

Paying for Appeasement: On the Moderating Role of Public Subsidies in East Central European Party Politics

Abstract

Focusing on the relationship between the access of political parties to direct public funding and electoral support for anti-political-establishment (e.g. populist, extreme) parties (APEp), this article tries to fill an important gap in the literature. Whereas previous contributions, mostly focused on the United States or Western European established democracies, have presented contradictory findings, our study of 19 East Central European new democracies clearly show that the absence of state subsidies for political parties boosts the support for those with an anti-political-establishment character. More importantly, and taking into account the minimum legal payout threshold granting parties access to public subsidies, our results show how the more restrictive the regulations and the higher the difficulties of parties to obtain state help, the higher the support for APEp. [Our findings have obvious implications for the development of post-communist party systems and the future of legislative \(party funding\) reform in the region.](#)

Key words: Public funding, payout threshold, anti-political-establishment parties, elections, East Central Europe

Under pressure from the rising Five Star Movement, a populist party that had managed to win a quarter of the vote in its first electoral appearance a year earlier (Mosca and Tronconi, 2019), the Italian government passed a decree in February 2014 phasing out public financial support for political parties by 2017. Serious attempts to eliminate or curtail public funding were also made, once again under pressure from populist outsiders with political aspirations (singer Paweł Kukiz and comedian Slavi Trifonov), in Poland and Bulgaria, where even referendums on the issue were organized in September 2015 and November 2016, respectively. Not surprisingly, one of the first measures adopted by the newly elected Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky, also

a political outsider with populist views, was to try to curtail public subsidies for extra-parliamentary parties.¹

These are just examples, perhaps the most illustrative ones, of how the so-called “IDEA consensus”² is being challenged in recent years, especially by populist political forces who believe that, following the “cartel party thesis” (Katz and Mair, 2018), public subsidies have helped traditional mainstream political parties to defend their corrupt interests and keep potential challengers away. The question that then follows is: why are populist parties so afraid of public funding? And, more specifically, to what extent do public funds help to moderate party politics in a country by reducing the percentage of votes for anti-political-establishment parties?

Trying to fill an important gap in the literature, this article will look at the relationship between the type of public funding regulation and the electoral success of anti-political-establishment parties (APEp), [understood as those which, following Abedi \(2004\), consider themselves as the sole representatives of “the people”, challenge the establishment and the major *status quo* policies they defend. Offering a comprehensive approximation, this concept \(Schedler, 1996\) encompasses a broad set of parties sometimes labelled as populist, radical, extreme, protest or anti-system \(e.g. Communists, Fascists, Populists, Nationalists, etc.\).³ In particular, \[this article\]\(#\) will examine not only if public subsidies in general help to reduce \[the electoral support for APEp\]\(#\), helping in turn to improve the quality of democracy \(Rama and Casal Bértoa, 2020\), but also if it is true that restricting access to public funds APEp to thrive.](#)

The article is structured as follows. In the next section we look at the relationship between public funding and party politics, with an emphasis on the implications of the well-known cartel party thesis. There we discuss the literature on the relationship between public money and support for APEp in general, introducing the main hypotheses. The second section deals with case selection. The third section looks, on the one hand, at the concept of APEp, presenting the evolution of electoral support for this type of parties over time, and on the other at the historical development of direct public funding regulations in the region, with an especial focus on payout thresholds. In the fourth section we explain the different indicators as well as delineate

¹ Direct public party funding had only been introduced in January 2016.

² For the insisting role International IDEA has played in the introduction of public party funding all over the world.

³ [In the third section \(i.e. APEp and public funding in ECE\), we offer the full definition of the concept. In Appendix A, we include a complete list of all the APEp included in the analyses.](#)

our methodology. The results are discussed in section five. We conclude the article with a summary of our main findings and some reflections on the implications they might pose for all those institutions working on legislative reform in the region (and beyond).

Public funding and party politics

Ever since the publication of Katz and Mair's (1995) seminal study on the "cartel party", scholars have looked at the role of money in party politics in general, and the "cartelization" (and/or over-institutionalization) of the party system in particular. To the point that there is not lack of studies looking at the relationship of political party funding and (1) party system size (Tavits and Potter, 2005; Rashkova and Su, 2020), (2) party system institutionalization (Birnie, 2005; Booth and Robbins, 2010), (3) party institutionalization (Bolleyer and Ruth, 2018), (4) party survival (Bolleyer, 2013; Casal Bértoa and Spirova, 2019), (5) party membership (Whiteley, 2011), (6) political trust (Whiteley, 2014), or (7) corruption (Hummel *et al.*, 2020; Casal Bértoa *et al.*, 2014).

However, and what is especially surprising given the consequences of "party system cartelization" for the rise of APEp (Katz and Mair, 1995, 2009), there has been almost no research done on the relationship between the latter and political party funding, especially "from a cross-national point of view" (Bichay, 2020: 2). In order to fill this lacuna in the literature, and following Scarrow's (2007) call for a better understanding of political party finance in comparative perspective, this article will examine the extent to which public funding helps to increase the electoral support for APEp in new East Central European (ECE) democracies. But before looking at the cases under study, and why should we focus in the post-communist region, it is important that we first clarify our theoretical framework trying to answer the following question: does public funding help to contain APEp?

According to the "cartel party" thesis (Katz and Mair, 2018), public funding is one of the institutional tools traditional political parties use to keep potential challengers outside the parliamentary arena. The idea is that because most political finance regimes tend to distribute state subsidies proportionally, either on the basis of votes or seats, direct public funding tends to favour mainstream parties (Jones, 1981). This will not only allow them to run more expensive campaigns, with the advantages it might have in terms of electoral success (Glantz *et al.* 1976; Coleman and Manna 2000; Stratmann, 2015), but also to increase their levels of nationalization and professionalization,

growing also their chances of survival (Casal Bértoa and Taleski, 2016), obviously in detriment of those parties outside the political establishment.

Perhaps a more direct mechanism linking financial state support and a reduction in support for APEp is that which, building on Down's (1957) "median voter theorem", assumes that because most voters - and consequently a larger quantity of public funds - are located in the middle of the political spectrum, state subsidies will favour political parties with moderate ideological views to the detriment of those parties which tend to place themselves at the fringes (Baron, 1994). In other words, public funding has a *moderating effect* in political party competition favouring mainstream parties at the expense of anti-political-establishment ones.

Thirdly, public funding helps parties to not only become more responsive, but also rely less on private donations, with the positive consequences this has for the reduction of ideological polarization (Hall, 2014). Thus, on the one hand, if state subsidies increase the level of responsiveness, as found by Costa Lobo and Razzuoli (2017) - both at country and party level - in their study of 18 European democracies, APEp will be deprived of one of the main accusations against mainstream parties: namely, that these act "responsibly, but not very responsibly" (Biezen, 2014: 13; Mair, 2014). And, as a result, electoral support for APEp is expected to retract in countries with public funding.

On the other hand, guaranteed a certain financial security, publicly funded parties will have fewer incentives to rely on private funding. This is extremely important for two reasons. Firstly, and in clear connection with the "responsive argument" mentioned above, parties relying mostly on public subsidies will be able to pursue a general interest, rather than the (more radical)⁴ policy preferences of their private donors (Nassmacher, 2009). Secondly, because as has been recently found "private donations are associated with increased party extremism on the general left-right dimension" (Tomashevskiy, 2019: 16), countries without public funding will be more prone to APEp's success. For all these reasons, we hypothesize that

H1a: *Electoral support for APEp will be lower in countries where political parties have access to state subsidies than in those where there is none.*

⁴ See Francia's work, either alone (2003) or with colleagues (2005).

Unfortunately, not everything that shines is gold, and some recent studies have also put into question what Winter and Bolton called the “myths about public financing” (1973: 21). Thus, Biezen and Kopecký, using data from the Political Party Database Project (Poguntke *et al.*, 2017), found that “paradoxically” and contrary to what used to be common knowledge, “Far-Right parties” (one of the most important type of APEp) benefit from state subsidies more than any other party family (i.e. Left Socialist, Greens, Social Democrats, Christian-Democrats and Conservatives, Liberals), to the point that they “contribute to a staggering 85 per cent of [their] total party income” (2017: 96). As they also point out, this seems to contradict the views according to which public funding mostly favours mainstream, rather than APEp (Scarrow, 2006).

More recently, Bichay, in what is the only cross-national study to date looking at the relationship between public (campaign) funding and radical-right parties’ electoral success, found that

[...] public monies serve to disproportionately assist them. Their reliance on a poor economy, inability to alter their platform to attract voters, and difficulty raising funds and being competitive is key to their disproportional benefit of public funds at any level of economic growth (2020: 10).

Among the different reasons mentioned for this positive relationship Bichay points to an indirect (but also pre-electoral) mechanism through which, by fostering the claim that financial state dependency neither discourages mainstream parties from exclusively serving their own interests nor from continuing their corrupt habits,⁵ state subsidies foster APEp’s anti-elitist “cries” (2020: 4). As a result, we also hypothesize that

H1b: *Electoral support for APEp will be higher in countries where political parties have access to state subsidies than in those where there is none.*

Turning the “cartel party thesis” upside down, one could think that by making access to state subsidies available to small parties, including anti-political-establishment ones, low access barriers will help to create a level-playing field favouring all parties without distinction. Moreover, the incentives to become

⁵ See also Casal Bértoa *et al.* (2014), who found a positive (but not significant) relationship between state dependency and party corruption in both Europe and Latin America.

ideologically moderate are considerably reduced, as almost any party, independent of its position in the political spectrum, will be able to benefit from the state financial help. And given that most methods of public funding allocation tend to be based on the principle of proportionality (IDEA, 2014), it will not help to decrease parties' dependency on private funding, with the implications this might have (see above). As a result, and building on those studies which support the idea that the more permissive an institutional regime, the higher the support for extreme political parties (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Bichay, 2020), we can formulate the following hypothesis

H2a: *The more liberal the public funding regime, the higher the level of support for APEp*

However, and building on what has been already said in relation to the positive effect of public funds on ideological convergence, especially when compensating for a significant reduction in the amount of private donations, it could be assumed that a party's incentives to moderate its ideological position will be higher in countries where state subsidies are accessible to as many parties as possible. Moreover if, as stated by other scholars (Morgan 2013; Hanley and Sikk, 2016), APEp flourish in corrupt contexts and, as Casal Bértoa *et al.* (2014) found, party corruption might thrive in democracies with restrictive public funding regimes, then we could expect APEp to increase their electoral support in those countries where, because only a limited number of established parties are able to financially benefit from the state, their "anti-corruption" discourse is more prone to be heard.

H2b: *The more restrictive the public funding regime, the higher the electoral support for APEp.*

Case selection

The few works in this field have primarily focused either in the United States (e.g. Hall, 2014; Masket and Miller, 2015) or in consolidated Western democracies (Tomashevskiy, 2019; Bichay, 2020). All of them not only ignore the issue in post-communist democracies, but also prefer to look into the effects of campaign rather than party finance. [Two phenomena which are not only conceptually distinct, whereas the former refers exclusively to the public funding of electoral campaigns, the latter is](#)

related to the funding of parties' regular (i.e. ordinary) activities, but also have divergent politico-institutional implications. Thus, while campaign finance might help parties to win parliamentary and, eventually, governmental representation, party funding will help them to build strong organizations and institutionalize (Casal Bértoa and Spirova, 2019; Bolleyer and Ruth, 2018), something so important for the healthy functioning of democracy in post-communist democracies (Tavits, 2013), and beyond (Casal Bértoa and Rama, 2021).

Moreover, in many cases [previous studies](#) tend to compare periods (e.g. post-WWII) where very few countries granted parties access to state subsidies and party systems were “frozen” (Bartolini and Mair, 1990) with other periods (e.g. post-Cold War) where party systems became unstable despite public funding becoming the norm (Chiaromonte and Emanuele, 2017). For all these reasons, in this study we will look at the relationship between party funding and APEp’s support in post-communist East Central Europe (ECE). This will allow us not only to fill a clear gap in the literature, but also to compare the effects of party funding in countries where, despite all experiencing similar levels of systemic instability (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa, 2018; Emanuele *et al.*, 2020), present important differences in terms of the way public party funding was regulated (Casal Bértoa and Biezen, 2018).

Thus, we will make use of an original dataset that covers 135 parliamentary elections⁶ in the 19 ECE countries (i.e. Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine), covering up to three decades of post-communist history since the transition of democracy in 1989. The range of years and the number of elections for each country are both displayed in table 1 below.

Table 1. Time period and number of elections for the selected countries.

Country	Elections	N° of cases
Albania	2001-2017	5
Bulgaria	1991-2017	9
Croatia	2003-2016	6
Czechia	1992-2017	8

⁶ We exclude all presidential as well as “breakaway” (e.g. during 1989 in Poland, or during 1990 in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia or Romania) elections.

Estonia	1992-2019	8
Georgia	2004-2016	4
Hungary	1990-2018	8
Kosovo	2007-2019	5
Latvia	1993-2018	9
Lithuania	1992-2016	7
North Macedonia	1990-2016	9
Moldova	1994-2019	9
Montenegro	2006-2016	4
Poland	1991-2019	9
Serbia	2000-2016	7
Slovakia	1992-2016	8
Slovenia	1992-2018	8
Romania	1996-2016	6
Ukraine	1994-2012	6

Source: Authors dataset (2020)

APEp and public funding in ECE

Based on our research question, which looks into the “moderating effects” of public funding, and given the confusion regarding concepts such as populist and/or radical parties, we have adopted the “most comprehensive” concept of APEp (Schedler, 1996: 292). As for Abedi, this article considers APEp to be those that fulfil at the same time

all of the following criteria: (1) it perceives itself as a challenger to the parties that make up the political establishment; (2) it asserts that a fundamental divide exists between the political establishment and the people (implying that all establishment parties, be they in government or in opposition, are essentially the same); and (3) it challenges the status quo in terms of major policy issues and political system issues (2004: 12).

In practice, our dataset includes most of those parties that for other scholars fall into the category of “radical” (Funke *et al.*, 2015), “populist” (Rooduijn *et al.*, 2020), “extreme” (Carter, 2005), or even “challenger” (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016) parties as they tend to share a clear *anti-political-establishment* character, in Abedi’s sense.⁷

⁷ While some scholars have distinguished between left- and right-wing APEp in the Western European context (Rooduijn *et al.*, 2020), it is not clear to what extent such distinction can travel to other contexts

Figure 1, in a descriptive approximation, displays the aggregate percentage of votes for APEp per decade (1990s, 2000s and 2010s), not only across the region but also in each of the 19 ECE countries examined. First of all, and contrary to what can be observed in the West (see Casal Bértoa and Rama, 2020), APEp were on average slightly more successful (roughly one higher) at the beginning of the century than during the current decade. Not surprisingly, the 1990s, when optimism about a brighter future in the aftermath of the fall of communism and support for democracy run high in most ECE countries (Rose and Mishler, 1996), present the lowest level of support for this kind of parties.

Figure 1. Mean percentage of votes for APEp by country per decade (1990-2019)

Source: Own elaboration based on Casal Bértoa (2021).

This picture is also observed when looking at the specific variations in APEp's electoral support within each country over different decades. As it follows from the figure above, the average percentage of votes for APEp during the 2000s was also higher in the plurality of ECE countries: namely, in Albania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. Whereas the current decade was more favourable in others (e.g. Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo and Lithuania), APEp struggled more to attract attention after the democratic transition. Thus, only in North Macedonia, Latvia, Slovenia and Ukraine, APEp were more successful than now.

As it has been observed elsewhere, “the nature and regulation of party [...] financing is a particularly important constraint on party behaviour in the post-communist world” (Casal Bértoa and Spirova, 2019: 236). In contrast to what can be observed in the most consolidated democracies of Western and Southern Europe (Scarrow, 2006; Biezen and Casal Bértoa, 2014), post-communist democratic party systems began to develop at a time when the direct funding of political parties by the

in general (De la Torre and Mazzoleni, 2019), and to the post-communist region in particular, as the very same concepts of “left” and “right” might have a completely different meaning (Tavits and Leki, 2009). For this reason, and also taking into consideration that electoral support for APEp has a negative impact on the functioning of democracy, independently of their – in most cases thin (Stanley, 2008) – ideology (Rama and Casal Bértoa, 2020), we have refrained from making any ideological distinction. In this line, and in order to understand Abedi's (2004) criteria, let us give an example. Whereas the National Movement Simeon II (NSDV) in Bulgaria and the Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO) in Czechia were APEp in 2001 and 2013, respectively, they lost such condition after joining the government.

state had become the norm not only in the continent, but worldwide (Norris and Es, 2016; Falguera *et al.*, 2014). This is not to deny, however, that within the ECE region a great variety of funding regimes across countries, but also within country, can be observed across time.

The different regimes and their dates in initiation are graphically presented in Figure 2.⁸ There we can observe how, despite a gradual evolution, political party funding is currently universal in the region. Of the other 19 post-communist nations here examined, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Georgia,⁹ Hungary, North Macedonia, Czechia, Slovakia and Romania guaranteed political parties access to state subsidies immediately after the democratic transition. However, while the first four established a “restrictive system” of public funding, the other seven preferred to adopt a more “liberal regime”.¹⁰

Figure 2. Public funding of political parties in post-communist Europe (1989-2016)

Source: Update from Casal Bértoa and Spirova (2019: 238).

As can also be observed in the figure above, in other eight ECE democracies, state aid was only introduced at a later stage: Poland, Slovenia and Estonia began with restrictive systems in 1993, 1994 and 1996, changing to liberal ones in 1997, 2000 and 2004, respectively. Ukraine and Moldova also adopted restrictive systems in 2004 and 2008, but they were not effective until 2016, when these regimes were also liberalized. Finally, Lithuania (1999), Bulgaria (2001) and Latvia (2012) adopted liberal systems of public subsidies from the very first moment.

Operationalization and Methodology

Our dependent variable measures the percentage of votes obtained by APEP in legislative elections in each of the abovementioned countries for the period cited between 1990 and 2019. Building on previous scholarship, and following Abedi’s

⁸ Such variation will enable us to examine the long-term effects of very similar funding systems, while allowing at the same time within-country comparisons over time between quite divergent funding frameworks.

⁹ Effective (i.e. actually paid) only from 2005.

¹⁰ We understand “restrictive systems” as those that limit public funding to parliamentary parties exclusively, while “liberal regimes” those extending direct state financial help to extra-parliamentary parties too.

(2004) definition mentioned above, we used the work of Kriesi and Pappas (2015), Wolinetz and Zaslove (2018) and, especially, those of Kessel (2015), Pirro (2015) to codify APEp. A complete list of all the APEp¹¹ included in our analyses can be found in Appendix A.

In order to test our main hypotheses, related to the presence of direct state subsidies for political parties and the level of restriction in terms of parties' access to those subsidies, we have opted for two alternative independent variables: a dichotomous (1 = presence) and continuous (different payout thresholds)¹² indicator, respectively. Data on the specific party funding regimes are taken from the 'Party Law in Modern Europe' project (Biezen, 2013) and International IDEA's (2018) databases and contrasted, and complemented, with various secondary sources (e.g. Casal Bértoa and Biezen, 2018: 20-21; Piccio, 2012).

Additionally, we add some control (i.e. economic, electoral, institutional and temporal) variables in order to deal with problems of false correlations. First of all, we include an indicator capturing the economic conditions: namely, the percentage of growth in the Gross Domestic Product (*GDP growth*). GDP data come from *Gapminder* (2019). In this sense, we assume that the higher the increment of the GDP, the lower the support for APEp (Brückner and Grüner, 2010). We opt for this economic indicator (instead inflation or unemployment), not only due data availability, but also to the central role this indicator has traditionally had when measuring economic performance (Kayser and Wlezien, 2011).

Regarding the electoral dimension we introduce two indicators. On the one hand, we use Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) standard "effective number of electoral parties" (ENEP)¹³ to capture electoral fragmentation and its impact on the increase on support for APEp. Thus, we assume that the higher the number of parties at the electoral level, the higher the probability of APEp to increase their electoral support (Casal Bértoa and Rama, 2020). On the other hand, and in order to measure electoral instability, also another traditional explanation of APEp' success (Kessel, 2015), we employ Pedersen's index of electoral volatility (TEV), which captures "the net change

¹¹ Quite comprehensively, we consider all those APEp that have achieved at least 0.1% of the votes in a given legislative elections (Casal Bértoa, 2020).

¹² This is the most easily identifiable criterion in terms of public funding allocation in the region (Birnir, 2005; Booth and Robbins, 2010; Casal Bértoa and Biezen, 2018; IDEA, 2018).

¹³ $ENEP=1/\sum v_i^2$, where v_i is the vote share of party i .

within the electoral party system resulting from individual vote transfers” (1979: 3).¹⁴ High TEV scores are assumed to show the extent to which voters are erratic, instable and, finally, more able to cast a vote for APEp.

We also contemplate two institutional variables: the *least square index (LSq)*, and the *type of regime (TOR)*. Thus, as we expect a positive relationship between ENEP and support for APEp, we also control for the disproportionality of the electoral system, calculated on the basis of Gallagher’s (1991) “least square index”. The idea is simple: as more proportional electoral systems will allow more parties into the party system (Duverger, 1954), the share of votes for APEp will be higher the less the disproportionality of the electoral system. Additionally, we consider the type of regime (semi-presidential = 1). Following Linz’s seminal work on the perils of presidentialism (1990a) and the virtues of parliamentarism (1990b), we expect that non-parliamentary regimes have led to an increment in the level of support for APEp.¹⁵

Additionally, we include one temporal variable: *years of democracy (YoD)*. We expect more consolidated democracies to be vaccinated against anti-political-establishment discourses threatening the democratic system in comparison to newer ones.

Trying to avoid any endogeneity problems, we opted for lagging all the independent and control variables, not just the economic ones (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2013). Doing so we address the impact economic, electoral, institutional and temporal in the year preceding an election ($t-1$) might have on the levels of support for APEp at the time of the analysed election (t). Descriptive statistics (i.e. number of observations, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum) for both the dependent and independent variables can be found in Table A1 (see Appendix B).

Given the continuous nature of our dependent variable (% of votes for APEp), we run a series of linear regressions (OLS). Taking into account that our data is panel data with elections nested in countries, we assume that our cases (elections) take place in a specific point of the time (year of election) and belong to a specific country (one

¹⁴ $TEV = \frac{1}{2} \sum |v_{i,t} - v_{i,t-1}|$, where $v_{i,t}$ is the vote share of party i at election t preceded by election $t-1$.

¹⁵ The idea is that while in parliamentary regimes the head of state is either hereditary or (s)elected either by a super-powerful government, which already assembles the qualified majority usually required for this type of (s)election, or by a compromise with the opposition, in (semi-)presidential regimes the “double electoral process” gives APEp the possibility to win office or, at least, get the necessary publicity to express their grievances against the establishment.

of the 19 Central and Eastern European countries).¹⁶ Thus, after specifying that our data is panel, we run OLS regressions with robust standard errors clustered by countries (see Models 1, 2, and 3 in Table A2 Appendix B). Additionally, and for the sake of robustness, hierarchical models with random country effects are run (see Models 4, 5 and 6 in Table A2 - Appendix B).

Following our hypotheses, we estimate three different full models¹⁷ which include not only our main independent variables (using, as we will see, two different types), but also all the control ones. Thus, and following the “cartel party” thesis, hypothesis 1a expects that the absence of public funding ($PF = 0$) will allow APEp to gain ground in the electoral arena. However, given more recent findings in the literature (Biezen and Kopecký, 2017; Bichay 2020), we formulate a two-tailed hypothesis, with the second part (H1b) expecting that APEp will be more successful in countries where parties are publicly funded.

In order to deal with hypothesis 2, we transform our PF dichotomous variable into a continuous one (i.e. *percentage of votes necessary to access PF*), formulating once again a two-tailed hypothesis. Thus, and as stated in H2a, we expect lower barriers (i.e. payout thresholds)¹⁸ to access to public funding to hinder APEp’s electoral support as all political parties will be able to benefit from state help. Conversely, and given that high-barrier regimes (e.g. those where only parties with parliamentary representation obtain state subsidies) might lead to party system *cartelization* (Katz and Mair, 1995), part b of hypothesis 2 poses the opposite direction: thus, the probability to have successfully APEp being higher in countries with high payout thresholds, as they might benefit from their anti-establishment (e.g. corrupt elites) stand.

Model 1 (for hypotheses 1a and 1b) and both Models 2 and 3 (for hypotheses 2a and 2b) are full models in which all the abovementioned control variables

¹⁶ By using the *xtset* command in Stata, *panelvar* identifies the panels and the optional *timevar* identifies the times within panels. Thus, we specify that our data is a panel data.

¹⁷ In Table A2 (Appendix B), Model 1 includes the dichotomous measure of public funding (0 = absence; 1 = presence), whereas Model 2 includes the threshold required for parties to access state subsidies in countries with public financing. Model 3, comparing all public funding regimes (i.e. liberal, restrictive and exclusive) uses the same thresholds as in Model 2, imputing a hypothetical threshold for those countries without public funding. Models 4, 5 and 6 follow the same logic, and are the result of hierarchical estimations.

¹⁸ In general, ECE payout thresholds move from as low as 0 and 1 percent to as high as 5 percent, going through 3 percent. Given the consistent 2 points jump between them, we impute a 7 percent threshold for those countries without PF.

(economic, electoral, institutional, and temporal) are simultaneously considered.¹⁹ This is possible, as the VIFs (variance inflation factors) of all variables are well below the levels that would rise concerns of collinearity problems (see Table A1 in Appendix B): the mean VIF is 1.15 and the maximum one 1.24 (ENEP). The models estimated are the following ones:

$$H1a \ \& \ H1b: \ APEp \ support = \alpha + \beta \ (GDP \ growth) + \beta \ (ENEP) + \beta \ (TEV) + \beta \ (Lsq) + \beta \ (TOR) + \beta \ (PF) + \beta \ (YoD) \ e$$

$$H2a \ \& \ H2b: \ APEp \ support = \alpha + \beta \ (GDP \ growth) + \beta \ (ENEP) + \beta \ (TEV) + \beta \ (Lsq) + \beta \ (TOR) + \beta \ (\% \ votes \ for \ PF) + \beta \ (YoD) \ e$$

Findings

A first approximation to the relationship between public funding (i.e. payout threshold in the X-axis) and electoral support for APEp (i.e. percentage of votes in the Y-axis) can be found in Figure 3. Comparing the average payout threshold parties need to achieve to obtain financial state support with the average percentage of votes for APEp in ECE countries, the pattern observed is very clear (even when Moldova, the country with the highest mean support for APEp, is excluded – see right graph below): the more restrictive the public funding regime (i.e. the higher the payout threshold and, therefore, the higher the barriers to access state subsidies), the higher is the support for APEp.

Figure 3. Average levels of APEp support and payout thresholds in post-communist ECE (1989-2019), with (left graph) and without (right graph) outliers

Source: Own elaboration.

Based on this first evidence, the question we should ask is the extent to which this is the case even controlling for other (e.g. economic, electoral, institutional, temporal) factors. Figure 4, which displays the coefficients and statistical significance for each of the abovementioned variables, graphically shows the results of our analysis

¹⁹ For the sake of robustness, we apply the *Jackknife* method, which is especially useful for correcting estimation bias, to our models. Table A3 in Appendix B shows how our main independent variable (i.e. *PF* and % votes *PF*) not only keeps the expected direction, but it is also statistically significant. Importantly, this estimation removes the extreme cases: namely, those elections where APEp obtained more than 30% of the votes.

(see also [Models 1, 2 and 3](#) in Table A2 in Appendix B). In order to interpret the figure, we need to bear in mind that the horizontal lines in the model represent an independent variable and its 95% (large line) and 90 % (short line) confidence interval, while the point stands for the best estimation of its effect upon the dependent variable (i.e. electoral support for APEp). If a confidence interval crosses the vertical line drawn at the origin (zero) of the horizontal axis (representing the absence of effects), the effect of the variable is not statistically significant. If it does, the effect is statistically significant: positive if on the right hand side, or negative if on the left.

Figure 4. Explaining APEp’s support in 19 ECE democracies (1990-2019)

Note: Coefficient plots based on M1, M2, and M3 Table A2 (Appendix B).

Source: Own elaboration.

Thus, and with regard to our control factors we [demonstrate](#) (see Model 3) that, when a country experiences a decrease in the level of GDP, support for APEp increases: in other words, the lower the GDP growth, the higher the percentage of votes for APEp. However, while having the same (negative) sign, in Model 1 and Model 2 it is not statistically significant (although for Model 1 the p-value = 0.146, is near to be statistically significant - see Table A2 in Appendix B).

Regarding the impact of our two electoral factors (i.e. ENEP and TEV), we find that the electoral instability (i.e. high TEV) has a positive and significant effect on the electoral success of APEp (but only if we look at Model 3).²⁰ Conversely, in no model is electoral fragmentation (i.e. high ENEP) close to have a statistically significant impact on APEp’s support. In other words, it seems that it has been the electorally unstable context, rather than the number of parties, what has helped ECE APEp to increase their electoral support.

Looking at the effects of institutions, we see that only electoral disproportionality (LSq.) acquires statistical significance (in Models 2 and 3). To the point that we can say that electoral disproportionality should be considered a deterrent of APEp in the post-communist region.

Finally, *years of democracy* (YoD) is the only of our control variables for which we find a statistically significant effect in the three models. Surprisingly, the effect is

²⁰ Like with GPD growth, TEV’s effect – even if it has the same (positive) sign - is not significant in the first model (p value is 0.119).

positive, meaning that the higher the years passed after the (re-)inauguration of democracy in the country, the higher is the support for APEp. Although initially puzzling, we should not forget that not only most ECE party systems remain unstable (Emanuele *et al.*, 2020), but also ECE citizens have grown more and more dissatisfied with democracy as years have passed, after an initial optimistic start (Karp and Milazzo, 2015). Such pessimism is visible in the low levels of turnout or trust in political parties (Rose, 1995; Howard, 2003; Kostelka, 2014; Letki, 2004), just to mention some examples. This has certainly created a perfect disgruntling ground where APEp, with their simple solutions to complex problems, can thrive (Pirro, 2015).

With regard to our main hypotheses, and as it follows from Figure 4 we can reject hypothesis 1b, while **partially confirming 1a (p value < 0.1)**. Model 1, which looks at the effect of public funding on APEp's support, shows that granting parties access to state subsidies decreases the percentage of votes for APEp in 3.68 points (see Table A2 in Appendix B), clearly showing how, for the reasons explained above, APEp have had more opportunities to rise in ECE countries where political parties had to exclusively rely on private funds.

Does this mean that APEp cannot be successful in countries where the state grants parties financial help? Looking at Model 2 which, as we have said, uses continuous (i.e. payout thresholds) rather than a dichotomous (Model 1) variable and looks only at countries where financial state help is available, we have to give a negative, but conditional, answer: APEp are able to thrive in countries with public funding, but only in those where the institutional barriers (i.e. payout thresholds) are high. In particular, we find that an increase of one percent in the threshold to grant access state subsidies leads to 3.58 percent of votes more for APEp (see Model 2 in Table A2 Appendix B). This means that the more restrictive the regime of direct public funding is, the more it will favour APEp. Conversely, the more liberal the access to public funding and, therefore, the higher the number of parties financially benefiting from the state which consequently do not need to exclusively rely on private funds, the more difficult it will be for APEp to thrive.

Model 3 compares all ECE countries like in Model 1, but distinguishing among different public funding regimes. It uses different payout thresholds like in Model 2 imputing, for the reasons explained above (footnote 18), a 7 per cent threshold for those countries where political parties are not granted access to state subsidies. Showing that an increase of one percent in the payout threshold to leads to 4.23 percent of votes more

for APEp, Model 3 in Figure 4 above (see also Table A2 in Appendix B) confirms the robustness of our previous results: electoral support for APEp increases the more restrictive (no funding at all being its supreme expression) the public funding regime.

Trying to go a step further in explaining our findings, and trying to disentangle the impact of public funding on the level of electoral support for APEp, Figure 5 looks at the relationship of direct state subsidies (left) as well as the percentage of votes required for parties to receive financial help from the state (right) and APEp's electoral support, with the bar charts representing the distribution of the independent variables (*PF* and *% votes PF*).

Figure 5. Linear prediction of the percentage of vote for APEp as a function of Public founding (PF) and % of votes required to access to public funding (% votes for PF)

Note: Marginal effects based on M3 Table A2 (Appendix B).

Source: Own elaboration.

On the one hand, the left panel shows that without public funding ($PF = 0$) the support for APEp increases significantly, being the punctual estimation of the linear prediction 25.45. This means that for those countries where state subsidies are not available, the probability of supporting APEp is about 25.45 percent. Conversely, the very same probability in countries with public funding is just of 12.7 percent (even controlling for all of the variables included in Model 1 and Model 3, Table A2 Appendix B). On the other, as the panel on the right illustrates, liberalizing the barriers to access public funding reduces the probability to support APEp. To the point that the probability of a given voter to support APEp in countries with no funding (with an imputed threshold of 7 percent) is of 23 percent, more than 3 times higher than with the lowest voting percentage (0 percent) required to access PF: 7.2 percent. Likewise, and looking at those countries with a payout threshold of 5 percent (the highest in countries with public funding), a given voter exhibits a 18.8 per cent of probabilities to support an APEp, i.e. more than two times the probability to support this type of parties with the lowest payout threshold mentioned above.

All in all, our findings show how, by making political parties more financially dependent from the state, public funding enables them to become not only more transparent and more organizationally stable, but also more responsive to the public interest, ideologically moderate and, less open to the siren songs of big private donors. By making parties more “mainstream”, state subsidies help to combat the rise of APEp,

characterised by their anti-corruption discourse, personalistic organizations, radical (and, frequently, also irresponsible) policies as well as discriminatory (and, more often than not, niche) ideologies (Casal Bértoa and Rama, 2021). Not surprisingly, the effect will be stronger the more generous and comprehensive the public funding regime will be.

Conclusions

Trying to answer a question with extremely important policy implications, and at the same time fill an important gap in the literature, in this article we have examined the relationship between public funding and electoral support for anti-political establishment parties (APEp) in post-communist democracies. This way we have tried to also complement the work of previous scholars who, focusing mostly on campaign - rather than party - funding, have looked at the effects of campaign subsidies and/or reimbursements granted by the state to eligible parties in more consolidated Western democracies.

Additionally, and assuming that most of the APEp fit well under the category of niche political options (Wagner, 2012), as they are characterizing by an issue-ownership and to give salience for specific themes, e.g. anti-immigration, anti-globalization, pro-environment, anti-market, etc., our findings regarding the relevance of public finance to fight against the simple solutions to complex problems that, sometimes characterize this set of parties, is also applicable not only to APEp but also to niche parties.

All in all, our results confirm that access (or not) of political parties to direct public funding matters in order to understand the levels of electoral support for APEp in Eastern and Central Europe (ECE). Thus, we find that direct public funding helps to moderate the level of support for APEp, with such moderating effect being stronger the more liberal the party funding regime is. In other words, not only granting state subsidies to political parties will hinder the rise of APEp in a country, but also making such access available to small parties will help to reduce APEp's electoral success.

Obviously, this has important implications for the development of post-communist ECE countries, characterized by endemically fragile party systems and political institutions. If, as some scholars have pointed out, the rise of APEp fuels political conflict (Powell, 1982), polarization (Sartori, 1976) and illiberalism (Rama and Casal Bértoa, 2020), it is important that as many political parties as possible benefit

from financial state help. This will reduce the financial dependency of political parties, including APEp, from private sources and, consequently, encourage them to moderate their programmes and discourses. This because, as the American writer Mark Twain once put it, “the lack of money is the root of all evil” (Leckey, 2001).

However, and perhaps more importantly, this has major implications in terms of legislative reform. Because if, as we saw in the introduction, the tendency to eliminate and/or reduce public funding to political parties continues to spread, then the rise in support for APEp should not come as a surprise. For this reason, given the negative consequences of such rise for the healthy functioning of democracy, and taking into consideration the findings of this article, both legislators and practitioners (e.g. IDEA, OSCE/ODIHR, IFES, WFD) are encouraged to continue recommending not only the introduction of public funding, especially in unstable post-communist contexts, but also the liberalization of its access. If money really talks, then we should certainly listen.

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Appendix A: Anti-political establishment parties in ECE

. **Albania:** Albanian Communist Party; Albanian Democratic Monarchist Movement; Albanian Green League; Albanian Labour Party; Challenge; Communist Party of Albania 8 November; Democratic National Front Party; Green Party of Albania; Group 99; Legality Movement Party; National Front Party; National Movement-King Zogu I; National Unity Party; Party for Justice and Integration; Party for Justice, Integration and Unity; Party for Justice and Unity; Red and Black Alliance.

. **Bulgaria:** Alliance for the King; Attack; Bulgaria Business Bloc; Bulgaria without Citizenship; Bulgarian Communist Party; Bulgarian Communist Party “Fatherland”; Bulgarian Communist Party-Marxists; Bulgarian Fatherland Party-National Union; Bulgarian Green Federation; Bulgarian National Association; Bulgarian National Ecologist Party; Bulgarian National Radical Party; Bulgarian Revolutionary Party of Youth; Bulgarian Socialist Workers’ Party; Bulgarian Spring; Bulgarian Worker-Rural Party; Bulgarian Workers’ Party; Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria; Coalition “National Union Tsar Kiro”; For the Homeland; Forward Bulgaria Movement; Homeland; IMRO-Bulgarian National Movement; Kingdom of Bulgaria Federation; Kingdom of Bulgaria National Movement for Crowned Democracy; Kingdom of Bulgaria’s Union of Monarchists Order, Law and Justice; Left and the

Green Party; National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria; National Movement Simeon II; National Patriotic Union Party; National Patriotic Unity; National Republican Party; National Union for Tsar Simeon II; National Unity Movement; Party of Bulgarian Women; Party of the Greens; Patriotism 2000; People for Real, Open and United Democracy; People's Voice; Popular Patriotic Left Front; Radical Christian Party; Revival; Simeon II Coalition; The Greens; Union of Bulgarian Patriots; Union of Communists of Bulgaria; Union of Non-partisan Guarantors; Union of Patriotic Forces and Militaries of the Reserve Defence; Volya.

. **Croatia:** Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja; Croatian Labourists-Labour Party; Croatian Party of Rights; Croatian Party of Rights dr. Ante Starčević; Human Blockade; Party of Labour and Solidarity; Socialist Labour Party of Croatia; Sustainable Development of Croatia.

. **Czechia:** Action of Dissatisfied Citizens; Balbín's Poetic Party; Bloc Against Islamisation; Cheer Up-Voting Bloc; Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia; Czech Pirate Party; Czech Sovereignty; Dawn of Direct Democracy; Democratic Left Party; Equal Opportunities Party; Freedom and Direct Democracy; Friends of Beer Party; Independent Democrats; Moravian National Party; Moravians; National Democratic Unity; National Party; New Democracy; Path of Responsible Society; Party of Free Citizens; Realists; Republicans of Miroslav Sládek; Sovereign-Common Sense Party; Stop; The Crown of Bohemia; Workers' Party of Social Justice.

. **Estonia:** Conservative People's Party of Estonia; Estonian Blue Party; Estonian Greens; Estonian Independence Party; Estonian Left Party; Estonian Nationalist Central Union; Estonian Nationalist Independence Party; Estonian United Left Party; Forest Party; Future Estonian Party; Independent Royalist Party; Natural Law Party; Richness of Life; Party of Estonian Greens.

. **Georgia:** Alliance of Patriots; Communist Party; Democratic Movement-United Georgia; Georgian Labour Party; Georgian Troupe; State for a People; United Communist Party of Georgia.

. **Hungary:** Green Party of Hungary; Homeland Is Not For Sale Movement; Hungarian Justice and Life Party; Hungarian Two-tailed Dog Party; Hungarian Workers' Party; Movement for a Better Hungary; Party of Greens; Politics Can Be Different;

. **Kosovo:** Self-determination

. **Latvia:** All for Latvia!; Equal Rights; Euroskeptic Party; Fatherland Union; For an Alternative; For Fatherland and Freedom; For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK; For

Latvia from the Heart; Freedom Party; Green List; Latvia National Independence Party; Latvian Nationalists; Latvian Revival Party; Latvian Russian Union; Latvian's Latvia National Political Defence Organisation; Latvian's Party; Last Party; Mara's Land; Motherland; National Alliance; National Power Unity; Our Land Party; People's Control; People's Movement for Latvia; Responsibility; Russian Party; Socialdemocratic Women's Organization; Socialist Party of Latvia; United for Latvia; Who Owns the State?.

. **Lithuania:** Democratic Party of Labour and Unity; Front Party; Lithuania Liberty Union; Lithuanian Centre Party; Lithuanian Green Party; Lithuanian Liberty League; Lithuanian Nationalist Union; Lithuanian People's Party; Lithuanian Popular Union; Lithuanian Socialist Party; National Progress Party; Order and Justice; Republican Party Socialist People's Front; The Way of Courage; Union of Lithuania's Patriots; Young Lithuania.

. **Moldova:** Communist Reformist Party; Democracy at Home; Ecologist Green Party; Labour Party; Motherland Party; Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova; Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova; Patriots of Moldova; People's Will Party; Popular Movement Anti-Mafia Party; Şor Party: Unity Movement for Equality.

. **Montenegro:** Alternative Montenegro; Fatherland Serbian Party; Montenegrin Communists; Party of Serb Radicals; Serb List; Serb National Alliance; Serb Party; Together.

. **North Macedonia:** Communist Party of Macedonia; Fatherland Macedonian Organisation of Radical Renewal-Vardar-Aegean-Pirin-Prespa; Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party; Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Fatherland; Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization; Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Macedonian; Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Macedonian National Democratic Alliance; League of Communists of Macedonia; Leftist Forces of Macedonia; Macedonian Party; Movement for All-Macedonian Action; National Alternative; National Democratic Party; National Democratic Union; New Democratic Forces; People's Movement of Macedonia; Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification; Radical Party of Serbs in Macedonia; United for Macedonia; Union of Tito's Left Forces; Workers' Party; Workers' Party of Macedonia.

. **Poland:** Ancestral Home; Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic-Freedom and Hope; Committee Zbigniew Stonoga; Confederation of Independent Poland; Congress

of the New Right; Effective; God Bless You!; JOW Non-partisan; Kukiz 2015; League of Polish Families; Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland; Movement for the Republic; National Polish Society; National Revival of Poland Party X; Patriotic Movement; Polish Beer-Lovers' Party; Polish Confederation-Dignity and Work; Polish Labour Party; Polish National Party; Right of the Republic; Self-defence of the Republic of Poland; Social Alternative Movement; Spring; The Greens; Together; Women's Party.

. **Romania:** Alliance for an United Romania; Ecological Convention Party of Romania; Ecologist Party of Romania; Greater Romania Party; Green Ecologist Party; National Christian Democratic Party; National Liberal Ecologist Alliance; New Generation Party-Christian Democratic; Party of the Motherland; Party of the Revival of Romania "Ion Mihalache"; People's Party-Dan Donescu; Republican Party; Romanian National Unity Party; Romanian Socialist Party; Romanian Workers' Party; Save Romania Union; Socialist Alliance Party; Socialist Party of Labour; United Romania Party.

. **Serbia:** Communist Party; Democratic Communist of Serbia; Dveri Movement; Green Party; Movement of Workers and Peasants; None of the Above; Party of Serbian Unity; Republican Party; Russian Party; Serbian Radical Party; Serbian Renewal Movement; Socialist Party of Serbia; Yugoslav Party.

. **Slovakia:** Anti-corruption Party; B-Revolutionary Workers' Party; Chance; Cheerful Political Party; 995-Civic Choice; Coalition for a Modern Slovakia; Common People; Communist Party of Slovakia; Courage-Great National and Pro-Russian Coalition; Green Party; Green Party of Slovakia; Greens; Law and Justice; Left Bloc; Party of National Unification; People's Party Our Slovakia; Rally for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia; Resistance-Labour Party; Slovak National Party; Slovak National Unity; Slovak People's Party; True Slovak National Party; United Labour Party of Slovakia; Union of the Workers of Slovakia; Woman and Family; Workers' Party-Rosa.

. **Slovenia:** Communist Party of Slovenia; Forward Slovenia; Green Alternative of Slovenia; Green Coalition; Greens of Slovenia; I Believe; List of Marjan Šarec; National Labour Party; Party of Ecological Movement of Slovenia; Party of Slovenian People; Republican Association of Slovenia; Slovenian National Party; Slovenian National Right; Slovenian Pirate Party; The Linden; United Slovenia; Voice of Slovenian Women; Youth Party-European Greens.

. **Ukraine:** All-Ukrainian Party of Workers; All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda”; Communist Party of Workers and Peasants; Communist Party of Ukraine; Communist Party of Ukraine (renewed); Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists; Greens; Internet Party of Ukraine; One Rus; Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists; Party of Defenders of the Fatherland; Party of Environmental Help; Party of Greens of Ukraine; Party of Patriotic Forces of Ukraine; Party of Slavic Unity of Ukraine; Party “Union”; Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine; Radical Party; Right Sector; Russian Bloc; Slavic Party; State Independence of Ukraine; Social Ecological Party; Social-National Party of Ukraine; Ukrainian National Assembly; Ukrainian Party “Green Planet”; Ukrainian Party of Honour, Fight with Corruption an Organised Crime

Appendix B: Statistical models

Table A1. Descriptive variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	VIF
<i>Dependent variable</i>						
APEp	149	15.4	12.5	0	54.7	
<i>Control variables</i>						
GDP growth	147	2.4	6.2	-31	30	1.03
ENEP	148	5.6	2.4	2.1	15.7	1.25
TEV	125	23.7	11.5	4.7	61.1	1.21
Lsq	148	7.1	5.0	0.9	33.1	1.11
TOR	148	0.4	0.5	0	1	1.11
YoD	148	12.6	8.8	1	42	1.12
<i>Independent variables</i>						
PF	148	0.7	0.5	0	1	1.20
% votes for PF imputed	148	4.3	2.8	0	7	1.24
% votes for PF	104	2.7	1.5	0	5	1.21

Source: Own dataset

Table A2. Explaining APEp’s support in 19 Eastern European democracies (1990 – 2019)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
GDP growth	-2.12 (1.46)	-1.05 (1.92)	-2.79** (1.41)	-2.02 (1.43)	-0.78 (1.80)	-2.03 (1.41)
ENEP	0.36	1.21	-0.19	0.47	1.22	0.53

	(0.99)	(0.79)	(1.42)	(0.89)	(0.75)	(0.92)
TEV	1.19	1.33	1.44*	1.19	1.24	1.21*
	(0.77)	(0.90)	(0.86)	(0.73)	(0.86)	(0.72)
LSq	-1.26	-2.04***	-1.48*	-1.21	-1.89***	-1.25
	(0.87)	(0.77)	(0.82)	(0.86)	(0.72)	(0.81)
TOR	0.46	1.29	1.46	0.39	1.33	0.85
	(1.27)	(1.47)	(1.45)	(1.24)	(1.35)	(1.34)
PF	-3.68*			-3.42*		
	(2.15)			(2.01)		
YoD	2.55**	2.74*	2.78***	2.54***	2.71**	2.58***
	(1.01)	(1.41)	(0.94)	(0.98)	(1.38)	(0.95)
% votes for PF		3.58*	4.23**		3.38*	2.86*
		(1.90)	(1.96)		(1.91)	(1.54)
Constant	15.61***	15.23***	15.93***	15.51***	15.22***	15.41***
	(1.95)	(2.12)	(1.93)	(1.89)	(2.08)	(1.88)
Observations	113	89	113	113	89	113
Overall R ²	0.25	0.18	0.26			
Log lik.				-418.87	-326.97	-419.14
AIC				857.74	673.93	858.27

Source: Own elaboration; Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; In M1, M2 and M3, errors are clustered by countries. M4, M5 and M6 are hierarchical models with random country effects.

Table A3. Explaining APEp's support in Eastern European democracies (1990 – 2019) – *Jackknife* estimation and excluding extreme cases (APEp > 30% votes)

	M1	M2	M3
GDP growth	-2.066	-0.990	-2.128
	(0.259)	(0.695)	(0.244)
ENEP	1.311	0.675	1.153
	(0.134)	(0.571)	(0.169)
TEV	0.0943	0.379	0.273
	(0.896)	(0.702)	(0.687)
LSq	-1.590**	-1.319	-1.583**
	(0.045)	(0.103)	(0.038)
TOR	0.516	1.408	0.757
	(0.713)	(0.460)	(0.582)
YoD	1.713	2.285	1.985
	(0.248)	(0.173)	(0.183)
PF	-1.647*		
	(0.060)		
% votes for PF		2.567	2.074**
		(0.103)	(0.020)
Constant	13.04***	12.83***	13.11***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
R ²	0.14	0.14	0.16
N countries	19	17	19
N observations	101	83	101

Source: Own elaboration; Notes: P-values in parentheses; * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; In M1, M2 and M3, errors are clustered by countries after jackknife estimation. M2 is closely to be statistically significant at the 90% (p value = 0.103).

