

**Political Accountability or Political Evasion? An Examination of Politician-Voter Linkages
in Hybrid Regimes**

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Paper prepared for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems

August 11, 2014

One of the main aims of representative governance surrounds the ability of citizens to hold their elected leaders accountable for their actions. In principle, this is only possible when voters know and comprehend the policy positions of their elected leaders, which of course requires political parties and politicians to be transparent and consistent in staking out issue positions. One particular way of examining this fundamental function of democracy is through politician-voter linkages (Kitschelt 2000). The field of comparative politics acknowledges that linkages form between politicians and voters both through the issues and policy positions taken as well as through the exchange of goods, services, and benefits for political support. As such linkages based on policy and issue stances are less corruptible and provide voters with a larger role in democratic governance, much recent focus has been devoted to understanding under what circumstances such linkages develop. The bulk of this scholarship has focused on this process generally, noting differences among levels of political and economic development (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Kitschelt and Kselman 2013), while other studies have suggested that substantively different linkages emerge in developing states (Lupu and Riedl 2013; Bleck and van de Walle 2013).

All of these studies have viewed all states on a spectrum of democracy, occupying spaces ranging from developing to developed. Yet recently, comparative politics scholars have

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recognized that such a linear conceptualization is not entirely accurate, as many contemporary states do not fit on such a spectrum. While elections are increasingly held worldwide, scholars acknowledge that many cannot be considered democratic, and are held on an uneven playing field (Levitsky and Way 2010; Schedler 2006). Instead of treating all such states as moving towards democracy, comparative scholarship needs to study such states for what they are: non-democratic hybrid regimes, or states that contain regular democratic institutions like elections that are marred by authoritarian practices. Given this reality, I seek to examine politician-voter linkages under such conditions, asking what affects the emergence and development of such linkages in hybrid regimes?

To do this, I first consider the recent literature both on politician voter linkages, as well as on the political development of elections in hybrid regimes. From there, I develop some initial theoretical expectations based on previous scholarship and pose three hypotheses based on these expectations. I then conduct some preliminary quantitative analyses using many data sources, including the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (Kitschelt 2013) and the Comparative Manifestos Project (Volkens et al 2013). From there, I discuss the results and consider the implications from them. Finally, I consider any policy suggestions as well as the future directions of this research.

Previous Scholarship

When considering the general purpose of elections and political accountability, it rests on voters and their ability to utilize this position of scrutiny of the policy positions and actions of elected officials (Dahl 1971; Easton 1965). Politicians do not, however, usually occupy such policy positions in a vacuum, instead political parties generally are expected to serve the purpose of an informational shortcut both for voters and politicians. Each party ultimately resolves to

hold unified positions on basic issues, which allows politicians to join the party that best aligns with their issue preferences, and eases the decision-making process for voters by providing them with helpful shortcuts (parties and their unified platforms) in evaluating politicians (Aldrich 1995). This interest aggregation represents the most basic level of politician-voter linkage. Politician-voter linkages generally refer to the connection forged between a politician and a voter, and imply a relationship between the two (Kitschelt 2000). By relationship, I mean that politician-voter linkages entail the participation of each side, the politician and the voter. For the politician, this participation means the promised issue positions and policy behavior that are meant to appeal to certain voters; for the voter, this requires them to distinguish among politicians and select the one they expect to best serve their interests in government. This relationship also implies accountability, because in principle, it requires politicians to follow through on such promises if they wish to remain in power, and enables voters with the power to reject or remove such politicians if such promises are unfulfilled.

Thus we typically consider such promises as policy-based, or programmatic, as Kitschelt (2000) calls such linkages. *Programmatic linkages* refer to clear, consistent policy positions on key issues in society, and imply that politicians will pursue such policies if elected into office. This linkage thus connects the voter to the politician by mutual support for the policy positions, along with voter expectations that politicians deliver on such policies. Programmatic linkages are more prominently highlighted in well-developed democratic societies, but as Kitschelt (2000) and others (cf. Stokes 2005) acknowledge, relationships and linkages between politicians and voters are not always policy-based. Instead, they may revolve around the exchange of goods, services and benefits for political support, better known as *clientelistic linkages*. These linkages still require a follow-through on both sides, with voters needing to cast their vote in support, and

politicians having to provide the actual promised goods. Thus both programmatic and clientelistic linkages both imply an agreement between politicians and voters based on certain promised outcomes; the main difference, aside from the obvious distinction regarding on what the agreement is based, is that a programmatic outcome, a pursued policy, would affect all citizens regardless of their previous political support, while a clientelistic outcome is only distributed to those who actually voted² (Kitschelt 2000).

Given this distinction between the two linkages, more recent scholarship has sought to understand the presence and development of each type. Both economic and political development have been both theorized and found to affect politician-voter linkages. Political development here refers to experience holding elections, with states that have held regular elections for a longer period of time are more likely to witness programmatic linkages (Keefer 2007; Kitschelt 2013). This relationship is often attributed to the higher degree of political party volatility in younger, less experienced democracies, which makes it difficult for parties to form and sustain coherent policy positions; such inexperienced parties may also feel they are less able to deliver policy outcomes, and therefore are less likely to take clear positions on policy issues. Conversely, the less electoral experience a state has, the more likely they are to build and sustain clientelistic linkages. This relationship is clearly related to the underdevelopment of parties in new democracies, who are again perhaps less motivated to develop clear policy agendas, but still need to find a way to attract voter support.

Economic development, which has also been found to influence the emergence of both programmatic and clientelistic linkages, refers to general size and income of a state. States with

² For Kitschelt (2000) this means that a politician who campaigns on a policy of increased public goods provision or spending is not engaging in clientelism because the product, better social welfare programs or public works projects, would be redeemable by all.

larger, more developed global economies that maintain a higher citizen income are likely to witness a shift toward increasingly programmatic linkages (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Kitschelt and Kselman 2013). Relatedly, when citizen incomes are on average lower in a state with a smaller economy, this makes clientelistic linkages more likely to be used by politicians. Citizens under such circumstances are more receptive to material or goods provision. However, Kitschelt and Kselman (2013) note a curvilinear relationship between economic development and clientelistic linkages; a state needs a baseline level of economic development to have the means to engage in clientelism at all. Thus in states with a meager-sized economy, clientelistic linkages are not likely as politicians cannot actually provide substantial goods or services for voter support.

Beyond these basic relationships, there remain many questions regarding the emergence of politician-voter linkages. Considering the importance of political and democratic development, I now turn to the burgeoning literature on elections in non-democratic states, and in particular in hybrid regimes, in comparative politics. As the presence of elections does not demonstrate or even guarantee the existence of democracy, more scholarship acknowledges this and seeks to examine and understand elections in both autocratic states as well as in hybrid regimes. While elections in autocratic states are often constrained to one political party or may limit the number of candidates on the ballot (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Hyde and Martinov 2011), elections in hybrid regimes typically allow competition, but still witness authoritarian practices by elites including electoral malpractice and an unfair electoral playing field (Schedler 2006; Levitsky and Way 2010). While hybrid regimes often witness elections with varying degrees of competition, the elections nonetheless “exist and are meaningful, but (are) systematically violated in favor of the incumbent” (Levitsky and Way 2010:19). Yet elections

are also often tools that ensure regime survival in hybrid and authoritarian regimes (Schedler 2002). Despite these realities, as elections, they still require popular participation and voter support, even given the uneven playing field, with both incumbents and opposition figures still likely to appeal to voters, although the amount and content may vary depending on the conditions of the election.

Much of this work highlights the importance of economic concerns, patronage, and clientelism³ as tools to motivate voters to turn out, but none has systematically sought to understand how the conditions of a state and of an election may influence the behavior of politicians. This also reflects claims that in developing democracies with underdeveloped party systems, parties and candidates are expected to resort to clientelism or personalistic appeals in lieu of stronger programmatic platforms or well-developed cleavages (Hagopian 2007). Moreover these studies, both on non-democracies but also on developing democratic states, often fail to consider variation in a politician's appeals or reliance on clientelistic behavior in the context of the election. While incumbents in non-democracies often seek to limit voter exposure to the messages and policies of the opposition through media control and restrictions on civil liberties (Schedler 2002), this ignores any issues or appeals made by the incumbents themselves. We expect that such incumbents will benefit from positive coverage and favorable treatment by the media, but we know little about what issues, if any, incumbents or the opposition emphasize to the public. Are specific policies raised? Do politicians attempt to differentiate themselves from one another? Or are such elections void of serious campaigning altogether? Politician behavior, in particular that of the incumbent, is likely based on strategic decisions to engage in

³ This has been demonstrated by Magaloni (2006), Grzymala-Busse (2008), and others, despite the claims of Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) that authoritarian regimes redistribute resources less than democracies.

both electoral manipulation and electoral persuasion to remain victorious (Schedler 2006).

While much more attention has been put on the former, rather than the latter, this section seeks to explore the types of persuasion that may be utilized depending on the conditions of the election, as it can help reveal the goals and purposes of elections under less than democratic circumstances.

Theoretical Development

Given what we know about both politician-voter linkages generally, and elections in hybrid regimes, I now seek to develop some basic theoretical expectations for the usage of both programmatic and clientelistic linkages in hybrid regimes. Here, I rely on factors expected to matter both generally, as well as factors more specific to elections in hybrid regimes. While the previous literature has highlighted democratic development as a factor in the emergence of both programmatic and clientelistic linkages (Keefer 2007; Kitschelt and Kselman 2013), I contend that by focusing exclusively on hybrid regimes, states that are by definition not democracies, previous explanations for programmatic and clientelistic linkages may not follow the same expectations when considering all democracies. To understand what may help explain the usage of programmatic and clientelistic linkages in hybrid regimes, I turn to factors highlighted in previous studies of non-democratic elections.

One explanatory factor often highlighted in hybrid regimes is the degree of uncertainty present in the election. This can come in multiple forms, including a higher degree of competition, but also negative economic circumstances that threaten the incumbent regime. Uncertainty here broadly aligns with the definition offered by Lupu and Riedl, as the “imprecision with which actors are able to predict future interactions” (2013:1344). Of course uncertainty is present in democratic elections, as the potential for a change in power exists

(Przeworski 1991; Dahl 1971). Yet in less politically developed states, uncertainty lies not just in the outcomes of elections but also in economic and regime terms. Thus overall uncertainty is augmented in developing democracies due to the relative newness of political institutions and economic practices (Lupu and Riedl 2013). Given that uncertainty is a very broad concept, I focus exclusively on one facet that varies within hybrid regimes: electoral uncertainty. While some elections in hybrid regimes have genuinely unknown outcomes, others are fairly predetermined (Levitsky and Way 2010). As many of these studies of uncertainty argue that it is likely to affect politician-voter linkages (Lupu and Riedl 2013; Bleck and van de Waal 2013), I focus on variation in electoral uncertainty as a potential explanatory variable.

Given the variability in uncertainty in hybrid regimes, I seek to explore factors that may increase or decrease such uncertainty by focusing on the degree of competition in an election. Competition likely effects politician behavior toward voters by making the outcome of an election more uncertain. Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) agree that a higher degree of competition increases the need for politicians to build linkages between themselves and voters. However, they note that only the most competitive of elections will lead politicians to seek out large segments of new voters, as “chasing uncertain prospects is likely to dissipate a great deal of resources” (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007:29). Such conditions suggest that instead programmatic concerns are more affordable and have a better likelihood of payoff. In democratic states, the greater the degree of competition in an election often is related to a candidate’s responsiveness to public opinion and issues that citizens care about (Hobolt and Klemmensen 2008). Thus greater uncertainty may push parties and candidates to develop greater programmatic linkages with voters.

While issues may receive more attention in democracies under uncertain or competitive conditions, Lust-Okar (2006) reminds us that in non-democratic elections, there is a reduced area for policymaking, leading candidates to focus less on specific issues. This also mirrors the argument of Bleck and van de Walle (2013) who note that in developing democracies, politicians are less interested in taking tough stances on issues that they are unsure they could possibly follow through on such programmatic linkages. Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) suggest that incumbents in non-democracies may be especially interested in mobilizing voters coercively in the presence of relative competition. When the outcome of the election are highly uncertain, by this logic, incumbents feel their power is threatened, and thus may be compelled to appeal to voters coercively, perhaps with strong, negative rhetoric to ensure the public votes to keep the incumbent in office. Blaydes (2012) argues a similar sentiment, that heightened electoral competition in Islamic states leads incumbents to rely on anti-American sentiment in the hopes of fomenting resentment both against the West but also against the opposition. This reflects the logic that politicians seek to antagonize voters under uncertain electoral circumstances. These conflicting arguments lead me to pose opposing hypotheses to empirically test the effect of uncertainty on politician-voter linkages.

H1: The greater / lesser the degree of uncertainty in an election, the more likely parties and candidates are to increase /decrease programmatic linkages.

The second factor highlighted in the literature is the incumbent's access to resources. The difference between available and required resources figures largely in to a leader's odds of survival (Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow 2003). Moreover, much of the literature on patronage and clientelism focuses specifically and often solely on states that engage in such behavior, which implies that it is not universal. Grzymala-Busse (2008: 645), for

example, discusses the circumstances under which rent-sharing and clientelism are strategic decisions depending on “existing organizational endowments”, implying that resources play an important role. Similarly, Hagopian (2007) contends that the size of the public sector affects the decision to utilize clientelism, and argues that in contrast, states with large private sectors have a reduced space for such behavior. Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) echo this, arguing that a politicized economy, often found with large public control of the political economy, make clientelism more likely. Much of the PRI’s dominance in Mexico hinged on the party’s strength and ability to manipulate budget cycles and economic policy due to its access to resources (Magaloni 2006). Moreover, Levitsky and Way (2010) consider a regime’s organizational strength, including its access to significant resources, as a formidable force in keeping incumbents in power, even as they acknowledge that non-material sources of cohesion may contribute to long-term stability. Lust-Okar (2006) also discusses the importance of elections in non-democracies as contests over the access to resources, as winning an election will grant the victor the ability to engage in subsequent patronage and clientelism. Similarly, Grzymala-Busse (2008) details how incumbent capture of state resources in the face of low competition can either lead to rent distribution, or elite predation, arguing that with the fusion of party and state institutions, incumbents distribute benefits widely despite low competition. In a similar vein, regarding the strategic decision to engage in electoral manipulation, its goal is not always to secure voters and win the election, but instead, as Simpser (2013) argues, to serve an informational role by showing both other elites and the public just how strong the regime is. Such behavior ultimately hinges on access to resources. Based on these findings, I pose this second hypothesis:

H2: The greater the amount of resources available to the incumbent in an election, the more likely they are to enhance their clientelistic linkages.

Thus I expect both access to resources and electoral uncertainty to affect the politician-voter linkages we find in elections in hybrid regimes, expecting uncertainty to be more valuable in understanding programmatic linkages, while resources are expected to hold greater importance with clientelistic linkages. While access to resources allows politicians to engage in patronage or clientelism to incentivize that voters come out to the polls in support of them, it is not likely to be a guaranteed method. As Levitsky and Way (2010) acknowledge, even patronage-based parties have succumbed to electoral or regime pressure when faced with other challenges (including economic crises or challenges to leadership). Thus, when faced with an uncertain election, incumbents often cannot rely solely on resources to ensure victory.

Data and Methods-1

In order to understand the relationship between electoral uncertainty, incumbent access to resources, and the emergence of programmatic and clientelistic linkages in hybrid regimes, I rely on multiple sources of data. Indicators for the two primary dependent variables, programmatic and clientelistic linkages, come from the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project or DALP (Kitschelt 2013). This dataset relied on expert surveys with individuals knowledgeable about specific political parties worldwide, and then compiled the answers into indicators for each party included. The data is not time series, since the surveys were all taken between 2008 and 2009, and instead refer to each individual party's behavior generally during the previous five years (2002-2007). Thus the party-level data are all averages from the multiple responses provided. The two measures used in this analysis are both from DALP, created to represent the

degree of programmatic and clientelistic linkages used by each party in the data⁴. Each measure combines multiple indicators on programmatic and clientelistic behavior by each party.

The two primary independent variables hypothesized in this analysis are the level of electoral uncertainty and incumbent access to resources. To measure the uncertainty of elections, I combine multiple factors theorized to affect the likelihood that an incumbent be victorious in elections in hybrid regimes. One such factor concerns the opposition. A competent and coherent opposition increases the likelihood that the incumbent could be removed from office (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). As Schedler (2002:49) argues, “(t)o a large extent, it is the strategic interaction between authoritarian incumbents and the democratic opposition that determines how the structural ambiguity of electoral autocracies plays out”. Moreover, many studies have highlighted the fact that when the opposition forms pre-electoral coalitions, this can increase the degree of competition in the election as well as the likelihood that they can unseat an incumbent (Howard and Roessler 2006; Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Thus the presence or absence of a pre-electoral opposition coalition included as one factor that can increase the degree of uncertainty. The data for the presence or absence of an opposition electoral coalition come from Donno (2013).

The second indicator refers to a state’s economic conditions, and in particular, when a state faces economic problems. Under such conditions, the opposition is more likely to see regime change as a possibility and thus to attempt to pose a serious challenge to incumbents (Case 2006), or it may compel party member or regime insiders to defect (Reuter and Gandhi 2011). This is related to the idea that democratic transitions can emerge from serious economic

⁴ For this, I used the measures b15 and cosalpo_4 for clientelistic and programmatic linkages, respectfully, as these are the two measures designed for this (Kitschelt 2013). I discuss how these measures were both coded in the appendix.

crises by either exhausting elite resources (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003), by upsetting the balance of power between elites within the government (Boix and Svolik 2013) or by diminishing regime legitimacy based on economic performance (Gasiorowski 1995). Moreover, voters are more likely to abandon an autocratic leader when faced with a prolonged economic crisis or a serious economic downturn; during prosperous times, the regime could build support based on its performance, but once this is absent, then voters are willing to consider an alternative (Magaloni 2006). To capture this, I include measures for both whether the economy is said to be doing poorly and whether it is in crisis. These indicators come from the National Executive and Legislative elections across Democracy and Autocracy or NELDA dataset (Hyde and Martinov 2012), which includes dichotomous measures for both⁵. Finally, I include a measure for incumbent confidence, which, more specifically, indicates that the incumbent is not confident of victory prior to the elections; this dichotomous measure also comes from NELDA.

To measure incumbent access to resources, I include two separate indicators. The first is the presence of a dominant political party in the state. This indicator uses a scale created by Levitsky and Way (2010), who measured both how coherent and how much scope an incumbent political party has; the indicators thus ranges from 0-4, with the higher the score indicating the higher the level of dominance of the party in the state. A dominant political party can monopolize the political scene and provide the incumbent regime with a larger amount of incumbent strength and resources to maintain power. The second indicator measures the percentage of total state GDP that comes from the export of energy resources, including oil, natural gas and other minerals. Such exports are often theorized to provide incumbents with

⁵ Technically, NELDA includes a measure for whether the economy is said to be doing well; I used the reverse of this to indicate that the economy is not doing well.

significant financial resources that help sustain an incumbent's dominance in a hybrid or non-democratic regime (Levitsky and Way 2010; Boix and Svobik 2013). Data on energy exports comes from the World Bank's World Development Indicators.

I also include many control variables expected to influence the appearance of programmatic and clientelistic linkages. Economic development is the most prominently theorized factor expected to explain the usage of both programmatic and clientelistic linkages, so a state's GDP per capita have been included; this data comes from the World Bank's World Development Indicators. Political and electoral institutions have also been tied to politician-voter linkages, so I include dichotomous measures for whether the state is a presidential system, whether it utilizes proportional representation for legislative elections, and whether it maintains a federal system of government. All three measures come from Norris' Democracy time series data (Norris 2009). The rule of law present in a state is also likely to be related to politician-voter linkages, particularly the usage of clientelism; data on the degree of the rule of law in each state comes from the World Bank's World Governance Indicators. District magnitude, which measures the average number of seats per district, also often affects the political behavior of candidates and parties during elections. This indicator also comes from Norris's Democracy time series dataset (2009). Economic inequality, or the gap between the richest and poorest citizens, also may provide important incentives both for the usage of clientelism and the degree of programmatic politics. To measure inequality, I include Gini coefficients for each state, which measures this gap; Gini coefficient data comes from the World Bank's World Development Indicators. Finally, I include two additional party-level variables. Older parties are expected to be better developed, which likely affects their ability to maintain both programmatic and clientelistic linkages (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013). Therefore, I include the

number of elections in which each party has participated; I coded this variable from the Parline database on national parliaments. Incumbent parties are also expected to be better able to engage in clientelism particularly, so I include a variable for whether the party was currently in power during the period of time relevant to this survey (2002-2007)⁶; this was also coded with data from the Parline database on national parliaments.

To analyze the relationship between these various indicators and politician-voter linkages, I estimate a multilevel cross-sectional regression with random effects. A multilevel analysis is needed as the data contain two levels, country-level and party level data, and estimating a conventional ordinary least squares regression on data with more than one level would lead to problems for the data analysis such as underestimated standard errors and clustering (Steenburgen & Jones 2002). Only states considered hybrid regimes by either Levitsky and Way (2010) or Gilbert and Mohseni (2011) are included in the analysis; this leaves me with fifteen states, each containing data on multiple political parties, making the total number of observations 61. I recognize the limitations of such a small N, but nonetheless maintain that this analysis still allows me to uncover any preliminary statically significant relationships that likely will deserve further investigation.

Table 1 displays the results from four statistical estimations. The first and third models only include the control variables for programmatic and clientelistic linkages, respectively, and serve as baseline estimations. The second and forth models, on the other hand, include the hypothesized explanatory variables, electoral uncertainty and the two indicators for incumbent access to resources. Hypothesis one stated that the literature was unclear on whether electoral uncertainty would be more or less likely to influence the degree of programmatic linkages used

⁶ If this varied during this period, I coded multiple parties in each state as the incumbent, as this does not seem problematic.

by political parties. The results show that uncertainty is not statistically significantly related to programmatic linkages. This is contrary to what is expected in democratic states, where more competitive elections are expected to lead parties and candidates to try to better address voter concerns. While the coefficient is negative, following the argument of Bleck and van de Walle (2013) that uncertainty may make parties in developing democracies less likely to stake out clear policy positions, its lack of statistical significance makes me unable to find genuine support for this hypothesis. Access to resources is also not statistically related to programmatic linkages. Across both models, GDP per capita is significant and positive, meaning that an increase in a state's GDP per capita is related to an increase in the degree of programmatic linkages cultivated by parties. Conversely, the presence of a presidential system is significant and negative, meaning that when a state has a presidential system, this is related to a decrease in a political party's programmatic linkages. The remaining control variables do not reach statistical significance.

Table 1: Programmatic and Clientelistic Linkages

	Programmatic	Programmatic	Clientelism	Clientelism
Uncertainty	-	-0.007 (0.019)	-	0.555 (1.013)
Dominant Party	-	0.008 (0.01)	-	0.873* (0.412)
Energy Exports	-	-0.0003 (0.002)	-	-0.063 (0.079)
GDP per Capita	0.00002** (7.72e-06)	0.00002*** (5.97e-06)	-0.0004 (0.0003)	-0.0005* (0.0003)
Presidential	-0.224*** (0.058)	-0.212*** (0.048)	-2.227 (1.731)	-1.7 (2.078)
PR	0.035 (0.03)	0.033 (0.024)	-2.126 (1.101)	-2.811** (0.983)
Federalism	0.032 (0.034)	0.029 (0.027)	-0.315 (1.279)	-0.24 (1.142)
Rule of Law	-0.102 (0.06)	-0.099 (0.049)	-3.469 (2.213)	-2.356 (2.052)
District Magnitude	-0.00002 (0.0004)	0.0001 (0.0004)	-0.023 (0.017)	0.008 (0.019)

GINI	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.07 (0.076)	-0.005 (0.088)
Age of Party	-0.004 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	0.024 (0.173)	-0.031 (0.177)
Incumbent Party	0.004 (0.018)	0.004 (0.019)	4.767*** (0.63)	4.685*** (0.627)
Constant	0.317** (0.103)	0.317** (0.1)	16.798*** (3.816)	9.777 (5.392)
N	64	64	64	64
# of Groups	15	15	15	15
R² within	0.011	0.01	0.531	0.532
Between	0.922	0.926	0.801	0.92
Overall	0.766	0.771	0.632	0.689

Standard Errors in Parentheses, z-value* <0.05 , ** <0.01 , *** <0.001

Turning to the results for clientelistic linkages, the baseline model finds that only the measure for an incumbent political party is statistically significantly related to clientelistic linkages, which makes intuitive sense, as incumbent parties by definition have better access to government means that typically facilitate clientelism. Considering the full model, which includes all the independent variables, I find that one of the variables indicating an incumbent's access to resources, the presence of a dominant political party, is statistically significant in the hypothesized direction. This means that the more powerful a dominant political party is in a state is associated with an increase in clientelistic linkages. This provides some support for my second hypothesis that incumbent resources are important in understanding the usage of clientelistic linkages in hybrid regimes. Considering the other indicators in this model, the estimates for both GDP per capita and the presence of a proportional representation electoral system are statistically significant and negatively related to the usage of clientelistic linkages. In other words, as GDP per capita rises in a state, this is associated with a decrease in the usage of clientelistic linkages by political parties in that state. Similarly, the presence of a proportional electoral system is also associated with a decline in clientelistic linkages. While an incumbent political party remains statistically significant, the remaining control variables are not

statistically significantly related to the degree of clientelistic linkages used by political parties in hybrid regimes.

Further Analysis

Given the finding that increased uncertainty neither increases nor decreases the usage of programmatic politics in a statistically significant manner⁷, I seek to understand whether uncertainty instead is related other potential linkages. As discussed earlier, political parties and candidates have a reduced space for policy-making in hybrid and non-democratic states due to the concentration of power (Lust-Okar 2006), so programmatic linkages may not be a viable option for politicians. As Kitschelt and Kselman (2013) note, both programmatic and clientelistic linkages require politicians to fulfill promises with voters either in the medium or long-term; otherwise they risk losing their voters' support. Yet in hybrid regimes, it may be difficult for political parties and politicians to honestly cultivate such linkages that require any such follow-through. Likewise, Bleck and van de Walle (2013) point out that when candidates and political parties are unsure of their voters' preferences in developing democracies, they are unlikely to take strong positions on issues prior to elections.

Thus I turn to other issue-linkages that do not require any downstream commitments on the part of candidates and parties. Values and identity-related appeals can serve as one such linkage. Previous studies have highlighted the role that such linkages have played during elections. For example, right-wing parties in Eastern Europe are more likely to highlight identities and values as a strategy to distinguish themselves from other parties that focus on interests, particularly in states with increasing social and economic diversity (Tavits and Letki 2014). In Africa, elections are often events for politicians to highlight identities as a strategy for

⁷ It also had no statistically significant relationship with the usage of clientelism.

victory (Eifert, Miguel, and Posner 2010). In particular, the usage of value-or identity-based linkages may be likely to emerge during particularly uncertain elections. On this, Wilkinson (2004) argues that politicians consider the conditions within the structure of political competition before employing an identity electoral strategy. Politicians maximize identities only when other conditions are met; in his study, this means that elites may either allow ethnic riots to take place or attempt to quell them depending on the contextual conditions. Similarly, Blaydes and Linzer (2012) argue that presence or absence of anti-American rhetoric in Islamic states depends on the degree of competition, and in particular, the presence of a strong opposition, during elections.

Thus, not only do value- and identity-based linkages allow politicians to avoid the downstream commitments required of both programmatic and clientelistic linkages, but they also may serve as a distraction and a useful tool in especially competitive elections. This leads me to pose this final hypothesis.

H3: The greater the degree of uncertainty in an election, the more likely political parties are to enhance value- or identity-based linkages.

Data and Methods-2

To test this final hypothesis, I turn to a different data source for the dependent variable, values and identity linkages. The Comparative Manifestos Project or CMP codes political party manifestos published in domestic newspapers at the start of each campaign period. Each sentence is coded based on what it refers to, including particular economic positions (support for free enterprise) as well as values or cultural issues (support for a state's traditions and national values). This dataset also covers multiple elections in each state, allowing me to examine how changes in the conditions of elections in each state may lead to changes in party messages and appeals. With this intra-state variation, I limit the states included to one region, the former

Soviet Union, to better hold constant certain historical and regional factors that are likely relevant in political party behavior. For the specific dependent variable needed for this analysis, I combine multiple variables from the CMP that reflect appeals made to traditional values or cultural identities⁸. This variable thus measures the percentage of a total party program that discusses such value and cultural linkages.

To test the impact of electoral uncertainty on the amount of values linkages present, I used the same measure from the previous section, which combines multiple indicators of uncertainty. I also include the two variables that represent an incumbent's access to resources, and many of the relevant control variables (GDP per capita, the degree of rule of law, gini coefficient, district magnitude, and an incumbent political party. As I am focused specifically on legislative elections, I do not include the measure for a presidential system or for federalism. I do include a measure for whether the state contains a mixed electoral system, which combines proportional representation with single-member constituencies, as this is the most common system in the Soviet Union.

To analyze the relationship between these variables and the amount of values- and culturally-based linkage, I estimate a multilevel cross-sectional time series regression with fixed effects and clustered standard errors. Table 2 displays these results. Like the previous table, the first model only includes the control variables, while the second includes all independent variables. The baseline estimates demonstrate that the presence of a mixed electoral system is statistically significant and negatively related to the amount of values-based linkages in a political party's electoral program. This suggests that the combination of PR with single-member constituencies make parties less likely to emphasize values, perhaps due to the need to

⁸ These indicators are all discussed in the Appendix

reach out to voters for a personal vote in the single member districts. Moreover, the larger the district magnitude, the less likely parties are to emphasize values in their programs.

Table 2

	Values/ Cultural Linkages	Values/ Cultural Linkages
Uncertainty	-	1.148* (0.325)
Dominant Party	-	-1.076 (0.845)
Energy Exports	-	-0.2 (0.201)
Mixed Electoral System	-3.522** (0.622)	-3.521* (1.256)
GDP per capita	-0.001 (0.0008)	-0.001 (0.001)
GINI	0.179 (0.07)	-0.051 (0.228)
District Magnitude	-4.496* (1.174)	-8.974 (7.277)
Experience with elections	0.757 (0.271)	1.448*** (0.201)
Incumbent Party	1.647 (1.472)	1.47 (1.993)
Constant	334.85* (89.454)	715.663 (579.886)
N	178	146
# of groups	6	6
R²: Within	0.041	0.065
Between	0.083	0.15
Overall	0.001	0.009

Standard Errors in Parentheses, z-value * <0.05 , ** <0.01 , *** <0.001

Turning to the full model, I find support for my hypothesis that the greater the degree of uncertainty in an election, the more likely a party is to highlight value-based linkages. The coefficient is statically significant and positively associated with amount of attention given to value-based issues in political party programs. This suggests that parties find the conditions of electoral uncertainty an important time to emphasize value-based issues, and more so than under less uncertain conditions. In this model, the presence of a mixed electoral system remains

statistically significant and negative, while the variable for experience with elections gains statistical significance. The more elections a state has held, the more likely political parties are to emphasize value linkages in their pre-election programs. Thus, despite expectations that states will shift toward more programmatic issue positions with greater experience with democracy (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013), this experience instead is associated with an increase in value-based linkages. This in fact supports the arguments of Bleck and van de Walle (2013) who contend that parties and politicians in developing democracies are less likely to highlight clear policy positions.

Implications and Future Directions

This study aims to expand what we know about politician-voter linkages in hybrid regimes. The findings presented thus provide many initial glances as the factors that may or more often may not help explain the linkages cultivated by politicians during elections. One key finding is that programmatic linkages are unlikely to emerge, with the exception being with greater economic development. More uncertain elections do not in fact create the conditions that increase programmatic linkages, contrary to expectations held in democracies. The results do find support for a relationship between greater uncertainty and value-based linkages, demonstrating that politicians and political parties prefer linkages with little commitment required. This finding suggests that further exploration into the linkages created during elections at varying levels of uncertainty. Value and identity-based linkages may not require any long-term commitments, but they have the potential to exclude some voters who do not agree with such values. Thus it is possible that politicians are only willing to take such a risk in competitive elections. Moreover, Bleck and van de Walle (2013) found that political parties in many developing states in Africa tend to highlight valence issues, as opposed to taking clear issue

positions during elections, as fact they attribute to greater uncertainty in such elections overall. They did not investigate whether such uncertainty varied nor whether the emphasis of issues varied between elections depending on electoral conditions like heightened competition. Thus I plan to further investigate the types of linkages cultivated under various levels of electoral uncertainty that marks vast differences in competition. It may indeed be the case that valence issues may be heightened under some electoral conditions but not others in hybrid regimes.

Regarding clientelism, I do find that it is positively related to incumbent resources, specifically the presence of a dominant political party. There is no statistically significant relationship, however between electoral uncertainty and clientelism. This may seem somewhat counterintuitive, as it suggests that politicians cultivate clientelistic linkages under all levels of electoral competition, both when an election result is very certain, as well as when it is rather competitive. While it may seem unnecessary to exhaust the resources and time needed to provide clientelistic benefits during a relative certain election, this may in fact follow the logic of Simpson (2013). He argues that incumbents in hybrid regimes always likely to manipulate elections, but that they are especially likely to manipulate them excessively in uncompetitive elections, not to ensure victory, as this is not in question, but to demonstrate organizational power. While clientelism is not the same as electoral malpractice, in this situation, the logic may be similar. Incumbents may find that the usage of clientelistic linkages even under conditions of electoral certainty may demonstrate power and help contribute to long-term support.

This study has not analyzed the abuse of state resources as a type of politician-voter linkage, but this is another direction I contend is essential, especially in hybrid regimes. The abuse of state resources can include clientelistic linkages, but is far broader, encompassing the use of state media, pressure put on the opposition and the deployment of state employees to

campaign events. Thus I plan to analyze the usage of such strategies in connection with electoral uncertainty as well as incumbent access to state resources. The relationship could mirror the relationship found in this study, namely that it is not related to uncertainty, or it may in fact vary depending on the amount of electoral uncertainty present.

While this study has explored the connections between uncertainty and incumbent access to resource to programmatic, clientelistic and value-based linkages, it has done so separately. Yet it is entirely possible that such linkages are connected, and that political parties and candidates may employ such linkages in strategic manner. Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) suggest that there is indeed a connection between clientelism and programmatic linkages, although it has been difficult to demonstrate such a relationship empirically. One way to better capture such a strategic interaction is through detailed case studies. Thus I intended to explore these relationships in great detail in the region of the former Soviet Union through case study comparisons. In particular, I plan to examine elections at different levels of government as these often provide opportunities to see genuine competition. Such case study comparisons aim to shed light on how politicians may cultivate multiple linkages depending on the conditions of an election.

This study also provides some basic conclusions about the emergence of programmatic and clientelistic linkages. First, as it finds that presidential systems are negatively related to the emergence of programmatic politics, this suggests that certain institutional arrangements may be better for voter accountability than others. Similarly, the analysis found that proportional representative systems were negatively associated with the usage of clientelistic linkages. These findings thus imply that institutional changes may allow for better voter accountability by assisting in the development of programmatic linkages. Of course, such changes may be difficult

to achieve⁹. For citizens to potentially find better avenues for political representation and accountability, one potential source may lie with civil society organizations. While Bleck and van de Walle (2013) found that while political parties and actors were often less likely to take strong issue positions, civil society organizations instead were more likely to do so. Such organizations may be able to serve citizen needs by advocating for specific positions. As politics in hybrid regimes are by definition less democratic, and make it difficult for voters to hold their leaders accountable, civil society organizations may be able to fill this void by linking voters and politicians through their issue positions and work.

Politician-voter linkages provide one avenue in understanding how responsive elected officials are to their constituents. Yet given that many of the world's elections are held under less than democratic conditions, this study has aimed to expand our understanding of such linkages in hybrid regimes. Many studies of elections in hybrid and non-democratic regimes have focused on manipulation and malpractice during the actual voting process, or with incumbent restrictions on the opposition, with little attention devoted to the behavior of politicians toward voters during elections. This study represents one such attempt to fill this gap by considering the occurrence of programmatic, clientelistic and value-based linkages in elections in hybrid regimes. The findings presented can contribute both to our overall knowledge surrounding elections in hybrid regimes, as well more specifically to the literature on politician-voter linkages. With greater attention to such issues, future scholarship can better understand democratization and the political development in such states, with the ultimate goal being greater citizen representation and accountability.

⁹ Although they are not impossible, as Georgia and Ukraine have recently undergone such shifts away from presidential systems.

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Appendix:

Coding of Dependent Variables

The two dependent variables used in the first analysis, for clientelistic and programmatic linkages, come from DALP (Kitschelt 2013). They are named b15 and CoSaPo_4, respectively, in the dataset. The data comes from an expert survey, so the indicators are compilations of expert responses to the survey. The five questions used to understand clientelistic linkages ask

about: the provision of goods to voters, preferential access to certain policies, promises of public employment, benefits from government contracts, and influence over certain policy-making.

The variable b15 is simply the sum of the scores given for each of these five questions.

Regarding programmatic linkages, the five questions used in the survey for programmatic linkages ask about: the role of the state in the economy, the degree of income redistribution, the amount of social spending, support for a national identity, and support for traditional values; certain additional questions relevant to specific national settings are also included. As this data is interested in a measure of a party's degree of programmatic linkages, and not their particular positions on these issues, the measure for programmatic linkages is more complex than the one for clientelistic linkages. The measure is based on the amount of cohesion among the experts' answers on the five programmatic issues, the degree of salience experts put on each issue, and the degree of distinctiveness between political parties on certain issues. Thus, the measure does not illustrate the specific issue positions of the parties; instead it describes expert agreement on such issues, how important such issues are in the national setting, and how polarized the parties are on the issues.

Turning to the measure for value- and identity based linkages, this measure is the sum of various indicators from the CMP (Volkens et al 2013). These indicators all code the percentage that a political party's program devotes to the following issues: traditional/ national way of life, traditional morality, negative stances on multiculturalism, support for a restrictive citizenship, and negative stances on Communists (referring to the people who were involved in the previous Communist regime, and not the ideology).