

Frontiers in Clientelism

Hector Bahamonde
Postdoctoral Fellow, CIPR

Mapping Clientelism

- There are two types of **linkages** between parties and voters:
 1. **Programmatic**: The type of exchanges between voters and parties takes place around “policy packages” (e.g., **environment**, **foreign policy**, **public security**, **fiscal policy**, etc.).
 2. **Non-Programmatic**: The party-voter exchange is centered around **personal interactions** and **material incentives**.
 - “Clientelism” belongs to this category.
 - What’s **delivered** is not a **public policy**, but a **private benefit**.
Voters vote for the party, in exchange of receiving:
 1. Money.
 2. Food.
 3. Are there any other private benefits (from Auyero’s paper)?

Defining Clientelism

Clientelism is a “direct exchange of a citizen’s vote in return for **direct payments** or continuing access to employment, [**private**] goods, and services.” (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007)

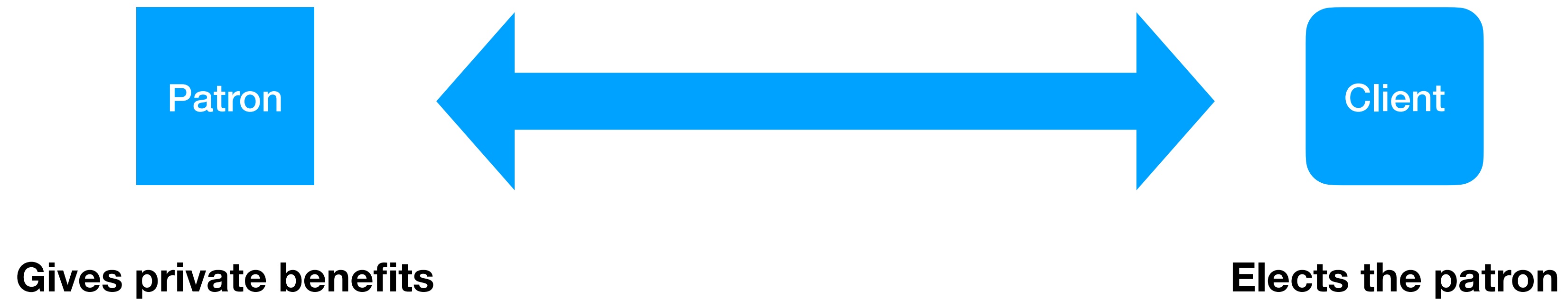


Defining Clientelism

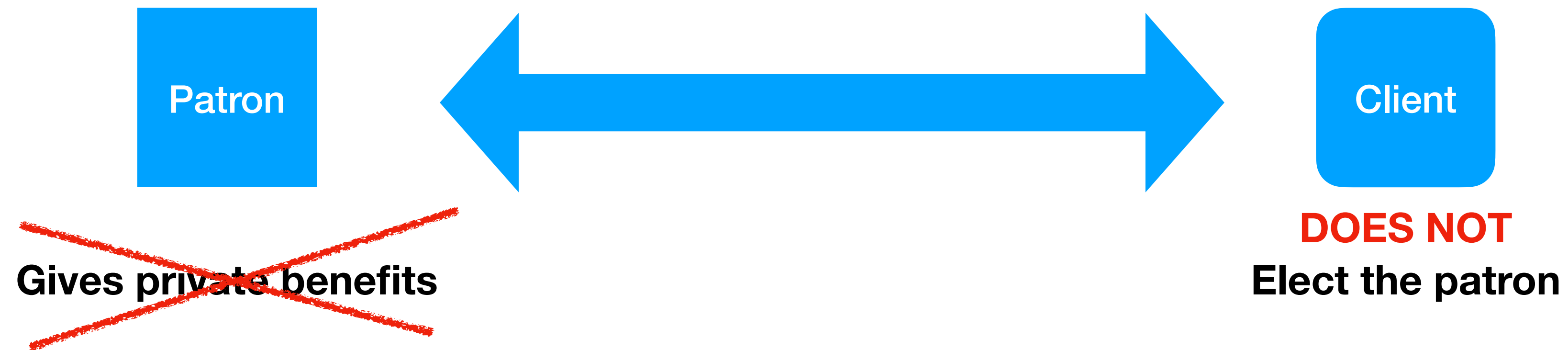
“Vote buying”



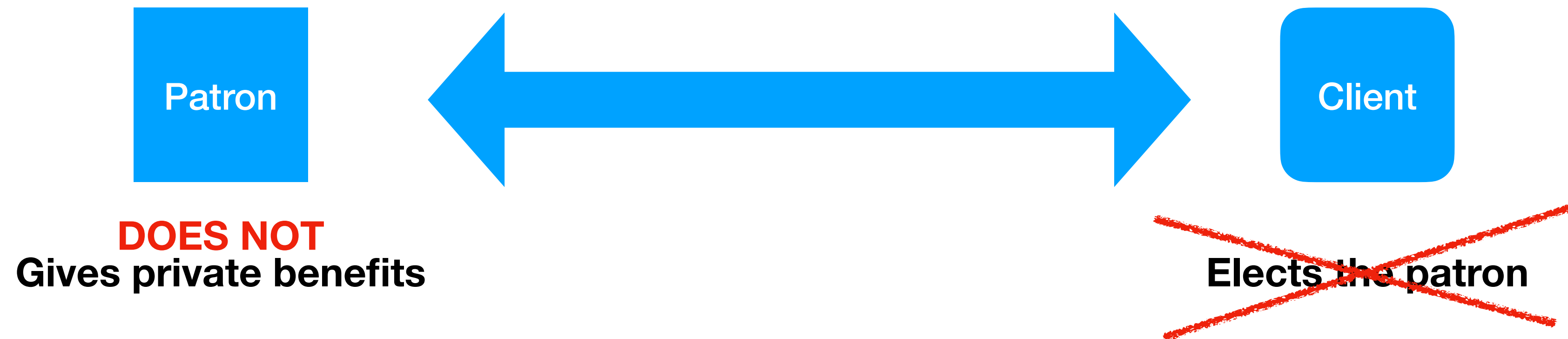
Buying Votes



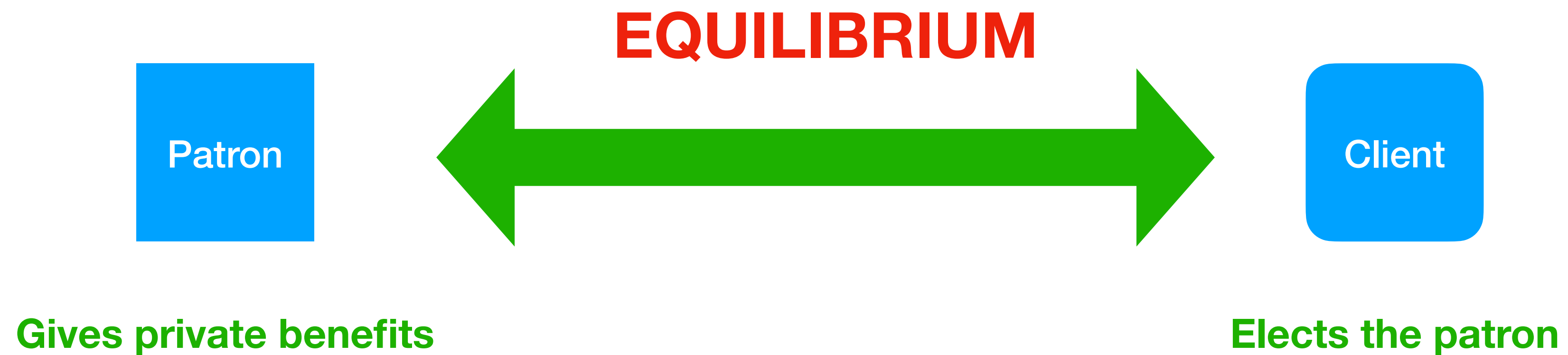
Buying Votes



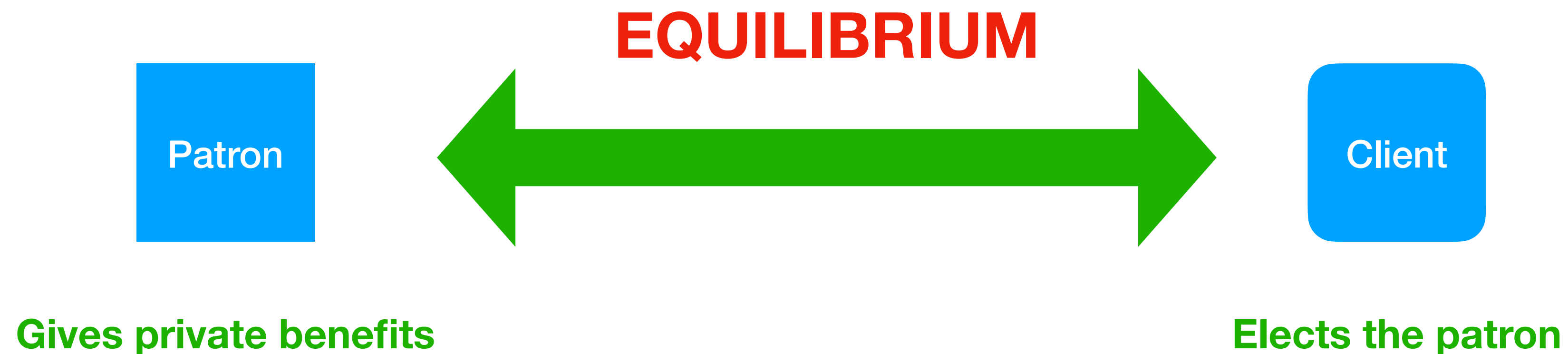
Buying Votes



Buying Votes



Buying Votes



STABLE and RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP

There is a third actor

Hint: in Auyero's paper, a "*puntero/a*"



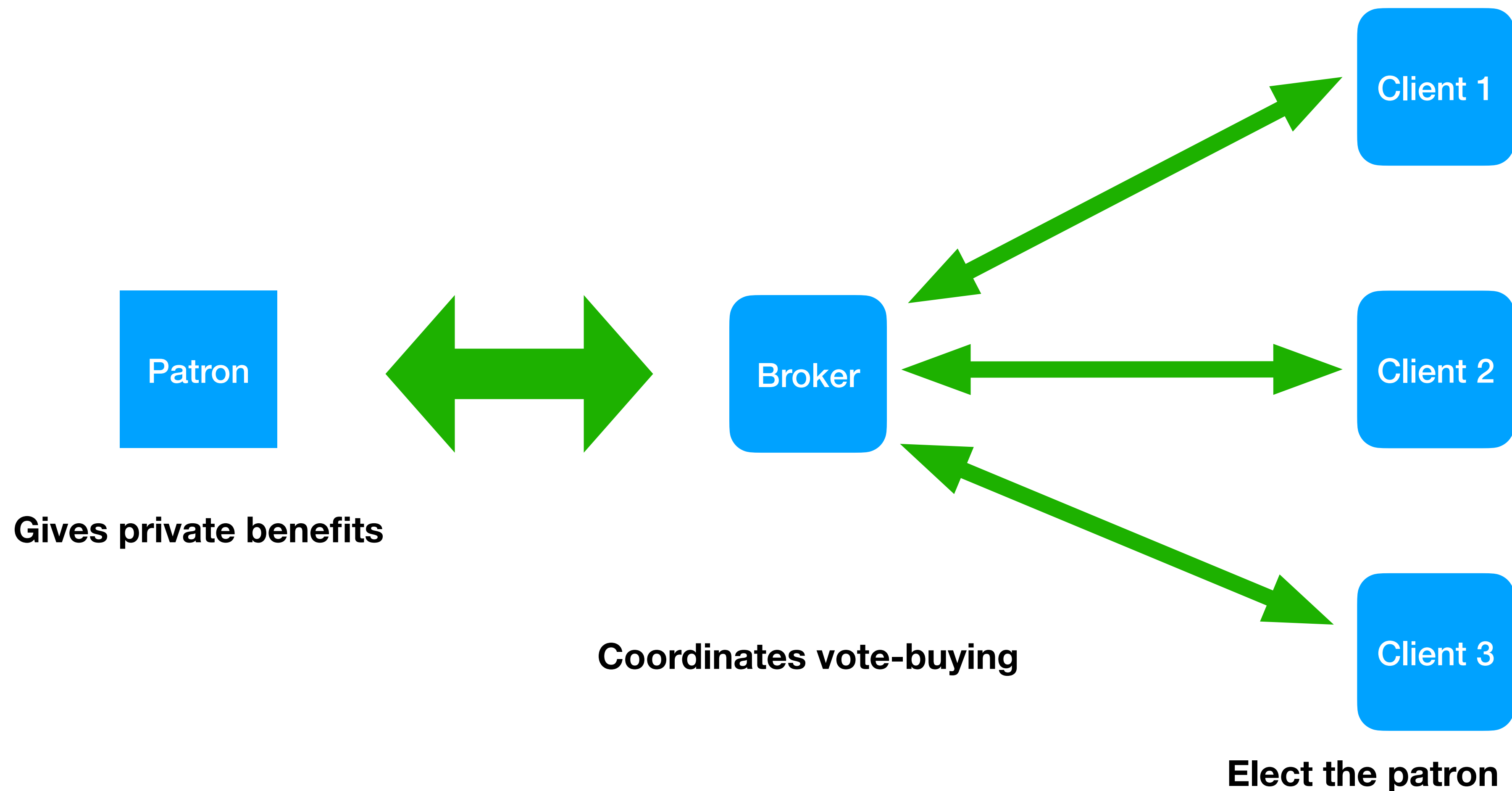
Broker

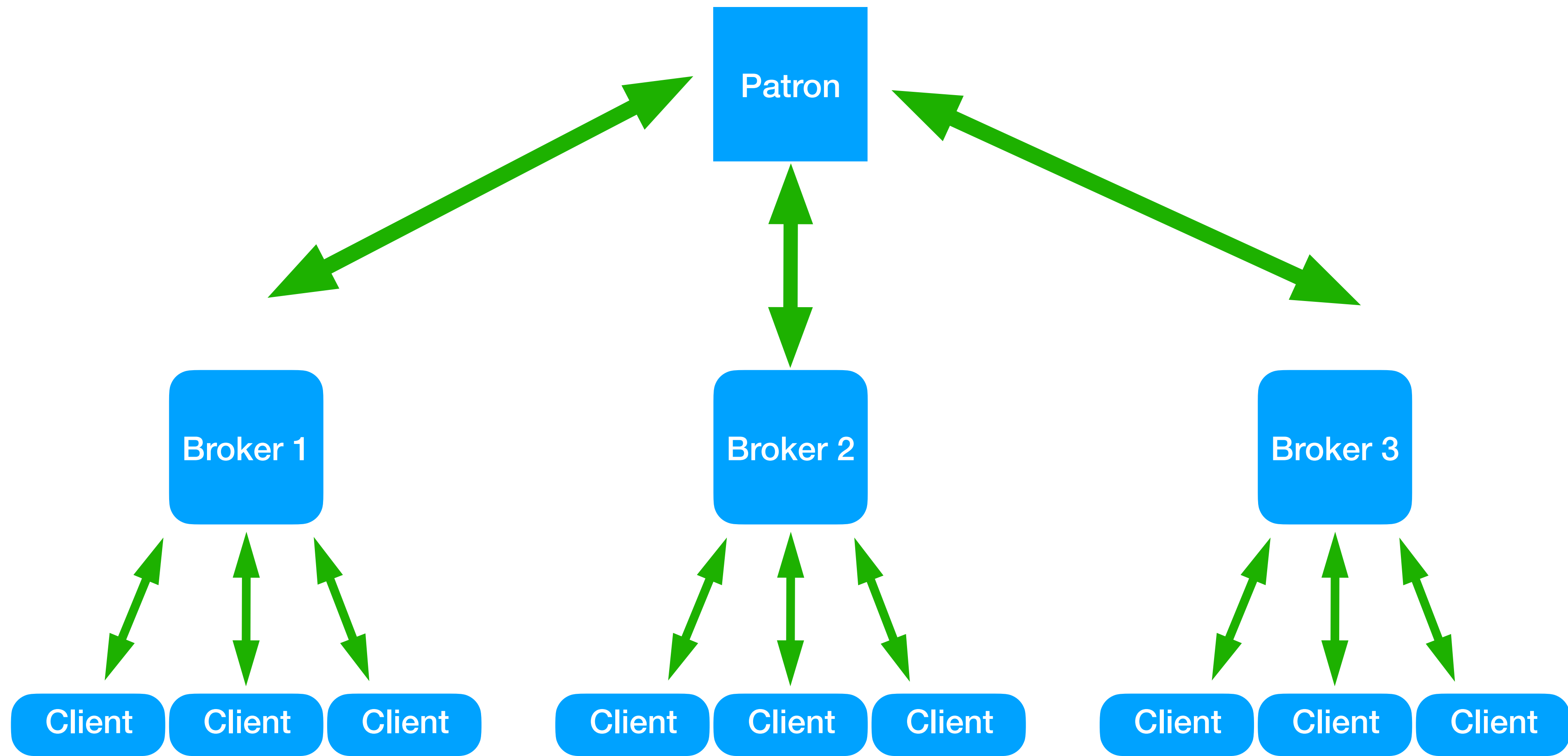
What's that?

Buying Votes



Buying Votes





The “**machine,**” or “**machine politics.**”

What Makes Clientelism “Clientelistic”?

1. Clientelism is **voluntary**, but involves **exploitation** and **domination**. *Why would anyone voluntarily consent to be dominated and exploited?*
2. Clientelism follows a logic of an **asymmetric** exchange. *Why?*

Why do Clientelistic Parties **Target** the Poor?

1. **Poor voters value **instant** benefits, and rely on **short** causal chains (?).**
 - They prefer receiving money now (vote-selling), than relying on uncertain and distant rewards (public policy, programmatic linkages).
2. **Poor voters are cheaper to buy.** A bag of rice is more **appealing** to the poor than to the wealthy.



What are the possible dangers of clientelism to democracy?

If poor citizens' votes are more likely to be bought, **what are the implications for democratic representation?**

Making Clientelism Work

- **Maintaining the machine** is very **expensive**: it requires building **long-term relationships** between patron and client. Why?
 - To prevent **defection**: defection is bad business for parties, it implies wasting limited resources.
- **Defection might happen anyways**: **secrecy of voting** makes it easier for voters to accept the bribe, but cast their ballots as they wish.

Hence, clientelism is not only expensive, but uncertain too.

- Party machines develop strategies designed to **target likely clients**, as they avoid possible **defectors**.

Two Key Concepts

“Targeting”

From **all possible voters**, and considering that **economic resources oriented to buy votes are finite**:

Who is the ideal client?

“Monitoring”

Once the client received the bribe and committed to vote for the patron, **How do political parties make sure that the client keeps his/her word?**

Who's the ideal target?
(supporters, opposition)

Clientelistic Targeting

- **Dixit and Londregan**, and **Cox and McCubbins**, show that parties target their **own supporters**. The “core constituencies” are well known individuals to the party machines, and hence, they are less likely to defect.
- **Stokes** explains that parties target **moderate opposers**. Targeting core constituencies is a waste. Machines target people whose future support is in doubt.

Clientelistic Monitoring

- **Challenge for brokers:** get **good-quality information** about the client. **Did the client fulfill his promise?**
- **Zarazaga** interviewed *punteros* in Argentina, and found that:

Most *punteros* live in the **same** neighborhoods than their clients. So **brokers know their clients** really well (i.e., they know who their clients voted for).

Clientelism and Political Ideology

- Which ideology is closer to the poor? The right or the left?
- **However**, research done in Chile and Uruguay shows that right-wing parties have displaced left-wing parties from poor districts, places that have traditionally been “controlled” by the left.
- Right-wing parties have done so by employing traditionally leftist strategies, s.a. clientelism and vote-buying.

Clientelism and Political Ideology

- * Particularly, in Chile, **conservative political elites** have made an **alliance** with the **business sector**:
 - **Conservatives parties** would **defend in Congress free market and regressive policies**, in exchange of receiving resources aimed to buy **poor people's** votes in the shantytowns.
 - “**Segmented linkages**”: parties can be **programmatic** and **non-programmatic at the same time**:
- ☑ **Conservative parties are programmatic with the wealthy, and clientelistic with the poor.**