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PARTY PATRONAGE IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

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ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

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Abstract

This paper is based on the concluding chapter of a forthcoming volume reporting the results of a research project that has investigated the principles and practices of party patronage in contemporary European democracies on a systematic cross-national basis. Despite sometimes substantial theoretical interest in this topic in the past, there has been a persistent lack of comparable data with which to gauge its extent, and hence also a persistent shortfall in cross-national empirical research efforts. At the same time, much of the theoretical work in this area has also been limited by virtue of the tendency to link the concept of patronage to exchange politics, thus ignoring its potential relevance as a party organizational resource in contemporary systems of multi-level governance. This project has aimed to fill an important empirical void in the literature on contemporary European polities. It has also aimed to use this new robust empirical evidence to theorize about party patronage within the context of party organisational development and transformation, on the one hand, and political-institutional transformations of modern state, on the other.

Introduction

This paper is based on the concluding chapter of a forthcoming volume on party patronage and party government in contemporary Europe (Kopecky et al, 2012). The volume reports the results of a recent research project on aimed at exploring the principles and practices of party patronage in contemporary European democracies on a systematic cross-national basis. Despite sometimes substantial theoretical interest in this topic in the past, there has been a persistent lack of comparable data with which to gauge its extent, and hence also a persistent shortfall in cross-national empirical research efforts. At the same time, much of the theoretical work in this area has also been limited by virtue of the tendency to link the concept of patronage to exchange politics, thus ignoring its potential relevance as a party organizational resource in contemporary systems of multi-level governance. This project has aimed to fill an important empirical void in the literature on contemporary European polities. It has also aimed to use this new robust empirical evidence to theorize about party patronage within the context of party organisational development and transformation, on the one hand, and political-institutional transformations of modern state, on the other.

Party patronage is defined in this research project as the power of a party or parties to appoint people to positions in public and semi-public life. The scope of the patronage is then considered to be the range of positions so distributed. The focus of this research therefore rests on what Hans Daalder (1966) once defined as the 'reach of the party' within the polity. We also understand party patronage as theoretically and empirically distinct from the two related phenomena, namely clientelism (a form of representation based on selective release of public resources – contracts, subsidies, pork barrel legislation – in order to secure electoral support), and corruption (illegal use of public resources for private gains). The patronage which is of interest to this project is largely legal, and in principle, if not always in practice, it is above board. It is also therefore researchable.

The first specific concern of the project has been to establish how far within a given political system the allocation of jobs and other important public and semi-public positions is in the gift of, or controlled by, political parties. The second objective has been to map out the precise institutional location of patronage appointments within each political system, to include not only the core of civil service, but also institutions that are not part of the civil service, but are under some form of state control, such as public hospitals, various regulatory agencies and commissions and state owned companies (see Table 1 below). The third objective has been to explore the relative importance of the national, regional and local levels of public administration in the location and scope of patronage. The final objective has been to explore changes in the parties' ability to exercise patronage resources over time, and the extent to which party patronage is exercised in a 'majoritarian' as opposed to a more 'consensual' manner across the spectrum of (mainstream) political parties.

This project has involved an intensive three-year research effort that has gathered and analysed data on public appointments and political control in 15 European democracies, ranging across both northern and southern Europe, eastern and western Europe, and across both large and small democracies. It also combines the analysis of polities in which there has been a strong tradition of patronage and clientelism, such as Greece, Ireland, and Italy, as well as those in which patronage is normally deemed irrelevant or non-existent, such as Denmark and Norway.

Among the results of this large-scale research project has been the creation of a unique data set which is likely to be extensively mined by researchers for many years to come. These data were gathered by 15 country teams who conducted one-on-one interviews with some 45 respondents in each country. Experts were chosen from within three major groups: academia, the non-governmental sector and the civil service. They were chosen as experts who were knowledgeable about appointments to institutions in nine different policy areas (e.g. judiciary, economy, foreign affairs, welfare etc.).

The country teams interviewed at least 5 experts for each of the nine policy areas with which we were concerned (see Table 2 below). The experts responded to a uniform questionnaire in face-to-face interviews conducted by the contributors to the volume and were asked to assess the pervasiveness, persistence and several other aspects of the party patronage practices within their policy area of expertise. Their answers were analysed systematically to produce a detailed description of the empirical situation in different institutional arenas of the state, but also aggregated to produce a more general picture of the patronage practices in the country. These data were supplemented with information from other primary and secondary sources such as literature on the status of the civil service, prior history of patronage, media reports about the current practice and government reports about employment trends in the individual countries.

Other members of the research project, and authors of the different national studies included in the volume, are Oliver Treib (Austria); Maria Spirova (Bulgaria); Carina Bischoff (Denmark); Stefanie John and Thomas Poguntke (Germany); Takis Pappas and Zina Assimakopoulou (Greece); Jan Meyer-Sahling and Krisztina Jáger (Hungary); Gunnar Helgi Kristinsson (Iceland); Eoin O'Malley, Stephen Quinlan and Peter Mair (Ireland); Fabrizio di Mascio (Italy); Sandra van Thiel (Netherlands); Elin Haugsgjerd Allern (Norway); Carlos Jalali, Patricia Silva and Diogo Moreira; Raul Gomez and Tania Verge (Spain); Matthew Flinders and Felicity Matthews (UK).

Party Patronage and Party Government

In developing this research project, we have sought to accomplish two distinct goals. In the first place, we have sought to restore attention to the topic of party patronage, while at the same time linking it more closely to theories of party government rather than to those of exchange politics and clientelism. For this reason, we have focussed mainly on party patronage as an organizational and governing resource rather than as an electoral resource or as a form of linkage between citizens and parties. This latter aspect remains important, to be sure, but, in common with much of the theoretical literature in the field, we anticipated that it would have become less important to parties and to their supporters as democracies matured and as societies modernised. Patronage as an organizational resource, on the other hand, was anticipated to have become more important with time, and to have become more central to the process of party government. Second, we have sought to explore the role of parties in contemporary governing and policy-making processes, not in the sense of the familiar 'do parties matter?' literature, which is more concerned with the impact of party preferences on policy outcomes, but rather in the sense of the management and organisation of policy-making. Hence we adopted an empirical focus, researching the capacity and willingness of parties to control appointments to the key policy-making institutions of the state – including obviously the central institutions and ministries, but also the autonomous agencies and executive bodies.

This also meant that we have tried to link two literatures that normally remain at quite a remove from one another: that on public administration and public management, on the one side, and that on party organization and party models, on the other. Throughout the project, and across all the various national studies, our chief concern has been with the role of parties as institutions in twenty-first century democracies, and with the way in which they organise and act within systems of modern governance. The study of patronage as an organizational resource has offered an important avenue for exploring this concern and for substantiating it with extensive cross-national data.

All of the original data that have been employed in this project, and the overall data-set that has been created and that will soon be publicly available on the OPPR website (www.eui.eu/Projects/EUDO-OPPR/) have been compiled through extensive and in-depth expert surveys in each of the countries that has been included in the volume. In each polity, some five experts in each of nine policy areas were interviewed about patronage practices within these policy areas and asked about the extent and reach of party patronage, the motivations that were likely to lie behind the use of patronage appointments, the degree to which the practice of party patronage was competitive or

consensual, majoritarian or proportional, and the extent to which current practices differed from those in the past. Based on about 45 to 50 expert interviews in each of 15 countries, and therefore on about 750 expert interviews in total, the result is a unique and relatively standardized cross-national data set on party patronage that marks a major milestone in the empirical study of party government in contemporary Europe.

However, it is not just the innovative data that mark this project out. As will be immediately apparent to anyone reading even a selection of the 15 national studies resulting from the project, the capacity to build on perspectives drawn from both party politics and public administration has yielded substantial insights into the working of party government in the various national polities. In this sense, the national studies tell us not only about patronage and party government, but also party systems and party competition, and in particular about changing party organizations. In this paper, and drawing from the insights in the national studies we, in turn, focus on the declining role of political parties in organizing patronage, on the changing style of party patronage, and on the scale and location of party patronage in contemporary Europe. We conclude with a note on the notion of the party as network.

The Declining Role of the Party in Controlling Patronage

As stated above, party patronage is defined for the purposes of these analyses as the power of parties to appoint people to positions in public and semi-public life, with the scope of the patronage then being considered to be the range of positions so distributed. One of our concerns has therefore been to establish how far within a given political system the allocation of jobs and other important public and semi-public positions is in the gift of, or is controlled by, political parties. We deal with this concern below. As has become apparent in many of the national studies, however, the term party patronage is difficult to evaluate, in that in practice it is often hard to distinguish whether an appointment is made by the party as such, or by an individual politician; and, if the latter, as often proves to be the case, it is often hard to know to what extent the party as such is involved. Indeed, one of the most striking conclusions to be drawn from this study is the extent to which party organizations have lost cohesiveness in recent years, fragmenting not only in terms of vertical linkages, with each of the different levels of party organization often acquiring substantially greater autonomy than in the past, but also within the same levels, with individual leaders and government ministers in particular increasingly seeming to operate as independent actors, disconnected from and relatively unbeholden to the broader party apparatus.

The Italian case, which, since the collapse of the old regime and the dominance of Berlusconi, may well be an extreme case, shows this trend more than most. As di Mascio (2012) points out, patronage in Italy has become highly personalized in recent years, with public managers no longer likely to be recruited through parties as organisations but being nominated instead by individual political actors who draw on personal networks embedded in the professional world. It is also in the Italian case that we see the most pronounced stratarchy, with sub-national notables offering the national leaders an organisational base for use in national political competition in exchange for a lack of interference in their own local operations and in their own use of local public resources. In this case, it seems that the party as such, except in its role as coordinator, almost disappears.

There are counter-examples, of course. Bulgaria and Spain are two of the very few polities where this research indicates that the party as such plays a more prominent role in the appointment process than do the individual ministers and leaders. To become a patronage appointee in the Bulgarian case, for example, it is not enough to be part of the personal network of a minister or local party leader. Rather, as Spirova (2012) argues, at least some form of party identity and allegiance is necessary. In contrast to the Czech case, where the party as such barely constrains the choices of the ministers, and where personal networks feed into party building, this also suggests that party identity actually precedes the creation of the networks of supporters. In Spain the party also plays a prominent role, exemplified in this case by the power of the party in central office in recommending appointments.

The unusually strong position of the party in central office in the Spanish case has already been noted in earlier literature on development of party organizations (van Biezen 2003), and in the patronage context Gomez and Verge (2012) suggest that this can be linked to the decentralized character of Spanish politics, which helps to privilege the party in central office as the organizational guardian of territorial quotas in the public appointment process.

An emphasis on the role of party over that of the individual leaders or ministers is also evident in the Hungarian and Dutch cases. In Hungary, the individual ministers can play an important role, but, as Meyer-Sahling and Jáger (2012) attest, this role is shared with the prime minister and general party leadership. In the Netherlands, where party patronage is more evident than is often assumed to be the case, it is again the party as such which plays a crucial role. Individual ministers and their networks matter, but, as van Thiel (2012) emphasises, it is striking to see how each of the parties designates one of its MPs – known as 'the party lobbyist' – as the person whose job is 'to keep track of vacancies and select potential candidates from the party network.' This is clearly a pronounced party filter, but for less obvious reasons than is the case in Bulgaria, Spain and Hungary, where patronage also plays an important role in party building (see below).

In the other democracies, ministerial discretion is more in evidence. In Iceland, for example, as Kristinsson (2012) argues, 'political appointments usually take place through personal networks rather than the party hierarchy or party apparatus.' Indeed, when ministers seek to gain control of and manage a policy sector for which they are responsible, this is usually an individual effort, where the party is of limited help. As a result, the 'informal control networks of different ministers from the same party may interconnect, but the "principal" is usually the minister rather than the party.' This more personalised or individualised process is emphasised throughout the analyses of the established polities, and, as in the Irish case, for example, seems to have become more pronounced over time. Indeed, in the Irish case, as O'Malley, Quinlan and Mair (2012) conclude, there is very little of the party *qua* party that remains visible within the wider political process. At local level, personal networks and candidate appeals appear to be more important than party loyalties, while at elite level personal networks and relations are also more important in building networks of power. In these circumstances, they argue, parties get squeezed from both sides, and while patronage might remain as important as ever in Ireland, in terms of both reward and control, it might not be something that is exercised in any meaningful sense by the parties as such. In Germany, as John and Poguntke (2012) argue, despite the importance of party both legally and constitutionally, one of the main findings of the analysis is that party patronage is largely the result of strategic decisions by different individual party politicians at different levels of the state, and is not driven or organized by a coordinating party body such as the party central office: as also seems to be the case in many other polities, 'parties as unitary or corporate actors are less important than the individual leaders who carry the label.' In Portugal, personal allegiances also play a significant role in appointments and even exceed political links as a reason for being appointed, a pattern that is consistent with the evidence of a personalisation of government that can be found in earlier Portuguese studies. As Jalali, Silva and Moreira (2012) conclude, 'personal allegiances to the party or faction leader are more important than the more abstract concept of party loyalty or influence.'

Although personal loyalties can prove more important than party loyalties or identities in appointment processes, it is precisely through party patronage that these types of networks can be developed as a means of party building. As Scherlis (2010) has shown in the case of Argentina, the fact that the personal network precedes the party (rather than vice versa) means that it can also be used to strengthen the party and to help foster subsequent organizational loyalties (see also Kopecký and Spirova 2011). In the Czech case, for example, as Kopecký (2012) suggests, giving MPs positions on the boards of companies is often done with the intention of cementing their loyalties to the party – something which is particularly crucial in nascent party systems that are often subject to frequent party splits. In such a context, as Kopecký goes on to argue, it is not uncommon to observe that it is the party that emanates from the practice of patronage, rather than patronage emanating from the party,

with some of the professionals who are placed by the parties in important state offices being then courted by the party leadership. Some of these individuals eventually decide to join the party and pursue a career in politics, thereby guaranteeing a renewal at the party elite level that otherwise might be difficult to achieve in the standard bottom-up intra-party process. A similar process is visible in Bulgaria, where, as Spirova argues, parties sometimes even 'headhunt' – seeking to locate people with good professional standing who they then attempt to incorporate in the party with promises of future appointments in the state structure. Irish parties also headhunt, sometimes promising candidacies or contracts to those who can bring resources to the party.

From Electoral Resource to Organizational Resource

There has been less ambiguity in finding answers to our second major concern, which involves the motivations for patronage. Here, as the chapters in the forthcoming volume make clear, the trend is more or less unequivocal, in that there has been a substantial shift away from patronage as reward and an increasing resort to patronage as control. The aggregate data in Figure 1 confirm this finding: control was seen as the most important motivation for parties to make patronage appointments by nearly 43 per cent of all respondents, while reward on its own was mentioned by only 7 per cent. As outlined in the introduction to the volume (Kopecky and Mair, 2012), reward is generally associated with the use of patronage for electoral purposes, while control is associated with the use of patronage as an organizational resource. In other words, the national case studies and the aggregate data clearly confirm our initial expectation that party patronage has become an organizational rather than an electoral resource.

Figure 1: Motivations for Party Patronage, European Averages
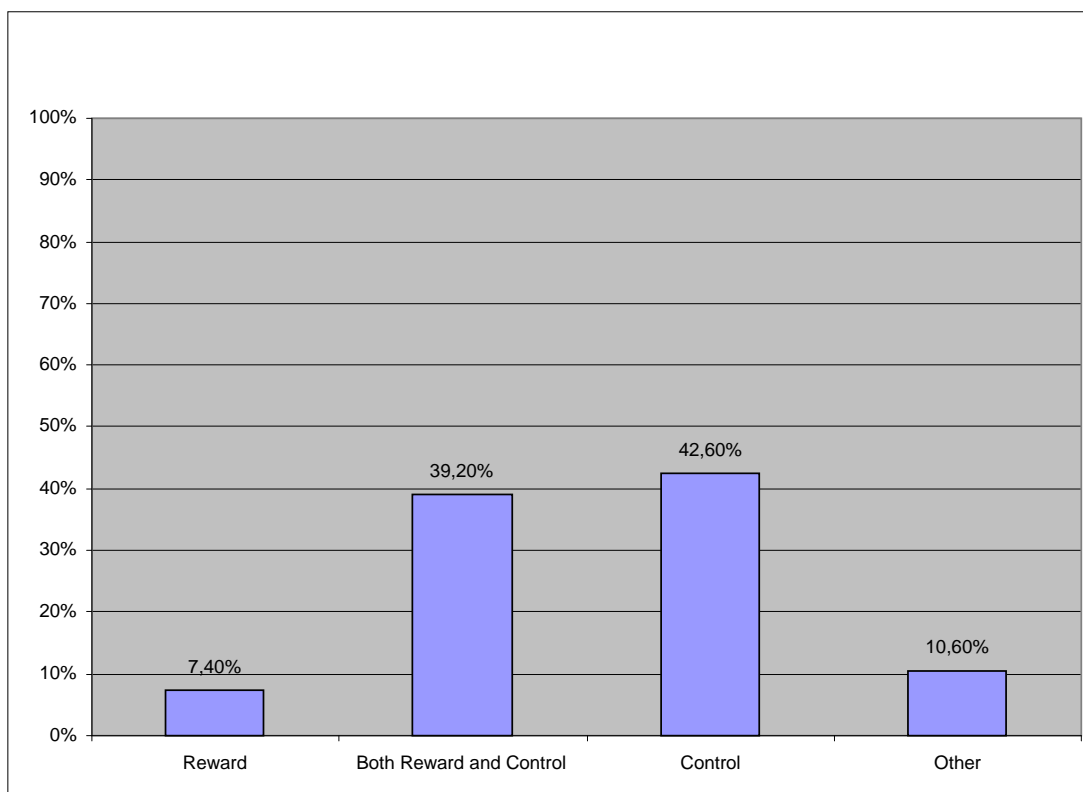
There are a variety of reasons for this change, some of which are common to many of the countries included in this project. In the Icelandic case, for example, Kristinsson offers four strong reasons why the use of patronage as reward became more difficult and more contested following the 1960s,

reflecting developments that are also often cited in the other national analyses. The first is the impact of the privatization and divestment of many state assets that followed the Thatcher-Reagan initiatives in the mid- to late 1980s. This not only meant that there were fewer positions available with which to reward party supporters, but it also fostered a more independent business community that was probably less keen to do favours for the party organisations.

The second has been the increased professionalisation of public administration, which has helped to close down the opportunities for non-qualified office holders. This is also true in other polities. At the same time, however, this also may have opened other doors for the more professional appointees who came to be appointed for control purposes. Professional administrations were vulnerable to the new forms of patronage in two ways: on the one hand, it became more difficult for the civil service to resist the appointment of party nominees who were also professionally qualified and who therefore 'fitted in'; on the other hand, by emphasising the sheer professionalism and political neutrality of the administration, the bureaucracy itself encouraged the appointment of politically sensitive nominees who could offer a useful interface with the politicians – people with political 'nouse' as one of the UK respondents puts it, or, as in the Czech case, the people who could be designated as 'politically connected professionals.' What is interesting to note here is the perhaps paradoxical impact of the 'new public management' principles within the bureaucracy, which also may have enhanced the opportunities for party patronage as control. In Austria, as Treib (2012) suggests, citing also Liegl and Müller (1999: 101), the new system reduced the party political shadow of history within ministerial departments, thereby offering ministers many more opportunities to change the personnel of heads of sections according to their party political tastes while also strengthening their powers of reorganization.

The third reason suggested by Kristinsson for the decline of patronage as reward, and a factor that is also cited by many of the other analyses, is the impact of media scrutiny and transparency. Both features – especially when tied to growing legal restrictions – ensure that appointments cannot be hidden from public view, and often have to be publicly justified and defended. In the Irish case, for example, one respondent referred to this as the 'Joe Duffy effect', referring to a radio broadcaster who presents a popular daily phone-in programme dealing with the major controversies of the day. In the British case, as Flinders and Matthews (2012) suggest, media scrutiny is such that having close personal relations with members of the party in government can actually damage the prospects of prospective appointees. In this context it is also interesting to note the Bulgarian pattern, where we see relatively weak evidence of patronage in institutions subject to substantial external control (including European controls), such as financial institutions, and much stronger evidence in institutions in policy areas that are free of external controls, such as in cultural policy and welfare policy.

The fourth factor refers to the demand side, in that in Iceland, as elsewhere, there are fewer party volunteers that need rewarding, or, as in the Irish case during the boom years, fewer that need rewarding in the way that parties can manage. There are, to be sure, exceptions to this trend. The Greek case remains dominated by reward-oriented patronage – Pappas (2012) refers to his country as a 'party patronage democracy' rather than as a 'party democracy' – and exchange motivations continue to be evident also in some of the other polities at the lower levels of the appointments ladders. In Austria, on the other hand, a polity long-dominated by exchange practices, patronage as reward has declined, with access to community housing, for example, being organized on a more objective and transparent basis so as to prevent political parties from using it as an instrument of clientelism. That said, some of the patronage-heavy sectors in Austria, such as the military and police in particular, continue to be marked by more traditional forms of reward-oriented exchange politics.

One of the most obvious problems in Austria, as elsewhere, is that the experts whom we have interviewed often claim to find it difficult to draw a precise distinction between motivations of reward and control, and hence often judge party appointment strategies to be a combination of both. This is clearly demonstrated in Figure 1 where both reward and control were, with 39% of respondents, nearly as large a category of answers as control. What matters here, however, is the relative infrequency with

which experts almost everywhere judge appointments to be based on reward motivations alone. If a party supporter can get a pay-off through an appointment, well and good, but this usually only happens, at least at the middle and upper levels of the ladder, when there is also an organizational advantage to be gained by the party or minister involved. In Portugal, for instance, as Jalali and his colleagues attest, it is important for the parties that their appointees can serve as a means to circumvent civil servants' capacity to 'boycott the decisions made by the political authority', especially in those policy sectors where there exists a strong bureaucratic *esprit de corps.* Hence, even when being rewarded, the appointees must also be skilled. A similar pattern is evident in Spain, where Gomez and Verge point out that patronage is sometimes guided by the desire to ensure that the decisions made by top rank public officers do not run counter to the approach adopted by the government – in this case, 'professionalism is a necessary condition while political criteria are not.'

There are also other interesting patterns here. While Spain, Bulgaria and Germany are among the few countries where reward on its own continues to be emphasised, John and Poguntke argue that the intent to reward party members in Germany through promoting their civil service careers should not be seen as a dominant factor driving party patronage. In this case, indeed, the evidence of patronage instead reflects a considerable demand side element, with middle ranking civil servants tending to use their party membership as a resource in their efforts to further their own careers. In Bulgaria and Spain, the pattern is more conventional. In the former case, new governments have frequently created new positions in the public and semi-public sector with which to reward supporters. One telling example cited by Spirova was the newly created Ministry of State Administration, a government department that was officially justified by citing the need to build a strong bureaucracy because of the EU accession process, but which, following media reports, was believed to have been created specifically to satisfy the demand for positions from the three newly incumbent parties. In the event, the new Ministry led to the creation of 140 new staff positions, all filled by the three coalitional partners. In the Spanish case, a change of government tends to provide a boost for the newly incumbent party's membership levels, suggesting that rewards are likely to become available. There has also been extensive reshuffling of top administrative positions following changes of government at the regional level in Spain, although this might reflect the intent by the new incumbents to put their partisan stamp on the policy-making process. Here also, reward and control motivations are mixed.

There are also efficiency requirements here. When parties, or their ministers, engage in patronage they do so by appointing people that are professionally qualified to do the job. As Figure 2 shows, professionalism was the single most often mentioned reason for appointees to obtain the job, significantly exceeding both political and personal allegiances. This is of course not to say that political considerations play no role when parties make an appointment: it is still an allegiance mentioned by nearly 70 per cent of all respondents. The crucial question is what exactly does the political allegiance mean and how does it square with traditional notion of partisanship? And here again one of the most striking conclusions to be drawn from this study is the extent to which 'political allegiance' can no longer easily be equated with strong partisan purpose, not least because the people that get appointed by parties are often not party members or even members of wider party networks, but rather come from the personal networks of ministers or from other non-partisan institutional settings.

Figure 2: Qualifications of Appointees, European averages
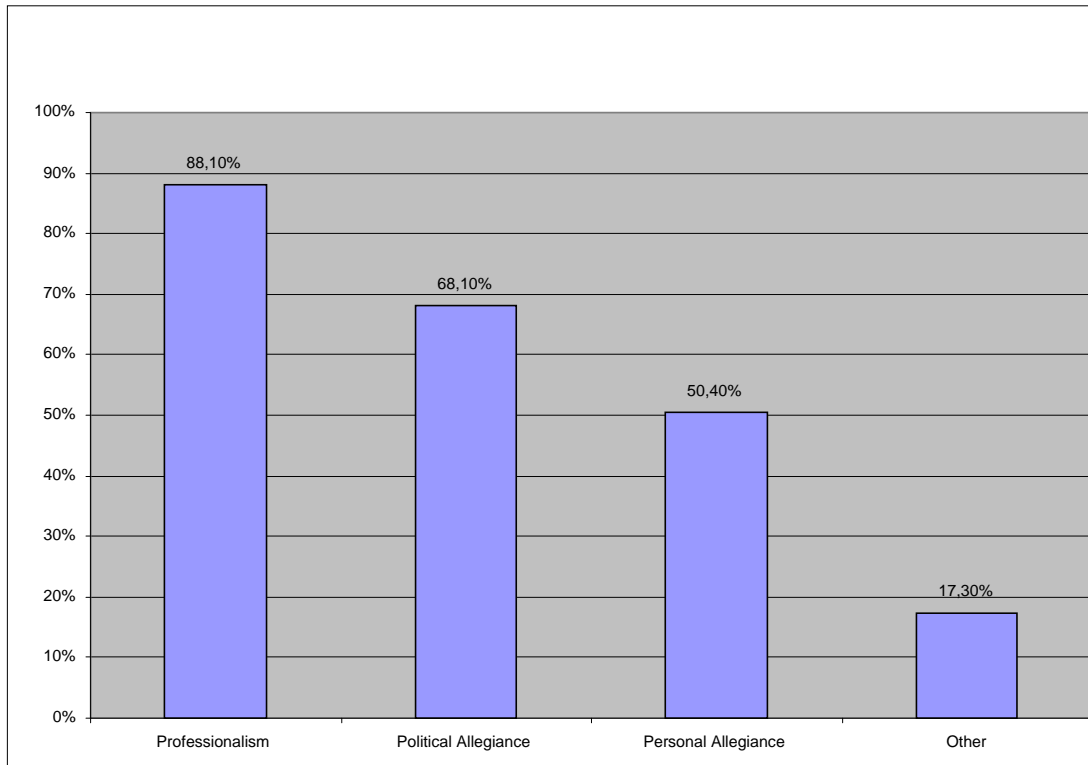
Furthermore, when parties, or their ministers, exercise patronage in an effort to enhance their control over policy-making, it is also often without strong ideological intent. As is evident from many of the national analyses, the exercise of patronage is often less concerned with bringing party preferences to bear on policy outcomes, and is more directed towards the efficient management and organisation of decision-making. It is also a strategy of blame avoidance, at least in the sense that it is a strategy that seeks to ensure that mistakes will not be made. This is also why, as Treib points out for the Austrian case, we can witness the transformation of party patronage in public and semi-public institutions from a mass phenomenon oriented to rewarding supporters to an instrument that often targets leadership positions. In Denmark, for example, as Bischoff (2012) notes, when there are so-called 'control appointments', it is not so much about pushing policy as it is about needing well-functioning boards. In Ireland, when parties or their ministers are concerned with patronage as control, this is more likely to be about controlling performance and output rather than policies and input. Since the decision-making process is subject to increasing public scrutiny, those appointed must be able to provide safe pairs of hands and ensure that things don't go wrong. In the UK case, as one former minister put it to Flinders and Matthews, patronage can be justified in cases 'where you need the right sorts of sensitivities for those jobs to be done well. So, inevitably, an element of judgement about somebody's political nouse comes into the selection process.' In Norway, as Allern (2012) notes, even if many of the respondents refer to efficient policy formulation and implementation, some also argue that politicians need trustworthy appointees simply 'to prevent administrative mistakes from being made.'

Party patronage in contemporary Europe

Our initial expectations concerning the changing nature of party patronage have generally been confirmed by the evidence of the national studies, suggesting that there has often been quite a radical transformation in the underlying logic of patronage, as well as in the role of the party as patron. In

contrast to the patterns that have been observed in the past and that have been depicted extensively in the vast literature on traditional modes of patronage politics, party patronage in contemporary Europe has become an organizational rather than an electoral resource. But how widespread is this form of party patronage? As stated in the introduction (Kopecky and Mair, 2012), one of the key concerns of the project was to establish how far within a given political system the allocation of jobs and other important public and semi-public positions is in the gift of, or is controlled by, political parties. Indeed, this is a concern that has long preoccupied empirical studies of patronage politics in Europe and elsewhere (Kopecky and Spirova, 2012). Moreover, in addition to investigating the scale and depth of party patronage, we were also interested in mapping out the precise institutional location of patronage appointments within each political system, including not only the core civil service, but also institutions that are not part of the civil service, but are under some form of state control, such as public hospitals, various regulatory agencies and commissions and state owned companies.

Figure 3 reports the values of the Index of Party Patronage in 15 European countries. The Index is a measure designed to estimate the scale and depth of party patronage, and the specific values are also reported and analysed in each individual national study. As can be seen from theses data, the United Kingdom records the lowest level of patronage, with an index of 0.09, while Greece leads the rankings with a score of 0.62. These values are to a large extent consistent with other estimates of patronage in Europe. This is especially true if we look at countries showing highest levels of party patronage, with Greece, Austria and Italy long being considered as the patronage heartlands of Europe (e.g., Müller 2007). In other words, while the underlying logic of patronage may have changed quite dramatically in at least the latter two of these countries, the scale is still particularly pronounced. Not all cases with extensive patronage in the past reveal similarly high levels of patronage in the present, however, as evidenced most notably by the cases of Iceland and, to a lesser degree, Ireland. These two countries, which are often treated as patronage-ridden political systems in the literature (e.g. Piattoni 2001) reveal values of this Party Patronage Index that are well below the European mean.

Figure 3: The Index of Party Patronage in 15 European Democracies
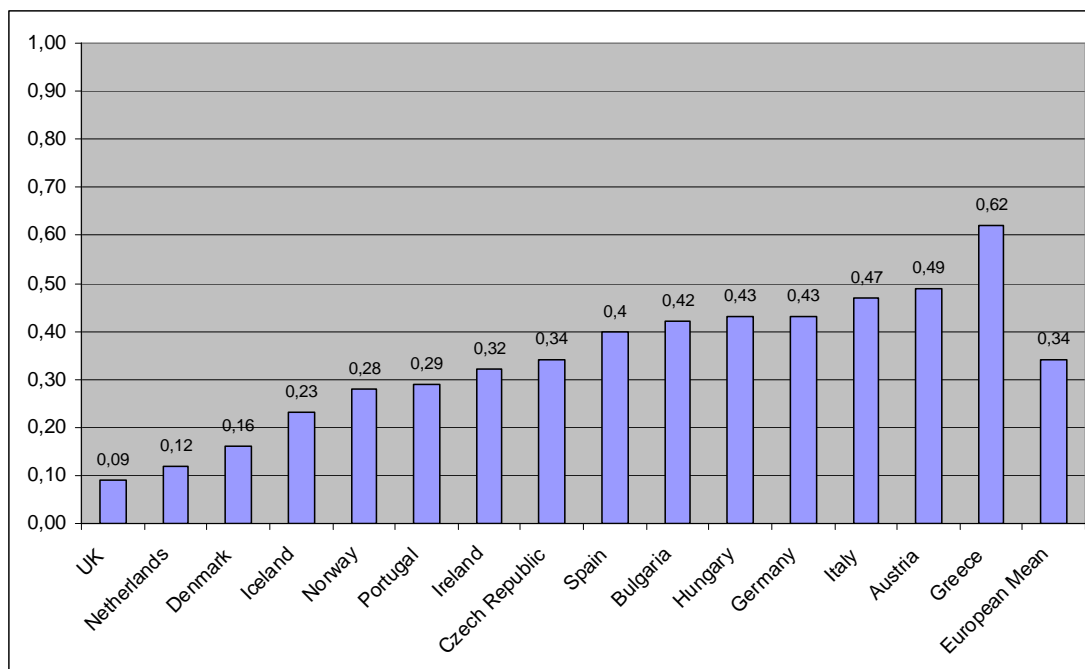
Most of the new democracies included in this study - the three post-communist countries as well as Spain – are grouped together at or slightly above the mean for Europe as a whole. This is also consistent with many predictions about the predispositions of democracies emerging during the Third

Wave of democratization to be relatively prone to party patronage (e.g. Shefter 1994, O'Dwyer 2006). Indeed, the most evident cases of patronage being specifically used for party building are in the more recently democratized polities – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary in Central and Eastern Europe, and Portugal and Spain in the south. The imperatives in the former countries are clear. Following the transition to democracy, the new parties in power devoted considerable efforts to clearing out and counter-acting the extensive patronage appointments which had been inherited from the former communist regimes. Indeed, at a stretch, it seems plausible to consider the old *nomenklatura* practices in CEE as an extreme form of party patronage conceived as an organizational and governing resource, with the new democratic governments then being obliged to sweep away the old appointees and to put others in their place in order top cement the democratic transition. In their discussion of the Hungarian case, for example, Meyer-Sahling and Jáger (2012) note that 'the literature on party patronage in Central and Eastern Europe tends to assume that the mere presence of laws and regulations establishes breaks on the ability of parties to make political appointments in the public sector', and argue that the Hungarian case in particular, and the other CEE cases more generally, show that such an assumption is untenable. The imperatives of party building, and the need to counteract the *nomenklatura* legacies, can help to explain why. As Spirova notes in the case of Bulgaria, the need to replace the 'oldtimers' – including people in various state institutions such as ministries, schools, and hospitals – became part of the democratization process. In the words of one of her respondents, the Union of Democratic Forces (SDS), representing the main opposition to the old regime, felt unable to 'implement new policies with old people.' Moreover, once the new people were in place, there could develop what Meyer-Sahling and Jáger define as 'cascading patronage', with the allocation of decision-making powers to a political appointee, such as the specialist state secretary, implying that party patronage could cascade downwards to the bottom of the ministerial hierarchy. In Spain, following Gomez and Verge, large-scale patronage also came in the wake of the transition to democracy, and in particular at the point when the Socialists came to power and displaced not only the last of the power-holders associated with the Franco regime, but also many of those put in place by their centre-right predecessors. As they note, political appointments were four times higher following the Socialist victory in 1982 than in the 1970s, with 76 percent of high officials being removed and replaced.

Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway offer the most contrasting examples to these often highly politicized patronage practices. Denmark, as is more than evident from Bischoff's study, is a case apart – being, as Bischoff calls it, a 'negative' case with virtually no evidence of party patronage. There are some small signs of relevant undercurrents, of course. Political colour can matter, especially as far as appointments to the advisory boards that offer policy advice is concerned, and as one of Bischoff's respondents observed, 'it is part of the ordinary political process when you appoint to councils and committees etc. … these people are selected on their qualifications, network and political profile'. But even then, political colour is more a matter of broad ideological orientation and political sensitivity than party loyalty as such, and as Bischoff reports, ministers making appointments will often canvass opposition parties for suggestions of names. As in the Netherlands, such appointments are thereby also intended to foster cross-party consensus, and to broaden the sources of political input. Citing Larsen (2003), Bischoff suggests that the key to Danish exceptionalism is the combination of a strong and independent – even pro-active – bureaucratic culture, on the one hand, and a tendency towards the appointment of minority governments, on the other. As is sometimes also the case elsewhere, a strong bureaucracy can resist political interference, while minority governments are usually too weak to push against such resistance and, were this to be driven by partisan considerations, would be unlikely to win support from the opposition parties on whose votes they depend. As Larsen (2003: 75) originally noted, it seemed no coincidence that the initiation of the process leading to the introduction of politically appointed 'special advisors' in 1993 coincided with the first majority government in 22 years in Denmark.

The Norwegian and Dutch cases offer more evidence of party patronage, but often in a form that is relatively depoliticized and consensual. In Norway, for example, Allern argues that appointments to important positions within the state administration are more likely to be related to government as such rather than to *party* government in particular. Political allegiance is seen to matter surprisingly often in the appointment process, but this seems less for party purposes than for the value attributed to political sensitivities and awareness. As Allern suggests, the administration in Norway has in general become more politicized, and political skills are increasingly valued in the policy-making process. This blurring of lines between politics and administration is 'due to intensified political-administrative leadership teamwork and due to a growing number of public relations officers working closely with the ministers', resulting in a greater demand for the appointments of persons with political experience – not least, as Allern points out, in the Foreign Service, where a background in politics is seen as a professional qualification it is own right. In other words, party patronage can be important, but not necessarily in the sense of a partisan patronage.

This also tends to be true in the Netherlands. In this case, the frequency of coalition government, often with three or even more parties involved, together with the strong consociational and accommodationist tradition, effectively requires the inclusion of all substantial parties in the appointments process. In the individual ministries, for example, multi-party patronage allows all the parties to have a voice in the relevant policy fields rather than having the ministry dominated by the particular party from which the senior minister is drawn. The process is depoliticized, to be sure, as in Norway, but, as van Thiel points out, this is achieved not by removing parties but by incorporating them. This also explains why Dutch ministers often appoint top civil servants with a different party political background to their own: as many of her respondents pointed out, 'not only are pure partisan appointments rare and frowned upon, but ...a strong minister will appoint candidates from other parties to create a system of checks and balances.'

Scholars of public administration might be interested in the fact that, as Table 1 demonstrates, in all but two countries, the core civil service is the most patronage ridden institutional type. The index of party patronage is often twice to three times higher in the ministries than it is in the non-departmental agencies and commissions, or as in the executing institutions that are charged with policy delivery in relevant policy areas. Only in the UK and in the Netherlands does the score of the index for the other institutional types exceed that for the ministerial bureaucracy. These are also countries which, as our national studies indicate, civil servants enjoy a particularly strong protection by civil service legislation and traditions, much like in Norway, Denmark and Iceland, all three countries where ministries turn out to be also less politicized than similar institutions in other European countries. With the score of zero, the UK actually appears to be a textbook example of separation between civil service and government; indeed, as Flinders and Matthews argue in their chapter, this separation is a result of a series of reforms introduced in the nineteenth century to safeguard the neutrality of the civil service, and further reinforced by reforms introduced by Tony Blair's Labour governments, which also seriously undermined party or ministerial involvement in public appointments outside of the core civil service.

Table 1: Party Patronage in Different Types of Institutions

	Ministries	NDAC	Executing Institutions	Country Total
Austria	0.63	0.31	0.52	0.49
Bulgaria	0.61	0.34	0.32	0.42
Czech Republic	0.67	0.25	0.14	0.34
Denmark	0.33	0.11	0.11	0.19
Germany	0.68	0.25	0.21	0.43
Greece	0.73	0.54	0.58	0.62
Hungary	0.65	0.30	0.34	0.44
Iceland	0.25	0.20	0.23	0.23
Ireland	0.36	0.29	0.31	0.32
Italy	0.63	0.40	0.38	0.47
Netherlands	0.14	0.15	0.07	0.12
Norway	0.33	0.28	0.23	0.28
Portugal	0.40	0.20	0.27	0.29
Spain	0.50	0.42	0.30	0.40
UK	0.00	0.17	0.11	0.09

As Table 1 shows, the pervasiveness of patronage in general also decreases as we move from non-departmental agencies and commissions to the executing institutions -- although in several countries the pattern in two institutional types is similar, and with one major exception, Austria, patronage seems to be much more widespread in the executing institutions than in the agencies. The general trend can at least partly be explained by the huge diversity and sheer number that both groups of institutions represent in each national context. Some of the agencies are highly technical bodies that will be of little interest to political actors. In other cases, where institutions will be subject of partisan interest as, for example, is often the case with state owned companies or with schools and their governing boards, it is enough to appoint a director or a CEO in order to control the entire institution. This said, the exception of Austria is important in this context because it leads us to another important variation, documented in Table 2, and that is a variation among policy areas.

Table 2: Party Patronage in Different Policy Areas

	Economy	Finance	Judiciary	Media	Military and Police	Healthcare	Culture & Education	Foreign Services	RLA
Austria	0,67	0,59	0,39	0,33	0,63	0,52	0,30	0,41	0,56
Bulgaria	0,44	0,37	0,33	0,44	0,33	0,48	0,52	0,56	0,31
Czech Republic	0,37	0,30	0,37	0,33	0,37	0,30	0,30	0,39	0,39
Denmark	0,11	0,22	0,00	0,17	0,13	0,19	0,15	0,33	0,17
Germany	0,26	0,35	0,58	0,56				0,50	0,44
Greece	0,56	0,56	0,46	0,83	0,30	1,00	0,78	0,56	0,67
Hungary	0,48	0,32	0,26	0,58	0,36	0,44	0,23	0,44	0,41
Iceland	0,30	0,19	0,22	0,24	0,30	0,30	0,11	0,22	0,17
Ireland	0,22	0,28	0,52	0,30	0,22	0,42	0,26	0,33	0,29
Italy	0,44	0,37	0,37	0,67	0,26	0,44	0,41	0,39	0,89
Netherlands	0,22	0,07	0,07	0,22	0,13	0,08	0,07	0,11	n/a
Norway	0,30	0,30	0,26	0,33	0,31	0,30	0,22	0,26	0,24
Portugal	0,41	0,30	0,44	0,41	0,19	0,19	0,14	0,30	0,28
Spain	0,44	0,33	0,48	0,28	0,33	0,67	0,30	0,30	0,41
UK	0,07	0,15	0,19	0,22	0,07	0,00	0,04	0,04	0,07

Note: Light shaded = least patronage; dark shaded = most patronage

As Table 2 shows, there is no one single policy area that would seem to be highly politicized in all European countries. The media, which could plausibly be expected to feature high on the wish list of political parties as an object of political control through appointments, comes closest to such characterization: the data in Table 2 show that media is the most politiczed policy area in four out of fifteen European countries, and least politicised in only one of them. In a similar vein, there is also no one single policy area which would be uniformly least politically controlled by partisan actors in the European context. More interesting is to see that there are countries, like the Czech Republic and Norway, where the index shows very small variation and hence where differences in policy areas influence the overall extent of patronage much less so than in other countries. In most European cases, by contrast, we clearly see certain policy areas that, as Meyer-Sahling and Jager put it, are "partially insulated" from patronage and others that can be deemed to have been "captured" by the parties. We suspect that these variations, both within and between countries, are likely to be of substantial future research interest to scholars in public policy and public administration, as well as in the field of party politics.

The Party as a Network

Although these variations tell us much about the changing world of party politics, as well as about the changing relations between parties and the state, they are far from offering a conclusive or uniform picture of contemporary party organizational life. Nor do they offer a distinct image of the emergence of some new party model or of a definitive transformation of party government. In this sense, the picture, through revealing, remains unclear. That said, the unique empirical perspective adopted in this project does provide yet more evidence documenting the erosion of the traditional mass party model and pointing to the more generalised decline of partisanship in contemporary structures of

government. This can be seen in at least three aspects of the role of party patronage in party organizational life.

In the first place, party patronage in the past was dominated by parties' central office or a central committee, which steered the distribution of jobs and controlled most of party organizational life. Within such a framework, patronage resources were largely in the hands of the extra-parliamentary institutions that acted on behalf of party on the ground. What we most often see in the evidence in this project, by contrast, is the tendency for appointments to be sourced from the party in public office without much evidence of any major constraints being imposed by the party apparatus beyond these confines. Patronage resources therefore appear to be increasingly concentrated in the hands of a relatively narrow group of partisan elites, usually occupying positions in the public sphere. However, it is also interesting to observe that even the party in public office often appears to lack cohesion and coordination capacity, with individual ministers assuming an increasingly dominant and quite autonomous role in appointments within their own policy areas.

Second, party patronage in the past was predominantly used as an inducement to build and sustain the infrastructure of the party, including the mobilisation of large networks of activists on the ground and a party bureaucracy at the centre (see e.g. Key 1964; Sorauf 1964). Party patronage also helped in the efforts to sustain the cohesion of the party by ensuring that positions were distributed among the multiple factions or tendencies that made up mass parties. The Italian DCI, the Japanese LDP, and the Austrian SDAP and OVP are among the most commonly cited examples in this regard (Leonardi and Wertman 1989; Park 2001; Müller1989). Today, however, this is less likely to be the case, and instead it seems that parties are more likely to emphasise appointments that can help them to manage the infrastructure of government and the state.

Third, while the recipients of party patronage in the past were primarily party members coming from within the large party organizations or their affiliate groups, appointees of the contemporary parties are often drawn from other channels and from outwith the party as such. Indeed, while a party membership card used to provide the leaders with decisive clues regarding the potential trustworthiness of their appointees, those appointed today are more likely to have been recruited on the basis of their professional expertise as well as on the basis of a very broad notion of political allegiance and ideological affinity.

All of this tends to point to parties that are increasingly open, network-like organizations, with a flexible set of programmatic goals represented and implemented by individual politicians and ministers, and operating within a dispersed and complex multi-level system of government. These are parties which may lack substantial vertical or horizontal coherence in organizational terms, but which work through relatively loose and fragmented teams of leaders. The teams themselves develop in different ways, emerging from inside the party in some cases, coming together through the very process of being appointed in other cases, or constituting a mix of personal, professional and partisan coteries in yet other. The party apparatus, which itself is increasingly professional and managerial, often lacks a strong partisan identity, and, as in the cartel party model, will be more inclined to cater to the needs of these teams of leaders when in public office rather than to those of the (often shrinking) party on the ground. In this case, moreover, the principal task of the party apparatus, whether located in the party headquarters, in parliament, or in government offices, becomes one of coordination and linkage, coordination itself being one of the main functions carried out by parties in contemporary democracies (Bolleyer 2011).

The party in this sense is a network two times over. It serves as the coordination mechanism for a network of policy-makers in government, integrating and communicating decisions, and providing the glue for what Tony Blair liked to call 'joined-up government'. At the same time, it is also a network in itself, in that the absence of a strong and coherent hierarchical party organization leads to a situation in which the party is constituted by its leaders and their personal and political hinterlands. In specifying the conditions for effective party government in his classic essay from the 1980s, Richard Katz

(1986:43) argued that in such a system 'positions in government must flow from support within the party rather than party positions flowing from electoral success', and that the highest positions in public office needed to be selected from within parties and to be held responsible through parties. With the ascendancy of the party in public office, however, these flows risk being reversed. The leaders may be selected within the party, but they then come to define the party. Rather than representing the party and being responsible to it, the leaders become the party, and the party becomes the leaders, or the teams of leaders, that are themselves constitutive of a party network. In this new configuration, party patronage plays a central and formative role.

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