Gov94, Clientelism
Spring 2020

Instructor: Horacio Larreguy (hlarreguy@fas.harvard.edu)

Time: Wednesdays 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Room: K031

Office hours: by appointment

Website: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/70202

Requirement: There are no requirements for this course

This course exposes students to core issues in the literature on clientelism in developing democracies. What are the structures of markets for votes? Which voters or groups of voters are targeted clientelistic exchanges? How do brokers enforce clientelistic exchanges with voters in the presence of a secret ballot? Who are brokers? What are the structures of markets for brokers? How do candidates or political parties enforce brokers' mobilization efforts? How do candidates or parties build political machines to implement clientelistic exchanges? How does political competition affect the markets for votes and brokers? What are the different mechanisms that have been identified as destabilizing clientelistic exchanges? Does clientelism crowd out or complement public service delivery?

Course requirements
(1) Participation: This course is a seminar and students are expected to attend and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings and participate in class discussions every week. (30% of your grade).

(2) Essays: Three (3) times during the semester, students will submit via email an essay that is approximately 750-1000 words long (approximately 3-4 pages). One essay should be submitted for Lectures 2 to 4 on February 28th, another for Lectures 5 to 7 on April 3rd, and the last one for Lectures 8 to 10 on April 24th. In the essay, students should think critically about the readings for those weeks. In your essay, you may follow one of the three following approaches. Ideally, you can think of tackling an issue that you identify as common across the readings of at least two of the weeks. Alternatively, you tackle the readings in one of the weeks. Lastly, and ideally complementing the previous approaches, you can focus on causal identification issues of such readings. The goal of the essays is not to provide a summary of the papers but to articulate the overarching issue, and/or criticize the empirical methods used. What is essential is that there is a single coherent argument that you defend through a clear logic. Essays will be graded on the degree to which they reflect that the student has thoroughly elaborated and defended such an argument while engaging with the readings' argument and empirical identification strategy (30% of grade).
(3) **Paper.** There will be a 10-page paper due at the end of the term but that you will build on it throughout the course. You have to pick a topic or idea you want to explore, and the assignment consists of developing an argument around it, ideally doing some empirical analysis. For example, you might want to study how clientelism is implemented in a country that we do not cover during our required readings. There will be partial submission deadlines. Students will submit the final paper via email (40% of your grade).

**Collaboration policy**
No collaboration is allowed. Students can provide each other offer feedback, and discuss the intuition behind empirical methodological issues, but all idea generation and writing for handed-in assignments must be done individually. In all these assignments students, must adhere to standard citation practices in the discipline and cite any articles, books, websites, etc. that they have used for their work. You can find about Harvard’s academic integrity policy on [https://college.harvard.edu/academics/academic-integrity](https://college.harvard.edu/academics/academic-integrity)

**Summary of lectures**

Lecture 0 (January 24th)

Lecture 1 (February 5th): An introduction to distributive politics and clientelism

Lecture 2 (February 12th): The agency problem between brokers and voters: monitoring votes, monitoring turnout, or targeting reciprocal voters?

Lecture 3 (February 19th): The agency problem between brokers and voters: who is the principal and who the agent?

Lecture 4 (February 26th): The agency problem between brokers and voters: challenging some core assumptions?

**First essay is due on February 28th.**

**March 4th – No class**

Lecture 5 (March 11th): The agency problem between candidates and brokers: selection, and monitoring and incentivizing

**March 18th – Spring break**

Lecture 6 (March 25th): Building clientelistic machines

Lecture 7 (April 1st): Political competition and clientelism

**Second essay is due on April 3rd.**

Lecture 8 (April 8th): Institutions and clientelism
Lecture 9 (April 15th): Anti-clientelism interventions
Lecture 10 (April 22nd) Clientelistic versus programmatic policies
Third essay is due on April 24th.
Lecture 11 (April 29th) Clientelism and social policy

Weekly outline (approximate)

Lecture 0 (January 24th) Introduction to the course

Probably in less than half an hour, I will walk you through the course requirements and course outline.

Lecture 1 (February 5th): An introduction to distributive politics and clientelism

Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) and Stokes et al. (2013)’s introductory book chapters conceptualize clientelism within the broader set of distributive politics and present a series of relevant issues, most of which we tackle during the course.

Required readings

Other readings

Lecture 2 (February 12th): The agency problem between brokers and voters: monitoring votes, monitoring turnout or targeting reciprocal voters?

Nichter (2008) and Stokes (2005) started a debate about the way by which candidates and their brokers enforce clientelistic exchanges in the presence of the secret ballot. While Stokes (2005) assumes that this is not a problem since brokers use social networks to learn how voters vote, Nichter (2008) argues that this is not the case and that instead brokers enforce turnout of
those believed to support their candidates. Finan and Schechter (2012) and Lawson and Greene (2014) add to the debate by providing evidence that brokers target citizens who are likely to reciprocate.

**Required readings**


**Other readings**


**Lecture 3 (February 19th): The agency problem between brokers and voters: who is the principal and who the agent?**

The initial work on how brokers enforce clientelistic exchanges with voters often assumes that voters have little or no choice over which local broker to turn to intermediate their exchanges with candidates. However, Nichter and Peress (2017) and Zarazaga (2014) argue that instead voters are the ones that approach voters and vote for other candidates if their requests are not fulfilled. In turn, Cruz et al. (2019) show how family networks that allow voters to request favors to candidates explain who gets targeted.

**Required readings**

Other readings


Lecture 4 (February 26th): The agency problem between brokers and voters: challenging some core assumptions?

The papers on the enforcement of clientelistic exchanges assume that brokers have great knowledge about citizens’ vote (Stoke 2005), partisanship (Nichter 2008), and social preferences (Finan and Schechter 2012). Duarte et al. (2019) provides evidence supporting that social networks diffuse information about voters to brokers, who leverage it to target voters. In contrast, Brierley and Nathan (2019) and Schneider (2019) provide evidence that brokers have very limited knowledge about voters, while Brierley and Nathan (2019) also show that brokers are selected not because of how well they know voters but as a result of their connections to party elites. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2018) and Robinson and Verdier (2013) further show that clientelistic-exchanges might actually be self-enforcing and that do not require brokers to have great knowledge about citizens. Rueda (2016) suggests that clientelistic-exchanges can be enforced through aggregate monitoring, although it is unclear from his argument how citizens coordinate their voting behavior.

Required readings


Other readings

Lecture 5 (March 11th): The agency problem between candidates and brokers: selection, and monitoring and incentivizing

In contrast to earlier work on clientelism, which focused on the agency problem between brokers and voters, later work focused on the way by which candidates enforce brokers’ effort. Larreguy et al. (2017) and Stokes et al. (2013) highlight the importance of broker selection along two different dimensions. Brierley and Nathan (2019)’s findings chime with Larreguy et al. (2017)’s argument. In turn, Bowles et al. (2019), Larreguy (2013), Larreguy, Marshall, and Querubín (2016, APSR), and Szwarcberg (2014) provide evidence for the importance of broker monitoring and incentivizing.

Required readings


Other readings

**Lecture 6 (March 25th): Building clientelistic machines**

Recent work analyzes how parties, and in particular originally non-dominant parties, set up clientelistic machines. Holland and Palmer-Rubin (2015), Novaes (2018) and Thachil (2014) show how parties outsource clientelistic exchanges to organizations of poor voters. Gingerich (2019) and Gottlieb and Larreguy (2019), in turn, show how candidates learn about which brokers are effective at mobilizing voters and target their resources accordingly.

**Required readings**


**Other readings**


**Lecture 7 (April 1st): Political competition and clientelism**

There is the presumption that clientelism prevails in low competitiveness systems. However, recent work suggests that increased political competition is in some instance associated with more clientelism (Corstange 2018, Weitz-Shapiro 2012). Auerbach and Thachil (2018) further argue that brokers actually compete for voters.
Required readings


Other readings


Lecture 8 (April 8th): Institutions and clientelism

Recent work studies institutional features that explain the persistence and demise of clientelism. Folke et al. (2011) show how reducing the extent of patronage via civil service reform led to the loss of the control of state legislatures and statewide elective offices. Consistent with these findings, Cruz and Keefer (2015) show that public sector reforms are significantly less likely to succeed in the presence of clientelistic incumbent parties. Aidt and Jensen (2017) and Baland and Robinson (2012) show how the introduction of the secret ballot has led to a reduction of clientelism, while Singh (2018) shows that compulsory voting is associated with lower clientelism.

Required readings


Other readings

Lecture 9 (April 15th): Anti-clientelism interventions

More recent work has focused on how to tackle clientelism. Specifically, researchers evaluated the effect of small-scale interventions providing civic education (Vicente 2014) or trying to exploit the same social preferences believed to mediate the enforcement of clientelistic and vote-buying exchanges (Hicken et al. 2018). Blattman et al. (2019) and Vasudevan (2019) study much larger-scale interventions, and the latter’s design is such so that to be able to identify the responses by candidates and their brokers. In turn, Rizzo (2019) evaluate an intervention that reduces bureaucratic administrative costs on clientelism, while others analyze the effect of reducing clients’ dependence on local brokers on incumbent electoral support (Bobonis et al. 2019, Frey 2018, Larreguy et al. 2018).

Required readings


Other readings


Lecture 10 (April 22nd): Clientelistic versus programmatic policies

Clientelistic politics are defined in contrast to programmatic policies. Fujiwara and Wantchekon (2013) and Wantchekon (2003) study whether switching to programmatic policy campaigning,
in contrast to using usual clientelism leads to a reduction in clientelism, as well as whether such strategy is electorally attractive for candidates and where. In turn, Blattman et al. (2019)’s experimental results challenge the premise that clienetlistic and programmatic competition are necessarily substitutes.

**Required**

- **[TO ADD]** Blattman, Chris, Horacio Larreguy, Ben Marx, and Otis Reid. 2019. “Eat Widely, Vote Wisely? Lessons from a Campaign Against Vote Buying in Uganda.”

**Other readings**


**Lecture 11 (April 29th) Clientelism and social policy**

Cruz et al. (2019), Garay and Maroto (2019), and Khemani (2015), among others, show that clientelism effectively crowds out public good provision, which effectively indicates that there is a tradeoff between the two strategies.

**Required readings**


Other readings

