Predictors of Party Patronage: A Case of the City Committee of a Serbian Parliamentary Political Entity in 2015

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The subject of interest of this paper is empirical research on party patronage within the City Committee of a political party in Serbia. The research problem is focused on the question whether patronage can be predicted retrospectively using sociodemographic variables and variables derived from social network analysis. Approximately one in five party members is employed through patronage. A network variable was generated, and centrality measures were calculated based on the data concerning party recruitment into the party. Variables that exhibited statistically relevant bivariate associations with the indicator of party patronage were incorporated into a binary logistic regression model. Statistically significant B coefficients were observed for:

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the number of secure votes, out-degree, membership in the largest component, core/periphery categorization, age, and educational level. In contrast to the other predictors, membership in the largest component and age demonstrate a negative association with the criterion. The obtained results substantiate the thesis of the technocratization of party patronage.

Keywords: party patronage, extractive institutions, City Committee of a Serbian political party, social network analysis, binary logistic regression

1. Introduction

The practice of party members securing employment through their associated political party constitutes a prominent manifestation of party patronage (Sorauf, 1959; Wilson, 1973; Shefter, 1994; Kopecký, Mair & Spirova, 2012; Kopecký et al., 2016). At the heart of this paper lies a pivotal research question: Can party patronage be predicted retrospectively using sociodemographic variables and variables derived from social network analysis (SNA)? If so, to what extent and with what degree of precision?

The motivation behind politicians and political parties engaging in patronage serves as a mechanism for exerting control over the creation and implementation of proclaimed policies, a form of clientelism aimed at rewarding supporters in exchange for political services[1], or a synthesis of both (Kopecký et al., 2016). Which of these motivations is dominant depends on historical legacy (Shefter, 1994; Piattoni, 2001), the structure of the party system (Geddes, 1994; O'Dwyer, 2006; Grzymala-Busse, 2007), organizational and ideological characteristics of political parties (Panebianco, 1988; Kemahlioglu, 2012; Cruz & Keefer, 2015), the social location, the legal system characteristics (Kopecký et al., 2016), cultural specificities, the extent to which party patronage reaches state institutions – the "depth of political patronage", and criteria for employment selection, encompassing professional competence, political allegiance, and personal connections, which may coexist or be mutually exclusive (Kopecký et al., 2016).

[1] Including electoral support.

There are, therefore, two distinct patterns of political patronage. One is clientelistic, in which public sector positions serve as a means to garner votes, promote local activism, and cultivate loyal clients (Piattoni, 2001; Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes et al., 2013). Kopecký, Mair and Spirova (2012) characterize this pattern as "electoral resource". The other is non-clientelistic and employs public positions as a means of exerting influence and establishing a presence within the state (Bearfield, 2009; Jalali & Lisi, 2009). Kopecký et al. (2012) classify this pattern as "public policy".

Contrary to intuitive expectations, party patronage spans all regions, including Western Europe. However, pronounced regional disparities are evident, with Latin America displaying heightened prevalence. The scope of party patronage extends to central government ministries, which are closely aligned with centres of political power. Party patronage is limited to the highest levels of the state apparatus in Western Europe, while it permeates all levels of hierarchy in the vast majority of state institutions in Latin America (Kopecký et al., 2016). This finding supports qualitative observations of heightened politicization in Latin America and relatively lower politicization in Western Europe (Peters & Pierre, 2004; Grindle, 2012). Middle and lower levels of bureaucracy are largely subject to political appointments in countries with high levels of political patronage. These facts suggest that patronage spreads from top to bottom, rather than from bottom to top (Kopecký et al., 2016).

The prerequisite for implementing party patronage lies in the political entity's influence over extractive institutions. Extractive institutions can be broadly defined as unwritten rules that allow a privileged minority to misuse resources that the majority funds for public goods and services (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2012). This type of institution can involve budgetary funds or state institutions at the national, provincial, or local levels. Such misuse results in the diversion of public resources for private ends, leading to insufficient funds for public services. The political misallocation of public funds in Serbia inflicts substantial annual damage, amounting to billions of euros. A significant avenue for squandering public funds is party patronage[2]. While evident at the local self-governance level, the practice is more constrained at the national level, yet poses more substantial financial implications and detriment to public welfare (Pavlović, 2018).

[2] In addition to party patronage, the mechanism of resource extraction manifests through manipulated tenders, privatizations, concessions, obscured budgets, undisclosed agreements, the misappropriation of the social welfare system, the negligent behaviour of government functionaries, and various other avenues leading to the misallocation of public funds (Pavlović, 2018; Center for Democratic Transition, 2022).

According to data from the European Statistical Office (Eurostat), Serbia was the fourth poorest country in Europe in 2022. Additionally, every fourth employed person works in the public sector (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia) which effectively makes the state the largest individual employer in this region. The quoted data could easily serve as an additional facilitating factor for clientelistic-type patronage[3] in the Serbian context.

Particular concerns arise from reports of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights after observing the April 2022 elections. Their mission revealed "consistent pressure on public sector employees to support the current president and ruling coalition" (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2022). Furthermore, there were mentions of the "abuse of administrative resources by state and municipal actors" (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2022).

In this study, party patronage is operationally defined as the hiring of selected party members in the public sector, obliging them to contribute 5% of their monthly earnings to the party (referred to as the "voluntary contribution"). This type of practice was also established in CRTA's research (2020). From a legal standpoint, this arrangement can be construed as a form of trading political influence, constituting a corrupt activity punishable under Article 366 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia (2005) (*Krivični zakonik republike Srbije*). The clientelistic relationship between various actors involves the exchange of services, money, and support, making verification challenging. Indeed, the influence wielded by ruling political parties combined with the lack of documentary evidence complicates detecting and punishing perpetrators. One of the key indicators of corruption is the lifestyle of officials that significantly exceeds their actual monthly earnings (Center for Democratic Transition, 2022).

In Serbia, the local government system is nominally organized around principles of decentralisation and local autonomy, aimed at enhancing self-governance and ensuring efficient administration of public affairs. The local government structure includes municipalities, cities, and the

[3] This necessitates a cautious approach, as evidenced by cross-national studies, which indicate that attributing the extent of politicization solely to fluctuations in economic development lacks justification (Kitschelt & Kselman, 2013). Cultural determinants that shape this phenomenon, rendering it a perceived imperative and an inherent aspect of the collective mindset, hold comparable if not superior significance.

City of Belgrade as a unique territorial unit. Local authorities hold powers in areas such as urban planning, public utilities, education, and healthcare. The primary legal basis for the structure and operation of local government in Serbia is the Law on Local Self-Government (2018) (*Zakon o lokalnoj samoupravi*), which defines the competencies of local authorities and regulates the autonomy of local administrative units. Additional regulation is provided by the Law on Public Enterprises (2016) (*Zakon o javnim preduzećima*), which governs employment and management of public utility companies.

A key aspect of power dynamics in Serbian local government is the influence of political parties over public sector employment. Research indicates that political parties in Serbia, especially at the local level, frequently use short-term contracts to engage party members in the public sector. This practice enhances party control over individuals in these positions, often creating a system of patron-client relationships (Mujanović, 2018). Insider testimonies and reports from civil society organizations, such as the Center for Research, Transparency, and Accountability (CRTA), reveal that party loyalty is a common criterion for job security and career advancement in public administration (CRTA, 2020).

Party patronage in Serbian public administration has also been linked to practices of election fraud, as short-term employment can serve as an incentive for party members to participate in or overlook irregularities in electoral processes (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2017). Such practices undermine democratic processes and hinder the professionalization of Serbia's public sector, as positions are often filled based on loyalty rather than qualifications (Vuković, 2021).

Existing research underscores how clientelist networks operate within Serbia's social, economic, and political frameworks, highlighting the role of political parties in mediating employment through both public and private channels (Cvejić, Stanojević & Babović, 2016; Vuković, 2021). Studies by Cvejić, Stanojević and Babović (2016) provide comprehensive insights into the nature of clientelism in Serbia, demonstrating how political parties leverage public sector employment to maintain loyalty. Their research illustrates that parties often rely on employment as a means to build patron-client relationships, effectively controlling individuals through their access to public sector opportunities. Similarly, Vuković (2021) discusses the impact of such practices on the rule of law in Serbia, linking the prevalence of clientelist networks to weaknesses in democratic institutions and accountability.

CRTA (2020) offers further evidence of how local clientelist networks extend into social welfare systems, sometimes involving expectations of salary contributions to party funds, as revealed through testimonies from public sector employees. This organization also found that public utility companies typically engage lower-level staff willing to contribute a certain percentage of their salary to the incumbent party.

In the context of private employment, Pešić and Milošević (2021) explore the intersection of clientelism and the private security sector in Serbia, detailing how political parties facilitate employment in private companies as part of broader networks of influence. This practice is significant, as it illustrates the adaptability of patronage networks, which extend beyond traditional public sector employment to ensure party influence in various economic sectors.

Serbia's multiparty system, coupled with high levels of political polarization, has incentivized parties to maintain control over employment within the public sector and related industries. In the context of a captured state, Pavlović (2023) discusses how these dynamics erode democratic governance, noting that the use of clientelist strategies by political parties weakens accountability and reinforces authoritarian tendencies within the state apparatus. In studying the troubling state of democracy in post 5 October Serbia, Vladisavljević (2019) notes that party patronage is a phenomenon more prominent within hybrid regimes.

Tomić and Pavlović (2023) analyse high-level political appointments in Serbia, demonstrating that partisan patronage remains pervasive, enabling ruling parties to extract resources and mobilize electoral support. However, their study is based on only a few cases within Serbia.

Vuković and Stefanović (2024) examine local social welfare institutions in Serbia, illustrating how ruling parties install loyal cadres to build clientelist networks. They describe this phenomenon as normative dualism, in which informal patronage networks operate alongside formal institutions, redirecting them toward party interests.

In a firsthand account, Pavlović (2022) provides insights into the internal party mechanisms behind patronage, revealing informal quotas and pressures within state-owned enterprises. However, this too is a single case study.

Notably, none of these studies rely on an empirical dataset comparable to the one used in this paper, underscoring its unique contribution.

The Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) emerged as a breakaway faction from the Serbian National Renewal (SNO) on March 14, 1990, with Vuk Drašković elected as its president, a position he continues to hold today (Thomas, 1998). Until the year 2000, the SPO functioned as an opposition

political party, except for a brief period of participation in the so-called Government of National Unity in early 1999. Following the events of 5 October 2000, Drašković assumed the role of Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2003. After the 2008 elections, the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs was assigned to the SPO. During the 1990s, the SPO was characterized as an extremely right-wing, populist, and conservative party (Dragović-Soso, 2002). However, after 2000, the party distanced itself from its radical nationalist past and embraced liberal-democratic elements (Petrović & Međedović, 2017).

The political entity at the focal point of this research is the City Committee of SPO in Novi Sad, specifically in January 2015. After the fragmentation of the SPO in May 2017, this City Committee largely transitioned to the Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia (POKS). Subsequently, after POKS divided into two factions in December 2021, the committee aligned with the newly elected president, Vojislav Mihajlović. A sort of "Ariadne's thread" that constitutes the continuity of this City Committee is personified by Vladimir Jelić, who has been serving as the President of the City Committee since 2004 until the present day. Jelić's activities, along with those of his co-workers, have been associated with multiple criminal allegations reported by the media (B92, 2010; Vesti.rs, 2013; 021, 2015; Strika, 2017). Particularly noteworthy is the claim by Žika Gojković, president of the opposing POKS faction, asserting that Jelić, incidentally his godfather, faces approximately 20 criminal charges, primarily stemming from economic offences (Direktno, 2022).

In the context of Novi Sad local elections, the SPO played a dynamic role in various political coalitions, reflecting their evolving engagement within the political landscape and the augmentation of their political influence. During the examined period, the Serbian political system at the local level operated on a proportional basis, without a dominant political entity. Consequently, post-election coalitions became a necessity. Moreover, the appointment of directors for public and publicly owned utility companies was based on political considerations. In essence, these appointments represented a concretization of the division of political spoils. The preceding practice influenced by political parties persisted, even throughout the nominal transition to a system of open competitions for the selection of directors of public and publicly owned utility companies.

In the 2004 local elections, the SPO forged a coalition with the Reformists of Vojvodina[4]. However, despite the electoral threshold being set at

[4] The coalition "Clean Hands".

3%, the coalition failed to secure representation. Subsequently, during the 2008 local elections, the SPO entered into a coalition with the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV), leading to the establishment of the "Together for Vojvodina" coalition. This strategic partnership garnered 9.74% of the vote share, translating to nine council seats. Among these, the SPO acquired two seats, concurrently gaining managerial roles within the public utility company "Novi Sad Heating Plant".

In the subsequent 2012 local elections, the SPO once again aligned with the LSV, contributing to their success with 16.12% of the vote and capturing 15 council mandates. Notably, the SPO expanded its assembly representation, securing three council mandates[5] and augmenting its impact compared to the prior election cycle. Shortly following these elections, the SPO disengaged from their pre-election coalition partner, the LSV, and shifted its position to join a post-election coalition with the *Dinara Drina Dunav* movement (DDD). This new coalition established a joint council group that actively participated in the executive authority, with the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) forming its core. Noteworthy within the landscape, Tomislav Bokan, president of the DDD, emerged as a singular figure in Serbian politics, having been definitively convicted of trading political influence – an extraordinary distinction in the political sphere. In any case, the SPO has significantly increased its presence in the executive branch, securing the position of City Secretary for Education and director positions in the public utility companies "Waterworks and Sewerage", "Sanitation", and "Housing".

In subsequent local elections, specifically in 2016 and 2020, POKS participated on the electoral list of the SNS. The outcome was significant, as POKS secured three council mandates in 2016 and fortified its position with four council mandates in 2020, including the prestigious position of vice president. As for the executive branch, POKS was allocated the position of City Secretary for Family Welfare and a director position in the public utility company "Sanitation".

Unfortunately, there is no existing literature on the role of small parties in the functioning of broader coalitions in Serbia. However, studies suggest that small parties in Western countries play a significant role in coalition formation and governance (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014; Peters & Bianchi, 2023). Moreover, these parties often reflect the overall nature of their

[5] A council group within the City Assembly of Novi Sad can be constituted with a minimum of three councillors.

respective political alliances and can serve as decisive factors in their formation or dissolution. Research also indicates that small parties are more likely to exhibit pronounced clientelist tendencies, whereas larger parties tend to be more ideologically driven. In this context, examining political patronage within a small party in the Serbian political landscape appears to be a justified approach.

2. Method

The research design was structured by complementing the classical correlational paradigm with the SNA methodology. In this case, a correlational study is conducted to gather information about the presence, direction, and degree of association between two variables, as well as the relationships of one variable with a larger number of variables (Ristić, 1995). SNA is a set of research methods designed for analysing relational data that describe a network through patterns or regularities in the relationships among interacting units and the implications of these relationships (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). According to Mitchell (1969), the implications of these connections as a whole can be used to interpret the social behaviour of networked actors.

The source of data used was the electronic membership record of the previously mentioned parliamentary political entity. It was valid in January 2015. This matrix was obtained from an insider who insisted on anonymity to avoid discomfort and potential security threats.

The sample of respondents, or in SNA terminology, the "network boundary", consisted of 1,725 party members at that time. The data on who recommended whom for party membership (referred to as "membership recommendation") served as the informational basis for generating the network variable. The SNA convention for representing directed networks dictates that actors sending a relation are recorded in the rows, while actors receiving the relation are recorded in the columns of the matrix. Therefore, the "recommendations" are represented in the matrix rows, i.e., the members who recommend new members, while the enrolled members are in the columns, with mutually exclusive binary values in the cells indicating the presence/absence of the studied relationship. Thus, it is a directed, binary, one-mode network variable.

Based on this network, the following SNA vectors were generated and treated as independent variables: selected centrality measures (out-de-

gree[6] and betweenness),[7] core/periphery categorization,[8] and membership in the largest component.[9]

The most commonly used centrality measures for directed networks are in-degree, out-degree, in-closeness, out-closeness, and betweenness. In-degree was not calculated because multiple members cannot recommend the same member.

In general, different centrality measures are positively correlated. When they are not, something is peculiar about the studied network (Serodio, 2019). Since out-closeness is extremely highly negatively correlated with out-degree in this case (Appendix 1), this measure was not included in the analysis. Possible reasons for this are: 1. The key actor is connected to significant/active individuals. 2. The key actor is embedded in a cluster that is distant from the rest of the network (Serodio, 2019).

The following socio-demographic characteristics were also included as independent variables in the design: gender, age, educational level, urban or sub-

[6] A number of relationships (ties/edges) originating from a single point (node/vertex) within a directed network (Black, 1998). In the context of this research, out-degree denotes the aggregate count of newly affiliated members by an individual member. Individuals marked by a notably elevated out-degree possess the capacity to interact with a broader array of counterparts for information exchange or dissemination of their viewpoints. Therefore, individuals exhibiting a high out-degree are conventionally denoted as influential (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005).

[7] "Betweenness of actor A is defined as the number of shortest paths between all other pairs of points that traverse through A" (Newman, 2004, p. 11). Centralization is investigated through this method by quantifying the extent to which a specific actor serves as an intermediary among a greater number of other actors within the network (Cheng, 2006). This measure of centrality offers a more refined approach to assessing centrality (Degenne & Forse, 1999). An augmented betweenness value signifies an individual's ability to intercept or regulate the flow of information, resources, or influence across a component (Cheng, 2006).

[8] The core/periphery model includes two distinct actor classes: the cohesive core, comprising actors with robust interconnections among themselves, and a set of actors characterized by either loose ties to the cohesive core or a lack of cohesion with it (Borgatti & Everett, 2000).

[9] The components of the graph representing the network are subgraphs that are connected internally but not connected to each other. In instances where the graph incorporates one or more isolated actors ("isolates"), these actors are treated as separate components. In the context of directed graphs (in contrast to undirected ones), two distinct component types can be delineated. A weak component encompasses a collection of actors that exhibit connectivity irrespective of link direction. Conversely, a strong component necessitates a directed path linking actor A to actor B, establishing their presence within the same component (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). For the scope of this study, the analysis focused on weak components.

urban background, and religion (Orthodox/other). Despite these, additional independent variables were: membership duration (tenure years), type of membership recommendation (current member, former member, or voluntary), and the number of secure votes each party member guarantees (SVN).

The dependent variable was represented by the recorded data indicating whether or not the examined party members were employed in the public sector through patronage (Employed_TP).

After an initial descriptive exploration, the statistical analysis was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, using bivariate analysis, the presence of an association between each independent variable and the dependent variable was tested. In the second phase, independent variables that showed statistically significant relationships with the dependent variable were included in a binary logistic regression model with a dual purpose. First, to determine whether the observed bivariate relationship remains significant when applying a procedure of statistical control; and second, to determine the unique contribution of each predictor in explaining the variability of the criterion variable individually. To ensure that the applied regression model adequately fits the data, continuous predictors were dichotomized using medians,[10] and categorical predictors with more than two categories were recoded into dummy variables.

3. Results

3.1. Results of Descriptive (Univariate) Analysis

The network variable consists of 1,725 actors, representing members during the given period, interconnected by 1,153 relations (ties/edges). It is characterized by a relatively high degree of fragmentation. Specifically, it is composed of 573 weak components. Among these components, 420 represent isolates, constituting 24.3% of the entire actor pool. These are members who either voluntarily joined or were recommended by former members (deceased, resigned, or expelled), without actively recruiting new members. Furthermore, the network comprises 55 dyads (3.2% of the membership), 22 triads (1.3% of the membership), 12 tetrads (0.7%

[10] Unlike other continuous predictors that exhibit a skewed distribution significantly deviating from normality, the distribution of the age variable, while leptokurtic, does not display skewness (Appendix 2). Hence, in this scenario, the arithmetic mean was adopted as the foundation for the process of dichotomization/binarization.

of the membership), and 64 larger components (comprising 70.5% of the membership). The largest component encompasses 146 actors, representing 8.5% of the overall membership.

Table 1: *Is the member employed through the party?*

	Frequency	Share (%)
Not employed through the party	1,384	80.2
Employed through the party	341	19.8
Total	1,725	100

Source: Author.

Approximately one in five members is employed through party affiliation (Table 1).

Table 2: *Distribution of party-employed membership by extractive institutions*

Extractive institution	Frequency	Share (%)
Banca intesa	1	0.29
Limited Liability Company "Maintenance and Services"	25	7.33
"Elektrovojvodina"	2	0.59
City Administration	17	4.99
Public Utility Company "Sanitation"	37	10.85
Public Utility Company "City Greenery"	1	0.29
Public Utility Company "Novi Sad Heating Plant"	38	11.14
Public Utility Company "Parking Service"	3	0.88
Public Utility Company "Stan"	15	4.40
Public Utility Company "Market"	1	0.29
Public Utility Company "Waterworks and Sewerage"	109	31.96
Public Institution "Shelters"	2	0.59
Public Institution "Urbanism"	3	0.88
Sports and Business Centre of Vojvodina	1	0.29
Youth Cooperative "Unity"	8	2.35
Elementary and High Schools	21	6.16
"Maintenance and Services"	9	2.64

"Youth Theater"	2	0.59
Preschool Institution "Joyful Childhood"	7	2.05
Institute for City Construction	14	4.11
Institute for Occupational Health Care	9	2.64
Univerexport	1	0.29
Missing data	15	4.4

Source: Author.

The largest portion of the membership is engaged in employment at the Public Utility Company "Waterworks and Sewerage", accounting for 32% of party-affiliated employment. Additionally, a notable percentage of members hold positions within the Public Utility Companies "Novi Sad Heating Plant" and "Sanitation", constituting 11.1% and 10.8%, respectively (Table 2).

Table 3: *Gender*

	Frequency	Share (%)	City share (%)
Male	1,060	61.4	47,3
Female	665	38.6	52,7
Total	1,725	100	100

Source: Author.

The observed gender representation asymmetry (χ^2=91.7767, p<0.01) lends support to the assertion that involvement in politics within this party is predominantly construed as a male-oriented endeavour (Table 3).

Table 4: *Education*

	Frequency	Share (%)	City share (%)
Elementary education and lower	139	8.1	19.6
High school	1,123	65.1	53.1
Higher vocational education	84	4.9	6.8
Higher professional education and advanced academic degrees	379	22.0	20.2
Total	1,725	100	100

Source: Author.

The distribution of educational backgrounds within the party significantly diverges from the urban context (⊠³=175.43, p<0.01) (Table 4). Notably, there is a reduced representation of individuals possessing elementary or incomplete elementary education, coupled with an elevated representation of those with vocational high school education in comparison to the urban population (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia). It is pertinent to mention that the test of significance for distinctions among proportions does not exhibit statistical significance for the remaining categories.

Table 5: *Urban/suburban environment*

	Frequency	Share (%)	City share (%)
Urban	931	54.0	24.7
Suburban	794	46.0	75.3
Total	1,725	100	100

Source: Author.

As per the 2011 population census (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia), the urban part of this city, namely its city core, accounts for 75.32% of the population, while suburban settlements contribute 24.68%. Such pronounced asymmetry (χ^3= 788.06, p<0.01) strikingly indicates that the political party under the focus of this study has its main stronghold in rural areas (Table 5).

Table 6: *Religion*

	Frequency	Share (%)	City share (%)
Christian Orthodox	1,535	89.0	79.3
Others	190	11.0	20.7
Total	1,725	100	100

Source: Author.

The findings from the 2011 census (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia) divulge that the Christian Orthodox community in this city constitutes 79.27% of the population, while individuals adhering to other faiths comprise 20.73% (as depicted in Table 6). Consequently, non-Orthodox

individuals are noticeably underrepresented in contrast to the respective population by a margin of 50% (χ^3= 98.63, p<0.01).

Table 7: *Membership recommendation*

	Frequency	Share (%)
Voluntarily	379	22.0
Former member	184	10.7
Current member	1,162	67.3
Total	1,725	100

Source: Author.

A considerable majority, exceeding two-thirds of the membership, was enlisted by existing party members. Slightly over twenty percent joined voluntarily, while approximately one in ten were recruited by former members (who were either deceased, resigned, or expelled) (Table 7).

Table 8: *Core/periphery categorization*

	Frequency	Share (%)
Core	164	9.5
Periphery	1,561	90.5
Total	1,725	100

Source: Author.

Slightly below 10% of the membership pertains to the party core, with the remaining forming the periphery (Table 8).

Table 9: *Membership in the largest component*

	Frequency	Share (%)
Largest component	146	8.5
Others	1,579	91.5
Total	1,725	100

Source: Author.

The largest component encompasses 8.5% of the total membership (Table 9).

Table 10: *Age, tenure years, SVN, out-degree, betweenness – descriptions*

	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Interquartile range	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
Age	19	90	39	18	41,08	13,075
Membership Duration	0,011	24,844	3,14	3,057	4,757	5,427
SVN	0	106	0	9	5,23	9,094
Out-degree	0	38	0	0	0,67	2,44
Betweenness	0	62	0	0	0,65	3,72

Source: Author.

When examining the descriptive indicators of dispersion for continuous variables at the ratio level of measurement (such as time spent as a party member, number of secure votes, out-degree, and betweenness), it becomes apparent that there are significant individual variations within the party membership (Table 10).

3.2. Results of Bivariate Analysis

Table 11: *Gender X employed through the party – χ^3 test*

			Employed_TP		Total
			Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Gender	Female	Observed	842	218	1,060
		Expected	850.5	209.5	1,060
		%	79.4	20.6	100
	Male	Observed	542	123	665
		Expected	533.5	131.5	665
		%	81.5	18.5	100
Total		Observed	1,384	341	1,725
		Expected	1,384	341	1,725
		%	80.2	19.8	100

Source: Author.

There are no statistically significant gender differences in the frequency of party patronage (χ^3=1.104, p>0.05) (Table 11).

Table 12: *Urban/suburban environment X employed through the party – χ^3 test*

			Employed_TP		Total
			Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Urban/Suburban Environment	Suburban	Observed	763	168	931
		Expected	747	184	931
		%	82	18	100
	Urban	Observed	621	173	794
		Expected	637	157	794
		%	78.2	21.8	100
Total		Observed	1,384	341	1,725
		Expected	1,384	341	1,725
		%	80.2	19.8	100

Source: Author.

Members originating from the urban core exhibit a slightly elevated relative incidence of party patronage in comparison to their counterparts from suburban regions, albeit at a marginally significant level (χ^3=3.786, p=0.053, φ=0.047) (Table 12).

Table 13: *Religion X employed through the party – χ^3 test*

			Employed_TP		Total
			Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Religion	Others	Observed	148	42	190
		Expected	152.4	37.6	190
		%	77.9	22.1	100
	Orthodox	Observed	1,236	299	1,535
		Expected	1,231.6	303.4	1,535
		%	80,5	19,5	100
Total		Observed	1,384	341	1,725
		Expected	1,384	341	1,725
		%	80.2	19.8	100

Source: Author.

There are no statistically significant differences between Orthodox and non-Orthodox membership concerning the prevalence of party patronage (χ^3=0.735, p>0.05) (Table 13).

Table 14: *Core/periphery X Employed Through the Party – χ^3 test*

			Employed_TP		Total
			Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Core/ periphery	Periphery	Observed	1274	287	1,561
		Expected	1,252.4	308.6	1,561
		%	81.6	18.4	100
	Core	Observed	110	54	164
		Expected	131.6	32.4	164
		%	67.1	32.9	100
Total		Observed	1,384	341	1,725
		Expected	1,384	341	1,725
		%	80.2	19.8	100

Source: Author.

Members who belong to the party core exhibit a heightened occurrence of party patronage compared to members from the party periphery (χ^3=19.785, p<0.01, φ=0.107) (Table 14).

Table 15: *Largest component X employed through the party – χ^3 test*

			Employed_TP		Total
			Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Largest component	Others	Observed	1,249	330	1,579
		Expected	1,266.9	312.1	1,579
		%	79.1	20.9	100
	Largest compo-nent	Observed	135	11	146
		Expected	117.1	28.9	146
		%	92.5	7.5	100

Total	Observed	1,384	341	1,725
	Expected	1,384	341	1,725
	%	80.2	19.8	100

Source: Author.

Regarding the membership associated with the largest component, a decreased relative occurrence of party patronage is notable compared when juxtaposed with members who do not belong to that network structure (χ^3=15.051, p<0.01, φ=-0.093) (Table 15).

Table 16: *Educational qualification X employed through the party – χ^3 test*

			Employed_TP		Total
			Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Educational qualification	Elementary education and lower	Observed	121	18	139
		Expected	111.5	27.5	139
		%	87.1	12.9	100
	High school	Observed	937	186	1,123
		Expected	901	222	1,123
		%	83.4	16.6	100
	Higher vocational education	Observed	64	20	84
		Expected	67.4	16.6	84
		%	76.2	23.8	100
	Higher professional education	Observed	228	94	322
		Expected	258.3	63.7	322
		%	70.8	29.2	100
	Advanced academic degrees	Observed	34	23	57
		Expected	45.7	11.3	57
		%	59,6%	40,4%	100,0%
Total		Observed	1,384	341	1,725
		Expected	1,384	341	1,725
		%	80.2	19.8	100

Source: Author.

The likelihood of party patronage demonstrates a linear augmentation in correspondence with the hierarchy of educational attainment (χ^3=45.472, p<0.01, C=0.160) (Table 16).

Table 17: *Membership recommendation X employed through the party – χ^3 test*

			Employed_TP		Total
			Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Membership recommendation	Voluntarily	Observed	296	83	379
		Expected	304.1	74.9	379
		%	78.1	21.9	100
	Former member	Observed	136	48	184
		Expected	147.6	36.4	184
		%	73.9	26.1	100
	Current member	Observed	952	210	1,162
		Expected	932.3	229.7	1,162
		%	81.9	18.1	100
Total		Observed	1,384	341	1,725
		Expected	1,384	341	1,725
		%	80.2	19.8	100

Source: Author.

Members recruited by former members display a slightly increased relative occurrence of party patronage when contrasted with the remaining membership (χ^3=7.825, p<0.05, C=-0.020) (Table 17).

Table 18: *Age X employed through the party – description by groups*

Employed_TP		N	Mean	SD	Standard error of the mean
Age	Not employed through the party	1,384	41.67	13.824	.372
	Employed through the party	341	38.67	9.069	.491

Source: Author.

Younger members exhibit a more frequent incidence of party patronage compared to their older counterparts (t=3.814, p<0.01) (Table 18).

Table 19: *NSV X employed through the party; time spent as a party member X employed through the party; out-degree X employed through the party; betweenness X employed through the party – Mann-Whitney U test*

	Null hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of NSV is the same across categories of Employed_TP.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Tenure years is the same across categories of Employed_TP.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of Out-degree is the same across categories of Employed_TP.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis
4	The distribution of Betweenness is the same across categories of Employed_TP.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis

Source: Author.

Table 20: *SVN X employed through the party; time spent as a party member X employed through the party; out-degree X employed through the party; betweenness X employed through the party – median*

	SVN	Tenure years	Out-degree	Betweenness
Not employed through the party (median)	0.00	2.85	0.00	0.00
Employed through the party (median)	14.00	3.89	1.00	0.00

Source: Author.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test reveal that individuals possessing a greater accumulation of secure votes, longer durations as party members, and elevated values on centrality metrics (out-degree and betweenness) are more frequently engaged in party patronage (Tables 19 and 20).

3.3. Results of Multivariate Analysis (Binary logistic regression – Method = Enter)[11]

Table 21: *Multicollinearity diagnostics*

	Tolerance	VIF
Age	.913	1.095
Tenure years	.784	1.275
Educational qualification	.905	1.105
Suburban areas	.875	1.143
Recommendation_former member	.858	1.165
Recommendation_voluntarily	.680	1.471
SVN	.788	1.269
Out-degree	.414	2.415
Betweenness	.419	2.387
Core/periphery	.864	1.157
Largest component	.827	1.209

Source: Author.

The tolerance values for all predictors comfortably exceed 0.1, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) remains significantly below 5, implying the absence of multicollinearity within the model (Table 21).

Table 22: *Omnibus test of the model*

X^3	df	Sig.
579,122	11	.000

Source: Author.

The Omnibus test (χ^3) conducted for the specified binary logistic regression model yields a statistically significant result at a significance level of $p<0.01$ (Table 22).

[11] Stepwise models produce very similar results.

Table 23: *Model summary*

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R^2	Nagelkerke R^2
1123,221a	.285	.453

Source: Author.

Nagelkerke's pseudo coefficient of determination is calculated to be 0.453. This value is quite respectable, suggesting that the selected set of predictors holds utility in predicting the dependent variable (Table 23).

The Cok & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 represent two different ways of predicting the explained variance of the dependent variable and are interpreted similarly to R^2 in the context of multiple linear regression (Field, 2005). Nagelkerke R^2, serving as an adjusted variant of Cok & Snell R^2, spans the entire range between 0 and 1. Therefore, it is often preferred for interpretation. The R^2 statistic does not quantify model fit but indicates how useful the explaining variables are in predicting the criterion, and can be referred to as a measure of effect size (Bevick et al., 2005).

Table 24: *Hosmer & Lemeshow test*

X^3	df	Sig.
2.872	8	.942

Source: Author.

The Hosmer & Lemeshow test is not statistically significant, indicating that the model adequately fits the analysed data (Table 24).

Table 25: *Classification table*

Observed		Expected		
		Employed_TP		Correct %
		Not employed through the party	Employed through the party	
Employed_TP	Not employed through the party	1,288	76	94.5
	Employed through the party	1,766	162	48.2

Total %			85.2

Source: Author.

The overall classification accuracy is 85.2% (Table 25). The model demonstrates near-perfect predictiveness (94.5%) for respondents who are not employed through the party. Conversely, the classification of those employed through the party is quite imprecise – only around half of such respondents are correctly categorized. These findings suggest that some of the predictors included in the study are necessary but not always sufficient conditions for securing party patronage. Moreover, all network indicators are generated solely from one type of relation: membership recommendation. It seems plausible to assume that the nodes of the scrutinized network are connected through a wider array of social relationships, but this lies beyond the scope of the research exploration.

Table 26: *Variables in the equation*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Age	-.711	.163	18.969	1	.000	.491	.357	.676
Tenure years	.042	.166	.064	1	.800	1.043	.753	1.444
Educational qualification	.377	.163	5.346	1	.021	1.457	1.059	2.005
Suburban areas	-.106	.158	.451	1	.502	.899	.659	1.226
Recommendation_for member	.364	.251	2.099	1	.147	1.439	.880	2.354
Recommendation_voluntarily	-.009	.228	.002	1	.967	.991	.633	1.549
SVN	2.730	.229	141.687	1	.000	15.327	9.778	24.025
Out-degree	1.425	.242	34.657	1	.000	4.156	2.587	6.679
Betweenness	.277	.317	.763	1	.383	1.319	.708	2.457
Core/periphery	.617	.252	5.987	1	.014	1.854	1.131	3.039
Largest component	-1.341	.413	10.565	1	.001	.262	.117	.587
Constant	-3.596	.250	206.304	1	.000	.027		

Source: Author.

The predictors with statistically significant B coefficients at the $p<0.05$ level are the number of secure votes, out-degree, membership in the largest component, core/periphery categorization, age, and educational level (Table 26). However, in contrast to the other statistically significant B coefficients, membership in the largest component and age exhibit a negative association with the criterion. Notably, the number of secure votes and out-degree hold the highest unique contributions in elucidating the variability of the criterion. The duration of party membership, urban/rural environment, type of membership recommendation, and betweenness, which were found to be statistically significant in the bivariate analysis, do not retain their significance when controlling for other factors.

Exp(B) serves as a measure of the odds ratio, i.e., the likelihood of transitioning from one category of the dependent variable to another, while holding the results of other predictors constant. An odds ratio of 1 indicates equivalent probabilities for both outcomes, and it is considered not relevant. B represents the logarithm of the odds, hence Exp(B) = 1 corresponds to B = 0. Since the 95% confidence interval for Exp(B) excludes the value 1 for all statistically significant predictors, it can be inferred that the obtained results are reliable.

4. Discussion

Remarkably, a striking observation emerges when considering that one-fifth of the membership within the studied political entity is engaged through party patronage. Upon extrapolation, such a statistic implies a profound role of political parties as entities accountable for professional selection and recruitment, essentially mobilizing secure voter bases. When the extent of this phenomenon is coupled with the fact that patronage is positioned "deeper" in contrast to the primary centres of state power, it becomes challenging to disregard indications of entailing clientelist political patronage. The conspicuous divergence of the phenomenon – encompassing up to 22 different extractive institutions[12] – might suggest unauthorized collaboration with other prevailing political entities, plausibly under reciprocal premises.

[12] Two institutions pertain to the private sector, which speaks to the skill, systematicity, and comprehensiveness of resource extraction (Cvetičanin, Popovikj & Jovanović, 2019; Cvetičanin et al., 2021; Cvetičanin, Blizankovski & Krstić, 2022). Moreover, this is directly in line with the findings of Pešić and Milošević (2018).

A contributory factor to the relative fragmentation of the network variable lies in the fact that every tenth party member was recruited by a former member. As per insider accounts, the majority of these former members belong to the category of individuals who were expelled from the membership due to their refusal to contribute a "voluntary" donation, amounting to 5% of their monthly earnings.[13] The result of the bivariate analysis indicating that members recruited by former members are employed through the party more frequently does not manifest in the regression model. This could be attributed to the extended period that expelled members had at their disposal to cultivate and exploit personal clientelist networks. Furthermore, when combined with the information that every fifth member voluntarily joined the party from an isolated peripheral position, the degree of network variable fragmentation should be assessed as potentially overestimated.

The fact that the number of secure votes and out-degree are convincingly the most predictive factors for party patronage supports the thesis that this form of illicit activity was executed in accordance with technocratic principles. In essence, patronage likely functioned as a means for political parties to efficiently and effectively reward loyal supporters, generate supplementary financial resources, amplify voter backing, augment influence, and consolidate authority. Besides its inherent corruption, this practice also manifests discrimination against those dissenting from the political stance of the incumbent party. Plausibly, this practice could adversely affect democratic governance by directly undermining meritocracy, transparency, and accountability principles.

Although this political entity enjoyed significantly greater support within the male[14], Orthodox electorate from suburban areas, these attributes did not prove germane to the allocation of party patronage, even at the bivariate analysis level. These findings further reinforce the previously postulated proposition of a consistent technocratization of public resource extraction.

More than half of the members employed through the party have a lower educational status.[15] This is consistent with findings from CRTA (2020),

[13] This type of practice is also mentioned in CRTA's research (2020).

[14] In this context, Inglehart, Norris and Ronald (2003) propose a cultural interpretation. These scholars posit that a pivotal element revolves around the prevailing perception of suitable gender roles. This perception is a manifestation of wider societal values and cultural norms, which are contingent upon economic advancement and religious customs. It is anticipated that a more pronounced discrepancy in political engagement favouring men will manifest in traditional and economically less developed.

[15] Elementary and high school education.

which also found a predominance of lower educational status among those employed through party patronage. However, the results of this study suggest that this is a consequence of the educational composition of the party membership, which has a positively skewed distribution. Additionally, a positive association was found between educational status and party patronage, indicating that more educated party members are more likely to secure employment through the party. This seemingly inconsistent finding can be interpreted with insights provided by an insider source. Namely, according to insider's indices, this party frequently sponsored further education at private educational institutions for members employed through political patronage. This artificially inflated the differences in educational status between party-employed members and those who were not. This approach served a dual purpose: firstly, it augmented the total income derived from collecting "voluntary" contributions, given that higher educational status corresponds to increased earnings in public and public utility sectors; secondly, this approach, akin to the Procrustean bed mechanism, fostered an illusion of competence among the employed personnel.

It is possible to conjecture that membership in the largest component correlates with alternative forms of material and/or service incentives, while the selection of younger members under party patronage might be strategic in facilitating a more efficient and enduring process of subsequent exploitation.

In contrast to logistic regression, discernible disparities in the betweenness centrality indicator were noted at the bivariate level for members employed through the party. This discrepancy could be attributed to the nature of the party's structure. It is conceivable that, in the context of party patronage rewards, the emphasis was primarily on contribution in terms of securing votes. The strategic positioning within the party structure, as reflected by the betweenness indicator, could potentially wield influence over power distribution and the associated potential for participation in decision-making. However, such an explanation remains speculative, given that testing the presented hypothesis extends beyond the confines of this study.

It is interesting to note that the duration of party membership did not constitute a statistically significant predictor when age was held constant. This gives the impression that decision-makers did not take into account the factor of confirmed loyalty during recruitment for party patronage.

It is reasonable to assume that the already high pseudo coefficient of determination would be even higher if the model incorporated additional

variables, such as personal connections and nepotistic relations. Unfortunately, the acquisition of such data is feasible only through naturalistic methodologies, which renders them practically inaccessible. Furthermore, this study encounters several other noteworthy limitations. Firstly, the analysed data on party patronage are derived from the spanning 2008 to 2015. However, the scrutinized political entity remained actively engaged in local governance until 2023, consequently leading to a potential underestimation of the phenomenon of patronage in this context. Secondly, the issue of replicability arises. The specific data type under consideration is effectively inaccessible by the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, thereby impeding the subsequent validation of the derived findings. On the other hand, the uniqueness inherent in the analysed dataset amplifies the study's informative value. Lastly, as is frequently encountered in case studies, the intrinsic validity of this research is high, albeit at the expense of ecological validity. In other words, the obtained findings are reliable; their replicability and generalizability remain constrained. Specifically, the SPO is a small party that has not been relevant on the Serbian political scene for a long time,[16] making the generalizability of the findings somewhat questionable. Nevertheless, low replicability and generalizability are inherent limitations of all case study research designs. Despite these issues, research on leaked data possesses undeniable epistemological strength (e.g., Lee, 2024). This author emphasizes that such data are increasingly used, and we would never gain valuable insights without them, despite the obvious challenges. Moreover, research of this type has not previously been published, likely due to a lack of comprehensive data. Overall, the empirical literature on party-based employment in Serbia's public sector is quite scarce. In view of this, the study represents a noteworthy effort.

Based on the relevant literature (Lee, 2024; Caruana-Galizia & Caruana-Galizia, 2016), the key advantages and disadvantages of the applied leaked data approach have been identified.

One of its main advantages is access to otherwise unavailable data, as leaked datasets often contain information that researchers would not be able to obtain through conventional means. Furthermore, this approach helps uncover socially significant phenomena. As demonstrated by Caruana-Galizia & Caruana-Galizia (2016), data leaks can facilitate the analysis

[16] Nevertheless, at the local level, the SPO remained relevant from 2012 to 2016, winning more than 16% of the votes with its coalition partner and securing significant participation in the executive branch.

of tax fraud and other forms of economic manipulation that are of public interest. Finally, this approach enhances transparency and accountability, as research based on leaked data can expose unethical or illegal activities that would otherwise remain hidden.

However, this research approach also has certain drawbacks. First, there is a potential risk of violating relevant ethical codes. Researchers must strictly adhere to principles of privacy and confidentiality, and the use of leaked data may conflict with these principles, particularly if it pertains to identifiable individuals. To mitigate this concern, fully anonymized data is used in this case, ensuring that individuals' identities cannot be reconstructed from the prepared dataset. Additionally, the city committee that is the subject of analysis no longer exists, meaning that the potential societal benefits of this research design far outweigh any possible negative consequences.

Another concern is data reliability. As noted by Lee (2024), leaked data may be incomplete, altered, or deliberately distorted, potentially leading to inaccurate scientific conclusions. Furthermore, in certain jurisdictions, using such data may have legal repercussions for researchers—a prototypical example being Julian Assange. Finally, there is the risk of manipulation and selective leaking. Data may be released with hidden motives (e.g., political or economic interests), which could introduce bias into scientific analysis.

There is a growing consensus in political science that the use of leaked datasets can be justified under certain conditions. Michael (2015) outlines these conditions in his discussion of WikiLeaks, focusing on ethical, legal, and methodological concerns. This dataset meets these criteria: it is fully anonymized, ensuring no harm to individuals or groups, and this paper presents only aggregate statistical analysis (ethical condition). There are no legal risks, as the dataset was informal and unclaimed (legal condition). Methodologically, the data is complete, unbiased, and free from significant limitations, making it a valid source for research on party patronage in Serbia and beyond.

In short, the use of this dataset adheres to the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report, ensuring full respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, as discussed by Boustead and Herr (2020). Respect for persons is upheld through the use of fully anonymized data, ensuring that no individual's identity is disclosed. Beneficence is maintained by maximizing the societal value of the research. Justice is ensured by preventing any individuals or groups from bearing disproportionate harm while advancing

the understanding of party patronage for the broader benefit of society. The dataset is fully anonymized, preventing direct or indirect identification, and poses no risks to subjects or the now-defunct political party. Additionally, the final publication will present only aggregate statistical analysis, eliminating any possibility of re-identification. The data's provenance is explicitly documented, ensuring transparency and aligning with Boustead and Herr's ethical framework for the responsible use of sensitive political data.

5. Conclusion

It is plausible to assert that clientelism has evolved into a kind of modus operandi within political entities in this region, persisting for decades (Center for Democratic Transition, 2022). Consequently, the compilation of a comprehensive registry of public sector employees, the reassessment of their qualifications, and an examination of their employment trajectories emerge as imperatives. Addressing various forms of extractive mechanisms assumes paramount importance from societal and political standpoints. Otherwise, Serbia will remain entrenched at the economic periphery of Europe for a protracted period.

This investigation into party patronage in Serbia holds critical significance, especially given the scarcity of analogous data for other countries. In accordance with prevailing views in comparative politics, case studies are most valuable when they generate testable hypotheses and serve as platforms for innovative analytical methods. This study fulfils these criteria. In contrast to recent findings from Latin America (Panizza, Peters & Larraburu, 2022), which suggest that party patronage facilitates policy implementation, it is argued that in Serbia, this practice impedes public policy while favouring the political party. In doing so, new insights are shed on the research of Kopecký et al. (2012), who relied on interviews and content analysis. This is the first research to present empirical data on party patronage amenable to inferential statistical analysis. Although focused on a specific country, this paper lays the groundwork for future comparative investigations by advancing new hypotheses that make substantial contributions to the existing literature on party patronage. Further studies are warranted to corroborate these assertions.

Appendixes

Table 1: *Inter-correlations between centrality measures – Spearman's ρ*

			Out-degree	Out-closeness	Betweenness
Spearman's ρ	Out-degree	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.999**	.677**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000	.000
		N	1,725	1,725	1,725
	Out-closeness	Correlation Coefficient	-.999**	1.000	-.678**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000		,000
		N	1,725	1,725	1,725
	Betweenness	Correlation Coefficient	.677**	-.678**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	
		N	1,725	1,725	1,725

Source: Author

Table 2: *Age, tenure years, SVN, out-degree, betweenness – tests of distribution normality*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk			Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Age	0.084	1725	0	0.96	1725	0	0.679	0.059	-0,016	0.118
Tenure years	0.258	1725	0	0.679	1725	0	2.317	0.059	4.859	0.118
SVN	0.282	1725	0	0.62	1725	0	3.543	0.059	23.958	0.118
Out-degree	0.424	1725	0	0.295	1725	0	7.252	0.059	73.323	0.118
Betweenness	0.474	1725	0	0.167	1725	0	9.851	0.059	116.618	0.118

Source: Author

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PREDICTORS OF PARTY PATRONAGE: A CASE OF THE CITY COMMITTEE OF A SERBIAN PARLIAMENTARY POLITICAL ENTITY IN 2015

Summary

The subject of interest in this paper is empirical research on party patronage within the City Committee of a political party in Novi Sad, Serbia. The research design was structured by complementing the classical correlational paradigm with the social network analysis (SNA) methodology. The research problem is focused on the question whether party patronage can be predicted retrospectively using sociodemographic variables and variables derived from SNA. If so, to what extent and with what degree of precision? This is the first research to present empirical data on party patronage amenable to inferential statistical analysis. Although focused on a specific country, this paper lays the groundwork for future comparative investigations by advancing new hypotheses that make substantial contributions to the existing literature on party patronage. Descriptive statistics reveal that approximately one in five party members is employed through patronage. A network variable was generated, and centrality measures were calculated based on the data concerning recruitment into the party. Independent variables that exhibited statistically relevant associations with the indicator of party patronage through bivariate analysis were subsequently incorporated into a binary logistic regression model. Within this model, statistically significant B coefficients were observed for the following predictors: the number of secure votes, out-degree, membership in the largest component, core/periphery categorization, age, and educational level. In contrast to the other predictors, membership in the largest component and age demonstrate a negative association with the criterion. The obtained results substantiate the thesis of the technocratization of party pa-

tronage. The compilation of a comprehensive registry of public sector employees, the re-evaluation of their qualifications, and an investigation into their employment trajectories emerge as crucial imperatives. Otherwise, Serbia is poised to remain entrenched on the economic periphery of Europe for an extended period.

Keywords: *party patronage, extractive institutions, City Committee of a Serbian political party, social network analysis, binary logistic regression*

PREDIKTORI STRANAČKOG POKROVITELJSTVA: SLUČAJ GRADSKOG ODBORA SRPSKE PARLAMENTARNE POLITIČKE STRANKE U 2015. GODINI

Sažetak

Predmet interesa ovog rada empirijsko je istraživanje stranačkog pokroviteljstva unutar Gradskog odbora parlamentarne političke stranke u Novom Sadu, Srbija. Dizajn istraživanja strukturiran je nadopunjavanjem klasične korelacijske paradigme s metodologijom analize društvenih mreža (SNA). Problem istraživanja usmjeren je na pitanje može li se retrospektivno predvidjeti stranačko pokroviteljstvo s pomoću sociodemografskih varijabli i varijabli izvedenih iz SNA. Ako da, u kojoj mjeri i s kojim stupnjem preciznosti? Ovo je prvo istraživanje koje predstavlja empirijske podatke o stranačkom pokroviteljstvu podložne inferencijalnoj statističkoj analizi. Iako je usredotočen na konkretnu zemlju, ovaj rad postavlja temelje za buduća komparativna istraživanja iznošenjem novih hipoteza koje daju bitan doprinos postojećoj literaturi o stranačkom pokroviteljstvu. Deskriptivna statistika pokazuje da je otprilike svaki peti član stranke zaposlen putem stranačkog pokroviteljstva. Generirana je mrežna varijabla, a mjere centralnosti izračunate su na temelju podataka o regrutaciji u stranku. Nezavisne varijable koje su bivarijatnom analizom pokazale statistički relevantne povezanosti s indikatorom stranačkog pokroviteljstva naknadno su uključene u binarni logistički regresijski model. Unutar tog modela promatrani su statistički značajni B koeficijenti za sljedeće prediktore: broj sigurnih glasova, diplomski studij, članstvo u najvećoj komponenti, kategorizaciju jezgre/periferije, dob i razinu obrazovanja. Za razliku od ostalih prediktora, članstvo u najvećoj komponenti i dob pokazuju negativnu povezanost s kriterijem. Dobiveni rezultati potkrepljuju tezu o tehnokratizaciji stranačkog pokroviteljstva. Sastavljanje sveobuhvatnog registra zaposlenih u javnom sektoru, ponovna procjena

njihovih kvalifikacija i istraživanje njihovih putanja zapošljavanja nameću se kao ključni imperativi. U suprotnom, Srbija je spremna ostati ukorijenjena na gospodarskoj periferiji Europe na dulje vrijeme.

Ključne riječi: *stranačko pokroviteljstvo, ekstraktivne institucije, gradski odbor srpske političke stranke, analiza društvenih mreža, binarna logistička regresija*