Explaining Resilience in Clientelist Voting: A Cross-National Analysis

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Abstract[1]

There is a tremendous amount of temporal and cross-sectional variation in the prevalence of clientelist voting (voting predicated on individualized benefits obtained from voluntary but asymmetric relationships) and it largely reminds unexplained. Most research on clientelism argues, either explicitly or implicitly, that clientelist voting is a result of poverty, or a deprivation of income and/or economic security.

It might stand to reason, then, that clientelist voting becomes less common as income and economic security increase. This point of view, however, is mistaken. Decreases in poverty can often be a contributing factor for declines in clientelist voting, and clientelist voting is indeed much more common in places with lower levels of income, but this macro-correlation has yet to be seriously examined. In fact, the relation between income and clientelist voting has been overstated in the extant literature.

Indeed, we argue that decreases in clientelist voting require voters to be able to easily and efficiently identify opposition candidates, which in turn requires a highly organized, easy-to-understand context of political information. When this is not present, increases in income do not lead to decreases in clientelist voting.

We use data from the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP), a survey of country experts with questions relating to specific aspects of clientelism, to test the conventional wisdom and our heuristic theory of clientelist voting. We find that income does not affect clientelist voting in countries with complex structures of information contexts.

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[1] This article draws substantially from one of the author's dissertations (Lloyd 2016).

Introduction

Clientelist voting is hardly a recent phenomenon. From Tammany Hall and the 19th-century UK to Ancient Athens and the Roman Republic,[2] clientelism—the exchange of money, goods, or in-kind benefits for votes between politicians and individual voters—has been an important and prominent way of winning votes. What causes people who used to vote clientelistically to stop voting on that basis? And, most importantly, what may cause that to not happen?

There is a tremendous amount of temporal and cross-sectional variation in the prevalence of clientelist voting, and it largely reminds unexplained. Most research on clientelism argues, either explicitly or implicitly, that clientelist voting is a result of poverty, or a deprivation of income and/or economic security (see Banfield and Wilson 1963; Scott 1972 and Hicken 2007 for good overviews; Stokes 2007; Stokes et al. 2013).

The central argument of this article is relatively counterintuitive: increases in income do not necessarily produce decreases in clientelist voting. In this article, we use cross-national expert surveys on clientelism to argue that decreases in clientelist voting only happen alongside increases in economic security in environments with highly structured information environments for voters. In other environments, changes in income are not guaranteed to have any effect.

The predominant argument about clientelist voting is that it is something that poor countries and poor people do. Scott argued in 1969 that the "perhaps the most fundamental quality shared by the mass clientele of machines is poverty" (Scott 1969, 1150)—after all, as Banfield and Wilson noted, "almost without exception, the lower the average income," the more

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[2] In addition to the Roman Republic, there is also evidence that forms of patronage and clientelism were used in Ancient Athens and the Ancient Near East. See, for instance, Westbrook 2005; Yakobson 1999; Finley 1983; Gallant 1991.

dependable wards were to American political machines (Banfield and Wilson 1963, 118). "It is impossible to survey the qualitative literature on political clientelism," says Stokes (2007, 617), "without concluding that it is a feature disproportionately of poor countries." As a result, the conventional wisdom is that increasing economic security decreases clientelist voting, and it seems to follow: taking away the main correlate of clientelist voting would seem to nip it in the bud.

This line of thinking is somewhat, but not entirely, right. Clientelist voting is indeed affected by decreases in political parties' monitoring ability, but it need not decrease as economic security increases. This is because money can serve not only as a bribe, but also as an information heuristic, in environments with highly unstructured information due to surpluses of candidates. In this environment, voters become demotivated about seeking out information about candidates, and—unless they already have prior party identification—are indifferent about which candidate wins. In these situations, they lose nothing by selling their votes to the highest bidder.

As a result, increases in economic security have little effect on clientelist voting in countries with high numbers of parties—something that has thus far been overlooked by the literature. The central argument of this article that increases in income do not necessarily produce decreases in clientelist voting. We argue that, while monitoring ability and party identification do affect the rate of clientelist voting (positively and negatively, respectively), income only affects it in countries with few parties, but not in countries with many parties.

THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT: CLIENTELIST VOTING AS A CONCEPT

We know much about many of the influences on voting behavior—candidate characteristics (Fridkin and Kenney 2011; Funk 1996, 1999), retrospective performance (Fiorina 1981; Key 1966; Kramer 1971; Achen and Bartels 2004; Kiewiet and Rivers 1984), and policies

(Downs 1957; Grofman 1985; Jackson 1975; Tomz and Van Houweling 2008), for instance—but not all of them. A neglected but important variable is the individualized benefit at the heart of clientelist politics. What makes some voters weigh such benefits more or less heavily than the appeal of a candidate, his/her past performance, or his/her policies? The short answer is that we do not know.

Following Lloyd (2016), we define clientelist voting as voting predicated on individualized benefits obtained from voluntary but asymmetric relationships. Individualized benefits are benefits such as money, goods, favors, or in-kind benefits that are given directly to an individual voter in exchange for political support.[3] An essential characteristic of this relationship is its being individualized—voters enter individual compacts with patrons and are expected to uphold their end of the bargain by voting for their patron, often running the risk of punishment if they do not.

Clientelist voting is voluntary because it is an exchange, not a relationship imposed by fiat; clients enter into agreements with patrons (see Hilgers 2008, 125; Kitschelt 2000, 849). It is also, however, asymmetric (see, for instance, Graziano 1976); the patron inherently has more power by virtue of his/her superior socioeconomic position and/or access to the state, and can therefore offer benefits to others who are less fortunate, threatening punishment if they suspect the client has reneged on the agreement (Kaufman 1974).

This definition focuses on the voter's side of the equation, and encompasses several different types of related phenomena. It is voting that can be based on "clientelism" in the broadest and most commonly used sense: a long-term, often affective, relationship between

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[3] This definition is similar to Susan Stokes' definition of clientelism as "the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?" See Stokes 2007, 604–605.

patron and client in which the client depends on the patron, living in the same community as her (Hilgers 2011; Kaufman 1974; Lemarchand and Legg 1972, 151). It also can be based on "vote buying," which is generally conceptualized as a short-term transactional arrangement often taking place on the eve of the election (Schaffer 2007). It also can be based on "patronage," or the distribution of public jobs and positions in exchange for votes and political support (Remmer 2007; Robinson and Verdier 2013; Stokes 2007).

All these phenomena are included in our definition of clientelist voting because they share the essential characteristics of individualized benefits (benefits directed to specific people, not to groups of people), voluntariness (clients voting of their own free will, not due to overt coercion), and asymmetry (the patron having more power and socioeconomic influence than the client). This excludes several related concepts, such as pork barrel politics and populist redistribution programs because they are directed to groups of people or districts, not individuals (Hilgers 2008; Stokes 2007).[4]

In several senses, clientelist voting is not all-or-nothing, either ecologically or on an individual level. Ecologically, not all voting is necessarily or typically clientelist even in areas and at times where and when it is prevalent. As a matter of the individual voter's calculus, some of those swayed by clientelist considerations may also base their votes on policy proximity (voting for the candidate/party whose policy positions are closest to the voter's),[5] candidate factors (voting for the candidate with the most appealing personality or background),[6] or retrospective judgments of the parties or candidates (voting on the basis of the goodness or

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[4] *Bolsa Familia* often is criticized by the Brazilian right as being clientelist, but under our definition, it does not count because it is not directed toward individuals specifically, but rather people with a pre-defined set of characteristics.

[5] See, for instance, Downs 1957; Grofman 1985; Jackson 1975; Tomz and Van Houweling 2008.

[6] See, for instance, Fridkin and Kenney 2011; Funk 1996, 1999. Some characteristics, such as charisma, remain understudied, however.

badness of "the times").[7] Any one vote may reflect all these and other considerations in varying proportions, and the proportions need not be same in every vote cast by a given voter. A voter may base his or her vote for president chiefly on party, his or her vote for governor chiefly on policy, and his or her vote for state-level congressman chiefly on individualized benefits.

Likewise, for the parties and candidates waging campaigns, clientelism often coexists with other strategies.[8] Some may rely more heavily on clientelism to win votes, and others more heavily on policies, charisma, descriptive representation, or other factors. This too is seldom all-or-nothing: candidates using clientelism often also make policy-based appeals, just as more policy-focused parties often make clientelistic ones.

As a result, clientelism needs to be treated like—and alongside—other determinants of vote choice. Its importance varies from country to country, from voter to voter, and from election to election. It is one explanatory variable, albeit an important one, among many. We attempt to do this here. We estimate a number of effects (not just clientelism's) on vote choice, each controlling for others. This analysis will help explain how and why the importance of individual benefits can decrease significantly and permanently, as has already happened in many democracies.

THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

The most common—if often implicit—argument in the clientelist literature is that increases in economic security will lead to decreases in clientelist voting. Without sufficient economic security, so the argument goes, voters will feel more pressure to sell their votes. When

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[7] Some of the most influential works in this vein include Fiorina 1981; Key 1966; Kramer 1971. Also see Achen and Bartels 2004; Kiewiet and Rivers 1984 for useful reviews of this literature.

[8] Works that take this perspective are relatively rare, but do exist. See, for instance, Lindberg and Morrison 2008, for one example applied to the context of Ghana.

they reach a sufficient level of economic security, however, they will begin to vote on the basis of heretofore latent motivations that they had been sublimating in the face of economic necessity.

Increases in economic security could be accomplished through general increases in income for a given population, or through social programs that guarantee access to essential resources, such as income, food, or education. With the benefits in which clientelist politicians trade already secured, the overtures that used to work no longer would. Clientelist voting should therefore decrease as economic security increases.

This could happen because of two reasons that could either act independently or complementarily. The first is marginal utility. As the President of Mexico's Electoral Federal institute once noted, "for a lot of people, one kilo of sugar or beans is more important than a vote. There are unscrupulous political operatives who know these needs and will find ways to capitalize on them" (Cornelius 2004, 47).[9] Every dollar is worth more to someone who makes few of them; a payment of 25 *reais* can be a significant amount of money for a poor peasant making less than a *real* a day, even if it is pocket change for a wealthy politician.

With more economic security, voters may feel free to vote on other bases, like policy preferences or candidate likability. As a voter's economic security increases, a politician may need to pay more to achieve the same electoral effect.

For example, Christmas turkeys and hods of coal were once used frequently to buy votes in the United States in the 19th and early 20th century. Such in-kind payments were significant for poor households lacking economic security and served as tokens of a politician's friendship (Banfield and Wilson 1963, 117–18). A comparable gift, however, would be unlikely to impress

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[9] This quote is also reminiscent of Banfield and Wilson's famous insight on political machines in American politics: "The existence of the machine depends on its ability to control votes. This control becomes possible when people…place a lower value on their votes than they do on the things which the machine can offer in exchange for them" (Banfield and Wilson 1963, 116–17).

the average middle-class (or even working-class) American nowadays. To achieve an equivalent effect, a politician may have to do something much grander and more expensive (perhaps help with a mortgage payment?).

These increases in payments, when aggregated, should bankrupt all but the wealthiest politicians.[10] Even if gifts are merely indicators of friendship (and friendship were the real factor affecting one's vote), it would become more expensive to provide gifts of substance as voters' economic security increased. Increases in economic security can decrease the value of clientelist payments, which eventually prices out clientelist politicians.

The second reason is a change in values. For an extremely poor person, what matters most is survival. For those without money or food, money and food will win their vote; it is what matters most. For those who are illiterate or who lack access to the state, help in receiving state benefits will win their vote. For those without the means to further their children's education, a letter of recommendation or access to a scholarship can win their vote. The allure of up-front benefits and the promise of future tangible benefits are too strong to pass up.

When these basic needs are met, however, voters begin to want other things. Self-expression, political participation, and the ability to influence policy, for instance, are distinctly secondary desires when one's basic needs have not been met, but these desires can become much more important when these needs are, and they are less tangible and less fungible. When a voter's primary goal regarding politics is representation or participation, not survival, it becomes much more difficult to get him/her to forfeit his/her vote.

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[10] Banfield and Wilson, in fact, note that even in the U.S.'s age of clientelism, politicians could not afford to buy *every* vote—they would pick and choose to whom to give tokens of friendship during particular elections, only partaking in this practice because they knew that the reciprocal obligations of the friendship signaled by such a gift would likely last for several elections (Banfield and Wilson 1963).

As an example, even the notorious *favelas* in Brazil have become home to "a citizen who is ever more demanding with public services," according to Renato Meirelles, a researcher on favelas. "He doesn't want dentures, he wants broadband internet. He doesn't want a *cesta básica*,[11] but access to universities" (Marsigilia 2014). When access to basic health and food needs is assured, voters begin to want more expensive goods—often those that require extensive public investment. Parties who use clientelism face severe problems when voters' demands begin to evolve in these ways, and must either change their style of politics or wither away.

In terms of theory, this hypothesis is consistent with several formal models of how clientelist parties distribute goods and how clientelism prospers (Medina and Stokes 2002; Stokes 2005. Stokes et al. 2013). Empirically, it finds cross-sectional support in a variety of places. In Africa, many voters choose clientelist parties over programmatic ones, figuring that a winning clientelist party will retaliate against those who did not support it, whereas a winning programmatic party will not (van de Walle 2007). In Argentina (Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004; Calvo and Murillo 2004), Nigeria (Omobowale and Olutayo 2010), Italy (Chubb 1981), Mexico (Fox 1994), Latin America generally (Stokes et al. 2013), and the early-20th-century U.S. (Banfield and Wilson 1963), the poor and economically insecure are/were more likely to be part of a clientelist relationship.

A corollary argument in the literature is that the ability to monitor clients' votes has a major effect on clientelist voting. To ensure that clientelist voters are holding up their side of the bargain, clientelist candidates need to monitor who actually votes for them and who does not. Otherwise, cheating—accepting money but then voting for other parties or candidates—may rise, undermining the utility of clientelism for the parties and candidates.

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[11] A basket of food staples often distributed by government social welfare programs

In a one-shot game in which a party offers a clientelist incentive, the equilibrium will be for no vote-buying to occur. If the voter moves first, the patron will always defect—accept the client's vote, based on a promise of payment, but not pay—leading the client, knowing this, to vote for whomever he/she preferred in the first place (Stokes 2007). Likewise, if the patron moves first, the client will always defect—accept the payment but vote for whomever he/she prefers—leading the patron, knowing this, to forego trying to buy the vote in the first place.

This changes in a repeated game parameterizing the probability that the patron detects a voter's defection. This probability represents the effectiveness of a clientelist party's monitoring system. The "folk theorem" states that a repeated game can have an equilibrium if both players are sufficiently patient because any gains from a one-time defection will amount to less than the gains from cooperation in every future period. The more effective the monitoring, the likelier this type of equilibrium becomes (Stokes 2005, 2007).

Legal inhibitions (notably, the secret ballot) and prohibitions of vote buying, now widely adopted around the world (Schaffer 2007, 6), have made monitoring more difficult. The secret ballot reduces patrons' incentives to engage in clientelism, while criminalizing the practice creates disincentives for patrons and clients alike. Yet regulations are probably not the primary reason for long-term declines in clientelist voting. Regulations outlawing vote buying usually do not make monitoring impossible or even infeasible; clientelist parties can work around them. (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, 43). Many brokers can infer which clients voted for whom. Nearly 80% of party brokers in Argentina (a country with secret ballots) said they would be able to tell if a neighbor voted for an opposing candidate, primarily because of their presence in community networks (Stokes et al. 2013, 100). While they may have economic and

psychological motivations to play this ability up to themselves and to an interviewer, it is not altogether impossible for them to make reasonably accurate educated guesses.

Urbanization can make clientelist voting less prevalent. Clientelism is more prevalent in smaller rural areas and ethnic enclaves, both of which tend to consist of residents who have lived there for generations (Stokes et al. 2013). Brokers there, themselves area residents, know about their fellow residents' political sympathies and personal lives. Furthermore, with small numbers of voters in given electoral jurisdictions, electoral brokers could monitor their clients by looking at aggregate vote outcomes and relying on their knowledge of the local community to fill in the blanks (Gingerich and Medina 2013).

The anonymity and transience of city life, by contrast, as well as the increased size of electoral districts, make monitoring much more difficult. Urbanization therefore spelled trouble for clientelist politicians in Britain in the 19th century and the United States in the early/mid-20th century (Stokes et al. 2013; Vicente n.d.). Without the ability to monitor clients, there was no point in paying them because their votes will not be ensured.

In summation, there does seem to be a correlation between poverty and clientelist voting: poor countries have more clientelist voting than middle-income and rich countries, and within those countries, poor individuals seem to vote more clientelistically than the middle and upper classes. As a result, the conventional wisdom argues that a increases in economic security (or decreases in inequality—Hicken 2007; Robinson and Verdier 2013) should explain decreases in clientelist voting.

Yet the direct evidence for the central claim here—that increases in economic security lead to decreases in clientelist voting—remains rather thin. These cross-sectional correlations are merely suggestive, and few scholars have made systematic efforts to analyze changes in levels of

clientelist voting. The one major exception is Stokes et al. (2013), who use historical sources to track the decline of clientelism in the U.S. and the U.K. They find that population growth and urbanization, combined with economic development, change relationships between party leaders and brokers. Brokers lose the ability to efficiently monitor voters' choices as electoral districts get larger, and the center of gravity shifts from the poor, who are less demanding of brokers, to the middle class, who want more. As a result, party leaders opt for more programmatic ways of winning votes, reasoning that they are more efficient at reaching many middle-class voters at once, particularly as electoral brokers become less effective at supplying votes (Stokes et al. 2013).

The problem with this analysis is that it has a case selection bias. Both the U.S. and U.K. have, and historically have had, first-past-the-post electoral systems, with many elections involving only two viable candidates. This may help explain one of the main sources of variation for declines in clientelist voting: the number of parties. In Brazil, for example, executive elections (from president to mayor) are majoritarian run-off elections, but lower-house elections use open-list proportional representation. This—along with federalism (André Borges 2015)—leads to high numbers of parties and candidates (André Borges and Lloyd 2016). In 2014, voters in the Federal District (*Distrito Federal,* or DF) had to choose from 127 candidates for federal deputy and 978 for *deputado distrital*[12] out of 35 parties—in addition, of course, to picking a president, a governor, and a senator. This is no easy task, even for a political sophisticate.

In short, the U.K. and U.S. are settings that are unusually generous from a comparative perspective in regards to the informational environment facing voters. But when it comes to

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[12] *Deputados distritais* are district-level deputies in the federal district of Brazil. The equivalent in other states is the *deputado estadual*, or state deputy.

countries with more complicated information environments, can one really guarantee that decisions about voting on the basis of clientelism will work the same way?

A THEORY OF VOTE BUYING

Decreases in clientelist voting may very well require increases in economic security as an antecedent condition, but we argue that they also require a specific necessary condition: the ability to easily and efficiently identify opposition candidates.

Outside first-past-the-post systems, many more parties and candidates typically compete for a given position (Clark 2006; Duverger 1954; Riker 1982). First-past-the-post systems also affect candidates' incentives to pursue a personal vote rather than win votes for their parties (Carey and Shugart 1993; Hicken 2007). This is not to say, as Kitschelt (2000) or Hicken (2007) does, that electoral systems that encourage personalist voting *necessarily* encourage clientelist voting. As Stokes (2007) rightly notes, they are not necessarily the same thing. What it does mean, however, is that countries with large numbers of effective parties—which sometimes, coincidentally, do incentivize a personal vote—offer information structures that are so disorganized that they require personal, face-to-face appeals (such as clientelist offers) to reach voters.

The number of candidates in a political system, in other words, is extraordinarily important because it complicates the voting environment exponentially, making the use of cognitive heuristics even more imperative for voters. Cognitive heuristics, in turn, matter even more because voters only have the willingness and ability to absorb a certain amount of information (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Downs, 1957; Rahn, Aldrich, and Borgida 1994).

In political systems with many candidates, a given candidate's probability of winning becomes extremely difficult to assess ex-ante. There is a difference between a voter's ability to understand the differences between two candidates and her ability to do so for 500 or 1,000, and for lower-house legislative elections in countries like Brazil, this number of candidates is normal. For countries like the U.S. and the U.K., political choices arrive at the average voter already organized, as Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock (1991, 28–29) put it, this process is easier because there are generally only two competitive candidates per race.

Voters become very uncomfortable when assessing probabilities (Popkin 1991), particularly vague ones. In open-list proportional representation, these probabilities are nothing if not vague; the winner of a seat can depend on the vote of a multi-party coalition, and then within that coalition, individual candidates' vote totals. But how can the average voter know if a given candidate will: 1) be part of a coalition that will win lots of seats, 2) beat out other hundreds of competitors within that coalition for seats?

This high number of parties leads to a surplus of information and a deficit of information structure. Rennó (2006) refers to this as the "rich man's dilemma": too many options and only one choice. Voters—particularly those in countries where voting is compulsory—are expected to interpret large volumes of information about politics without much in the way of guidance (Power and Garand 2007; Power and Roberts 1995).

This high cognitive load makes it difficult for all but the very most knowledgeable of voters to form on-line judgments of candidates (Bargh and Thein 1985; Rahn, Aldrich, and Borgida 1994), and the uncertainty that is part and parcel of such an environment makes it more likely that voters will rely on memory-based candidate evaluation processes (McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger 2003; McGraw, Lodge, and Stroh 1990; Rahn, Aldrich, and Borgida 1994; Zaller

1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992). Memory-based candidate evaluation processes tend to result in weaker attitudes (Bizer et al. 2006) and less reliable judgment (Dijksterhuis and Knippenberg 1995). And the more candidates there are in an election, the less likely voters are to seek out information on them (Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Rennó 2004, 2006).[13] An overload of unstructured information can lead to paralysis and a lack of preference.

As a result, many voters in systems with highly unstructured information settings head to the polls uninformed or apathetic about the candidates. For instance, in Brazil, a country with many parties and candidates (Power and Garand 2007; Power and Roberts 1995; Rennó 2006), there is an alarmingly high rate of voter error (Nicolau 2015; Zucco Jr. and Nicolau 2016), as well as blank and spoilt ballots (Kouba and Lysek 2016). These voters without candidate preferences are the prime targets for election-day vote buying efforts (Lloyd, Turgeon, and Gramacho 2016).

More "traditional" voting heuristics are not particularly practical in countries with so many candidates and parties. That does not, of course, mean that other heuristics aren't developed and used. Candidates, for instance, focus their campaign efforts on certain geographical areas or segments of the population, which, can filter out those who do not campaign in a given area. Yet this is not always a reliable or a consistent heuristic: the number of candidates campaigning in a given area or for a given subset of voters varies by city and by election (Ames 2001; Rennó 2006).

As recent ethnographic work has shown, many low-sophistication voters use something else as a heuristic—and it's not particularly helpful for decreasing clientelist voting: whether the

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[13] And in the case of Lau and Redlawsk, that was only with increasing the number of candidates from two to four!

candidate can afford to pay voters or not. If she can, maybe she has a chance. If not, she's not worth the fuss.

In other words, providing money to voters is multipurpose: it not only is used to convince someone to vote for you, but can also increase one's vote totals more indirectly by incentivizing the turnout of voters likely to support you anyway (Nichter 2008) and indicating that you have enough resources to get elected (M. Borges 2016; Kramon 2016; Muñoz 2014). Voters in contexts with unstructured political information use candidates' abilities to buy votes as a voting heuristic and, in the absence of other factors that may determine their votes in environments with more structured information, they often end up voting for those same people.

Clientelist voting can survive in these environments because the benefits used to buy votes serve as valuable, easily-digestible information in a complex political information environment. This is not just information for information's sake: it signals one's viability as a candidate (Muñoz 2014). For poorer people, this is crucial information, even with a certain level of economic security. Picking an unviable candidate is a waste of one of the only resources they have: their vote.[14]

As a result, there is no guarantee that clientelist relationships will break down even if clients feel more economically secure because one of the fundamental causes of clientelist voting—this lack of structured information—will still be present. Furthermore, even if long-term clientelist relationships do break down, there is no guarantee that voters will not still want to vote clientelistically and sell their vote. Economic security and structured information, in other words, are both necessary conditions for clientelist voting to decrease.

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[14] See Borges 2016.

This explains why these countries have seen decreases in clientelist voting arrive relatively quickly after income increased, but others have not. Clientelist voting can start out based on traditional social relationships, which may weaken with development, but it does not necessarily need them to survive. It can still, even if weakened, morph into short-term vote buying.

Model Specification

The following model reflects this argument:

$$y_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 x_{i1} + \gamma_2 x_{i2} + \gamma_3 (x_{i1} * x_{i2}) + \gamma_4 x_{i3} + \gamma_5 x_{i4} + u_i$$

where:

y_i is the dependent variable, a measure of clientelist voting in a given country;

x_{i1} is an income variable;

x_{i2} is the number of parties in the country;

x_{i3} represents the monitoring capacity of parties in the country;

x_{i4} is the percentage of voters who identified with a political party;

and u_i is an error term.

We estimated the model with linear regressions and OLS estimation. Our key hypothesis is that the inclusion of a product term multiplying x_{i1} by x_{i2} would change the relationship between income and clientelist voting, nullifying any negative effect of x_{i1} that might be predicted by the conventional wisdom. This would be because countries with high effective numbers of parties necessarily have complex, unstructured information contexts that make the

effective adjudication of candidates very difficult, even with higher levels of economic security. Given this, γ_3, the coefficient for the product term, should be positive and its estimate significant.

We expected the total effects of x_{i1}, accounting for both γ_1 *and* γ_3, the coefficient for the interaction term, to not be statistically significant. Meanwhile, the total effects of x_{i2}, which measures the effective number of parties of each country (the number of parties in a country, accounting for the concentration and fractionalization of votes--Laakso and Taagepera 1979), should be positive.

We also expected enforcement capacity to have a positive effect on clientelist voting, although we were not sure whether this would be limited by effective number of parties or other conditioning factors. Still, the possibility of retribution should increase clientelist voting, even in this revised model, so γ_4 should be positive and its estimate significant.

Finally, we believed that the degree to which voters identified with parties would also affect clientelist voting, decreasing it. Identifying with a party would make it more likely for voters to have *a priori* preferences regarding candidates, avoiding the type of indifference that we hypothesize leads to a resilience in clientelist voting. Consequently, γ_5 should be negative.

Data

We used data from the Democratic Accountability Linkages Project (DALP) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) as the primary sources for our cross-national analysis. The former contains information on the extent of clientelism in countries across the world, whereas the latter has information about political and electoral systems across the world.

The DALP is a cross-national survey that was administered in 2008 and 2009 to country experts about the degree to which democratic accountability and clientelist practices are prevalent in given countries. Eighty-eight countries from six continents are included in the

dataset, with questions about specific clientelist practices, such as monitoring votes and offering consumer goods to voters in exchange for votes (Kitschelt 2013). Most questions are asked at both the country level—about countries as a whole—and about individual political parties within the country. The measure would have been better for our purposes if it had included changes in the levels of clientelism of parties, but it only collected one wave of data, and no other comparable datasets are available, to our knowledge.

Clientelist voting—the dependent variable—was measured by a vote buying statistic: experts' judgments on whether individual parties look to win votes by distributing in-kind benefits. Experts were asked to determine how much effort candidates and parties expended to attract voters by providing consumer goods, ranging from 0 (a negligible effort or none at all) to 4 (a major effort). Likewise, the monitoring and enforcement capacity of the parties in a country was measured by experts' responses to whether parties could assess any consequences to individuals or groups of voters if they promised to vote for the parties but did not deliver on their promise. Answers ranged from 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

The CSES has had four waves since 1996, and includes a wide variety of micro-level and macro-level data that are collected after elections in a variety of countries (CSES 2015, 2016). we used the third and fourth waves, ranging from 2006-2016, because they included variables on party and electoral systems, such as the number of effective parties and the number of per country.

Measures for the effective number of parties were also taken from the CSES. While better proxies for the complexity of given countries' information environments are currently being developed (Turgeon and Lloyd 2017), they are still in development. As a result, we used

CSES' effective number of parties measure—an important determinant of the complexity of political environments—as a proxy for the time being.

Partisan identification was measured by aggregating the number of CSES respondents in an individual country who answered that they felt close to a particular party. An individual's response of 1 indicated that they did feel close to a party, while 5 indicated that they did not—these figures are country averages of these responses. Income data were measured with natural logarithms of the World Bank's GDP/capita data.

Descriptive Statistics

To get our vote buying statistic—the dependent variable for this analysis, we took the mean answer for each party, multiplied it by the average number of votes it had gotten in the last two lower-house legislative elections, and added it together. These figures ranged from a minimum of 97.4 (Switzerland) to a high of 381.42 (Jamaica), as seen below in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: VOTE BUYING STATISTIC
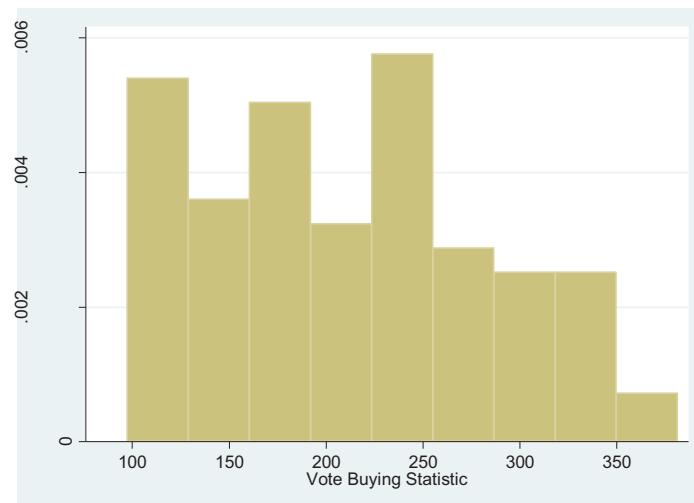

Source: Kitschelt 2013

We used the same method to measure the monitoring capacity of clientelist parties in a given country, taking the mean answer for each party to the monitoring question on the DALP, multiplying it by the average number of votes it had gotten in the last two lower-house legislative elections, and adding it together to get an index. A distribution of the scores can be seen below in Figure 2, ranging from 0 (Germany, Greece, Switzerland, Australia, and Slovakia) to Lebanon (85.04).

FIGURE 2: PARTIES' MONITORING CAPABILITIES
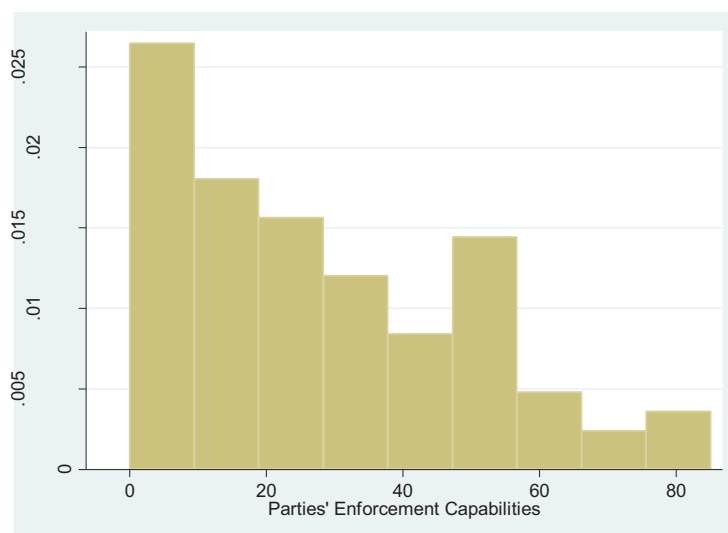
Source: Kitschelt 2013

As seen in Figure 3, party identification data from the CSES ranged from 1.29 (New Zealand), indicating a very high degree of partisan identification, to 4.52 (Thailand), indicating almost none.

**FIGURE 3: COUNTRIES' LEVELS OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION**
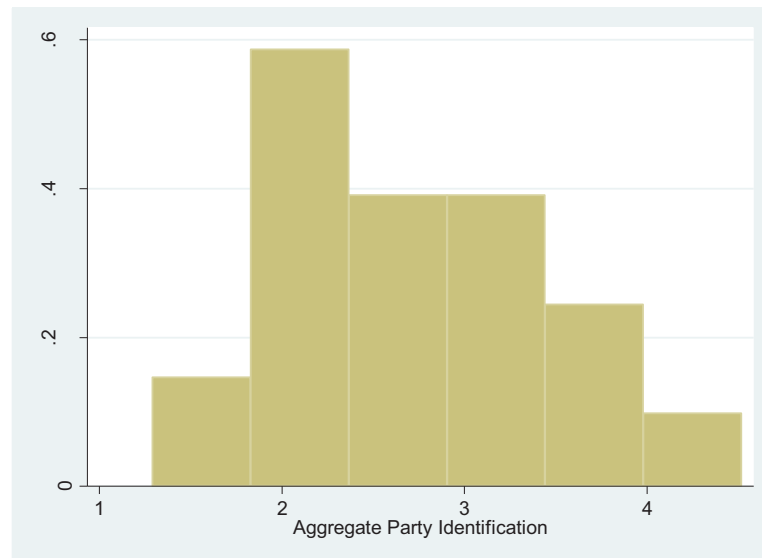
Source: CSES 2015, 2016

Meanwhile, the aggregated measure of effective number of parties ranged from a low of 2.02 (Taiwan) to a high of 19.38 (Thailand). Our measure was composed of an average of two separate measures—the effective number of electoral parties in a given country and the effective number of parliamentary parties in that country
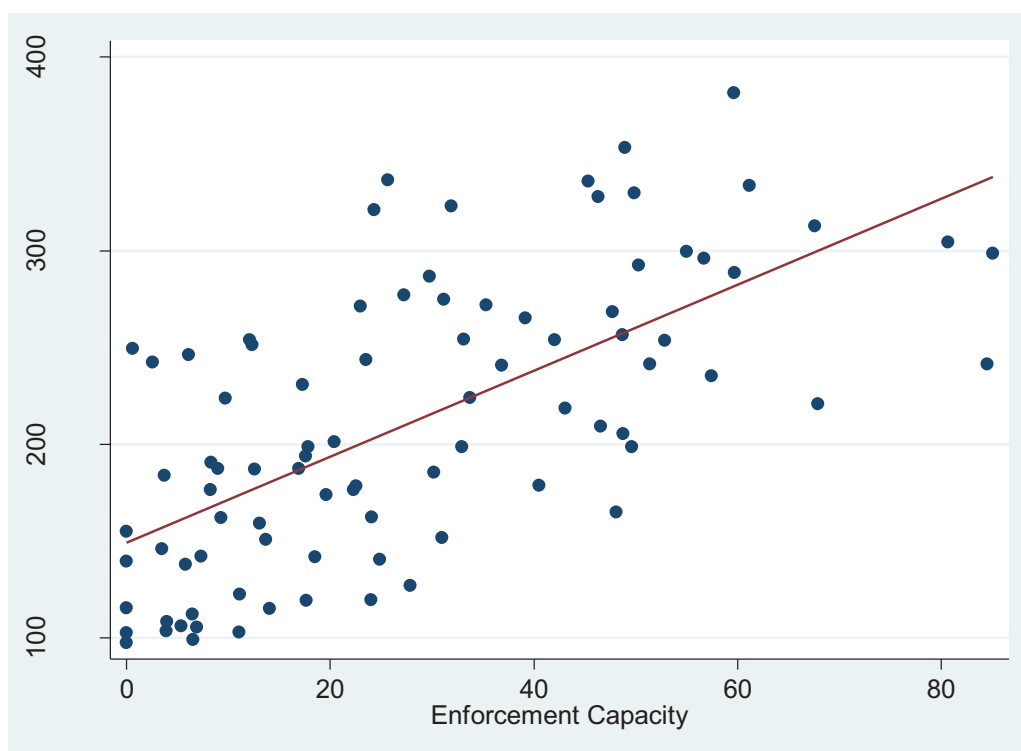
FIGURE 4: COUNTRIES' EFFECTIVE NUMBERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES
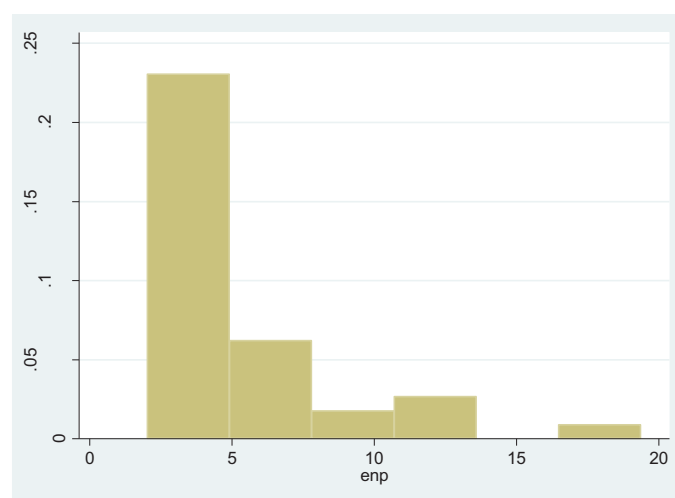
Source: CSES 2015, 2016

FIGURE 5: LNGDP/CAPITA VS. VOTE BUYING STATISTIC
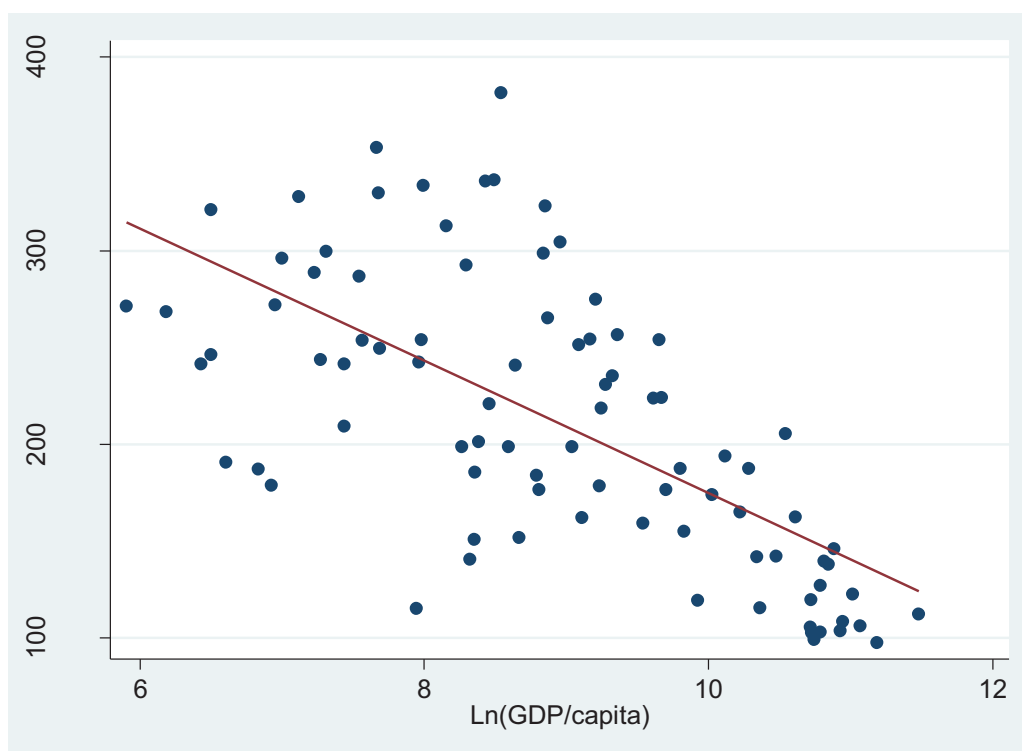
Source: Kitschelt 2013, World Bank

FIGURE 6: ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY VS. VOTE BUYING STATISTIC

Source: Kitschelt 2013

Results

With a model that did not include an interaction term, we found that both enforcement capacity and income do indeed have statistically significant effects on the vote-buying variable. The conventional wisdom does seem to be borne out here. This can be seen below in Table 1 and Figure 5.

TABLE 1: VOTE BUYING STATISTIC, WITHOUT PRODUCT TERM

Variables	Coefficient (std. error)	P
Enforcement Capacity	2.55 (0.50)	0.02**
LnGDP/capita	-20.87 (8.61)	0.02***
ENP	-.68(2.29)	0.77
Aggregate Party ID	10.86(13.45)	0.43
N	37	
F	<0.001***	
R^2	0.57	
*=p<.1, **=p<.05, ***=p<.01		

Source: Kitschelt 2013, World Bank, CSES

Yet when we included our product term, the effect of income was nullified when the effective number of parties was greater than 5, as Figure 7 shows below.[15] The estimates of the total effects of all coefficients on x_{i1} fall well below the level of significance when the product term is included, as can be seen in Table 2.[16] Income only matters when the number of parties is sufficiently low.

[15] We also, in alternate specifications, used measures for electoral formulas (majoritarian vs. open-list PR vs. closed-list PR), urbanization rates, HDI, district magnitude, purchasing power parity, the Gini coefficient, compulsory voting, the age of the democracy in question, Freedom House and Polity ratings, and literacy rates, but found no significant effects for any of them. There were not sufficient data over the time period we were looking at in the CSES database to evaluate the effect of Internet and cell phone access on vote buying, or the effect of extreme poverty rates. We also created an index from political knowledge questions in the data, and this did indeed have a significant positive effect on the vote buying in some specifications.

[16] These results also held when using a more general clientelist summary statistic as the dependent variable. GDP/capita also became insignificant with the introduction of the interactive GDP/capita and ENP product term, although the coefficient for the product term itself was not significant. That said, this measure is less direct when it comes to measuring vote buying specifically; it includes other factors such whether the party in question manipulates regulatory mechanisms to benefit its supporters. While this is not unrelated to clientelism, not every scholar would include it as an essential component of clientelism, and it's not necessarily related directly to clientelist voting. As a result, it makes more sense to put more stock in the original vote-buying dependent variable.

TABLE 2: VOTE BUYING STATISTIC, WITH PRODUCT TERM

Variables	Coefficient (std. error)	P
LnGDP/capita	-123.45(38.09)	<0.01***
Effective Number of Parties	-13.31(5.04)	0.01***
LnGDP*ENP	97.89 (35.57)	0.01***
Enforcement Capacity	1.54 (0.46)	<0.01***
Partisan Identity	2.11(12.66)	0.87
N	37	
f-value	<0.01***	
r-squared	0.66	
	*=p<.1, **=p<.05, ***=p<.01	

Source: Kitschelt 2013, World Bank, CSES

FIGURE 7: AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS OF LOGGED GDP/CAPITA WITH 95% CIS
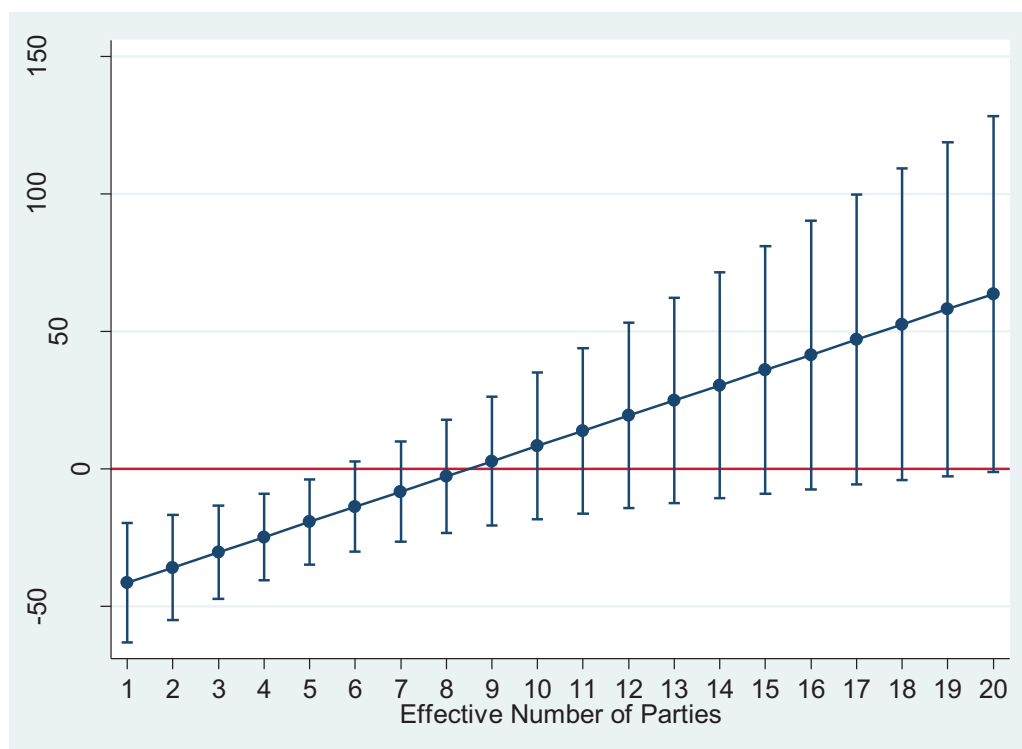
Source: Kitschelt 2013, World Bank, CSES

Another notable effect is how much of the dependent variable's variance was explained by the introduction of the interactive variable; the R-squared statistic increased considerably (to 0.66) with the product term in Table 2 as opposed to without it (0.57) in Table 1. A partial-f test indicated that the product term significantly affects the model ($p<0.01$).

Clientelist enforcement capability also maintains the significant effect it had without the interaction term, despite the inclusion of other variables, with p holding a value lesser than 0.01. One unexpected result was that partisan identification does not have a significant negative effect on vote buying. It is also worth noting that the full model did have some heteroskedasticity ($p=0.01$ on the Breusch-Godfrey test), but our final results still held, even when using robust standard errors. Residual diagnostics indicated that the heteroskedasticity did not seem to indicate an omitted variable or misspecification.

Discussion

These data suggest that economic security affects vote buying, but only when options for voters are well-defined. As the number of effective parties increases, income's effect diminishes.

Our sample may not be representative of the world at large, but this means that it actually presents a tougher test than it otherwise would have. Countries with large numbers of effective parties were underrepresented in our sample, which made it more difficult for them to have a large effect on the final conclusions. With a more representative sample of countries, the interactive effect we found may have been more pronounced.

One other surprising result is the resilience of enforcement's effect. Monitoring had a significant effect on vote buying regardless of the dependent variable used, and regardless of whether the interactive variable was included as an independent variable. Perhaps this ability to

enforce is directly caused by other variables, such as district size (as Gingerich & Medina, 2013 predict) or income, but regardless of the ultimate cause, it does seem to matter.

The key finding relates to the conditional role of income. In environments with small numbers of parties, it does indeed lead to decreases in vote buying, but its effect is neutralized with large numbers of parties. As predicted, economic security might very well be a necessary factor for decreases in clientelist voting to take place, but only when the number of options for voters is sufficiently low for them to distinguish rationally between different options. Income's negative effect on clientelist voting does indeed seem to be limited, in large part, to the type of majoritarian country exemplified by the U.S. and the U.K.

Conclusion

This article only represents an entry point to the study of clientelist voting rather than the final word. In fact, it raises a number of questions and avenues for future research.

We have shown that increases in voters' economic security do not necessarily lead to decreases in clientelist voting when informational contexts are complex and disorganized, which is often the case with countries with many political parties. Decreases in clientelist voting only happen when institutional factors facilitate voters' ability to distinguish candidates from one another and form opinions on them. In some countries with few parties, this can happen, but in others, any change in clientelist voting can end up being marginal at best.

This research makes contributions to the literatures of both clientelism and comparative political behavior. In the clientelism literature, previous researchers have, as a rule, ignored arguments about what causes clientelist voting to decrease, often using an implicit argument that income should be the key determinant. We show, however, that the impact of income, however, has been overstated because this theory—whether explicit or implicit—has been based on the American and British cases, which had simpler-than-average political information environments. In countries with more parties, the absence of these specific institutional factors suppresses income's effect on clientelist voting.

This argument does two things for the clientelism literature. First, we evaluated and modified a common argument that has not received as much scrutiny as it deserved. There is merit to the argument, and a reason it is so intuitive. It, however, overlooks important, relevant information that lead us to a different conclusion than that of the conventional wisdom.

It also makes a more methodological contribution. The tools that comparative political behavior brings to the theoretical questions in play are extremely useful, particularly because clientelist voting is not all-or-nothing. Voters can, at one time, vote on party lines, and at another, vote on policy, and at another, vote based on the individual benefits they receive from selling their votes. They can even have all these factors at play during one election, or even during one vote. The political behavior subfield brings other useful methodological tools that can be suitable for this type of analysis, in addition to those used by the clientelism literature. This dissertation used rather simple analyses within a comparative political behavior framework, but it can serve as an example of how to look at clientelism from another new, exciting perspective. It would be to everyone's benefit to look at more questions about vote buying with a political behavior framework.

Likewise, it also contributes to the comparative political behavior literature. Political behavior, as a rule, seems loath to get involved with areas that are difficult to quantify, and clientelist voting is, at present, certainly one of those areas. However, leaving out any measure of vote buying in many countries is around the world is a big oversight, as it is indeed a major factor in how significant portions of the population vote. Ignoring that biases estimates using other voting motivations, particularly partisan identity. Just because the U.S., the origin of much voting behavior research, does not find it useful to measure vote buying does not mean that other countries should reach the same conclusion. It is often a relevant factor in elections, and one that cannot afford to be overlooked.

Yet this article also raises more questions. Highly structured information environments might be necessary conditions for ensuring that increases in economic voting decrease clientelist voting, but we were only able to use effective numbers of parties as a proxy. What about other

aspects of political information environments, such as the extent of media coverage, the freedom of media outlets, the number of houses in the legislature, and the type of electoral system? How much does each aspect affect information environments?

With the data available, this was not something we could establish. However, an index that measures and explains the complexity of political institutional structures would go a long way. As a result, we have begun to construct an index of institutional complexity for voters that we hope will help solve this problem and facilitate the analysis made in this paper, among others (Turgeon and Lloyd 2017).

With more data, researchers and policymakers interested in affecting the rates of clientelist voting will have more of an idea of what sort of policy actions to take. Changing electoral systems or electoral thresholds are not decisions to be taken lightly, so knowing which factors matter more than others, and in what circumstances, would be a considerable help for those looking to take practical action in reducing levels of clientelist voting.

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