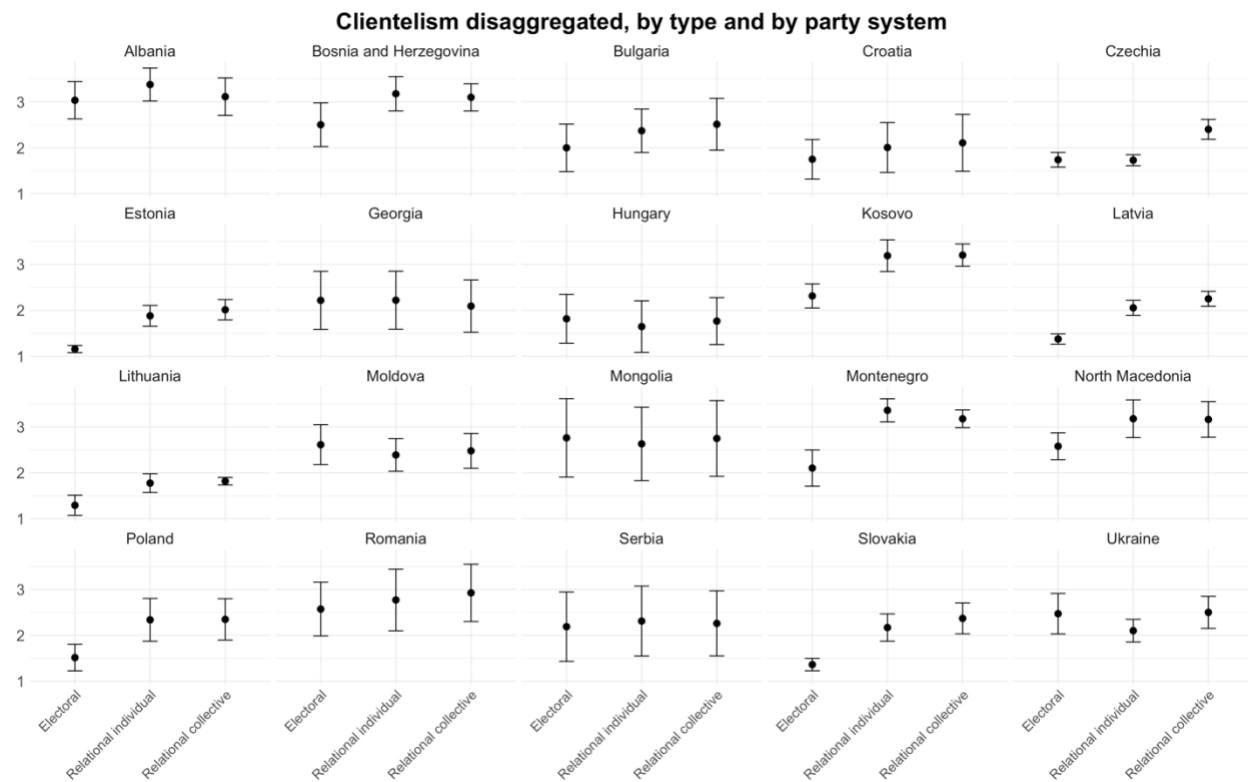
Which of these sub-strategies contributes most to clientelistic effectiveness? To explore this, Figure 9 presents the marginal effects of the three sub-strategies on a measure of effectiveness available in DALP II. The marginal effects, derived from an OLS model with clustered standard errors at the party system level, show a statistically significant positive effect only for individual relational clientelism. This suggests that individual relational clientelism is key to clientelistic effectiveness across the post-communist space. In contrast, neither electoral nor collective relational clientelism shows a statistically significant marginal effect in this model.
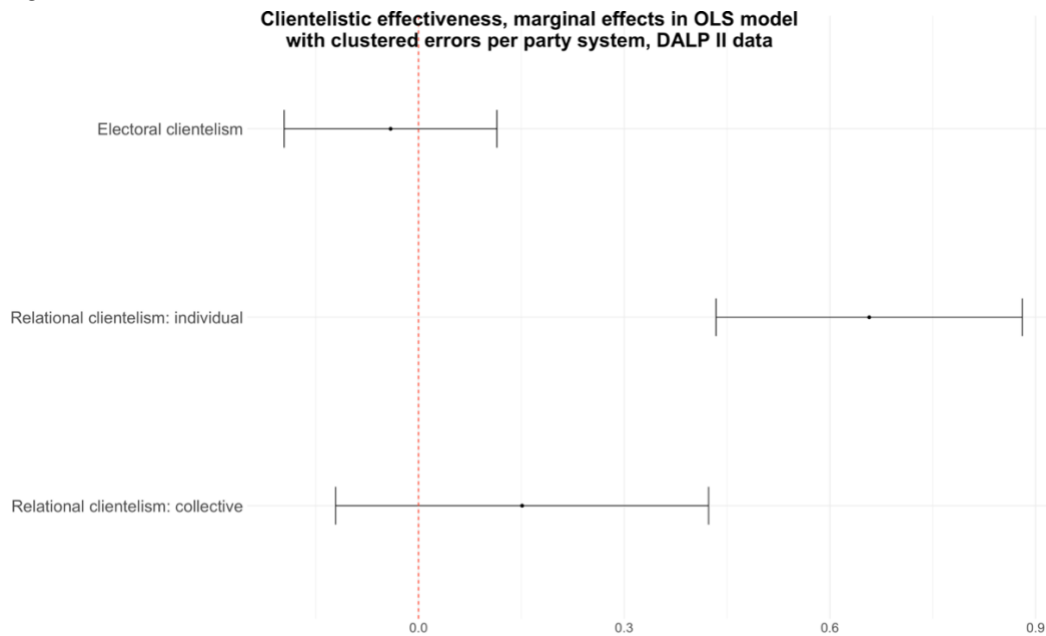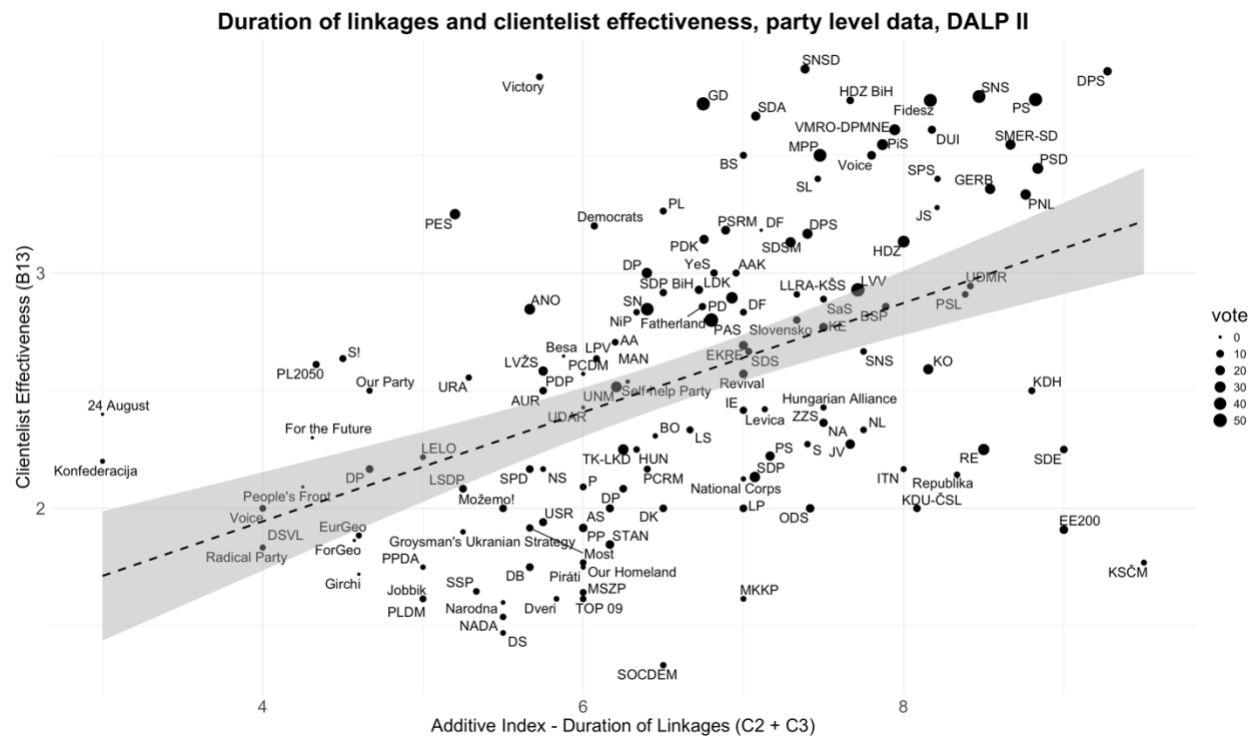
FIGURE 9.

Clientelistic effectiveness, marginal effects in OLS model
with clustered errors per party system, DALP II data

FIGURE 10.

Duration of linkages and clientelist effectiveness, party level data, DALP II

Another way to gauge the effectiveness of specific clientelistic strategies is by examining the longevity of clientelistic linkages pursued by political parties, also available in DALP II. As previously discussed, relational clientelism is characterized by lengthy linkages, and if effectiveness in the region is driven by this type rather than electoral clientelism, we should expect a positive relationship between the longevity of linkages and clientelistic effectiveness. Figure 10

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plots this relationship, showing that effectiveness increases as the duration of linkages per party lengthens. A visual inspection of the plot reveals that many political parties in the sample, particularly those with larger vote shares, exhibit both higher levels of clientelistic effectiveness and durable linkages with brokers and voters. This is clearly visible in the top right corner of the plot, further supporting the idea that clientelism across the region is predominantly effectuated through long-term, relational clientelism.

3.5. The application of negative inducements

Threats to cut access to clientelistic benefits, as well as actual sanctions against clients, are common features of clientelistic linking. So far, we have focused on the (positive) distribution of benefits across the region, but it is equally important to assess the effort directed at negative inducements. Figure 11 provides this data at the party system level, plotting means with 95% confidence intervals for each of the post-communist countries.

FIGURE 11.

Negative inducements, means per party system, DALP II Data
Red dashed line represents regional average
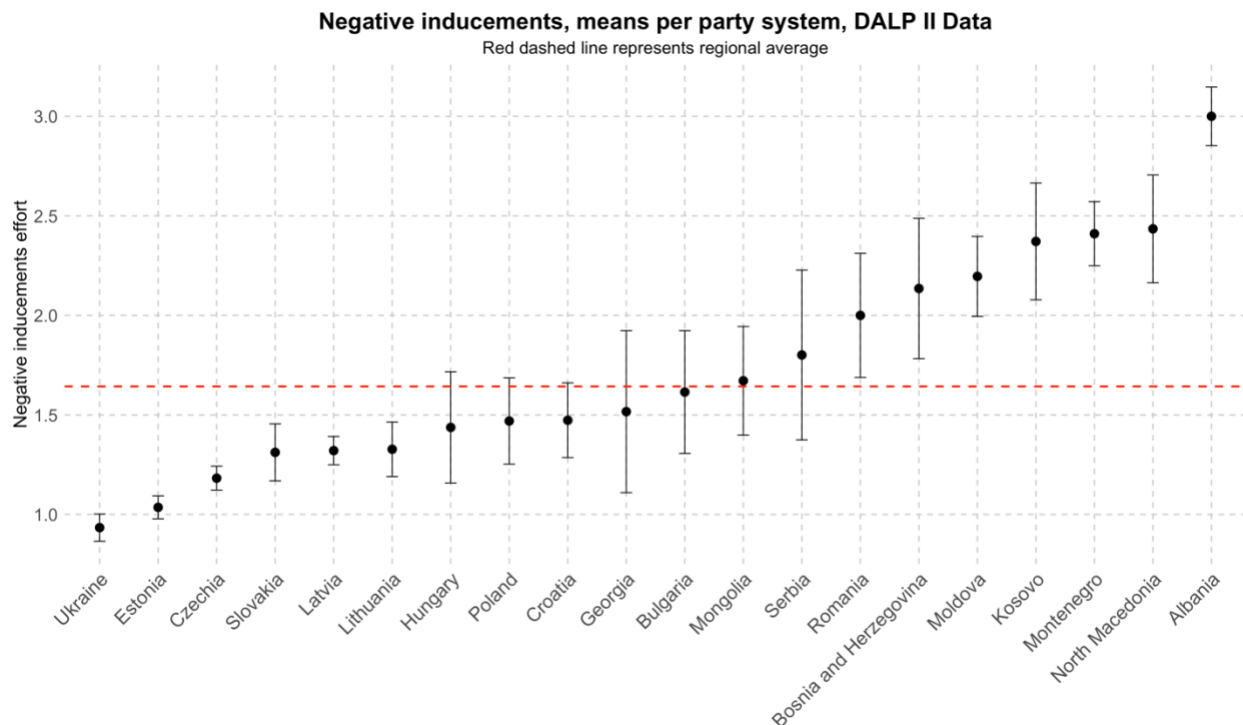
The figure reveals that many of the party systems previously identified as more clientelistic—due to greater efforts in distributing benefits—are also more prominent in applying negative inducements. The Western Balkan countries, with Albania leading the post-communist region, as well as Moldova and Romania, show the highest levels of negative inducement effort. Conversely, the Baltic countries, Central Eastern European countries, and Ukraine (which ranks lowest) exhibit the least effort in negative inducement targeting.

The positive relationship between general positive clientelistic targeting and efforts involving negative inducements is further confirmed in Figure 12, which illustrates the connection between an additive index of clientelism and the negative inducements item from DALP II. The

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plot reveals that parties with higher levels of positive clientelistic targeting also tend to exert greater efforts in applying negative inducements.

FIGURE 12.

Clientelist effort and negative inducements, party level data, DALP II
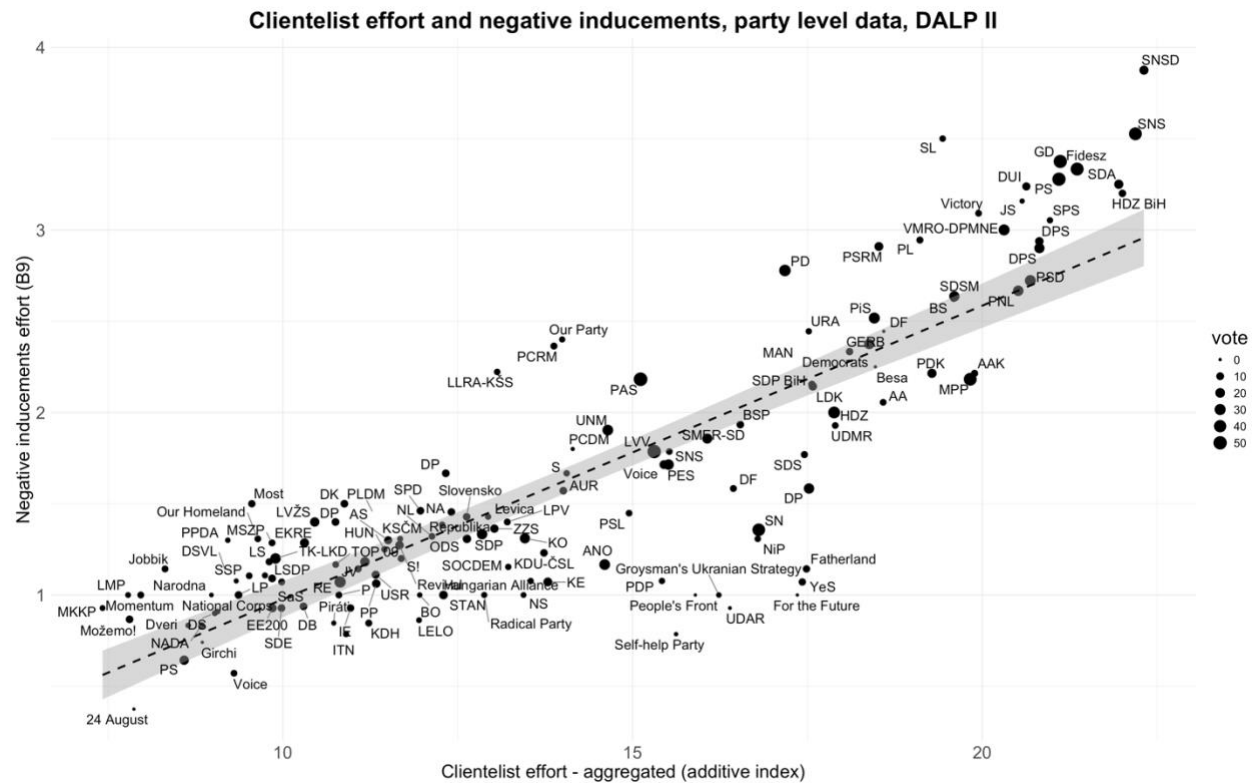
3.6. Clientelistic signaling

Political parties may also use the distribution of small-scale benefits as means to disseminate information about the party, and one of the measurements available in DALP II allows us to assess these efforts across the post-communist region. In Figure 13, the mean levels of signaling efforts at the party system level are plotted alongside 95% confidence intervals. The plot reveals a different pattern from what was observed earlier in terms of the ordering of countries by their efforts. Signaling efforts are highest in Moldova, Mongolia, and Albania, and lowest in Montenegro and the Baltic countries. Montenegro, for example, is a party system where clientelistic efforts were generally measured at the higher end of the group but showed less effort in signaling. Czechia is another interesting case, as it repeatedly scored lower in clientelistic effort but ranks relatively high in signaling. The relationship between the effort in distributing benefits and signaling is further examined in Figure 14. While a positive relationship is identified, it is somewhat weaker in magnitude than the relationship between positive and negative clientelistic targeting observed in the previous subsection, for instance. These findings in general suggest that signaling via small scale benefits and the actual distribution of clientelistic benefits overlap less in the region in comparison to other features of clientelism discussed in this paper.
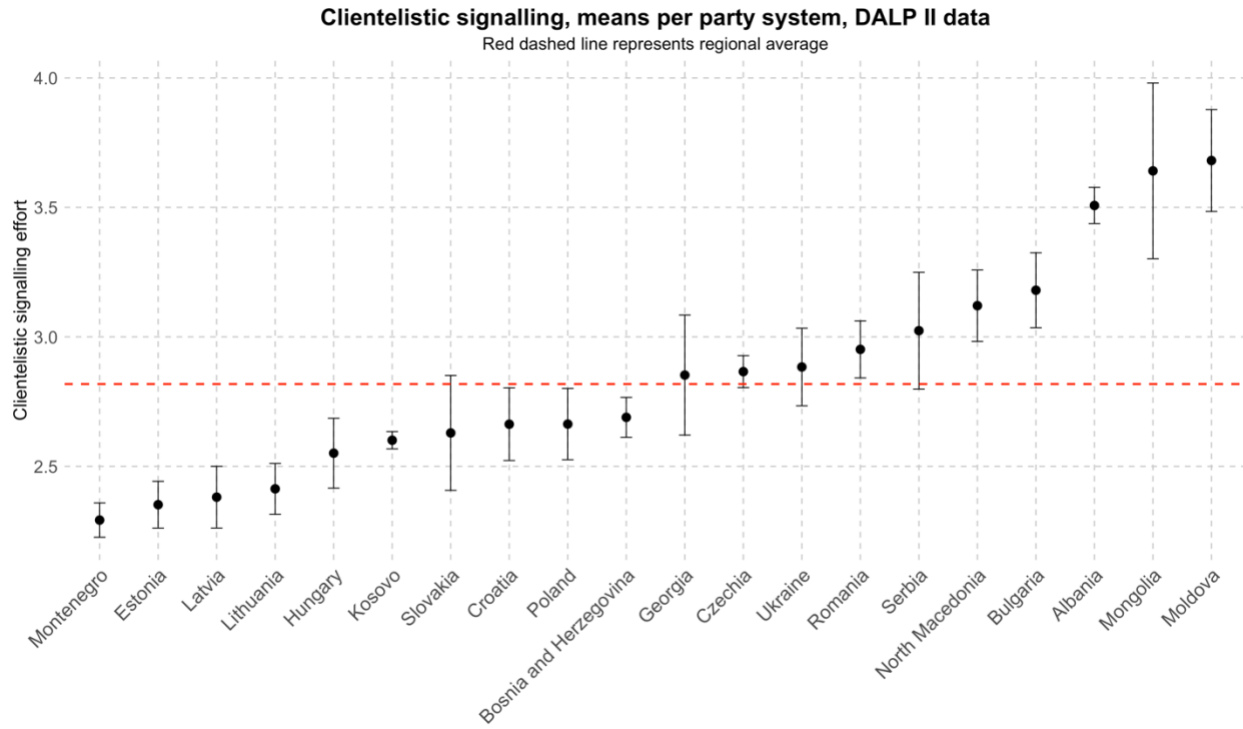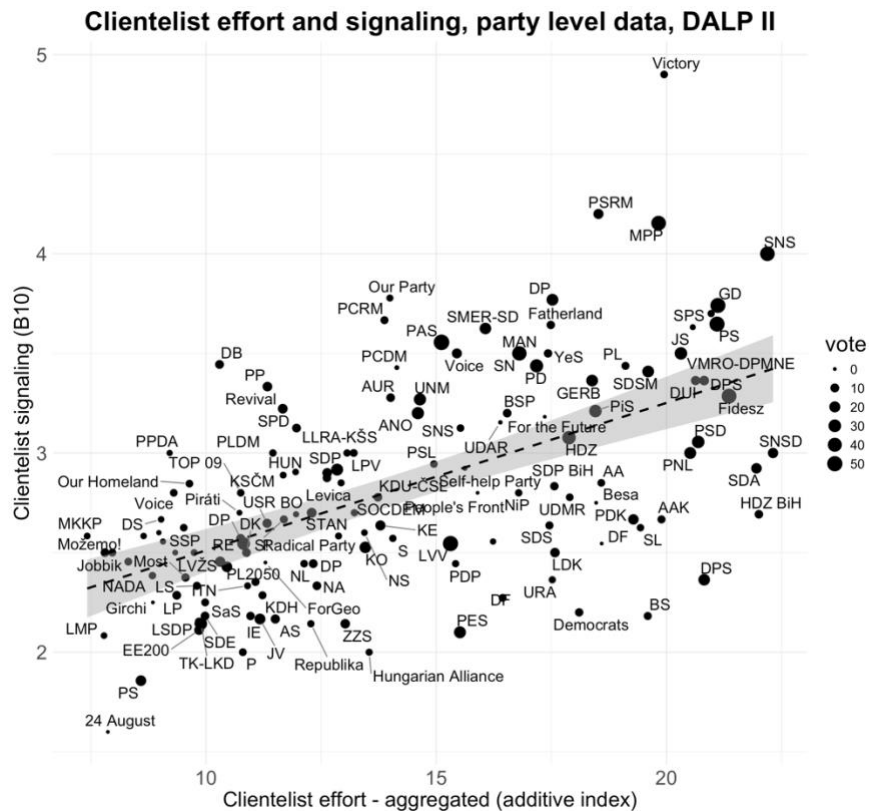
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FIGURE 13.

Clientelistic signalling, means per party system, DALP II data
Red dashed line represents regional average

FIGURE 14.

Clientelist effort and signaling, party level data, DALP II

3.7. Who gets targeted?

The final issue addressed in this paper lies at the core of the puzzle of political clientelism: who gets targeted with clientelistic benefits? To explore this, I conducted six OLS regressions with clustered standard errors at the party system level, reporting the results as estimated marginal effects. Each of the six models uses a different dependent variable, representing specific voter groups derived from DALP II: rural voters, urban voters, ethnic groups, poor voters, middle-income voters, and wealthy voters. The independent variables, common to all models, are the three distinct positive inducements clientelistic strategies already discussed: electoral clientelism, individual relational clientelism, and collective relational clientelism. The marginal effects are plotted in Figure 15.

FIGURE 15.

Clientelist targeting in the post-communist space
Marginal effects of sub-strategy on types of voters, DALP II data, party level, clustered standard errors by country
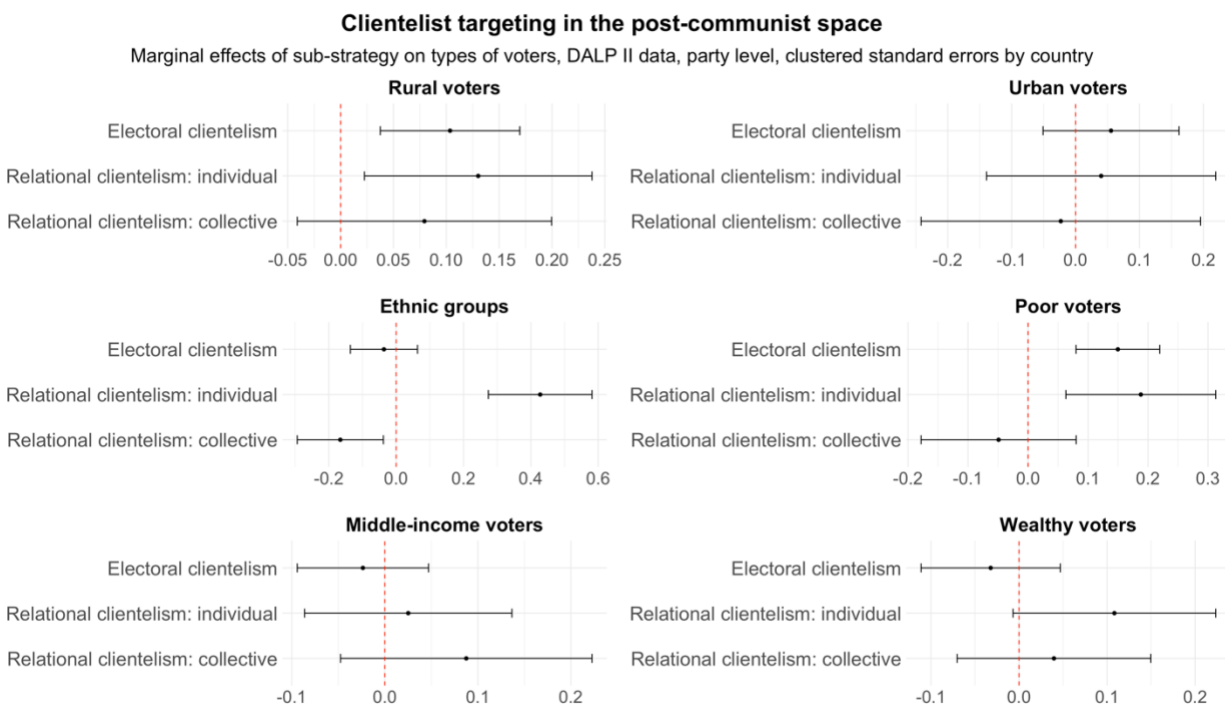
Figure 15 provides evidence supporting the idea that distinct targeting strategies are used for different types of voter groups. Rural and poor voters are systematically targeted with both electoral and individual relational clientelism, while ethnic groups are systematically targeted only with individual relational clientelism, and, notably, not with collective relational clientelism. However, we do not find evidence of systematic effects for the other voter groups, though some tendencies are observed. For instance, both middle-income and wealthy voters are estimated as non-targeted by electoral clientelism and targeted by the two forms of relational clientelism, but the marginal effects are not statistically significant enough to draw firm conclusions. Similarly, the poor are not targeted with collective relational clientelism, though this effect is also not statistically significant. The findings suggest that targeting through different clientelistic sub-strategies may be specific to certain voter groups.

Conclusions

The initial findings from the DALP II expert survey, along with a small-scale comparison to DALP I data, allow us to draw several preliminary conclusions about the nature of party-voter linkages in the post-communist space. First and foremost, there is a clear negative relationship between clientelism and programmatism across the region, observable at both the party system and political party levels, with the relationship being stronger in magnitude at the system level. Interestingly, several political parties in the region successfully practice both clientelistic and programmatic politics simultaneously, achieving significant electoral returns. This suggests that clientelism and programmatism do not necessarily cancel each other out, offering a promising avenue for further research on how these strategies are combined.

The study also found that political clientelism is statistically significantly correlated with all strategies of political mobilization measured by DALP, and mostly in a positive direction. The same does not hold true for programmatic politics, adding a layer of complexity at the party level that could be an important topic for further research on party-voter linkages in post-communist countries.

Moreover, the dominant mode of clientelistic linking in the region is relational clientelism, though with notable differences among countries. Three distinct groups emerged: (1) countries where electoral clientelism is measured as the most prominent sub-strategy (Hungary, Moldova, Mongolia, and Ukraine); (2) countries where individual relational clientelism is measured as dominant (the Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia; as well as Georgia); and (3) countries where collective relational clientelism is measured as most prevalent (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia). The findings of this paper also suggest that relational clientelism contributes most to clientelistic effectiveness in the region.

The paper further explored the use of negative inducements and clientelistic signaling. It found positive relationships between both variables and the overall clientelist effort, with the relationship between signaling and general clientelist effort being somewhat weaker in magnitude. This suggests that the correspondence between signaling and clientelist effort varies across the region.

Finally, the study provided an initial assessment of the voter groups targeted by political clientelism. It identified that some clientelistic sub-strategies extend beyond the "traditional culprits" in clientelism literature—namely, the poor and rural populations—suggesting that other voter groups may also be systematically targeted. This is an exciting avenue for future research, particularly given the theoretical arguments that can be made for why better-off voters might engage in relational clientelism.

Where does this leave us? The findings suggest that post-communist clientelistic linkage-making is characterized by specific nuances that add intriguing elements to the broader puzzle of political clientelism. These nuances include how clientelism is combined with other mobilization strategies, particularly programmatic linkages, and the distinct nature of relational clientelism compared to electoral clientelism, including which voters are targeted. Additionally, there is significant variation between post-communist party systems and parties, likely influenced by political and economic macro-level factors, which complicates any attempt to generalize about

"post-communist clientelism" as a whole. In fact, some of the countries in the study may resemble clientelistic and programmatic practices in other geographical regions more closely than they do within the post-communist group itself. Nonetheless, this initial exploration demonstrates the value of studying clientelism through party-level data—a less common approach in contemporary studies compared to general population surveys—and underscores the utility of DALP in advancing our understanding of contemporary linkage mechanisms between parties and voters.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1. Party systems and number of parties included in DALP I and DALP II

Party system	DALP I: number of parties	DALP II: number of parties
Albania	5	3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NOT INCLUDED	9
Bulgaria	7	7
Croatia	10	5
Czechia	5	9
Estonia	6	6
Georgia	4	6
Hungary	5	8
Kosovo	NOT INCLUDED	5
Latvia	8	8
Lithuania	7	8
Moldova	6	9
Mongolia	5	3
Montenegro	NOT INCLUDED	6
North Macedonia	5	6
Poland	6	6
Romania	6	5
Russia	6	NOT INCLUDED
Serbia	7	8
Slovakia	6	9
Slovenia	8	PENDING TO BE INCLUDED
Ukraine	6	13
Total party systems	**19**	**20**
Total political parties	**118**	**139**

TABLE 2. Composite variables used in the study

CONCEPT MEASURED	variable	MIN	MAX	MEAN	SD	DATA SET	DESCRIPTION OF VARIBLE
Clientelistic effort party system level	b15nwe	10.52	18.48	13.56	2.14	DALP I	Aditive index of B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, weighted by party size
Programatic effort party system level	cosalpo_4nwe	0.14	0.51	0.31	0.12	DALP I	Multiplicative index of programmatic cohesion, salience and polarization, weighted by party size
Clientelistic effort party system level	b15nwe	8.31	16.26	13.02	2.53	DALP II	Aditive index of B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, weighted by party size
Programatic effort party system level	cosalpo_4nwe	0.16	0.36	0.25	0.06	DALP II	Multiplicative index of programmatic cohesion, salience and polarization, weighted by party size
Programatic effort party level	cosaldi_4	0.30	0.94	0.56	0.12	DALP II	Multiplicative index of programmatic cohesion, salience and distinctiveness
Clientelistic effort party level	B_additive	7.42	22.31	14.14	4.11	Created from DALP II	Additive index: B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, Cronbach's α = 0.97
Individual relational clientelism effort party level	mean_B2_B3	1.04	3.90	2.35	0.75	Created from DALP II	Mean index: B2 and B3, Cronbach's α = 0.94
Collective relational clientelism effort party level	mean_B4_B5_B6	1.33	3.66	2.47	0.69	Created from DALP II	Mean index: B4, B5 and B6, Cronbach's α = 0.96
Populist effort (inverted), party level	populism_inverted	2.41	8.43	5.02	1.39	Created from DALP II	Mean index: D6 and D7, inverted, Cronbach's α = 0.87
Duration of linkages, party level	additive_C2_C3	3	9.5	6.62	1.33	Created from DALP II	Additive index: C2 and C3, Cronbach's α = 0.83

TABLE 3. DALP items used in the study

CONCEPT MEASURED	variable	MIN	MAX	MEAN	SD	ORIGINAL QUESTION TEXT	RESPONSE CATEGORIES
Consumable goods provision / Electoral clientelism effort	B1	1.00	3.92	2.02	0.76	B1 Consider whether candidates and parties give or promise to give some 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?	From [1] A neglible effort or none at all to [4] A major effort
Material advantages in public social policy schemes	B2	1.00	3.87	2.31	0.70	B2 Consider whether candidates and parties give or promise to give some 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?	From [1] A neglible effort or none at all to [4] A major effort
Employment / Patronage	B3	1.00	3.95	2.40	0.83	B3 Consider whether candidates or parties give or promise to give some 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 or in large private 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 providing preferential access to employment opportunities?	From [1] A neglible effort or none at all to [4] A major effort
Government contracts or procurement opportunities	B4	1.00	4.00	2.43	0.81	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 opportunities?	From [1] A neglible effort or none at all to [4] A major effort

Regulatory rules issued by government	B5	1.17	3.62	2.39	0.64	B5 Consider whether candidates or parties influence or promise to influence the application of regulatory rules issued by government agencies (e.g., more lenient tax assessments and audits, more favorable interpretation of import and export regulation, less strict interpretation of fire and escape facilities in buildings, etc.) in order to favor 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 favor?	From [1] A neglible effort or none at all to [4] A major effort
Provision and maintanence of infrastructure	B6	1.00	3.79	2.59	0.68	B6 An important activity of local government is the provision and maintenance of utilities (water, sewer, electricity) and transport (roads, public transport). Candidates and parties may target these activities on electorally relevant localities (e.g. districts or neighborhoods) not based on levels of local need but to reward voters who deliver their votes and to ensure that voters in the locality are supporting the candidate or party. How much effort do candidates or parties expend to attract voters in a specific locality by offering them local utilities and transport?	From [1] A neglible effort or none at all to [4] A major effort
Negative clientelistic inducements effort	B9	0.38	3.88	1.64	0.78	B9 How much do candidates or parties rely on the threat of withdrawing social and occupational benefits, access to utilities and physical violence to voters unwilling to support them?	From [0] The party does not threaten voters with withdrawing benefit to [4] To a great extent
Clientelistic signaling effort	B10	1.60	4.90	2.82	0.54	B10 Consider once again the benefits politicians may target to individual voters during electoral campaigns: partisan branded objects for everyday use (mugs, t-shirts, trinkets, etc.), communal entertainment, meals and booze at campaign events, or cash handouts, among other possibilities. To what extent do such campaign gifts provide a means or incentive for voters and potential donors to learn about a party's (or candidate's) message, resources, and viability?	From [0] Party does not extend such campaign benefits to [5] Campaign benefits greatly provide means or incentive to learn

Rural voters targeting	B11_1	0.00	1.00	0.44	0.30	B11_1 Do political parties make special efforts to attract members of one or several of the following groups with such inducements? Rural voters	From [0] No to [1] Yes
Urban voters targeting	B11_2	0.00	1.00	0.48	0.24	B11_2 Do political parties make special efforts to attract members of one or several of the following groups with such inducements? Urban voters	From [0] No to [1] Yes
Ethnic groups targeting	B11_3	0.00	1.00	0.29	0.29	B11_3 Do political parties make special efforts to attract members of one or several of the following groups with such inducements? Specific ethnic groups	From [0] No to [1] Yes
Poor voters targeting	B12_1	0.00	1.00	0.47	0.29	B12_1 Do political parties make special efforts to attract members of one or several of the following groups with such inducements? Poorl voters	From [0] No to [1] Yes
Middle income voters targeting	B12_2	0.13	0.93	0.51	0.17	B12_2 Do political parties make special efforts to attract members of one or several of the following groups with such inducements? Middle income voters	From [0] No to [1] Yes
Wealthy voters targeting	B12_3	0.00	0.71	0.24	0.20	B12_3 Do political parties make special efforts to attract members of one or several of the following groups with such inducements? Wealthy voters	From [0] No to [1] Yes
Clintelistic effectiveness	B13	1.33	3.87	2.54	0.64	B13 Please assess how effective political parties are in their efforts to mobilize voters by targeted benefits.	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
Duration of linkages: parties and brokers	C2	1	5	3.40	0.71	C2 Is the relationship between parties, politicians and their local promotors who organize the targeted, excludable voter benefits a short-term or a long-term relationship?	From All promotors are short term (1) to All promotors are long term (5)
Duration of linkages: brokers and voters	C3	1	5	3.25	0.69	C3 Is the relationship between voters and local promotors who organize the targeted, excludable benefits on behalf of parties and their candidates a short-term or a long-term relationship?	From All promotors are short term (1) to All promotors are long term (5)
Charismatic politics	E1	1.46	4.00	2.98	0.66	E1 To what extent do parties seek to mobilize electoral support by featuring a party leader's charismatic personality?	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
Programmatic politics	E2	2.15	3.83	3.12	0.36	E2 Please indicate the extent to which parties seek to mobilize electoral support by emphasizing the attractiveness of the party's positions on policy issues.	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent

Clientelistic politics	E3	1.55	4.00	2.76	0.58	E3 Please indicate the extent to which parties seek to mobilize electoral support by emphasizing the capacity of the party to deliver targeted material benefits to its electoral supporters.	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
Party loyalty mobilization	E4	1.25	4.00	2.79	0.72	E4 Please indicate the extent to which parties draw on and appeal to voters' long-term partisan loyalty ("party identification"). Parties may invoke their historical origins or the achievements of historical leaders. They may feature party symbols and rituals to reinvigorate party identification.	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
General competence	E5	1.54	4.00	3.09	0.56	E5 Please indicate the extent to which parties seek to mobilize electoral support by emphasizing their general competence to govern and bring about or maintain economic, social and political stability	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
Club goods politics	E6	1.30	4.00	2.42	0.59	E6 Please indicate the extent to which parties and their candidates mobilize electoral support by providing specific localities or regions with goods and services that may benefit residents regardless of whether or not they vote for the politician who claims credit for the provision	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
Negative campaigning	E61	1.75	4.00	3.22	0.53	E61 Please indicate the extent to which parties and their candidates engage in negative campaigning to mobilize electoral support.	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
Constituency services	E7	1.42	3.22	2.41	0.40	E7 Legislators (or their staff) may sometimes respond to requests and complaints by citizens without knowing or caring whether these citizens would ever vote for them ("constituency service"). Please indicate the extent to which parties and their legislators provide such constituency assistance.	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent
Descriptive representation	E8	1.33	3.90	2.70	0.52	E8 Parties may sometimes choose national election candidates based on descriptive traits, such as their native language, region of residence, gender, religion, ethnicity or race. Please indicate the extent to which parties rely on such "descriptive identification" of their candidates	From [1] Not at all to [4] To a great extent

Anti-elitism in party appeal	D6	1.37	7.79	4.83	1.49	D6 Perception of an Unaccountable Elite. Assess the extent to which parties and their candidates depict political competition in their partisan rhetoric as a struggle between two sharply contrasting camps: the honest citizen-politicians who are spokespeople of popular demands, represented by one's own party, and an unresponsive, unaccountable and deceptive elite, assembled around the opposing parties.	From [1] Politics as struggle between right and wrong, honest citizen-politicians and deceptive elites to [10] Politics as competition among politicians representing different trade-offs, about which reasonable people can disagree in good faith.
People-centrism in party appeal	D7	1.77	8.14	5.13	1.47	D7 Conceptions of Social Divisions in Electoral Appeals. Assess the extent to which parties and their candidates focus on common people in their discourse.	From [1] Identifies with the common people and celebrates their authenticity to [10] Refers more generally to citizens and their unique interests.