

Conclusion

This book has explored an important phenomenon observed in much of the world – the contingent exchange of material benefits for political support. Many journalists and scholars assume that these exchanges always involve vote buying, a campaign strategy that rewards citizens who vote for candidates they do not prefer. In recent years, however, a growing number of observers have become increasingly attentive to several other campaign strategies that also distribute contingent benefits. For example, elites often induce supporters to show up at the polls (turnout buying), and in some contexts reward opposing voters for staying home on Election Day (abstention buying). Over the past decade, a vibrant research agenda has greatly advanced our understanding of such strategies of “electoral clientelism,” which exclusively provides benefits during campaigns. Unfortunately, this recent strand of research has generally remained silent about the role, and sometimes even about the existence, of benefits distributed during non-campaign periods.

This recent fixation on electoral clientelism diverges from generations of studies focused on what I call “relational clientelism” – ongoing exchange relationships in which contingent benefits extend beyond election campaigns. Decades of ethnographic work on patron-client ties documented how a variety of elites, ranging from politicians to village notables, provided sustenance to the poor within the context of enduring relationships. Much of this work emphasized the asymmetry of relationships between patrons and clients; for instance, land tenure contracts often restricted citizens’ exit options, thereby hindering voter autonomy. While no longer the predominant focus of research, some influential studies investigated how and why elites in various contemporary societies maintain long-term clientelist relationships with citizens. A limitation of such studies, in part stemming from the contexts they examined, is that they tend to pay minimal attention to the ways in which citizen choices may also shape ongoing exchange relationships. By contrast, the present book puts

the choices of citizens into stark relief and argues that they often play an instrumental role in the survival of relational clientelism.

Increased voter autonomy has empowered many citizens to play this important role in ongoing exchange relationships. Unlike many of their historical counterparts, citizens in the modern world frequently have sufficient independence to undertake political actions of their own volition. Furthermore, a shift from monopolistic to competitive clientelism in many countries expanded the potential scope for citizen choice because a single machine often no longer serves as the exclusive distributor of benefits. Coupled with this heightened voter autonomy, citizens often have a pressing motivation – their own vulnerability to adverse shocks – to undertake actions that fortify relational clientelism. Despite various countries' efforts to develop welfare states, social policies often inadequately protect citizens from the full range of risks that threaten their livelihoods. And even though GDP per capita has risen substantially in much of the world, income gains alone are often insufficient to enable voters to self-insure against risks. Amid such vulnerability, many citizens rely on ongoing relationships with politicians who provide material assistance when adversity strikes. In short, many citizens have both the autonomy and motivation to undertake purposive actions to buttress the stability of relational clientelism.

Citizens' choices to undertake such actions often underpin the survival of relational clientelism because ongoing exchange relationships are particularly susceptible to the threat of opportunistic defection. More specifically, this book has elaborated and tested two key mechanisms – declared support and requesting benefits – by which citizens help to alleviate a dual-sided credibility problem inherent in relational clientelism. By declaring support publicly, citizens mitigate the concern that they will renege on their promises to vote for politicians with whom they have ongoing exchange relationships. And by screening out politicians who have denied their requests, citizens reduce their own concerns that entrusted politicians will defect on promises to help during adverse shocks. Declared support and requesting benefits are by no means the only important actions that citizens undertake in ongoing exchange relationships, but evidence of both mechanisms underscores how citizens can play an instrumental role in sustaining relational clientelism.

Substantial evidence suggests that citizens employ both mechanisms in Brazil. With regards to declared support, many Brazilians publicly pledge allegiance to political candidates, and are more likely to do so amidst adverse shocks. While citizens have various reasons to declare support, the practice is strongly linked to relational clientelism. Two original surveys, as well as many interviews, reveal the widely shared perception that declaring support can influence the benefits one receives. Beyond perceptions, quantitative analyses suggest that citizens who declare for victorious candidates are more likely recipients of benefits. As expected with relational clientelism, this finding is observed during both election and non-election years, even when controlling for various other factors. Quantitative and qualitative evidence is also consistent with a signaling

model of declared support, which elucidates how and why declarations can mitigate concerns that citizens will renege on their vote promises. In further corroboration of this important mechanism, citizens overwhelmingly vote and hold perceptions in accordance with their declarations.

Just as for declared support, evidence from Brazil also points to the mechanism of requesting benefits. Even in rural Northeast Brazil, an area not traditionally known for voter autonomy, the majority of citizens who received material benefits from politicians had requested it. Vulnerability is frequently a motivating factor: requests increase during adverse shocks and typically involve life necessities. As expected with relational clientelism, requesters disproportionately receive benefits during both election and non-election years, and declared supporters are more likely to be recipients through bottom-up demands. Qualitative and quantitative evidence suggests that citizens screen out politicians with poor track records of fulfilling their requests; for instance, they tend to hold negative perceptions of candidates who are unresponsive to their demands and refuse to vote for them. Overall, empirical materials from Brazil elucidate how citizens can play an important role in sustaining relational clientelism, as both mechanisms mitigate credibility problems that threaten ongoing exchange relationships.

Comparative evidence suggests that this role of citizens in bolstering clientelism extends beyond Brazil. In both Argentina and Mexico, survey respondents who declare support – as well as those who demand benefits – are more likely to experience clientelism. Qualitative evidence likewise suggests the role of both declared support and requesting benefits in these countries. In addition, one or both mechanisms are observed in Ghana, India, Lebanon, and Yemen. Moreover, cross-national surveys from Africa and Latin America reveal a strong association between citizen requests and clientelism. To be sure, the mechanisms elaborated in the present study warrant additional investigation outside Brazil; for instance, quantitative analyses of comparative cases examined only patterns during campaigns, due to data availability. Notwithstanding such limitations, evidence of declared support and requesting benefits in other countries points towards the role of citizens in the wider global context.

By broadening its analytical lens to encompass voter choice, this book has revealed an important explanation for the survival of clientelism. As mentioned, the choices of citizens can mitigate the dual credibility problem that challenges the viability of ongoing exchange relationships. Aside from this problem that citizens mitigate, relational clientelism is relatively more resilient than electoral clientelism to numerous key challenges. For instance, income gains from economic development frequently reduce citizens' willingness to accept vote-buying offers, but are often insufficient to eliminate voters' reliance on clientelist relationships to cope with adverse shocks. Institutional factors such as ballot secrecy and compulsory voting are also less damaging for relational clientelism, in part because it does not channel benefits to swing voters (as with vote buying and abstention buying) or to those unlikely to participate in

elections (as with turnout buying). Furthermore, ongoing exchange relationships provide benefits extending beyond campaign periods (unlike electoral clientelism), so they have a greater ability to withstand heightened legal enforcement focused on the months preceding elections. The broader point is that relational clientelism is better able to withstand the onslaught of challenges facing clientelism, once citizens' choices help to alleviate its dual credibility problem. Relational clientelism is by no means a new phenomenon, but its resilience to growing challenges often makes it a more efficacious political strategy than electoral clientelism. In such contexts, machines are expected to rely relatively more heavily on ongoing exchange relationships than on electoral clientelism. However, both forms of contingent exchanges often coexist because clientelism is typically most effective when employing a diverse portfolio (Magaloni et al., 2007; Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016; Gans-Morse et al., 2014).¹

This book emphasizes that vulnerability often motivates citizens to help sustain relational clientelism, and thus clarifies an important reason why the phenomenon often persists in contexts with low poverty. Many studies underscore that clientelism flourishes when poverty is rife. A common explanation invokes the diminishing marginal utility of income, which suggests that poor citizens place relatively greater value on material benefits than ideological preferences (Dixit and Londregan, 1996, 1114; Stokes, 2005, 315). However, an unresolved question in the literature is why clientelism often remains remarkably resilient when poverty declines. An important explanation emerges when broadening the focus to vulnerability – a concept that encompasses poverty as well as risk, which both reduce citizens' well-being (Ligon and Schechter, 2003). The present book's focus on vulnerability clarifies that *either* poverty or risk may be sufficient to motivate citizens to undertake actions that sustain relational clientelism.² Therefore, nonexistent and inadequate welfare states often contribute to the perpetuation of clientelism. In much of the world, welfare states are underdeveloped and truncated, reaching only narrow subset of the population such as formal employees. Ongoing exchange relationships often help unprotected citizens cope with adverse shocks. This book thereby provides important microfoundations for the longstanding observation that relational clientelism tends to erode as welfare states are developed (e.g., Banfield and Wilson 1963; Scott, 1969). Even if poverty declines, clientelism may persist until a welfare state is developed that adequately mitigates shocks in an institutionalized manner, or until alternative mechanisms emerge that enable citizens to cope with risks without relying on politicians. These insights help to explain why mere income transfers, such as those offered by conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs burgeoning across the developing world, often

¹ Formal analyses in Magaloni et al. (2007) and Diaz-Cayeros et al. (2016) predict machines diversify their portfolios across both clientelism and public goods. The model in Gans-Morse et al. (2014) suggests machines optimally mix several strategies of electoral clientelism.

² Risk may be an insufficient condition on its own to motivate citizens to sustain clientelism, if their income is high enough to self-insure.

do not lead to the demise of clientelism. For example, this book has documented the resilience of clientelism in Brazil, where Bolsa Família – one of the world's largest CCT programs – serves about a quarter of the country's population (see Chapter 4). Given the pronounced vulnerability of many citizens across world, future research should investigate the relative importance of economic development versus welfare state development to the trajectory of clientelism in various settings. In addition to relational clientelism, such research should consider how these factors influence electoral clientelism, which does not necessarily decline in all contexts with high income levels and comprehensive welfare states.³

If vulnerability motivates citizen choices that bolster clientelism, as this book argues, then reductions in vulnerability should decrease such choices. A field experiment in Northeast Brazil (Bobonis, Gertler, Gonzalez-Navarro and Nichter, 2018) reveals precisely this effect on one of the mechanisms examined in the present book: decreased vulnerability cuts requests by citizens likely to be in clientelist relationships. In that project, we randomly assigned households in rural Northeast Brazil without piped water to receive 16,000-liter water cisterns. These concrete tanks collect and store rainwater, thereby decreasing households' vulnerability to droughts. The study finds that the intervention not only reduced vulnerability, but also reduced requests for private benefits by 3.2 percentage points (significant at the 5 percent level). These treatment effects were entirely concentrated among respondents likely to be in ongoing exchange relationships – those who had talked to a politician at least monthly before the start of the 2012 municipal campaign. For such citizens, the cisterns intervention reduced requests by 11.1 percentage points (significant at the 1 percent level). By contrast, the intervention had negligible and statistically insignificant effects on other respondents. Evidence suggests that the impact of the cisterns treatment, which reduced citizens' vulnerability, extended beyond the campaign period: the decline in requests during the 2013 non-election year is comparable to the decline in requests during the 2012 election year. The study also reveals electoral effects on incumbent politicians. If vulnerability weakens ongoing exchange relationships through a decrease in requests, one might expect incumbents – who tend to have a competitive advantage at clientelism – to suffer a loss in electoral support. Indeed, the cisterns treatment reduced the number of votes cast for incumbent mayors during their reelection campaigns.⁴ Overall, these experimental findings from Northeast Brazil are consistent with the present book's argument that vulnerability motivates citizens to undertake actions (such as requesting benefits) that help sustain clientelism. Furthermore,

³ For example, although analyses in Chapter 4 show that citizens' willingness to accept clientelist offers during campaigns decreases as incomes rise, substantial electoral clientelism remains in some developed nations.

⁴ Our analysis compares voting machines within the same voting location. Machines with a greater number of voters randomly assigned to the cisterns treatment had fewer votes for the incumbent mayoral candidate, conditional on the number of voters in the experiment.

they suggest that curbing vulnerability may have important political ramifications by undercutting the electoral prospects of clientelist politicians.

Given that citizens often play an instrumental role in sustaining relational clientelism, why is the phenomenon not even more widespread? As discussed in the Introduction, both demand-side and supply-side factors help to explain why some citizens do not undertake actions to fortify ongoing exchange relationships. With regard to demand-side factors, citizens are unlikely to play this role unless their circumstances meet two scope conditions: voter autonomy and vulnerability. Citizens with insufficient autonomy, such as those in contexts with substantial coercion, may be unable to engage in various political actions of their own volition. In addition, voters who experience neither poverty nor unprotected risk may lack motivation to buttress the stability of exchange relationships. Moreover, not all citizens who meet both scope conditions are involved with relational clientelism. While much of the world's population relies on enduring exchange relationships to cope with adversity, other voters express aversion to clientelism and refuse to promise political support in return for assistance. In the case of Brazil, numerous interviewed politicians emphasized the distinction between "voters of conscience," who vote purely on programmatic grounds, and "clientelist voters," who are responsive to contingent benefits. Likewise, experimental evidence from Benin suggests that clientelism is not universally appealing to all impoverished citizens (Wantchekon 2003, 422); reasons for such variation are frequently multifaceted and context-specific. Citizens may also be less likely to undertake actions to bolster relational clientelism in contexts where viable candidates offer credible policy proposals, underscoring the importance of supply-side factors. While this book aims to tilt the focus of research on clientelism towards the understudied role of citizens, a wide body of scholarship emphasizes various ways in which elites shape contingent exchanges. Politicians may eschew clientelism under numerous conditions, such as if they are able to make credible campaign promises about programmatic benefits (Keefer, 2007), or if middle-class voters penalize candidates who distribute handouts (Weitz-Shapiro, 2012). Other supply-side constraints on relational clientelism include resources, discretion, and organizational structure. In some contexts, local politicians only cultivate long-term relationships with a small subset of voters due to the sheer level of resources available. The discretion of politicians to channel existing resources to supporters may also be limited to varying degrees by institutional factors, such as statutory requirements regarding municipal expenditures as well as randomized federal audits in Brazil. In addition, politicians may not have sufficient organizational infrastructure to observe clients' declarations and fulfill their requests reliably. In short, both demand-side and supply-side factors help to explain why relational clientelism is not even more prevalent than observed.

While relational clientelism is by no means ubiquitous, its prevalence is often underappreciated, in part because analysts rarely consider the broader

duration of exchange relationships. When contingent benefits are distributed during campaigns, this practice is commonly depicted as vote buying or other forms of electoral clientelism. But most studies fail to distinguish whether a citizen's receipt of contingent benefits also extends beyond campaigns. Thus, much of what scholars interpret as electoral clientelism is actually relational clientelism. Notwithstanding this important point, many contingent exchanges across the world are indeed restricted to campaign periods. Strategies such as vote buying and turnout buying persist in many countries, even in the face of challenges from structural changes, institutional reforms, legal enforcement and partisan strategies. For example, this book demonstrated that a reduced level of electoral clientelism continues in Brazil, in part because some politicians "gamble" on these relatively unreliable strategies as a secondary measure in competitive elections. In addition, evidence suggests that a small share of Brazilians targeted with electoral clientelism may well be influenced by its rewards.⁵ But in Brazil and beyond, many campaign handouts are distributed not in isolation, but rather as part of ongoing relationships in which benefits extend beyond campaigns.

Considering the broader duration of exchange relationships also helps to resolve an outstanding puzzle in the clientelism literature: Why do politicians often distribute campaign handouts to their own voting supporters? From the vantage point of electoral clientelism, such behavior is wasteful. As emphasized by the typology in Chapter 2, politicians who employ electoral clientelism target citizens who are unlikely to vote for them or participate in an imminent election, in exchange for promising to act as instructed. An influential study by Stokes et al. (2013) suggests that due to a principal-agent problem, voting supporters are the unintended recipients of electoral clientelism: party leaders strive to target swing voters with campaign handouts, but their resources are misdirected by brokers who find it easier to target supporters instead. By contrast, the present book argues that providing benefits to supporters who face adverse shocks is part and parcel of relational clientelism, regardless whether an election is a week or a year away. And crucially, supporters often receive benefits during campaigns because they demand them, not because they are targeted with offers. In the context of ongoing exchange relationships, denying supporters' requests during a campaign tends to be counterproductive, as it tarnishes the credibility of a politician's promises to continue providing help to supporters during times of need. And such credibility often takes years to cultivate, as shown in Chapter 6. Hence, broadening the analytical lens to consider citizen actions in relational clientelism provides an alternative explanation for otherwise puzzling behavior by elites.

⁵ As discussed in Chapter 2, 18 percent of respondents who received vote-buying offers in the nationally representative Brazilian Electoral Panel Study said they were more likely to vote for the specified candidate (Ames et al., 2013). In the Rural Clientelism Survey, 18 percent of respondents indicated they would choose a candidate who provided them a large campaign handout over one who repeatedly provided them more modest help over time (see Chapter 6).

Even though many citizens rely on relational clientelism to cope with vulnerability, it deserves emphasis that these ongoing exchange relationships are an inferior substitute for a universal, comprehensive welfare state. Relational clientelism provides assistance in contingent exchange for political support, and generally withholds benefits from citizens who fail to provide such support. This contingency frequently distorts the allocation of public resources. For instance, when a mayor leverages the municipal hospital to provide supporters with preferential access to costly medicines or expedited surgeries, such actions often exacerbate the difficulties other patients face when seeking similar health care. Another concern is that unlike social insurance enshrined in legislation, relational clientelism bestows clients with no formal rights to benefits. Even when citizens undertake actions to reinforce ongoing exchange relationships, elites maintain broad discretion to rejigger their clientelist networks as is deemed politically advantageous. Such considerations may lead politicians to adjust their provision of benefits and terminate ongoing relationships with particular clients. These issues of exclusivity and discretion, as well as other concerns discussed next, render relational clientelism a troubling and imperfect substitute for an adequate welfare state. As a stopgap in countries with patchy social insurance, however, relational clientelism often serves an important role in mitigating citizens' vulnerability.

More broadly, it is also important to emphasize the wide array of other potential negative consequences of clientelism. To name a few, Hicken (2011, 302–304) summarizes numerous studies suggesting that clientelism can contribute to the under-provision of public goods, undermine political institutions, bloat and politicize bureaucracies, weaken political parties, increase rent seeking, expand public deficits, and heighten corruption. Furthermore, by protecting their clients from risks, clientelist politicians are often able to secure electoral victories while they enact policies against the broader interests of poor voters (Anderson et al., 2015, 1786). As such, they may have incentives to undermine the implementation of social policies that reduce the vulnerability of the poor. Research on Brazil also finds various negative consequences of clientelism, such as the weakening of legislators' incentives to work collaboratively with co-partisans on policy (Desposato, 2007), hindering policy reforms that would otherwise benefit the poor (Weyland, 1996), and fostering the use of illegal funds obtained from corrupt activities (Gingerich, 2014). While such findings should be considered neither definitive nor exhaustive, they do collectively emphasize that clientelism can impose substantial costs. Notwithstanding these consequences, the present book suggests that interventions combating clientelism should pay close attention to the role of ongoing exchange relationships in alleviating citizens' vulnerability. To enhance such interventions, a crucial step is to improve alternative means of risk mitigation. As suggested by the cisterns experiment in Brazil, providing other mechanisms that insulate citizens from shocks will likely reduce their actions that serve to reinforce clientelism. Perhaps even more important, this step can help shield citizens from unintended

consequences, as anti-clientelism interventions may otherwise aggravate citizens' vulnerability by undercutting the informal insurance provided by ongoing exchange relationships.

It is important to emphasize that not all consequences of clientelism are uniform across subtypes of the phenomenon. One key distinction, for example, involves consequences for democracy. The predominant form of electoral clientelism in many contexts, vote buying, is often viewed to be especially pernicious for democracy. One key reason is that vote buying undermines democratic accountability by enabling politicians to buy the votes of citizens who are unsatisfied with their performance in office (Stokes et al., 2013, 254). Instead, Susan Stokes (2005) argues that vote buying only involves "perverse accountability," in which rewarded citizens are punished if they do not vote as instructed. By contrast, this book's focus on relational clientelism emphasizes that politicians are indeed accountable to their clients, though in a manner that diverges from how many observers expect democracy to function. As shown in Chapter 6, citizens who request help systematically vote against politicians who are unresponsive to them, as they deem such politicians untrustworthy promisers of assistance. Such findings dovetail with Kitschelt's (2000, 851–852) argument that "clientelist politics establishes very tight bonds of accountability and responsiveness. ... Politicians who refuse to be responsive to their constituents' demands for selective incentives will be held accountable by them and no longer receive votes and material contributions." Undeniably, vote buying and relational clientelism also share some negative consequences for democracy; for instance, both subtypes of clientelism tend to undermine political equality by enabling those with resources to attract votes of the poor, and they often weaken representation by distorting the link between citizens' preferences and voting behavior. Despite such similarities, their divergent implications for democratic accountability suggest the need to investigate potential differences across a host of other consequences.

Another fruitful area for future research involves the role that citizens play in clientelism in authoritarian contexts, particularly in non-democratic regimes that allow some form of limited electoral politics. Although the present study focuses on democratic settings, numerous prominent studies have explored elite strategies of clientelism in various authoritarian regimes. For instance, Blaydes (2006, 5–8) documents how some Egyptian candidates not only engage in vote buying during electoral campaigns, but also cultivate longer-term relationships through the distribution of particularistic benefits to citizens. In the cases of Brazil and Mexico explored in this book, clientelism was extensively employed in both countries during recent authoritarian periods (e.g., Hagopian, 1996; Magaloni, 2006). Citizens may have substantially less autonomy to undertake political actions that sustain clientelism in non-democratic polities. Furthermore, politicians in such contexts may be more likely to employ negative inducements, such as threats of physical and economic sanctions, which are used for clientelism in various countries and likely have

different implications for citizens' behavior (Mares and Young, 2016, 269–271). The mechanisms examined in this book are expected to be applicable even with negative inducements; as discussed in Chapter 3, Nichter and Nunnari (2017) show experimentally that patterns of declared support persist with some level of punishment. Nevertheless, given this book's focus on Brazil – a democracy where incentives are by far predominantly used – the role of citizens in clientelism under authoritarianism deserves further investigation.

An additional line of inquiry involves the formation of clientelist relationships. This book presupposes the existence of ongoing exchange relationships, as it argues that citizens' actions help to ensure their continued survival. Although it is commonly assumed that elites initiate these relationships, citizens also often approach potential patrons – with whom they may or may not have existing personal or economic ties – when in dire need of assistance (e.g., Powell, 1970, 412–413; Silverman, 1965, 176–177). In the case of Brazil, interviewees suggest that both citizens and politicians can take the first step in forming clientelist linkages. Given the understudied role of citizens in contingent exchanges, further research should investigate the extent to which voters not only fortify clientelist relationships, but also help to create them. Citizens' proclivity to do so is likely influenced by various individual and contextual characteristics, including their ability to mitigate adverse shocks through self-insurance, kinship, or social networks; the degree to which entitlement programs provide adequate risk protection; and the existence of viable political candidates who offer credible policy proposals. When citizens seek to form clientelist relationships, an additional research question involves how they choose which elites to approach. For example, numerous factors discussed in this book may influence citizens' decisions, such as politicians' probability of winning, incumbency status, available resources, and number of existing clients. Also worthy of further investigation are the diverse ways in which citizens can seek to initiate clientelist relationships; for instance, some citizens may first request help from prospective benefactors, while others may first declare support to signal the trustworthiness of their vote promises. Such questions would further understanding of the phenomenon, but it deserves emphasis that this book's argument and mechanisms do not depend on how a clientelist relationship was initially formed. As demonstrated, citizens often play an instrumental role in the survival of relational clientelism, as their actions foster a mutually reinforcing cycle: ongoing patterns of both declared support and fulfilled requests buttress the stability of established exchange relationships, which may originate from various sources.

This book has focused on municipal-level politics, and has shown that citizens' actions often help to sustain their ongoing exchange relationships with local politicians. In turn, these actions can have important consequences for higher levels of political systems because local politicians often serve as brokers for state, provincial, and national politicians in various countries. In Brazil, Novaes (2017, 4–5) argues that mayoral candidates often serve as

brokers by mobilizing their established clienteles on behalf of congressional candidates, who in return provide money and other benefits to these local politicians. In Argentina, Stokes et al. (2013, 261, 268) emphasize that elected city councilors – who comprise three hundred of the eight hundred brokers they survey – frequently serve as intermediaries for higher-level politicians. And in the Philippines, Ravanilla, Haim, and Hicken (2017, 8) describe a “chain of patron-broker relationships” connecting local and higher-level politicians, including mayors who receive resources from national candidates and mobilize votes for them in return. When local politicians have enduring clientelist relationships with voters, their ability to mobilize votes on behalf of other politicians in this manner is often heightened. As such, citizens who fortify relational clientelism may help to perpetuate a cascade of exchanges across different tiers of government. By strengthening the capacity of local politicians to serve as brokers, citizen actions can also influence the political strategies of higher-level politicians, with potentially important policy effects. For example, a model by Keefer and Vlaicu (2008, 371–373, 395) predicts that when there are low costs to obtaining votes through intermediaries with established clienteles, politicians will underprovide public goods and make fewer broad policy appeals through programmatic linkages. Such potential effects underscore the importance of further research about how citizens’ role in sustaining ongoing exchange relationships with local politicians may also influence higher spheres of politics. One important question involves how these broader effects are shaped by contextual factors. For example, citizens’ actions to reinforce relational clientelism are likely to have greater effects on state and national politics when many local politicians serve as brokers, which Novaes (2017, 1–4) argues is more likely if political parties have weak brands and few linkages to voters.⁶ As researchers explore such questions, they should pay close attention to the effects of citizens’ relationships with various types of brokers, which can include a broad range of actors beyond local politicians.⁷ This investigation will require expanded data and analyses, given that existing work on brokers tends to focus almost exclusively on electoral clientelism (e.g., Stokes et al., 2013; Larreguy et al., 2016).

The demand side of clientelism is relatively understudied, presenting numerous additional directions for future research. One direction involves how citizens may collectively shape relational clientelism. Although the present book has focused on the role of individuals in sustaining ongoing exchange relationships, clientelism in some contexts may involve groups of citizens, such as neighborhoods or organizations (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007, 11–12). For instance, Gay (1990, 106–107) discusses how a neighborhood association in

⁶ Such conditions pertain in Brazil. Only a third of respondents in the Brazil 2010 Panel Study expressed a preference for any party. In Datafolha polls, comparable figures are about 40–45 percent (Samuels and Zucco Jr., 2014, 214). Parties other than the PT and PMDB tend to have minimal infrastructure in most municipalities (Braga and Pimentel Jr., 2013, 19).

⁷ For an excellent overview, see Mares and Young (2016).

Rio de Janeiro exchanged its political support for road paving. Under what conditions and how do such groups help to sustain relational clientelism? Extending the mechanisms examined in this book, citizens may declare support jointly to signal the credibility of their vote promises. Likewise, they may collectively ask for private or club goods, and screen against politicians who fail to meet their demands. Conversely, under what conditions and how do groups of citizens undermine relational clientelism? Shifting away from clientelism involves a coordination problem (e.g., Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016, 34; Lyne, 2008, 37). If many citizens jointly abandon a clientelist candidate, they can elect a programmatic competitor; however, if a citizen acts alone, she is unlikely to affect the election outcome and may lose contingent benefits. While analyses in this book employ controls to hone in on the role of individual citizens, future work should investigate how and why the actions of collective actors may also fortify or undercut relational clientelism. Another important direction involves exploring how citizens' choices about clientelism influence politicians' actions. Whereas this book strives to call attention to the undertheorized role of citizens in clientelism, the extant literature generally emphasizes the pivotal role of elites. As such, the strategic interaction between citizens and politicians is an important research frontier. A recent study that begins to tackle this research agenda is Nichter and Peress (2016), which as discussed in Chapter 3, develops and tests a formal model of how politicians respond when citizens demand clientelist benefits during campaigns. Within this agenda, future work should consider how citizens' actions affect the relative effectiveness of relational versus electoral clientelism, as well as how they influence the allure of clientelism to politicians vis-à-vis many other tools for obtaining votes (ranging from electoral fraud to campaign advertising). More broadly, such questions suggest that the demand side of clientelism presents intriguing opportunities for additional scholarly inquiry.

Stepping back, the present book suggests three overarching directions for the study of clientelism. First, it underscores the need to take more seriously the independent role of citizens in the survival of clientelism. Second, it emphasizes that analysts must consider how vulnerability, and not just poverty, shapes contingent exchanges. And finally, it calls for renewed attention to ongoing exchange relationships, which have been given short shrift compared to electoral clientelism in recent years.

Overall, this study has shifted the dominant analytical lens to consider the logic, mechanisms, and motivations behind citizens' actions in clientelist exchanges. A broad array of evidence from numerous countries reveals how and why voters often play an instrumental role in the survival of clientelism. Despite income gains in much of the world, vulnerability frequently motivates citizens to help sustain ongoing exchange relationships with politicians who mitigate risks.