Are Consociations Plagued by Political Clientelism?

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Abstract

Government by consensus between elites of different segments of society, and working relationships between representative elected and their constituents are key to consociational politics. In consociations, cooperation between political elites of dominant communities therefore is bound to represent interests of politically salient identity groups, making social interactions of the constituent identities politically significant. Yet, consociations usually vest political elites of formerly conflicting groups with responsibility to moderate their appeal to ethnic constituencies; a more realistic observation is that incumbents rather establish their credentials as legitimate representatives of their communities over all 'others'. This, as Lijphart noted, invites a degree of paternalism into the relations between representatives and those they represent because elites are more moderate and further moderate ethnic appeals to ensure stability of political system from which all profit.

Indeed, scholarship on power-sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia but also in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, South Tyrol offers considerable empirical evidence that political patronage occurs often as a result of identity-based mechanisms of political representation; some even claim that clientelism is engrained within the power-sharing institutions. Thus, whereas placing the elites of distinct, formerly conflicting groups into key positions is widely seen as central to success of postconflict political stability, incentives thus created often lead to protracted stand-off between antagonistic constituencies of citizenry.

Our paper focuses on six consociations that have been in place for a variant length of time: Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Lebanon, South Tyrol, Northern Ireland. It asks whether consociations are inclined to develop networks of political patronage, enticing democratically elected elites (who cooperate across the divide when in government while being prone to fierce intra-ethnic competitions during elections) to insulate their followers from one another, maintaining the perceptions of intergroup differences. We review voting patterns of the electorate; increasing consolidation of dominant parties; political longevity of elected representatives; and lack of permeability of electoral systems for the 'new' political parties decades following the consolidation of institutional frameworks, patterns of political allegiance and publics' expectation of citizen/elite acceptable for formally democratic politics.

Introduction and Objectives

Democratisation literature offers different – in part competing – visions on the relationship between the type of democratic political institutions and the quality of democracy after protracted identity based conflicts. The convention posits that the presence of a strong state is a necessary condition for the gradual consolidation of democratic governance, while uneven development of democratic institutions hampers democratic consolidation. Indeed, the notion that "no state, no democracy" put forward early on by Samuel Huntington (Huntington 1968) has raised to prominence the need to positively test the impact of expanded democratic franchise on the "overload of demands" (Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki 1975) and propensity for the crisis of governability (Mazzuca and Munck 2014).

In order to ensure better-quality democracy and the development of state capacity, professional bureaucracies ought to be in place to populate newly established democratic institutions and

non-partisan political elites should oversee the application of the rule of law even before the beginning of democratisation process (Geddes 1994; Waldner 1999). Different forms of corruption however challenge democratisation. S*tate capture* affects the fully structured state and exposes political institutions to high levels of influence by client networks, making it a form of "grand corruption" in which individuals influence public decision-making to obtain private gains, doing so at the expense of public interest (Gray and Kaufman 1998; Lalountas, Manolas, and Vavouras 2011; Fazekas and Tóth 2016). *Clientelist networks* allow individuals with access to public decision-making systems to influence the (application of) rules and policies with the purpose of securing continuous access to and gains from public goods for themselves and the members of social networks to which they are a part (Keefer 2007; Wang and Kolev 2018; Lancaster 1986; Shepsle and Weingast 1981).

Ultimately, the key to the quality of democracy is the representation of citizens' interests and preferences in decision-making and the elite perceptions of what their electorates expect (Dahl 1972; Miller and Stokes 1963). Although studies of political congruence abound focussing on substantive and descriptive representation,, most studies tend to focus on cases of consolidated established democracies, neglecting the cases of postconflict democratising states. The work focussing on "policy responsiveness" deals with elites' ability to take cues from electorates preferences (Andeweg, De Winter, and Dumont 2011) and inability to correctly assess voters preferences (Holmberg 1999). Past work on elite failure to deal with "politically charged" issues (Hedlund and Friesema 1972; Holmberg, Rothstein, and Nasiritousi 2009) is re-enforced by the recent research suggesting that societies marked by (perceptions of) inequality entice voters to follow rather than to question their political leadership (Norton and Ariely 2011; Cruces, Perez-Truglia, and Tetaz 2013; Mansbridge et al. 2010). Thus, socioeconomic inequalities, contestation of old political leadership and existing political institutions create conditions for establishing new norms of governance and shaping new forms of principle-agents interactions.

Overall, scholars see the quality of democracy to be dependent on a state's capacity to deliver good governance, thereby increasing the legitimacy of the new political institutions by redistributing social and economic resources and improving the flow of information between elites and societal actors (Mann 1984; Acemoglu and Robinson 2005; Grzymala-Busse 2008). Despite undermining state redistributive capacity and privileging the relationship between elites and their followers, whereby mutually beneficial – top-down and bottom-up – favours are exchanged for guarantees of stability in status, access to resources and influence, *political patronage* can help introduce some features of democracy into democratising society (O'Dwyer 2006; Kopecký and Scherlis 2008; Kristinsson 1996).

Societies transitioning from war-to-peace provide all the requirements for consolidation of patronal networks. This is particularly the case if the establishment of new sets of political institutions accompany the political transition. Consociational power-sharing has emerged as the dominant governance model for societies transitioning from violent conflict or other forms of deep division. Over the last two decades consociational rules brought the leaders of ethnic majorities and minorities together in governing institutions, in settings as diverse as Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Burundi, Kosovo, South Tyrol, Lebanon and Iraq.

In the majority of cases where consociation has been established, the primarily motivating factor has been to stop or pre-empt violence. By bringing groups together to share political space and to govern jointly, this is intended to facilitate the resolution of disputes by peaceful means. As such, a cooperative relationship between elites is expected to stabilize social interaction between antagonistic groups. It also creates a de facto supermajority government where the dominant 'segments' of a divided society each have a stake in the system. They

should thus be – by means of the effective representation of their agendas therein – genuinely interested in maintaining the stability of the system. Power-sharing arrangements feature prominently as avenues for conflict resolution and are widely perceived as democratic tools to ensure stability of fragmented societies (Nagle 2018).

Because of the key role political elites play in power-sharing, consociations may be particularly prone to political clientelism: They are premised both on the need for close affinity between elected representatives and their constituents and to establish government by consensus between the elites of different segments of a divided society. That is, leaders must be able to lead and followers must be able to follow for a consociation to work as anticipated. Consociations usually vest the political elites of formerly conflicting groups with responsibility to moderate their appeal to ethnic constituencies; yet, one may observe, incumbents instead seek to establish their credentials as legitimate representatives of their communities over all 'others,' that is, each party must convince their supporters that they are the "most robust defender of the cause" (Mitchell, Evans, and O'leary 2009). This, as Lijphart notes, invites a degree of paternalism into the relations between representatives and those they represent because elites tend to be more moderate than their followers.

Political clientelism flourishes where illiberal and undemocratic practices form a part of everyday interactions between elites and voters. With consociational rules usually established to stop and/or reverse group-based violence, elites are piloted into position to make public decisions for the benefit of their client networks in order to ensure the stability of the political system. Thus, as societies move from war-to-peace, citizen representation becomes ever more dependent on their representatives' presence in governments. Given that (ethnic) conflicts consolidate both the routes for interest representation outside of political institutions *and* project representatives into positions of power, consociational rules bringing peace after conflict are bound to benefit the established networks of patronage.

However, the focus on *identity based* representation under consociational rules unduly limits understanding of the nature of political competition in deeply divided societies: not only does it overlook the legacy of conflict over the political economy of the state, it also tends to view all social processes through the ethnic lens. Even during civic conflict the warring factions engage in violence against co-ethnics at some times, while engaging in pragmatic exchange with former adversaries at others (Andreas 2004; Mueller 2000). This means not only that there exists an informal social order in parallel to the formally established consociational politics (Bogaards 2019), the deep division of society into ethnic silos helps sustaining clientelist networks of political elites (Chabal and Daloz 1999).

In what follows, we present the contours of a research program that focuses on the relationship between consociation and political clientelism. Are consociations plagued by clientelism? If so, what are the consequences? We also consider how best to study the relationship between consociation and clientelism. What methodological techniques can help to establish causation? What sort of case selection is required? By testing if patronage politics are likely to emerge as a matter of consociational institutional design we are able to assess whether stability comes at cost of democracy's quality in divided places. We conclude by outlining some avenues for future inquiry on the relationship between consociation and clientelism.

Study in Context

We start from the observation that consociation places a high premium on the role of political elites. As a top-down approach to conflict regulation, it assumes a critical role for conflict group leaders: 'Elite cooperation is the primary distinguishing feature of consociational democracy' (Lijphart 1977). The argument is that 'it is the leaders, and in reality only them,

that have the possibility to change the terms of relationships in divided societies' (Hadenius and Karvonen, 2001: 42). In his earlier writings, Lijphart even went so far as to contend that the essential feature of consociationalism 'is not so much any particular institutional arrangement as the deliberate joint effort by the elites to stabilize the system' (Lijphart 1969, 213). There is an expectation in consociational theory that elites will pursue responsible leadership and that they will come together to co-govern due to a self-negating prophecy. There is a further expectation that elites are more moderate than their followers and that as a general rule 'good fences make good neighbours' (Lijphart 1969). Abiding by this adage can 'enhance the elites' potential of controlling their different constituencies, which strengthens their capacity of making deals with leaders from the other camps' (Hadenius and Karvonen 2001, 46). By following such logic, political stability should prevail.

Given that consociational regimes are meant to stabilise politics in deeply divided societies, they seek to mitigate ethnic tensions by allocating institutional representation to all major groups and ensuring their participation in decision-making processes. A consociation is marked by the concurrent adoption of four political institutions: a grand coalition where the leaders of the different segments govern jointly in the executive, proportional representation in the legislature, civil service, security forces and other key sites of political power, mutual veto rights by which segments are able to protect their vital interests, even if in a position of numerical minority, and segmental autonomy whereby segments have some degree of self-rule, either territorial or cultural in form (Lijphart 1977). Thus one could expect that rather than sponsor patron-client relations, consociational rules recognise and institutionalise the rules of the game that reflect both political elites' practices and their followers' preferences.

Although consociations can be designed in different ways, a notable distinction relates to whether the groups party to power-sharing and their amount of their share of power are named in advance of elections. In a corporate consociation, the power-sharing partners are predetermined according to ascriptive criteria (e.g., ethnicity, language, religion). By predetermining which groups ought to be assuaged, corporate rules incentivize group members to maintain their outward identity as a part of the groups included in power-sharing and thus ensure their on-going participation. In so doing, corporate power-sharing exercises a form social control over potential ethnic defectors, and presents the highest barriers for leavers and entrants to the power-sharing arrangement. In a liberal consociation, the institution framework 'rewards whatever salient political identities emerge in democratic elections, whether these are based on ethnic or religious groups, or on subgroup or transgroup identities' (McGarry and O'Leary 2007, 675). Yet, even under liberal rules, there is still often recourse to the identity-sets assumed to be entitled to a share of power. Whether they are named or not, it is often clear who the groups are who will fill the power-sharing roles.

The advance knowledge in the electorates about the elites representing them ensures political stability despite the potential volatility of the electoral cycles. In so doing, consociational rules craft vertical networks in order to reward followers' loyalty with opportunities for social, economic and political advancement. Patronal relations, that is, are generally considered as an exchange between patrons and clients. Stokes (2005) defines clientelism as 'the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?' Hicken (2011) argues that clientelism supports the dependence of citizens on the state and increases acceptance for the extant regime, making it difficult to move past the status quo. Scott (1972) frames it as an "instrumental friendship" between patron (an individual of high economic status who offers protections) and client (an individual of lower economic status who accepts the protection in exchange for general support). Kitschelt and Wilkinson meanwhile suggest that since patron-client relations are based on reciprocity - yet are not simultaneous - there always is the risk of 'opportunistic

defection' (2007, 7). Therefore, a certain degree of mutual trust between patron and client necessarily constitutes the relationship and undergirds the perceptions of stability.

Under consociational rules, political elites find themselves with a dual role – they cooperate across the inter-ethnic divide when in government but they contest elections on the basis of fierce intra-ethnic competition. Consociation's two-level game – strong intra-ethnic competition during elections and inter-ethnic brinkmanship the rest of the time – means that interest in good governance can fall by the wayside. As McEvoy (2017) demonstrates in the case of Northern Ireland, the legislative record leaves something to be desired. She points to "an underwhelming amount of legislation put forward by the executive," a lack of policy innovation, the cultivation of 'departmental silos' and a lack of a unified executive. Wilford (2010) speaks of "legislative famine" in the same case. Several reasons abound for this state of affairs, including the fact that the parties in Northern Ireland not only have contrasting perspective on the big constitutional questions, they also have very different ideological starting points (Sinn Féin adopts a socialist agenda whereas the DUP has a socially conservative and neo-liberal orientation) (McEvoy 2017). But part of the explanation also stems from the parties' preoccupation with 'carving up' power instead of sharing it. Nagle (Nagle 2015)(2015) points to a similar phenomenon in Lebanon where everything – including rubbish collection – is divvied up between sectarian elites. He calls this "pie-sharing, not power-sharing." According to Deets (2018), "What consociationalism often does is entrench the access of ethnonational/sectarian elites to state resources that then can be distributed by them and only by them."

If consociational rules undermine the open contestation of existing societal relations, the interactions between political and social elites will take place outside the framework of the rule of law, facilitating exchange of resources via informal channels and ensuring staying in power of those who can mete out the benefits (Hale 2006). This concerns is echoed in a wide and rich literature highlighting the negative impact of clientelism (Auyero 1999; Lemarchand 1972; Stokes et al. 2013; Flynn 1974; Wantchekon 2003). As Stokes summarises, clientelism 'slows economic development, vitiates democracy, and allows dictators to hold onto power longer than they otherwise would' (Stokes 2011, 650).

If the public is acquiescent to the political leadership already in place, it would do damage to the quality of consociational democracy even as it shores up its stability. This undermines the prospects for a state's greater responsiveness to societal needs; instead, the importance of politically relevant identities is foregrounded across the board of political, economic and social interactions between patrons and clients (Lindberg and Morrison 2008). This in turn makes access to state institutions only possible via the dedicated/designated patrons who act as gate-keepers, distributing benefits and granting access to rights as a result of personal, not objective, criteria (Lust 2009). Rather than a form of vertical accountability between leaders and voters, whereby parties are judged by the soundness of their policies, the viability of their party platforms, and their judicious use of public resources, where clientelist practices prevail, parties are instead judged by their ability to ensure personal favours and benefits (Lindberg 2003; Epstein 2009). This, as Lindberg (2003) argues, has an impact on horizontal accountability as politicians become less interested in fulfilling their legislative roles and in holding other parties accountable. Instead, their primary focus becomes ensuring their constituents' needs are met. The stability ensured by consociational rules therefore serves the groups large enough to guarantee their representation and as a result access to political office with a view of guaranteed say over redistribution of political and social resources.

That is, elites at the helm of clientelist networks are constantly playing a two-level game. Elections contested under consociational rules tend to reduce the likelihood of cross-identity political alliances. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, Hulsey (2010) argues

that rather than having one single party system, there are in fact three separate party systems, one for each of the three main ethnic communities. The 'winner' in each party system then goes on to form government with the 'winners' from the other systems, with the winners defined in ethnonational terms. One implication is that it can lead to in-group favouritism among publics competing for resources allocated to them by their elected representatives. As Piacentini (forthcoming) suggests, "By exploiting in their favour both ethnic power-sharing mechanisms and the poor economic conditions of their own countries, ethnonationalist parties can promise the electorate protection and security in exchange of political loyalty during elections, even from those 'not ideologically convinced.'" For Piacentini, it is the existence of 'ethno-clientelism' that explains the enduring appeal of ethnonationalist parties in Bosnia and Macedonia. While her focus is limited to these two cases, there may be a wider lesson here: there is a tendency to assume that it is the presence of consociational rules that explains the popularity of ethnonationalist parties in divided societies (e.g., a common critique of consociationalism is that it entrenches ethnic divisions), but Piacentini's findings suggest that we need to focus not only on *who* wins elections in consociational settings but also *how* they win elections and retain voter support over time.

Thus, our focus on *political clientelism* centres on elites availing of their position in and access to public decision-making processes to strategically and systematically organise 'their political and economic pursuits primarily around their personalised exchange of concrete rewards and punishment through chains of actual acquaintance, and not primarily around abstract, impersonal principles such as ideological belief or categorisation like economic class.' (Hale 2014, 9–10). Indeed, the scholarship on consociation in power-sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia but also in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, South Tyrol and elsewhere offers empirical evidence of political patronage alongside identity-based mechanisms of political representation; some even furnish examples of clientelism being engrained within power-sharing institutions (McCrudden and O'Leary 2013; Mauzy 2013).

However, rather than introduce clientelist relationship into an otherwise stable political system, consociational rules may build state institutions that recognise, protect and legitimise the rights of some groups to privileged access to the political economy of the state over the rights of others. It may also encourage political representatives to act on behalf of their client networks and support the interests of the segment of the people who have appointed them before any domestic authority instead of representing the interest of the whole electorate. Thus, societies prone to political patronage as a result of conflict are more likely to maintain rather than redress clientelism under consociational rules. We aim to investigate whether this is in fact the case.

Consociation and Clientelism: assessing the relationship

If indeed consociations consolidate clientelist relations in the societies they govern, what are the consequences? Whilst this trend in international peace- and state-building toward the sharing of power has seen peace and stability secured in a number of conflicts previously considered intractable, fundamental tensions remain in both the theory and practice of power-sharing. There is a range of challenges widely discussed in the literature on consociationalism some of which overlap with the issues raised in relation to political patronage and clientelism in particular; let us summarise these:

1) *governability:* the dominant line of inquiry in the literature on consociationalism questions whether it can deliver on its claim to support political stability. While the system itself endures over time, day-to-day politics can be more volatile. Executive formation is frequently a protracted affair in consociations as parties bargain for a share of power. This can often take months – even years – to agree to a cross-community coalition amenable to all sides. Once

formed, power-sharing coalitions also face several legislative challenges. Veto rights run the risk of thwarting the legislative agenda and bringing it to a standstill (Bieber 2005; McEvoy 2013). Even without vetoes, it is alleged that power-sharing may result in a dearth of policy innovation with parties only able to agree to lowest-common denominator strategies. With only a limited legislative agenda, consociation is also accused of overemphasizing constitutional issues, keeping ethnonationalism alive and bread and butter issues off the agenda (Hulsey 2010, 1139). Here, the focus is on the 'how', or the mechanics, of consociational governance.

2) *representation:* This line of inquiry relates to the effect of consociational institutions on the relationship between political representatives and the wider public. Political representatives, whose role it is to mediate between the state institutions and the citizenry, shape the preferences of their electorates by swaying citizens to see the democratic process as being tailored to meet the priorities of their respective segments of societies. Consociations, it is suggested, can be particularly vulnerable to elite strategies that engage in practices of political patronage to maintain the salience of identities for political participation and representation in order to stay in power (see also, Deets 2018). Here, the focus is on the 'who delivers' consociational governance.

3) *participation*: A more recent line of inquiry focuses on the 'whose interests count' in consociation (Agarin, McCulloch, and Murtagh 2018; Stojanović 2017). Power-sharing is thought to suffer from a 'selection bias' (Nagle 2016), whereby it seemingly sees all politics through an ethnic lens. While the ethnic divide may well be of heightened political salience in divided places, even in the most intractable conflicts, it is not the only political cleavage that matters (Horowitz 2000). Stability is therefore guaranteed by means of excluding some groups, including those groups who were neglected in the original design of power-sharing institutions, who remain on the side-lines of post-conflict politics, and who face major institutional constraints on their representation and participation in the power-sharing arrangement, in order to ensure the representation of others. Consociation may be democratic, but only for some, not all, groups posing the question of whose interests do consociational governments ultimately serve.

In short, consociations formally recognise the importance of prior networks of patronage, accept that parallel informal channels exist outside the office space of political decision making, incentivise representation by those in key position of clientelist networks and formalise the barriers for accessing decision making to those outside the established networks.

These lines of inquiry are interrelated, the central tensions in both stem, we suggest, from their emphasis on the *stability* at the expense of *quality of democracy*. This 'stability vs. quality' tension manifests in different ways, including in relation to the governability (do consociational and clientelist regimes govern effectively?); interest representation via informal channels (does a light policy load ensure clientelist regimes and consociational stability?); the exclusion of some groups from governing processes (how widely exclusive are clientelist politics and consociations?) These questions set the framework for our research puzzle, and we consider in turn how each aspect challenges opportunity for address challenges of clientelism once consociational rules are in place.

1) *institutional stickiness:* Power-sharing, it is said, suffers from 'institutional rigidity' – 'once power-sharing is agreed upon, it becomes difficult to make changes to the initial set-up' (Jung 2012, 490). Agreement to share power between the established elites and the likelihood that reforming existing arrangement would increase existing divisions makes institutional reforms difficult to push through. Moreover, as long as group identities are central for political mobilisation, consociational rules make it difficult to encourage the emergence of crosscutting cleavages. That is, such rules underline the relevance of conflict-generated identities for

political participation, freezing identity-focused political representation in the process. Such arrangements 'tend to rigidify conflicts and do not lend themselves to renegotiation. Most agree that consociational institutions, once established, are sticky' (Horowitz 2014, 12). That is, divided societies often find themselves "stuck" with power-sharing long after it has outlived its usefulness.

Why might this be the case? Clientelism also induces a form of 'institutional stickiness' in that it incentivizes political elites to maintain the status quo. A consociational arrangement introduced on top of such informal practices makes it difficult to reform both political institutions tasked with stopping violence and address the load on the system posed by pervasive nature of patronal politics. This dovetails with a long-standing debate as to whether consociation is intended to be a transitional device or a more permanent fixture of the institutional terrain in divided societies (Maphai 1996; Sisk 2013; McCulloch 2017). Political elites generally have no motivation to change the rules of the game under which they stand to benefit. This absence of motivation is all the more acute where the rules predetermine who will benefit, as in a corporate consociation. Political elites have been known to use state institutions to consolidate their own grandstanding, extend their ability to shape and use political structures for rent-seeking, and use deep-running interethnic and social cleavages to their advantage. In most cases, political elites have delivered a strong incentive for voters to fall into line by proactively working in their interests. Inevitably, whilst power-sharing systems put the representatives of some politically relevant groups on top, these can navigate the system to command control over their constituents and consolidate their positions as patrons of dependable, ethnically defined networks.

2) *expansion of informal institutions*: Clientelism is prone to the expansion of, and relies upon, informal institutions and practices, whether it takes the form of a so-called 'gentleman's agreement' or the *quid pro quo* relationship that exists between patron and client (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Green 2011; Deets 2018; Bogaards 2019). Consociational agreements usually involve political elites concluding deals behind-closed-doors and are typically careful to maintain the balance of power between major parties. However, there is some political competition at elections, but it spills over into rather than engages intergroup rhetoric; their outcomes are oftentimes predictable and the composition of governing coalitions and other intergroup agreements often reflects informal or so-called 'gentlemen's agreements' rather than voters' preferences.

The benefits of intergroup exchange are hedged by elites who have little incentive to reform power-sharing institutions. While social capital travels lightly across group boundaries at elite levels where individuals can exchange it for favours, general publics have but limited opportunities to exchange favours across group boundaries. Here, an array of economic, social and cultural domains function as a sets of network of individuals with high levels of 'social lubricant' to get things done and redistributing resources 'passed down' by the segmented elites. If popular trust in political institutions is vital for democracy's quality (Mishler and Rose 1997, 418), then the interpersonal relations determined by intragroup trust and alliances in the divided society (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984) will only feed into the networks of political patronage of the 'likes by the likes' (Wimmer 2002).

Such hierarchical networks facilitate the redistribution of scarce resources. The governments they constitute run the risk of being less accountable and transparent as they hold sway over social environments wrought by concerns over descriptive representation. As Fearon (1999) notes, 'using ethnicity as a criterion for the allocation of "pork" is a way for those who win elections to prevent losers from entering the winning coalition'. As parties seek to outcompete

each other (rhetorically at least) in defence of guaranteed institutional representation, access to economic opportunities for 'their' groups, and talking up the 'zero-sum game' of intergroup competition, these elite networks reconstitute themselves maintaining significance with little reference to electoral cycles.

3) *representing over governing:* A zero-sum view of political trade-offs compels elites to prioritise political representation, to ensure that their group has a fair 'slice of the pie'; this often comes at the expense of the legislative agenda and policy innovation. Power-sharing elites are less interested in *governing* and more interested in *representing*. They are concerned more with participation and representation their own communities than with 'government for all' policies. This then exacerbates the system's intrinsic focus on stability. As our recent research demonstrates, consociations consolidate structures for domination of 'significant' groups over those thought of as 'less significant' (Agarin, McCulloch, and Murtagh 2018; Byrne and McCulloch 2012). Where politics rely on ethnopolitical bargaining, gender and sexual minorities, micro-minorities, and members of groups identifying around non-ethnic labels all find it disproportionally difficult to mobilise around issues that cut across the politically salient group boundaries.

The democratisation literature tells us that visibility of all segments of society in politics positively impacts on the quality of policy proposals, intergroup dialogue, governance and democratic stability (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009). At the same time, the absence of some groups from politics often reflects the exclusive nature of the political process, affecting broader societal categories. The exclusiveness of politics is a challenge to stability in all political regimes, but it particularly affects the quality of democracy for divided societies. If the priority is to represent, elites have little incentive to ensure that those that fall outside the ambit of their own community are effectively represented; "Others" are thus destined to fall through the cracks (Agarin, McCulloch, and Murtagh 2018; Jusić and Stojanović 2015; Larin and Röggla 2019).

The exclusion of some groups from accessing public goods can result in the limited acceptance of shared interests, identities and institutions (Shepsle and Weingast 1981), can prevent conflict resolution by pitting the winners and losers of peacebuilding against one another (Belloni 2004; Bieber 2001), and can curtail the consolidation of democratic principles (Daskalovski 2004; Linde and Ekman 2003), all of which threatens to impede the war-to-peace transition. Thus consolidated, consociation may be able to deliver democratic stability, but often at the expense of democracy's quality, particularly for groups whose identities are not prominent in everyday politics. Studying the link between elites and citizens in consociations allows us to leverage broader comparisons of the dynamism in the linkages between clientelism, consociations and the quality of democracy.

Methods and Case Selection

Scholars of power-sharing offer considerable empirical evidence that political patronage occurs as a result of identity-based mechanisms for political representation, and some even claim that clientelism is engrained within consociation itself. Are consociations harder to reform because they are plagued by clientelism? How might this be confirmed? As a first step, there is the need to establish evidence for clientelistic practices in consociations. This can be accomplished by examining voting patterns in the electorate, including:

-a pattern of increasing consolidation of dominant parties over time
-incumbency trends and the political longevity of elected representatives

-a lack of permeability of the electoral system to 'new' political parties, particularly those of a non-ethnic persuasion
-voter turnout levels in represented and non-represented communities

We aim to explore the structural conditions for, inclination to engage with, and voter perceptions of patronal politics in consociational systems. Specifically, we seek to investigate i) the avenues available for political parties to build and sustain alliances that might be perceived as reflecting clientelist networks; ii) the political rationale for elected elites to initiate and expand their networks, and iii) citizens' participation and contribution to clientelist networks by engaging in exchanges of favours and foregoing criticism of political elites' practices.

We propose to do this through a comparative analysis of six long-standing consociations, sketching how the emphasis on 'peace and stability' in post-conflict divided societies consolidates elite domination, sponsors patronage politics, and can ultimately result in political clientelism. We investigate whether the interactions between the governing elites (in power over several electoral terms) are linked to key social and economic interests and, which as a result, culminate in the exclusion of large constituencies beyond the ethno-divide. Our selection of cases taps the relatively small universe of contemporary consociational regimes, of which there are only a dozen or so.

To test our assumption that consociations consolidate identity-based patronage networks, we identify contemporary deeply divided societies that have turned to consociation as a way to navigate their divisions. The previous experience with ethnopolitical violence is an important determining factor for the consolidation of the functional and meaningful networks of patronage along the identity group lines, despite relative similarity of income differential among the designated groups. However, we also account for the fact that consociations are often trapped in a group-focussed equilibrium where individuals struggle for economic and political change of their status by operating through extended personalised networks and acquaintances seeking inclusion and avoiding being excluded from accessing public goods. Where the number of politically relevant groups are easily translated into opportunities for interactions that might be deemed socially significant, shrinking the horizon to only those who one has met, or who is like oneself might offer a handy survival skill (Wang and Kolev 2018), therefore we include cases of consociations that have – among other criteria – ethnic quotas for guaranteed political representation.

Applying these criteria, leads us to the selection of six cases that share these core attributes: The six consociations we propose to study are: Lebanon (Taif 1989-, but also National Pact 1943-1975); South Tyrol (1972 Autonomy Statute, though its origins extend back to Gruber-de Gasperi 1946), Northern Ireland (Good Friday Agreement 1998), North Macedonia (Ohrid Agreement 2001), Burundi (Arusha Accords 2000), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Accords 1995). Over several decades, these constitutional frameworks have consolidated patterns of political allegiance and publics' expectation of citizen/elite relations acceptable in formally democratic politics.

All of these six cases have had some experience of identity-based *violence*: small-scale or isolated experiences with violence (South Tyrol, North Macedonia) whereas four have had protracted violent conflicts, with high fatality rates (Burundi, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Lebanon, Northern Ireland). In terms of economic development, it is also worth noting that in each case, there is only *minimal income differential* between groups. However, there is considerable evidence that members of societies continue to tap their personalised ethnicity based networks, chains of acquaintance and seek personalized exchange to come-by individually rather than as society as a whole. The number of *significant groups* has an impact on levels of clientelism. In

Lebanon, eighteen different sects are recognised, though much of the consociational framework is geared towards the accommodation of three dominant groups (Maronite Christians, Shia Muslims, and Sunni Muslims). Bosnia recognizes three 'constituent peoples' (Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs); South Tyrol also has three dominant groups (Italians, Germans, Ladins). Burundi, Northern Ireland and North Macedonia have bipolar divides (Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, Irish nationalists and British unionists in Northern Ireland, and Macedonians and Albanians in North Macedonia). Limiting interactions to the small pool of potential partners is particularly expressed as the levels of ethnic fractionalisation rise (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002).

Further, and beyond the design of the consociational framework, we note that each of our cases has a *relatively small population size* (511,000 in South Tyrol, 1.8 million in Northern Ireland, 2.1 million in Macedonia, 3.5 million in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4.1 in Lebanon, 10.5 in Burundi). All are located regions where domestic ethnopolitical mobilisation is keenly observed by a neighbouring state with a close historic and/or cultural ties with (at least) one significant group: Catholics in Northern Ireland, German speakers in South Tyrol, Albanians in North Macedonia, Serbs and Croats in BiH, Shia in Lebanon and Hutus & Tutsis in Burundi all have 'special relations; with one of the neighbouring states claiming to be their patron. Population size and access to resources outside one's own state are acknowledged to bring considerably larger positive pay-offs for the general wellbeing and development, in the light of experience (and memory) of group based conflicts negatively reflected in propensity to seek cooperation with co-citizens.

The six consociations are similar in some respects, but differ in others: four are corporate consociations (South Tyrol, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Burundi) while two have more liberal institutions (Northern Ireland, North Macedonia). Two are regional consociations embedded in larger state structures (Northern Ireland, South Tyrol) and four are stand-alone consociations (Burundi, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, North Macedonia). Two are classified as 'free' according to Freedom House (2017) (Northern Ireland, South Tyrol) whereas four are categorized as 'partly free' (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, North Macedonia, Burundi). All have experienced high-profile political scandals in recent years but only two have seen widespread citizen protests erupt in response (Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia), while citizen protested over the failure of state to deliver some of the services have emerged in Lebanon (over garbage collection) and over limited political accountability of elites to electorates (South Tyrol, Northern Ireland, Burundi).

Although there are cases of rent-seeking behaviour by political elites in the recent history for each of the case studies, there are numerous further examples that serve to indicate how political clientelism has been tacitly tolerated. This is unsurprising, given that the weak institutions of post-conflict societies provide an 'ideal breeding ground' for the misuse of public office (Haass and Ottmann 2017). Where relations between identity groups are divisive, 'finger-pointing and buck-passing' between political actors provides further opportunities for graft and private gain within a system that lacks in sufficient accountability (Charron 2009, 592). The abuse of public office, 'state capture', represents both the inefficiency of the political institutions in delivering the good to its citizens, as well as 'pork barrel politics' and where legislatures have small number of representatives there would appear to be even more well-placed to ensure access of their followers to scarce resources of the state and consolidate their gate keeper status (Svensson 2005, 20). In each of the case studies, the significant financial benefits to private actors as a result of the misuse of public expenditure is indicative of institutional failures in implementing a transparent and accountable structures of governance. Yet, this accountability has only been called into question when the profits of corruption have not been shared across the wider society, but limited to politics actors own networks –

signalling a breach of trust by failing to protect the interests and share the rewards across 'one's own' people (Orjuela 2014, 758).

In South Tyrol, the 2012 SEL scandal concerned the abuse of tenders for the renewable energy. An energy company, SEL was established and 93.8 per cent owned by the province of Bolzano - leading many to question the conflict of interest of the province acting as both a regulator and a participant in competitions over hydroelectric concessions (Battistella 2012). Ultimately, government office has awarded twelve concessions to the South Tyrol power plants with an estimated value of over one billion euros providing significant commissions for those involved (Helfer 2014). The energy minister, Michl Laimer, of the leading German speaking party SVP, and the SEL director, Maximilian Rainer, were both sentenced for their roles in tampering with tenders in order to ensure that SEL would win all of the concessions – resulting in several hundred million euros in damages paid to other competitors (Tessadri 2013). Representatives of the Green Party argued against Laimer's position as the sole scapegoat for the scandal, calling for the resignation of the Governor of South Tyrol - Luis Durnwalder, also of the SVP – citing that the state government were not only aware of the tampering but had deliberately implemented vague legislation on energy competitions in order to allow the manipulation to take place (Heiss et al. 2012). As a result, Durnwalder – the longest serving governor of South Tyrol (1989-2014) – stepped down from his position acknowledging political responsibility in the scheme (Scantamburlo and Pallaver 2014, 495).

In Northern Ireland, the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) was rolled out in 2012, encouraging local businesses and non-domestic users to switch to environmentally-friendly fuels such as biomass or woodchip (Macauley 2017). The scheme promised to cover the cost of changing their heating systems and of the fuel that they used – instead it was used to pay a higher subsidy to claimants, allowing them to profit from their fuel costs. Some of the claimants took advantage of the scheme by heating unused sheds for twenty-four hours a day in order to maximise their profits (BBC News 2017). Over four hundred private companies and organisations had received payments totalling between £5,000 and over £500,000 as a result (Manley 2017). The Department for the Economy has estimated that the RHI scheme will cost the Northern Ireland budget just under £500 million over a twenty-year period (BBC News 2016). Despite issues that it was not clearly stipulated that the available funds were only to be used to replace old heating sources – and no upper limit had been set on the amount that businesses could claim under the scheme – the DUP leader Arlene Foster refused to allow an inquiry into the scheme to take place (Bush 2017). This triggered the collapse of the power-sharing government when Sinn Féin Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, resigned in protest at Foster's refusal. The political crisis served to highlight the continued fragility of power-sharing in Northern Ireland, shattering perceptions that the arrangement would become naturally embedded after a period of stability (Birrell and Heenan 2017, 476).

In 2015 and 2016 Lebanon saw a wave of protests as a consequence of the Beirut's garbage crisis, which made visible governance failures on the part of the Lebanese state. The campaign #YouStink[1], an unusual cross-sectarian mobilisation of the population (Deets 2018), was followed by the creation of Beirut Madinati (Beirut is my city), an electoral list of citizens not part of the 'corrupted' status quo. The garbage crisis started already back in 1994, when the Hariri government gave Sukleen, a company headed by one of the Prime Minister's Saudi business partners, the contract to collect Beirut's garbage. Over the years new waste management companies emerged and, given their desire of being part of the lucrative contracts, in 2014 the government foresaw a plan for collecting the city's garbage. The plan eventually did not pass into law and, as Sukleen no longer had a contract for collecting Beirut's garbage,

[1] '*Lebanon cleans up its act as 'You Stink' operation begins'* https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/lebanon-cleans-its-act-you-stink-operation-begins-702874888

it stopped collecting refuse. As the garbage continued to mount, civil society groups and organizations such as #YouStink and then Beirut Madinati point out the failure of a state characterised by rampant corruption and clientelism (Karam 2017), offering an alternative to the sectarian-based Lebanese political system. Eventually, however, their attempts to subvert the sectarian status quo did not work, and Beirut Madinati failed to succeed in the election: 'it could not overcome the deep sectarian networks, the fears of individuals of acting outside sect, and the difficulties of the electoral system (Deets 2018, 17).

Corruption, clientelism and fragmentation are also a feature of Macedonia's political landscape. In 2016 the country experienced a deep political and economic crisis, brought on by a 'wiretapping scandal'. Zoran Zaev, leader of the main Macedonian opposition party (SDSM) accused the government led by Nikola Gruevski (VMRO-DPMNE) of the illegal phone tapping of up to 20,000 people over a four-year period. The so-called 'bombs' revealed that the Prime Minister and several of his allies (ministers and MPs) had strong and consistent control over most of the public institutions[2], that high-ranking politicians and officials were involved in electoral fraud, criminal damage, police brutality and even attempts to cover up a murder. Gruevski denied the allegations, even though some of his top ministers, as well as his intelligence chief, resigned in May 2017. After a decision by the President Gjorgje Ivanov to stop the investigation against Gruevski and the other politicians involved in the scandal, people took the streets of Skopje initiating the "Colourful Revolution". This was not the first experience with corruption, as the controversial architectural project 'Skopje 2014' reminds us. Launched by its main creator and investor: the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (i.e. its ruling conservative party VMRO-DPMNE), the project raised questions about historical revisionism and the domestic ethnic tensions, to the 'name dispute' with Greece, yet these were mostly directed towards the possible financial corruption behind the project itself - which cost dearly for a country with around one third of the population unemployed. The expense was, in fact, estimated between 80 to 200 million euros[3]. If anything, the wiretapping scandal was followed by the 'Colourful Revolution', making clear that the country's polarised political system, lack of separation between state and ruling parties as well as their authoritarian tendencies[4], inaccuracy of voters list and vote bribing and, above all, widespread corruption.

The examples of corruption scandals in consociations might suggest that it is consociation that cultivates an environment in which 'a democratic façade covers authoritarian rules' (Linz 2000), given that the outcomes of political competition remain stable over time (i.e., it is difficult to 'throw the rascals out' in a consociation) and limits incentives for institutional reform. Rather than keeping elites on their toes, elections are used to rally support for their candidature as well as to promote the networks associated with their political parties. The longevity of political leadership and their uncontested position in the segmented political system therefore seem to undermine the rule of law in virtually the same way as uncontested leadership does in non-democratic systems.

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[2] https://www.politico.eu/article/wire-tapping-scandal-hits-macedonia/

[3] Jasna Koteska, "Troubles with History: Skopje 2014," *Art Margins [Online],* December 29, 2011. http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/2-articles/655-troubles-with-history-skopje-2014; Shishovski J. *et al*, *Check and Balances in the Republic of Macedonia. How to make them work*? (Skopje: EPI Working Papers, 2016), 5

[4] Ivo Bosilkov, 'Overcoming their own authoritarianism for immunity from the populist virus' http://respublica.edu.mk/blog/2017-11-13-09-01-08 '*Xhaferi: Gruevski's request for immunity to be waived by the Speaker of the Assembly'* https://www.alsat-m.tv/xhaferi-gruevski-kerkesen-per-heqje-te-imunitetit-ta-bej-tek-kryetari-i-kuvendit/

Further Research

With the empirical record established, there is then a need to assessing the consequences of clientelism on consociational consolidation, it would be important to compare the empirical record and the impact of clientelism on the stability of the institutional design that prevents institutional reform. One of the key questions in this regard is whether clientelism maps onto existing cleavages or do the institutions simply uphold patronage politics that previously have ran along the ethnic lines?

In order to study the extent of so-called 'pork-barrel politics' in consociations, we take a comparative approach, which takes seriously the two-fold competitive nature of the political process in multiethnic societies operating under consociational settings (i.e., the two-level game). This can be done in three stages.

The *first stage* adopts an institutional lens to examine different institutional accommodation of existing clientelist networks in consociations, paying particular attention to the liberal-corporate distinction. How do these different institutional manifestations incentivize social interactions that are not per se political?

The *second stage* hones in on the actions of political parties to assess fluctuations in the composition of political elites. In so doing, we can identify cycles of interaction between the elected representatives and their electorates. Do they encourage parties to treat their voters as clients? Do voters see parties as their patrons? This will allow us to isolate the endogenous factors related to patronage from exogenous factors that maintain stability of consociational politics overall despite internal contestations (e.g., international pressures and incentives).

The *third stage* turns to the views of citizens in consociations. Here we assess the perspectives of voters and ask, to quote Hulsey (2010), "why did they vote for those guys again?" What makes voters return to the dominant parties time and again, even in the face of high-level corruption scandals and failures to deliver on public services and economic opportunities? Even after seeming critical junctures, such as widespread, cross-community protests at the state of politics, as in the protest and plenum movement in Bosnia & Herzegovina, the Colourful Revolution in Macedonia, and the YouStink protests in Lebanon, why do dominant parties remain dominant? How do voters perceive the quality of democracy in consociations?

By examining these three levels of analysis (institutions, parties, voters) we can assess the perceptions of trade-offs between democratic stability and democratic quality that encourages the elites in consociations to foster networks of patronage while enticing followers to accept the existing practices of clientelism. On both sides, we can then examine need versus greed corruption that is a part of politics under consociational rules: do consociations accommodate patronal politics to make democracy work under conditions of extreme uncertainty, or do they foster uncertainty in order to make the system work to their own advantage?

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