# What Explains Party Membership in Post-Yugoslav Countries: Socialism, Nationalism, Clientelism or False Reporting?[1]

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**Abstract:** *Earlier studies on party membership in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) led to the conclusion that political parties in new democracies are not inclined to build strong party organisations or invest in recruiting members. However, several recent individual country studies point to the opposite conclusions, indicating that there are significant cross-country variations in party membership figures across the post-communist region. By using a unique dataset on party membership in post-communist Europe, in this article we argue that the average membership level in CEE seems to be higher than in Western Europe. This holds true even when party membership figures for CEE countries are 'corrected' after conducting validity and reliability tests. Furthermore, we also find that party membership figures across CEE countries vary to a much higher degree than in established Western democracies. Our analysis shows that former Yugoslav countries are clustered at the top and other CEE countries at the bottom, leading to the conclusion that selection bias has been present in many studies on party membership that only included a limited number of post-communist countries. In order to explain higher levels of party membership in post-Yugoslav countries, we test three sets of explanatory variables, namely socialism, nationalism and clientelism. This exploratory study suggests that nationalist movements from the early period of transition, coupled with clientelistic politics, could serve as the most convincing explanation of high membership density in former Yugoslav countries.*

**Keywords:** ***party membership, post-communist countries, former Yugoslav states, socialism, clientelism, nationalism***

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## I. Introduction

When assessing the role of political party members in modern democracies, recent studies point to two somewhat contradictory trends that have attracted significant scholarly interest. On the one hand, most of these studies indicate the central importance of active party members for the health of democracy, in that their participation affects the vitality and legitimacy of the democratic system. This is particularly evident in the literature on intra-party democracy, with the growing evidence of political parties becoming much more inclusive and broadening their grassroots base (Cross – Blais 2012; Cross – Katz 2013; Pilet – Cross 2014). On the other hand, party studies also raise concerns about widespread patterns of declining levels of party membership in both old and new democracies, pointing to the fact that parties are rapidly losing their social support, which is a direct consequence of citizens becoming more and more disaffected with parties and looking for alternative forms of expressing political preferences (van Haute – Gauja 2015; Scarrow 2015).

Political parties as membership organisations in new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are particularly problematic from the perspective of this normative ideal, because initial scholarly observations indicated that the conditions for the development of parties as mass organisations in CEE were unfavourable (van Biezen 2003). Still, initial scholarly interest in studying party politics in post-communist countries has not been followed by systematic cross-national accounts of party membership in CEE, especially when it comes to the democratic latecomers in Southeast Europe. This is in stark contrast with the wealth of comparative and single-country studies that have documented trends of party membership decline in Western Europe. However, a growing body of recently published studies shows that there are significant cross-country variations in party membership figures across the post-communist region (van Biezen et al. 2012; Gherghina et al. 2018).

Accordingly, our focus in this article is on party membership in CEE. Specifically, we ask what factors can explain significantly higher levels of party membership in post-Yugoslav countries in comparison with the rest of the region. In order to answer the research question, we structure this article as an exploratory study for testing three sets of independent variables that we consider to be plausible explanations for the observed differences in membership levels, namely socialism, nationalism and clientelism. We argue that the nationalist movements that were the driving force in the initial period of democratic transition and which were led to the emergence of dominant party systems are the main drivers of the relatively high membership levels found in former Yugoslav countries.

In the next section, we survey the literature on party membership in post-communist countries, and then systematically compare party membership

figures in 17 countries across the region by using a unique dataset on party membership in new democracies. We place a special emphasis on testing the validity and reliability of data collected and seek to detect patterns of cross-national similarities and differences. In the subsequent section, we test three hypotheses on high levels of party membership in post-Yugoslav countries. Our findings should be treated as preliminary, in accordance with the exploratory nature of this study. We conclude by reflecting on implications for further research.

## II. Studying party membership in CEE countries: The research to date

Research of party membership in CEE is characterised by a general lack of systematic and comparative work, with only a handful of countries in the region included in cross-national studies, mostly when comparing established and emerging democracies. This is even more true for the former Yugoslav region which was for a long time the blind spot in comparative research on party members and their role in contemporary party politics. Wincławska et al. (2020: 2) argue that 'the "non-importance" of the members' paradigm led to a much lower interest of researchers in party members in general, and notably their role in the party organisation or perception of intra-party dynamics'. Part of the explanation also lies in the limited availability of data on party membership, as the access to 'objective' data in the post-communist region is often constrained by party secrecy and a lack of organisational capacity to regularly maintain membership registers, which makes it difficult to gather reliable estimates of party membership figures. The same is true for the availability of 'subjective' data, as comparative opinion survey studies do not regularly include all the countries in the region, but instead cover only 'the usual suspects' like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Initial scholarly observations on post-communist party membership pointed to the conclusion that membership parties in Central and Eastern Europe were unlikely to develop due to the various social and historical factors that made the development of mass membership organisations very difficult (van Biezen 2003; Kopecky 2008; Smith 2020). It was expected that political parties in CEE would develop as 'formations with loose electoral constituencies, in which a relatively unimportant role is played by the party membership, and the dominant role by party leaders' (Kopecky 1995: 517). Starting from these expectations, most studies of post-communist party politics agree that political parties in new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, in contrast to their Western counterparts, have rather weak organisational capacity with a marginalised role for members (Kopecky 1995; Lewis 2000; Szczerbiak 2001; van Biezen 2003; Webb – White 2007; van Biezen at al. 2012). Haughton and Deegan-Krause (2020) concluded that with the emergence of newer parties in the CEE region traditional member-

ship is even less in the focus of contemporary actors. As one scholar interested in post-communist party politics noted, 'to the extent that votes rather than members are the primary asset that aspiring politicians seek to acquire, there have clearly been more direct ways of acquiring them than the arduous path of membership growth and organisational development' (Lewis 2000: 101).

The literature has indicated several factors at play in explaining the unimportance and low membership figures in CEE democracies. In her seminal work on how parties organise in the context of new democracies, van Biezen (2003) pointed to three specific explanatory arguments. First, she identified that political parties in CEE countries have skipped several organisational stages that parties in Western Europe went through. This means that they were internally created from above as parties in public office and strengthened their organisational links with the state from the beginning, while being discouraged at the same time from building organisational capacities in terms of territorial penetration and membership base. Second, van Biezen argues that the lack of strong social cleavages in post-communist countries created parties as electoral machines, which lacked stable constituencies and strong partisan identities. Third, parties in new democracies were raised in an era of mass communication, when diversity of communication channels created an environment in which party membership was of limited relevance. This was coupled with widely available state subsidies to political parties which deterred parties from investing in building their organisational capacity (see also Kopecky 2008).

Against such a backdrop, several cross-national studies of party membership have concluded that the average level of party membership in CEE countries is well below the average for the established Western democracies (Whiteley 2011; van Biezen et al. 2012; van Biezen – Poguntke 2014; Ponce – Scarrow 2016). For instance, van Biezen et al. (2012) show that the average level of party membership in post-communist democracies in CEE is just 3.0 percent, which is significantly lower than the 5.6 percent average for the established West European democracies and democratic latecomers of Southern Europe. In addition, it has been observed that there is a longitudinal trend of overall decline of party membership across European democracies, which 'demonstrates that in contemporary democracies, old and new alike, the opportunity structure for political mobilisation has become largely unreceptive to mass organisation' (van Biezen – Poguntke 2014: 207). Furthermore, membership studies at the individual country level also report that party membership has been steadily declining since the beginning of democratisation in CEE countries, with party membership figures in some countries dropping below one percent of the entire electorate (Cabada 2013; Linek – Pecháček 2007; Auers 2018; Gherghina et al. 2018; Wincławska et al. 2020; Iancu – Soare 2020).

However, despite this initial scepticism about the importance of members for the development of post-communist political parties, a growing body of

literature on party membership in CEE countries shows that investments in membership organisation can significantly improve parties' endurance and electability over time. In her research on the organisational strength of political parties in post-communist democracies, Tavits (2012; 2013) convincingly argues that investments in organisational capacities (i.e., the professionalisation of staff in central office, a growing membership base and territorial penetration) increase both the electoral support and survivability of parties in the long run. Similarly, two case studies of political parties in Bulgaria (Spirova 2005) and Lithuania (Ibenskas 2014) show that party membership helps explain prolonged electoral success of political parties, particularly in the highly volatile party systems in the CEE region. In his recent study of six new democracies in CEE, Gherghina (2015: 48) tests institutional variables in explaining voting choice, including the initial hypotheses that 'political parties with large membership organisations have lower levels of electoral volatility'. While the results of his analysis offer some support for the hypothesis, Gherghina warns that the strength of this relationship varies across countries, which means that 'the enlargement of party membership can hardly represent a mechanism through which parties can stabilise their vote in CEE' (Gherghina 2015: 159). In a novel study of party membership in the CEE region, Smith (2020) concludes that investing in a membership base is beneficial for parties because by doing so they are better able to survive electoral challenges and improve the stability of the party system.

In the most recent study on variations in party membership, van Haute and Ribeiro (2022) apply a novel investigation strategy as they make a move away from 'western-centric studies and offer the largest test of explanations of membership variation to date', by broadening the scope of their research to include one of the largest dataset of parties in 38 countries, many of which are cases of new democracies, some even outside Europe. In this study they test several country-level and party-level variables that affect membership variations across parties. Among country-level factors they outline the state structure (the level of state decentralisation), the system of government (presidential and hybrid countries with directly elected presidents), national party laws (incentives for membership recruit) and the age of democracy (democratic latecomers vs established democracies) as the external drivers of membership fluctuations. Although the authors found that party-level variables explain much more variance in membership ratios than macro-variables, we think that some macro-level findings did not get due attention. For instance, a steady negative effect of the age of a democracy (parties in new democracies have more members than in the old ones) was just touched upon in interpretation, without discussion on possible hidden effects of discrete world regions. This is the exact reason why we in this study decided to operate only at the country-level, making sub regional groupings the central matter of the research puzzle.

Also, some studies of the CEE region have also indicated that there are significant cross-country variations in party membership/electorate ratio, ranging from 0.74 in Latvia to 6.28 in Slovenia (van Biezen et al. 2012). Moreover, when the view is expanded to take in the post-Yugoslav countries even greater variations can be observed across the entire post-communist region. Political parties in this sub-region report exceedingly high levels of party members, for instance 13.1 percent in Serbia, 17.0 percent in Montenegro and 17.1 percent in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Gherghina et al. 2018). Some scholars have expressed surprise with such high membership numbers in post-Yugoslav countries (Kosowska-Gąstoł et al. 2016: 473–474). Such high figures also raise questions about the reliability of data and how far numbers reported by the parties themselves can be trusted. In order to address potential methodological doubts about the validity and reliability of these data, in the next section we pay special attention to these issues by systematically analysing data on party membership in 17 post-communist countries in CEE.

## III. The data

In order to systematically assess the party membership size in the region, we planned to gather data on a relatively large sample of 128 parties across 17 CEE countries, ranging from four parties in Albania to twelve parties in Serbia. The main criteria were to include parties represented by at least two MPs in national parliaments in 2018.[2] 'Objective' data was reported by parties themselves and comes from different sources: Internet sources (89 cases), Political Party Database Project (PPDB) (73 cases), Members and Activists of Political Parties Project (MAPP) (50 cases) and other political science literature and the press (9). Additionally, in the second half of 2018, we conducted an online survey of party secretaries, using a short questionnaire that was sent to all 128 parties. Apart from questions on the number of party members and some other organisational issues, we also asked for estimates on how precisely the number of members from the party record mirrors the real state of membership on the ground. Due to the high non-response rate, even after three rounds of reminders, in the end there were 58 responses, of which 51 (40 percent) were included in the analysis.

Comparing and crosschecking the sources, we found a rather high correspondence between them, due in part to overlapping data sources. In cases when there was data from two or three sources, we opted for the most recent one. As expected,

2 Having in mind that each threshold is somewhat arbitrary, we opted for at least two MPs since this criterion maximised the number of party members in a country included in the analysis and minimised the cost of gathering data with regard to very small parties that do not substantially contribute to the number of party members in a country. Nonetheless, in the case of two Polish parties we did depart from this criterion: we excluded Kukiz'15, since it was not formally registered as a political party and we included the Polish Social Democrats (SLD), the party that lost parliamentary representation in the 2015 elections. For electoral results, we relied on the information provided by the internet source Parties and Elections (http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/).

parties have generally lost members over time, which explains why the online survey, as the most recent source, records lower numbers than other sources. However, there were several cases (e.g., the Albanian Socialist Party or the Croatian Peasant Party) when respondents reported considerably lower figures in comparison to other sources. We believe that this kind of discrepancy justifies the usage of the online survey as a reliable – if more conservative – source of information.

Ultimately, we ended up with 115 cases, 49 from the online survey, 37 from PPDB, 18 from Internet sources, eight from the scholarly literature and three from MAPP, with 13 cases left without any information. The number of parties per country ranges from three in Albania to twelve in Serbia (see Table 1). The data covers from 2010 to 2018, with 55 percent of figures reported for 2018, a further 22 percent for 2017 and in total some 96 percent since 2014. Party membership density, our dependent variable, is measured by the members/electorate (M/E) ratio and serves as the main objective measure. All figures are generated by aggregating data for individual parties at the national level.

## IV. Party membership in 17 countries in CEE: Reliability and validity

Table 1 shows the 'objective' uncorrected measure (M/E) of party membership in CEE countries, with the mean value around eight percent. When compared to Western European democracies where the average level of party membership is 4.12 percent (Webb – Keith 2017: 33)[3], post-communist countries have almost double the level of party members. This is an interesting finding since most studies of party membership points to the opposite conclusion (Whiteley 2011; van Biezen et al. 2012; van Biezen – Poguntke 2014; Ponce – Scarrow 2016).

One possible explanation of this contradictory observation lies in the distribution of party membership across countries in CEE, since the range and variance of the distribution are much higher than in Western Europe. In CEE, there are several democracies with M/E ratios around one percent and several above ten percent, while in Western Europe only the UK clusters around one percent and Austria above ten percent (Webb – Keith 2017: 33). The second explanation argues that the value dispersion in the post-communist region follows a rather clear geographical pattern, separating other CEE countries from democratic latecomers in Southeast Europe. While Central European and Baltic democracies report rather low levels of party membership (with the exception of Estonia), former Yugoslav countries have very high membership densities (with the exception of Slovenia). Since most cross-national studies of party membership in Europe usually include only Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary (and occasionally Slovenia and Romania), it is evident that they deal

3 Reported mean differs from the source, since we calculated mean value only for 12 Western countries and for the most recent period.

with a biased sample of post-communist democracies. Moreover, these three 'usual suspects' from CEE have the lowest M/E ratios among all European democracies (Webb – Keith 2017: 33).

However, what is more important is the explanation of differences in party membership density across post-communist Europe. Former Yugoslav countries record M/E ratios several times higher (15.3) than the rest of the post-communist region (2.79) or Western Europe (4.12), clustering five out of seven post-Yugoslav countries at the top of the list in Europe. These rather sharp diversities, and the clear geographical pattern which structures them, point to an interesting research puzzle that has not yet been systematically analysed.

**Table 1: Party Membership in CEE**

| Country | Number of parties | Objective M/E | ESS 2010 | WVS 2010–2014 | ISSP 2014 | EBRD LITS III 2016 | Various sources 2016–2017 | M/E corrected |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albania | 3 | 5.37 | | | | 18.6 | 7.9 / | 5.37 |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | 7 | 19.43 | | | | 11.5 | 10.1 / | 10.10 |
| Bulgaria | 4 | 3.52 | 6.0 | | | 4.3 | | 3.52 |
| Croatia | 8 | 8.66 | 8.6 | | 12.7 | 6.3 | / 7.4 | 8.66 |
| Czech Republic | 9 | 1.26 | 3.2 | | 5.9 | 2.0 | | 1.26 |
| Estonia | 6 | 5.62 | 4.4 | 6.0 | | 3.3 | | 5.62 |
| Hungary | 7 | 1.06 | 1.2 | | 2.7 | 0.6 | | 1.06 |
| Kosovo | 4 | 13.13 | | | | 9.9 | 9.0 / | 9.00 |
| Latvia | 8 | 0.70 | | | | 0.7 | | 0.70 |
| Lithuania | 7 | 2.85 | 3.2 | | 5.5 | 3.1 | | 2.85 |
| Montenegro | 9 | 26.18 | | | | 11.2 | 9.6 / 19.3 | 9.60 |
| North Macedonia | 5 | 16.25 | | | | 13.7 | 13.3 / | 13.30 |
| Poland | 5 | 0.70 | 0.7 | 4.2 | 0.9 | 3.1 | | 0.70 |
| Romania | 5 | 6.07 | | 4.6 | | 2.1 | | 6.07 |
| Serbia | 12 | 19.37 | | | | 8.1 | 9.7/ | 8.10 |
| Slovakia | 8 | 0.73 | 1.4 | | 3.3 | 1.1 | | 0.73 |
| Slovenia | 8 | 4.05 | 3.9 | 5.1 | 4.5 | 2.3 | | 4.05 |
| **(Sum) Mean** | **(115)** | **7.94** | | | | **6.0** | | **5.33** |

Note: Objective data (M/E) is created by adding up the figures for individual parties. M/E ratio is expressed in percentages. In the case of multiple sources, we opted for the most recent one. Last column (M/E corrected) is created by lowering objective figures (M/E) to subjective ones only for countries with significant differences between the two measures (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia).

Source: Objective data comes mainly from the online survey (49 cases) and PPDB (39 cases). Data on the size of electorate from IDEA (https://www.idea.int/data-tools/question-countries-view/439/Europe/cnt). Data in the penultimate column is taken from Bliznakovski, Gjuzelov and Popovikj (2017: 8). Data in the final column is from: for Croatia from Croatian National Election Study (CEPIS, 2016) and for Montenegro from Montenegrin National Election Study (2016). Other sources: EES (European Social Survey), WVS (World Value Survey), ISSP (International Social Survey Programme), EBRD LITS III (Life in Transition Survey III, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development).

The objective data raises *prima facie* questions about validity and reliability. For instance, extremely high M/E ratios in Montenegro, Serbia or Bosnia-Herzegovina look very suspicious methodologically and, at the same time, considerably inflate the overall M/E mean for the region. One way to test the reliability of the objective data reported by the parties themselves is to turn to the individual reporting of citizens – subjective data. Table 1 also reports data from different surveys and public opinion polls that asked respondents about their engagement in political parties. Earlier studies (Ponce – Scarrow 2014: 3–6; Scarrow 2015: 83–86; van Haute – Gauja 2015: 11–12) show that this procedure has its own shortcomings, which are particularly pronounced in the case of CEE countries. Therefore, methodological problems like the availability of data, different question wording in different surveys, different time points, varying response rates and the varied quality of surveys, along with inevitable random errors, result in rather scattered and inconsistent figures. For instance, in Montenegro two surveys conducted within a year show dramatically different results.

However, while for most countries the subjective measure more or less corresponds to the objective measure, in some countries these two measures show a systematic and significant bias, especially in the same five former Yugoslav countries with the highest official numbers. Focusing on more recent surveys, particularly on the LITS III that covers all cases, it is not hard to notice that subjective data for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and, to a lesser degree, Kosovo and North Macedonia, reduces party membership by more than half.[4]

We can take a step further to test the validity of measurements. Up to now we have dealt with official membership numbers as they are recorded in the party register. While some reliability problems emerge from false reporting, other methodological difficulties stem from the fact that parties often correctly report numbers as they are recorded in the party registers, but at the same time these numbers do not mirror the actual state of the membership. This problem refers to a group of causes that Scarrow calls 'type 3: poor data' (Scarrow 2015: 77). Unlike other types of errors in data on party membership, this type refers more to the problem of validity than to the reliability of measurement. Namely, even when parties frankly and to 'their best knowledge' report on membership figures in a way that is externally reliable insofar as it is consistent through space and time, it seems that these figures do not correctly reflect the actual state of membership; that is, they are not valid insomuch as they fail to measure what we intended to measure.

This problem can occur for different reasons. For instance, a party does not have a technically advanced way of maintaining party membership records

4 It is also true that LITS III, in relation to the objective data, largely underestimated Romania and Slovenia. In contrast, figures for Albania and Poland were considerably overestimated.

(e.g., a central electronic database) nor does it have an efficient way of updating membership, especially in regularly erasing those individuals that ceased to be members. Furthermore, some parties from time to time engage in collective updating of their membership by implementing some sort of re-registration of members, while others never do this. Finally, members are generally more important for some parties than for others, which can also be reflected in varied party membership data quality. We assume that this type of error can particularly be pronounced in new democracies in CEE.

In order to overcome at least some of these problems, the online survey of party secretaries

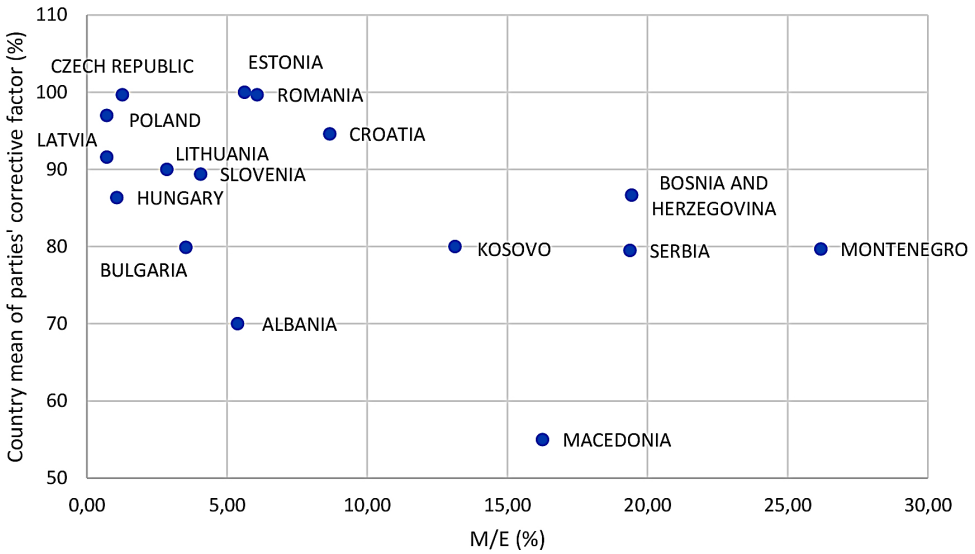
uses respondents' judgement on correspondence between the party membership record and the actual number of members. This variable is expressed in percentages that theoretically can vary between 0 and 100 and represents what we call a 'corrective factor' in membership density estimation. In short, out of 47 valid answers, party secretaries estimate that actual party members constitute on average 87 percent of members recorded in party registers, with half of the parties estimating it above 90 percent. Still, since the range goes from 30 to 100 percent, it is clear that parties differ considerably in this respect.

Studying different aspects of party organisation very often points to national-level organisational styles as the main explanatory variable. Namely, parties in a given country tend to resemble each other organisationally more than parties belonging to the same family elsewhere do (Poguntke et al. 2016; Webb – Keith 2017: 33). If this holds true, parties in each country should share similar corrective factors and we should be able to observe national differences in the validity of official party membership figures, even working on the limited sample of parties. However, our data does not confirm this proposition, since differences between countries with data available for two or more parties are not statistically significant (ANOVA, $F=1.774$; $p=.10$).

However, it is possible that relatively small sample size explains the apparent lack of a statistically significant country effect in this regard. By taking this possibility into consideration, we ask if there is a link between the M/E ratio and corrective factor at the country level. Figure 1 points to a certain correlation between the two variables in expected direction ($r=-.48$; $p=.057$), suggesting that we should approach higher official membership figures at the national level with caution. Despite the fact that differences between countries on 'corrective factor' are not large and can hardly explain the level of discrepancies between subjective and objective measures seen in Table 1, at the same time it is interesting to notice that five countries with the highest official number of members and highest drop in survey estimates also show a higher mismatch between party registers and the actual state of membership.

We therefore decided to correct the objective number of members in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and reduce

**Figure 1: Correlation of objective measure and corrective factor at the country level**




Note: Slovakia is missing since there is no available corrective factor. Data for Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Poland are based only on one observation.

Source: Online survey.

it to the lowest subjective figures (shaded cells in the final column of Table 1). Since all these countries have a shared history in former Yugoslavia, it creates the most unfavourable condition for confirming the hypothesis on regional differences in party membership density in post-communist Europe. In other words, we are conservatively cautious and in the remaining analysis work only with corrected M/E as dependent variable.

Naturally, this lowers the average membership in the whole post-communist region from almost 8 to 5.33 per cent of the electorate, but this figure is still higher than for Western Europe. In addition, this adjustment did not affect the pattern of regional clustering with regard to party membership. We still can identify countries with low (Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia), medium (Albania, Estonia, Romania and Slovenia) and high membership densities (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia). In other words, Central European and Baltic countries are clustered on one side, while post-Yugoslav countries are clustered on the other side. Therefore, even if there is, intentional or accidental, false reporting of the number of party members in post-Yugoslav countries, it does not substantially affect regional variance of party membership. In the next section, we test some preliminary explanations of the higher membership density in the former Yugoslav region in comparison to other CEE countries.

## V. Preliminary explanations

Table 2 shows the corrected M/E percentage as a dependent variable. When clustering the cases into two groups, ex-Yugoslav vs. other CEE countries, a significant difference in the average membership density (9.0 vs. 2.8 per cent) is observed. Thus, a clear between-group variation is also observed, since all the countries in the ex-Yugoslav group, except Slovenia, exceed the overall average and show a higher M/E value than any of the cases in another group. Nevertheless, regional clustering is theoretically an empty shell if not followed by substantive explanations. Therefore, in the rest of the article we discuss three sets of explanations for regional differences in the national party membership rate, namely socialism, nationalism and clientelism. For each explanation, we present the theoretical background, hypotheses, and indicators which are analysed at descriptive and bivariate level. Given the country-level analysis and small number of cases, we refrain from any multivariate statistical analysis, considering that descriptive and bivariate analysis should suffice for initial insights. Therefore, these findings and explanations should be treated as preliminary, in accordance with the exploratory nature of this study.

### *Socialism*

Mishler and Rose (1997, 2001, 2002, 2007) have produced a series of studies in which they tested different hypotheses about origins and determinants of regime support for newly established democracies in CEE, using, among others, the 'cultural theory' explanation. This approach holds that different aspects of support for democratic regimes can be best explained by an exogenous socialisation effect: institutional support for democracy will be contingent upon the dominant type of socialisation of people under communism. In a later paper, Rose and Mishler (1998) coined the term 'negative partisanship' and showed that in post-communist democracies negative partisanship dominates over positive party identification, presumably as a counter-reaction to often instrumental and forced political mobilisation during the communist era. They argue that '[i]n societies in which the Communist Party was for two generations the only party, there are good grounds for expecting popular reservations about parties to continue indefinitely' (Rose – Mishler 1998: 230). In a similar vein, Gherghina states that 'in the aftermath of regime change, mostly as a result of the extensive membership pursued by the communist parties the newly emerging political actors considered membership a legacy of the past. Their discourse responded to and further fuelled the existing anti-party feelings' (Gherghina 2015: 98).

If cultural theory holds true, we might assume that there is a negative correlation between communist party membership prior to 1990 and today's membership density in the observed countries. Table 2 shows the official number

of former communist party members relative to the size of the population for each country. Although former Yugoslav countries on average show somewhat lower levels of communist party membership, the difference is not significant and there is no correlation between former communist party members and actual party membership at the country level (r=.05, see Appendix).

Socialisation theory also takes into consideration the level of legitimacy of former communist regimes among citizens. Regardless of the percentage of the communist party members, socialist countries differed in terms of how much public support their regimes mobilised among the vast majority of non-allied citizens and the extent to which communist party membership was forced or instrumental rather than genuine and ideological. Consequently, we expect such differences to generate an impact on contemporary anti-party sentiments and current party membership. It is generally accepted that Yugoslav communism deviated greatly from the CEE communist countries under Soviet control (Pickering – Baskin 2008: 522–523). It was perceived as more 'liberal', less forced and violent, economically more developed and internationally more open. As a result, Yugoslav communism enjoyed greater legitimacy and support among citizens compared to other CEE communist regimes, which could be a potential explanation for less strong anti-party sentiments and consequently higher membership rates in post-Yugoslav countries.

However, the socialisation theory does not work only at the aggregate level. At the level of individual citizens, we can hypothesise that citizens that were linked to the communist regime have less chance to develop anti-party sentiments in a democratic period than citizens that do not have a tradition of close ties to communism. In order to estimate impact of the level of legitimacy of the communist regimes on current party membership in CEE, we draw on the ERBD Life in Transition Survey III (2016) to calculate the national ratios of current party members who had prior family ties to the communist party and those who had not, controlling the size of both parameters (see Table 2).[5] Individual level analysis suggests that family links to the communist party increase the probability of current party membership by a factor of around one third to more than four. Looking from an opposite angle of current party non-members, the results are reversed. Thus, we interpret these differences as 'regime generated anti-party sentiments'.

At first glance, the findings at the individual level seem to be at odds with socialisation theory at the macro-level, since individual linkage to the previous

5 ERBD Life in Transition Survey III includes two important variables for our research: personal or family ties of respondents to the Communist Party during socialism and actual party membership. The survey was conducted in 31 countries, including all countries in post-communist Europe. Each country was represented with roughly 1,500 respondents. The survey's estimates of the current party membership are in line with other surveys (see Table 1) and shows high correlation with M/E corrected at country level (r=0.73). Also, the reported family ties to former Communist parties and the official number of the Communist Party members (Table 2) correlate highly at country level (r=0.68).

**Table 2: Indicators of socialism, nationalism and clientelism hypothesis, former Yugoslav vs. other CEE countries**

| | | Socialism hypothesis | | Nationalism hypothesis | | | | Clientelism hypothesis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| country | M/E corrected | Communist Party membership (M/P) | Anti-party sentiments index | Nationalist movement | Dominant party, years | Largest party/all parties (%) | M/E without 'the largest party effect' | Clientelism index |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | 10.1 | 9.0 | 1.45 | yes | yes, 31 (SDA+HDZ+ SDS/SNSD) | 65.0 | 3.54 | 0.74 |
| Croatia | 8.7 | 6.9 | 1.45 | yes | yes, 10 (HDZ) | 64.3 | 3.09 | 0.18 |
| Kosovo | 9.0 | 5.3 | 2.18 | yes | yes, 17 (LDK) | 40.4 | 5.37 | 0.55 |
| Montenegro | 9.6 | 11.5 | 2.04 | yes | yes, 31 (DPS) | 48.5 | 4.99 | 0.77 |
| North Macedonia | 13.3 | 7.3 | 1.37 | yes | no | 58.6 | 5.51 | 0.65 |
| Serbia | 8.1 | 9.7 | 3.09 | yes | yes, 17 (SPS/SNS) | 53.6 | 3.76 | 0.64 |
| Slovenia | 4.1 | 6.0 | 1.36 | yes | no | 43.5 | 2.29 | 0.13 |
| *Ex-YU countries, (mean)* | *(9.0)* | *(8.0)* | *(1.85)* | *7/7* | *5/7 (15.1 years)* | *(53.4)* | *(4.08)* | *(0.52)* |
| Albania | 5.4 | 4,7 | 1.66 | no | no | 56.7 | 2.33 | 0.79 |
| Bulgaria | 3.5 | 10,4 | 4.25 | no | no | 41.5 | 2.06 | 0.41 |
| Czech R. | 1.3 | 10,9 | 3.82 | no | no | 36.0 | 0.81 | 0.16 |
| Estonia | 5.6 | 7.1 | 1.75 | yes | no | 29.3 | 3.98 | 0.05 |
| Hungary | 1.1 | 7,7 | 3.80 | no | yes, 11 (Fidesz 2010–2020) | 45.3 | 0.58 | 0.39 |
| Latvia | 0.7 | 6.5 | 1.43 | yes | no | 33.7 | 0.46 | 0.28 |
| Lithuania | 2.9 | 5.5 | 1.64 | yes | no | 24.7 | 2.15 | 0.21 |
| Poland | 0.7 | 5.8 | 2.92 | no | no | 47.0 | 0,37 | 0.11 |
| Romania | 6.1 | 16.1 | 3.00 | no | no | 45.6 | 3.30 | 0.45 |
| Slovakia | 0.7 | 10.9 | 2.22 | yes | yes, 24 (HZDS, 1990–1998; Smer 2006–2020) | 47.1 | 0.39 | 0.17 |
| *Other ECE countries, (mean)* | *(2.8)* | *(9.6)* | *(2.65)* | *4/10* | *2/10 (3.5 years)* | *(40.7)* | *(1.65)* | *(0.30)* |
| **Overall mean** | **(5.3)** | **(8.3)** | **(2.32)** | **11/17** | **7/17 (8.2 years)** | **(45.9)** | **(2.65)** | **(0.39)** |

Note: 'M/E corrected' is taken from Table 1. 'Communist party membership' refers to 1987 (for Lithuania 1986) officially reported data for most countries. Only in the case of Estonia and Latvia are these estimates based on data for previous years (1961 and 1973) for three Baltic countries and Lithuania for 1986. Czechia and Slovakia have the value for Czechoslovakia. 'Anti-party sentiments index' are ratios between percentage of respondents with ties to the communist party who are now party members and percentage of respondents without ties to communist party who are now party members. 'Largest party/all parties' refers to party with most party members as percentage of all members in a country. 'M/E without the largest party' is calculated without number of members of the largest party. All calculations are done after absolute numbers of party members for each party in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia are proportionally lowered to fit the corrected M/E.

Sources: Communist party membership: Staar (1989: 60), Radelić (2006: 520–521). Anti-party sentiments index: LITS III (2016); Clientelism index: Varieties of Democracy (2018).

regime is positively rather than negatively related to current party membership.[6] However, given that current party membership and ties with the former regime represent rather small parts of national samples, the aggregate effects among the opposite camps (non-members and non-allied with communism) dominate national pictures. Socialisation theory works primarily at the aggregate level, where regime generated anti-party sentiments function as an intervening variable: they are higher in countries with more communist party members (r=.47, see Appendix), but they also lower the total current party membership (r=–.41, see Appendix). Thus, at the individual level, the theory of prior socialisation works differently for different groups of respondents with regard to family links to the communist regime, but at the aggregate the compound effect leads to the same direction of lower overall party membership.

With regard to differences between former Yugoslav countries and the rest of the post-communist region they go in the expected direction. Ex-Yugoslav countries on average show a lower level of anti-party sentiments as a reaction to the previous regime, with Serbia as a significant outlier. In the group of other CEE countries, it seems that the Baltic states and Albania also depart from their group mean, but in the opposite direction. However, these regional differences, whether in the communist party membership or anti-party sentiments, are too small and too inconsistent to account for much larger differences in the current M/E ratio between post-Yugoslav states and the rest of the CEE region. Overall, although the impact of socialism through micro-macro interplay of socialisation theory could partially work as a sort of general explanation of differences between countries, it accounts for very little when it comes to differences between the observed regions.

### *Nationalism*

The transition to democracy in post-communist Europe differed also with regard to the state-building process. While this process did not affect transition in several countries, in the majority of our cases the early transitional phases were dominated by movements for national independence. National uprisings, often generated by rhetoric of ethnic nationalism, created nationalist movements that left their imprint on various characteristics of newly established democracies (Kuzio 2001; von Beyme 1996: 42–62). More specifically, nationalist movements contributed to the political mobilisation of citizens and often determined types and levels of party formation and organisation. The nationalism hypothesis

6 This is exactly what Rose and Mishler concluded. While assuming a negative total aggregate effect of previous regime socialisation on party identification, the analysis at the individual level showed that ex-Communists tend to be more positively identified with a party than non-Communists (Rose – Mishler 1998: 221–222).

presumes that this effect, created in the early phase of transition, has persisted and can explain differences in contemporary party membership densities. In this respect, popular movements for independence that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the Baltic states and Yugoslavia are the best examples. Although Czechoslovakia was another complex state that dissolved during the process of democratic transition, its dissolution was different since it took place later and was not a political issue at the first democratic elections. Nevertheless, we treat Slovakia as a case of nationalism, primarily because of Mečiar's movement that appeared very soon after the demise of communism (Deegan-Krause 2004). Nationalist movements appeared in all former Yugoslav countries and in four out of ten countries belonging to the other group (see Table 2).

However, there is a crucial difference with regard to the type of relationship between initial nationalist movements and the future party organisation and membership density. While in some countries these movements dissolved very soon after transition started and national independence was achieved, assuming that the initial high political mobilisation has not turned into a long-lasting mass type of party organisations, in other countries nationalist movements transformed into party organisations and survived as dominant parties in the party system (see Table 2). In the latter cases, the initial broad political mobilisation has been encapsulated in the form of massive party membership, very often not limited only to the dominant party.[7] The electoral dominance of these parties sometimes has lasted throughout the entire democratic period (e.g., Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro) and in some cases, the party systems with dominant parties became the norm even though one initially dominant party was replaced by a different one (e.g., Serbia, Slovakia, Republic of Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina).[8]

This kind of party system is more often a trademark within the group of former Yugoslav countries (five out of seven) than in other CEE countries (two out of ten). Moreover, the average period under party dominance differs greatly in

7 It is strange to find that the relationship between type of transition and subsequent party development in Eastern Europe has not been analysed so far, not even through the link between nationalist movements for independence and dominant party emergence, nor as a direct link of prevalent nationalist political culture and size of party membership. One should go back to the literature on decolonisation and liberation movements in Africa and Asia in order to find any similar discourse focused on the relationship between nationalist movements and dominant parties. Some of the contemporary studies on the third world democratisations still employ this nexus as a fruitful explanation of party dominance and mass organisations (see Reddy 2005; Carbone 2007: 14–16).

8 We define dominant parties as those that formed single-party governments through three consecutive elections or were the leading parties in coalition governments and that won 15 percent more votes than the second-ranked party. Since Bosnia-Herzegovina is a special case of an ethnically divided party system, we count all three main ethnic parties as one dominant party. Although in Kosovo there were no legal elections until 2001, we count the Democratic League of Kosovo, a leading political party in Kosovo during the 1990s, as the dominant party throughout the whole period. For different definitions and measures of dominant parties see Bogaards (2004).

the two observed regions. Although it is not possible to establish a clear causal mechanism, early nationalism certainly played a role in setting favourable conditions for dominant parties to emerge. Hungary is the only deviant case of dominant party system, since Fidesz did not emerge from the transitional nationalist movement.

Working with 'dominant party' variable potentially opens an alternative and very simple explanation for membership density. Since the higher membership density in a party system with a dominant party can be explained as the effect of the largest party, we decided to control for 'the largest party effect'. Table 2 shows the percentage of members that belong to the party with the largest membership.[9] Results range from roughly one quarter in Lithuania to almost two thirds in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In former Yugoslav countries, the largest parties attract on average more than half of all party members, but 40 percent in other CEE countries is also large. A very similar difference can be found by comparing the 'dominant party' group of countries with countries without a dominant party. If we add that the 'largest party variable' correlates significantly with the M/E measure (r=.58, see Appendix), it is clear that all results point to the necessity of controlling for the largest party effect.

After eliminating the largest party effect by subtracting absolute membership of the largest party in each country, the newly calculated M/E index (see Table 2) was halved in comparison with the original M/E index corrected, yielding 45 percent of it for ex-Yugoslav countries and 59 percent for others. A stronger impact of the largest party on the M/E index in the ex-Yugoslav countries is obviously the result of more frequent cases of dominant party systems in this region. However, an important insight is that the largest party effect is far from explaining the whole variance in membership density. Although it makes the M/E difference between the regions smaller, the remaining parties in the ex--Yugoslav region still produce a considerably higher M/E ratio than other parties in the 'other countries' group. Moreover, ex-Yugoslav other parties show higher M/E ratios than all the parties in the rest of CEE. Actually, the effect of 'other parties' contributes generally to the M/E ratio much more than 'the largest party effect', since it yields a much higher correlation of.93 (see Appendix). However, a more detailed analysis reveals that the 'other party effect' does not stem from the dominant party, in the sense of a spill-over effect, as much as from the initial nationalist movements.[10]

9 The largest parties in terms of absolute members are always either dominant parties or amongst two electorally most successful parties, except in two cases: In the Czech Republic it refers to the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM), and in Poland it refers to the Polish People's Party (PSL).

10 T-tests with three types of case groupings, with regard to nationalism, existence of dominant party and a compound effect of both, showed that the 'nationalism' group is the best explanation of the remaining variance in the M/E ratio after elimination of the largest party effect and the only grouping that yields better predictive value for M/E without largest party than for the original M/E ratio.

In conclusion, nationalistic movements at the beginning of transitions were conducive to the development of party systems with a dominant party. Dominant parties thus played an intervening role as a mechanism that individually contributed to higher M/E ratios in a country. However, initial nationalistic mobilisation also had an independent, direct and enduring effect on the organisational capacities of other parties. Finally, ex-Yugoslav countries show the best regional overlapping with all three measures: nationalism, dominant party and a combined effect of the two.

### *Clientelism*

Clientelism is not only a type of linkage of parties with voters and society, but it is also a rather efficient way of maintaining organisational capacity of parties. Regardless of whether authors use the term clientelism with emphases on party-society linkages (Kitschelt 2000; Kitschelt – Wilkinson 2007) or the term patronage with emphases on party-state linkages (Kopecký at al. 2012; Kopecký at al. 2008; Kopecký – Spirova 2011), they agree that party organisational resources are important, either as an instrument of clientelistic politics (Kitschelt 2000: 849; Kitschelt – Wilkinson 2007: 8) or as one of the goals of patronage (Kopecký – Mair 2012a: 7). However, it is less clear whether increasing organisational capacities in this respect necessarily leads to traditional vertical organisation and building party membership. Historical interpretation holds that the emergence of modern politics and ideological mass parties were obstacles to traditional patronage (Kopecký – Mair 2012a: 6; Kopecký – Spirova 2011: 899). Moreover, contemporary forms of patronage build and maintain party networks within the public sphere rather than build classic party membership organisations (Kopecký – Mair 2012b: 372–374). On the other hand, Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007: 17) concluded that '[w]e can think of mass party organisation models as highly effective group devices for surveillance and mobilisation, in which local party bosses closely monitor individuals' conduct. In contrast to Shefter's (1977, 1994) conceptualisation of mass party organisations as the antithesis of clientelistic machine politics, mass parties provide the capabilities of serving clientelistic monitoring practices… '

Some empirical studies from the post-communist region suggest that strong membership parties go hand in hand with clientelistic politics. In their work on clientelism in Romania, Gherghina and Volintiru argue that 'Romanian political parties do not have strong membership organisations that would allow them to engage in multiple clientelistic linkages with the electorate', concluding that more than six percent of members within the Romanian electorate is 'a relatively small percentage of members' (Gherghina – Volintiru 2017: 126, 133). They also show that a wide territorial coverage by party local organisations is the best predictor of the level of clientelism in three Eastern European democracies

(Gherghina – Volintiru 2020). Spirova (2012) argues that extensive patronage politics in Bulgaria in the mid-2000s was rooted in the comparatively large membership of governing parties, which used patronage to reward members and attract new ones.

In order to check the clientelism hypothesis at the aggregate level, we introduce the clientelism index from the Varieties of Democracy project for the year we have the most M/E observations (2018). The index is composed from three variables: vote-buying, particularistic vs. public goods and programmatic vs. clientelistic linkages, with a higher score indicating a higher level of clientelism. In Table 2 we can see that the index yields a difference between ex-Yugoslav countries and the group of other CEE countries, albeit with Slovenia, Croatia and Albania as outliers from their respective groups. Apart from a solid correlation of the clientelism index with dependent variable (r=.65), clientelism is also connected with the largest party membership percentage (r=.55) as well as with years of domination of one party in the system (r=.46) (see Appendix). These findings support initial expectations that party systems with dominant parties tend to be more prone to clientelistic politics than systems where parties developed more evenly. If a party dominates government over the years, this gives it more opportunity to exploit state resources for patronage and to maintain both its membership and its electorate.

These findings are also confirmed by the fact that dominant party systems, alone or combined with nationalist cases, yield the largest differences on the clientelism index. On the other hand, correlations between the clientelism index and indicators of the socialism hypothesis, whether cultural (anti-party sentiments) or institutional (former communist party membership) are negligible (see Appendix). At this stage, we can conclude that the type of transition better explains the emergence of clientelistic politics than the specific nature of the previous regime. We have already seen that transitions that were marked with nationalist movements in their initial phases were almost a necessary precondition for the emergence of dominant party systems. Thus, we can hypothesise that these systems enabled dominant parties to engage in patronage and clientelistic strategies, which became the norm for the overall political landscape in a country.

We are aware that for more robust conclusions on dynamics of nationalism, dominant party systems and clientelism one should turn to longitudinal analysis. Also, the relatively high clientelism scores for Albania, Romania or Bulgaria certainly cannot be explained by the theory outlined here. However, we believe that for the group of former Yugoslav countries there is sufficient evidence to support such an interpretation. With one important caveat; Slovenia performs as a serious outlier from the group, both on the dependent variable and most of the independent ones. This is not strange given the fact that Slovenia, as many studies show, departed from the rest of the ex-Yugoslav states in many other

dimensions of political development, or even economic or social, which led to the exclusion of Slovenia from the Balkan or South-East European comparative group. Exception from explanation of party membership, in this respect, fits the overall developmental pattern.

## VI. Concluding remarks and further research

We believe that this exploratory research and preliminary interpretations of party membership in post-communist Europe has contributed to the research field in several respects. With regard to the data, it offers a systematic coverage of party membership figures for almost all parties in 17 countries in the region. By using PPDB data as well as an original online survey of party secretaries, it fills the gap in information that existed in party literature with regard to many countries in post-communist Europe. The figures are, however, still not perfect; there are still missing parties in the database and probably include dubious cases.

Given methodological problems with the accuracy of the reported numbers, which are probably more pronounced in new than in established democracies, the collected data have been exposed to reliability and validity tests. We have isolated suspect cases and offered corrected M/E ratios for several countries. This procedure might be seen as imperfect, and calls for further improvement, particularly in finding ways to implement corrections at the level of individual parties. However, working with corrected data did not change the main pattern of distribution in the M/E variable among countries in the region. If there is a problem with data validity and reliability, it does not substantially affect the overall picture.

This brings us to the main insight of the article. Even when working with data that intentionally lowered the mean and variance in our dependent variable, average membership density appears to be higher in CEE countries than in Western Europe. This was what many scholars from the region have regularly noticed working within single cases. However, the party membership literature still points to the opposite conclusion. Furthermore, we find that variance in national membership rates in CEE is much higher than in the West and it has been regionally clustered. Thus, former Yugoslav countries are at the top and other CEE countries on the bottom, with some intermediate cases and a few regional outliers (like Slovenia or Estonia). This regional pattern has been responsible for selection bias in many studies of party membership that have included only a limited number of post-communist countries.

Additionally, our analysis shows that initial nationalist movements that transformed into dominant party systems could offer the most appropriate explanation of the high membership density of former Yugoslav countries. Coupled with clientelistic politics, this explanation is the most promising for developing a theory of this regional clustering. Interestingly, although the ex-

-Yugoslav region was formed primarily of countries that for 70 years (45 under communism) shared the same political system, the socialism hypothesis did not show much explanatory power. Unfortunately, the small number of cases is a serious constraint on more ambitious and explanatory quantitative analysis at the level of countries. Turning to party-level analysis is therefore logically the next step that would make it possible to estimate the independent effects of specific variables, while controlling for regional and national effects.

Finally, we believe that this country-level analysis helps us raise some conceptual questions. Party membership has been for a long one of the most frequently used indicators of party organisational strength. Studies undertaken at the party-level, even when incorporating macro variables as predictors or controls, may miss substantively important factors. Particularly if we talk about regions or national peculiarities, party membership sometimes measures much more than the mere organisational capacity of a party. It can reflect longstanding historical developments, attitudes towards previous regimes, transitional circumstances, national institutional specificities or a specific type of political culture. This article shows that CEE, and particularly the former Yugoslav region, might be the area where more variance in party membership levels could be explained between regions than between parties.

## Appendix

| | | M_E | M_E_CORR | KP_MP_1987 | ANTI_PARTY | LARGEST_PARTY | DOM_YEARS | OTHER_PARTIES | CLIENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M_E objective measure (uncorrected) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0,862** | 0,177 | -0,263 | 0,505* | 0,655** | 0,815** | 0,741** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0,000 | 0,496 | 0,308 | 0,039 | 0,004 | 0,000 | 0,001 |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| M_E_CORR M/E corrected | Pearson Correlation | 0,862** | 1 | 0,047 | -0,411 | 0,577* | 0,365 | 0,931** | 0,649** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0,000 | | 0,859 | 0,101 | 0,015 | 0,149 | 0,000 | 0,005 |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| KP_MP_1987 Communist party memebrship (% of population) | Pearson Correlation | 0,177 | 0,047 | 1 | 0,466 | 0,075 | 0,241 | 0,049 | 0,130 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0,496 | 0,859 | | 0,059 | 0,774 | 0,352 | 0,851 | 0,619 |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| ANTI_PARTY regime generated anti-party sentiments index | Pearson Correlation | -0,263 | -0,411 | 0,466 | 1 | -0,184 | -0,110 | -0,354 | -0,080 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0,308 | 0,101 | 0,059 | | 0,479 | 0,674 | 0,163 | 0,760 |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LARGEST_PARTY largest party in the system (% of national membership) | Pearson Correlation | 0,505* | 0,577* | 0,075 | -0,184 | 1 | 0,433 | 0,283 | 0,548* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0,039 | 0,015 | 0,774 | 0,479 | | 0,083 | 0,271 | 0,023 |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| DOM_YEARS years of dominant party system | Pearson Correlation | 0,655** | 0,365 | 0,241 | -0,110 | 0,433 | 1 | 0,288 | 0,464 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0,004 | 0,149 | 0,352 | 0,674 | 0,083 | | 0,262 | 0,061 |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| OTHER_PARTIES M/E corrected without the largest party | Pearson Correlation | 0,815** | 0,931** | 0,049 | -0,354 | 0,283 | 0,288 | 1 | 0,559* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,851 | 0,163 | 0,271 | 0,262 | | 0,020 |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| CLIENT index of clientelism (Vdem) | Pearson Correlation | 0,741** | 0,649** | 0,130 | -0,080 | 0,548* | 0,464 | 0,559* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0,001 | 0,005 | 0,619 | 0,760 | 0,023 | 0,061 | 0,020 | |
| | N | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |

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