Making Clientelism Work

How Norms of Reciprocity Increase Voter Compliance

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Political scientists have long been interested in the exchange of selective benefits for political allegiance. In developing countries, these relationships are grouped under the rubric of "clientelism"; followers are known as clients, leaders as patrons, and intermediaries as brokers. In the United States, analysts refer to these same groups as "constituents," "bosses," and "precinct captains," and the relationships among them are called "machine politics."[1] Despite extensive research in both contexts, political scientists have not reached consensus on how such relationships are maintained.

Recent models assume that voters only comply with political brokers' wishes if they believe that their choices are monitored and that they can be sanctioned if they fail to support the machine. This instrumentalist approach focuses on deliberate exchanges between voters who seek to extract tangible benefits and brokers who want to deliver votes as cheaply as possible.[2] Such arguments emphasize the degree to which careful surveillance—or at least the credible threat of surveillance[3]—ensures that constituents follow through on their part of the clientelist bargain.

Yet, as we show below, this instrumentalist approach has not fully resolved the problem of voter compliance. Where ballot secrecy is well established, brokers cannot effectively monitor individual voters and sanction them for non-compliance. If voters can "take the money and run," clientelism must obey a different logic. Instead of external monitoring by vigilant brokers, we propose that machine politics can be supported by a psychological mechanism of reciprocal obligation. Specifically, we argue that the receipt of gifts, favors, services, or protection creates feelings of indebtedness and gratitude among voters, who, under certain conditions, spontaneously support their political patrons.

This norms-based approach to clientelism has roots in ethnographic studies from various disciplines that emphasize the embeddedness of relationships between patrons and clients and the "moral economy" of exchanges between the two.[4] These studies routinely emphasize norms as the basis for clientelist exchanges. Yet, they

often stress instrumentalism as well, without differentiating between these two different bases for clientelism. Moreover, these studies do not provide a psychological foundation that is as conceptually well-grounded, or as rigorously tested, as the principal-agent models that underlie instrumentalist approaches to vote buying.

We show that the feelings of obligation created by brokers through the provision of selective benefits can sustain patron-client relations even in the context of ballot secrecy. One implication is that clientelism may be much more entrenched than existing analyses would lead us to believe and will not necessarily disappear once ballot secrecy is enforced, as long as politicians have access to discretionary resources. Rather, purging clientelism from political life requires a normative component—specifically, that citizens must reject clientelist exchanges on principle because they feel a greater obligation to vote in accordance with their conscience, obey the law, and support democratic institutions.

Limitations of the Instrumentalist Foundation for Clientelism

The monitoring of vote choices and the threat of sanctioning voters for non-compliance form the cornerstone of instrumentalist theories of clientelism, but there is reason to suspect that they have not fully resolved the problem of voter compliance. Asynchronous clientelist exchanges that involve the distribution of benefits before Election Day allow clients to "defect" from the agreement after receiving their payoff. As Stokes[5] shows, one way to diminish the incentive to renege is for brokers to monitor voters' choices, either when they cast their ballots or after the fact. For such monitoring to matter, brokers must credibly threaten to withdraw subsequent benefits from individual voters who defect. But, unless brokers can identify individual defectors, they cannot know which voters to sanction. Clientelism would then break down for one of three reasons.

First, if brokers pay supporters and opponents alike, the cost to the machine increases—possibly enough to bankrupt it.[6] Second, paying opponents makes defection costless and no voters can be bought.[7] Finally, if brokers inadvertently sanction supporters, they create a group of spurned clients who are unlikely to support the machine in the future.

Instrumentalist work on clientelism often suggests that monitoring and sanctioning groups of voters (e.g., precincts or villages) can overcome the difficulty of identifying individual defectors.[8] However, adopting such strategies would hasten clientelism's demise if patron-client relations worked as instrumentalist theories suggest. If brokers and voters employ either "grim trigger" or "tit-for-tat," a machine that loses in a constituency would withdraw benefits from supporters who, in response, would not renew their support for the machine.[9] The logical implication is that clientelism based on instrumental calculations alone would only be sustainable where the machine has an unlimited budget (so that it could buy both opponents and supporters) or where it is dominant and never loses an election.

In some places, monitoring and sanctioning voters is not especially challenging. Some countries use partisan ballots, effectively eliminating ballot secrecy. In other countries, operatives have devised clever tactics to violate ballot secrecy (e.g., having clients photograph their ballots with a cellphone) or to convey the appearance of monitoring despite ballot secrecy. However, in many settings, the secret ballot is sufficiently well established that instrumentally motivated voters can take the money and run.

Some instrumentalist scholars have recognized this problem and attempted to grapple with it.[10] For instance, Stokes argues that the monitoring problem can be overcome by local brokers who can guess how their clients vote.[11] Unfortunately, this contention has not been tested systematically, and research in experimental psychology casts doubt on its veracity. People are often surprisingly bad at detecting when others are lying, even when they are trained to do so.[12]

Furthermore, clientelism persists in many places without well-organized political machines, such as Nigeria, Benin,[13] and Peru,[14] as well as in areas where machines do not attempt to monitor people's votes, such as Taiwan,[15] Sao Tomé e Principe,[16] and Paraguay.[17] These "anomalies" also call into question the instrumentalist paradigm. As Kitschelt and Wilkinson acknowledge, in the absence of "expensive organizational surveillance and enforcement structures" clientelism thrives only where voters voluntarily and spontaneously comply with clientelist inducements.[18]

Reciprocity and Obligation in Clientelist Exchange

Reciprocity is a fundamental element of human social interaction. Norms of reciprocity are recognized at a very young age,[19] and although cultural differences can influence the expression of these norms,[20] the concept and practice of reciprocity are sufficiently universal that most researchers regard them as "hard-wired."[21] Recent research in genetics and neuroscience has even identified some of the alleles and biological pathways that underlie reciprocal exchange.[22]

Instincts of reciprocity can powerfully influence behavior.[23] For instance, experimental research shows that people often treat others fairly even when they face an incentive to do otherwise.[24] People may also reciprocate insults toward those who behave unfairly toward them, even if they incur a personal cost to do so—a phenomenon known as "altruistic punishment."[25]

Instincts of reciprocity lead people to feel indebted to those who provide them with gifts, services, favors, or protection.[26] Such debts can be discharged by providing a good of comparable material worth to the original "gift;" however, not all recipients can pay their patrons back. In those cases, recipients may balance the ledger by according the giver greater social status, esteem, or loyalty.[27] In the political sphere, such loyalty typically involves voting for a particular candidate, attending rallies, volunteering on a campaign, or joining protests.[28]

A key question concerns the conditions under which feelings of obligation become activated to serve clientelism, and thus why we would expect variation in machine

politics across individuals, communities, and countries (even where politicians have similar access to discretionary resources). We underscore two important limitations on the power of obligation to create clientelism. First, the value of a vote may vary across individuals, making it too expensive for brokers to create enough obligation among wealthier citizens or those with more intense partisan preferences. Second, obligations stemming from reciprocity must compete with other obligations that could diminish the likelihood of compliance, such as the degree to which voters have imbibed civic norms and their respect for the law or for representative institutions. Just as instrumentally motivated clients do not automatically support the machine when they have competing reasons to choose another party,[29] voters motivated by feelings of obligation will only become clients when the demands of reciprocity outweigh other considerations.

Observable Implications of the Reciprocity and Instrumentalist Approaches

In some circumstances, instrumental and normative explanations make similar predictions about when clientelism will emerge and survive; for instance, both predict that machine politics disappears when politicians run out of discretionary resources to distribute. On the key issue of voter compliance, however, the two approaches yield different predictions. As noted above, if instrumental models are correct, machine politics is limited to contexts where patrons can credibly threaten to reward or punish individual voters for non-compliance.[30] By contrast, clientelism based on reciprocity may persist even where voters do not believe that they are monitored because the mechanism of enforcement is an internal psychological one.

The two approaches also yield competing predictions about retrospective voting. In the instrumentalist view, voters care exclusively about prospective costs and benefits.[31] Although their perceptions of future benefits may be informed by what they have received in the past, instrumentally motivated voters are concerned only with how today's interactions condition their future stream of benefits. Clients motivated by obligation, however, may demonstrate loyalty to leaders who did right by them in the past, regardless of what they stand to gain in the future. They may thus cast their ballots based on purely retrospective considerations.[32] Intriguingly, they may also seek to reciprocate perceived injustices by voting against politicians who failed to deliver when expected to do so. As a result, they may turn against erstwhile patrons even when doing so diminishes the chances of receiving clientelist benefits in the future.

Political attitudes also play a key role in the reciprocity approach to clientelism. Although some versions of the instrumentalist approach argue that ideological preferences condition clientelist attachments[33]—a point on which the reciprocity approach agrees—instrumentalist theories discount other values or beliefs that do not affect the costs or benefits of supporting the machine. In the reciprocity approach, attitudes like civic responsibility also matter. Civic-minded individuals consider the needs of the community above and beyond the parochial needs of the individual or family, which are

typically the target of selective benefits.[34] These citizens are less likely to follow through on a clientelist bargain because they perceive a value-conflict between clientelist and civic obligations. For instance, they may believe that machine politics undermines democratic representation, encourages corruption, or retards economic growth.

Arguments employing the instrumentalist micro-foundation are currently better established in the political science literature. Yet, as Brusco and colleagues point out, this foundation has not yet been subjected to a systematic test against the normative framework we propose.[35] We thus proceed in two steps. We begin by demonstrating the plausibility of the norms of reciprocity approach by presenting evidence that obligation shapes vote choice. We then test the norms of reciprocity approach against instrumentalist predictions. We draw on evidence from published studies using an array of methods (surveys, ethnographic accounts, and experiments) and from new data from split-sample experiments embedded in two new surveys from Mexico in 2009 and 2010.[36] Our aim is to go beyond the observational evidence that researchers have used to support instrumentalist arguments and firmly establish the plausibility of our norms-based approach using findings from a variety of methods.[37]

Clientelist Exchanges Generate Obligation

If the provision of selective benefits failed to conjure feelings of obligation, there would be little reason to think that such feelings motivated clientelist exchange. Consistent with our argument, ethnographic accounts of clientelism produced over the last seventy-five years are drenched in the language of obligation.[38] Clients regularly report feeling indebted to the politicians who provide them with benefits and act accordingly.[39] One example comes from the "new leaders" (*naya netas*) in northern India. Although these village notables cannot monitor voters' behavior, they can count on beneficiaries to support them nonetheless. As one *naya neta* put it:

> It is a matter of keeping faith. People can obviously vote as they wish. But most people remember well who has helped them in times of need. And it is only a rare person who is faithless.[40]

Field reports on electoral politics in other countries, including Benin, Japan, northern Portugal, and the Philippines have uncovered the same dynamic.[41]

If the approach we propose is correct, not only should benefits generate obligations, but variation in the value of benefits should also affect the degree of obligation. Data from existing surveys that include appropriate items suggest that such a relationship does exist. For instance, the more that recipients of gifts in the nationally representative Mexico 2006 Panel Study said that the gifts mattered to them, the more obligation they felt to support the patron ($r = .51$, $p < .01$, $N = 79$).

Our own surveys, which employed a series of split-sample experiments, provide direct evidence on this point. Interviewers read third-person vignettes of the following type, in which half the sample was prompted with the smaller sum and half with

the larger sum: "Let's imagine that a candidate for municipal president offers Gabriel/Gabriela [50/500] pesos [roughly 3.7 USD or 37 USD] in exchange for his/her vote and Gabriel/Gabriela accepts the money. In your opinion, how much obligation should Gabriel/Gabriela feel to vote for this candidate—a lot, some, a little, or none?" Similar vignettes were read where the benefit in question was a bicycle, several bags of cement, or medical treatment for a sick child. Note that this question used hypothetical third-persons to diminish social desirability bias in responses, given that many of the practices discussed were illegal; interviewers matched the gender of the person in the vignettes to that of the respondent in order to enhance identification with the subject of the vignette.[42]

The results of these split-sample survey experiments are presented in Table 1 and show that respondents, in the aggregate, perceived different "gifts" as eliciting different levels of obligation to support a clientelist party. Small monetary payments induced the least amount of obligation to support a candidate, with approximately one quarter of the sample reporting some obligation. Larger monetary payments generated more obligation, but less than the "gifts."[43] A gift of a bicycle induced obligation among more than one-third of respondents, and a bag of cement (crucial to people living in poorly constructed homes) raised that proportion to almost two-fifths. As we would expect, the provision of a doctor's visit for a sick child was the most powerful inducement, with nearly half of respondents saying that such an act should create a sense of obligation in the voter to support the politician providing it.[44]

Table 1 Degree of Felt Obligation for Benefits Offered (Mexico)

Benefit offered	Percent who felt "a lot" or "some" obligation to support politician providing gift	Mean obligation	Percent of respondents who thought it correct to accept the gift
50 pesos	24.6	0.78	23.9
500 pesos	28.2	0.89	24.9
Bicycle	33.8	1.00	30.2
Cement	39.7	1.15	32.4
Doctor visit	49.9	1.48	71.8

Source: Mexico 2009 Clientelism Survey.
Note: The mean value is calculated on a scale of 0 to 3 (0 = no obligation). Differences between adjacent benefits in the table are not statistically significant except cement versus medical treatment, for which $p<.01$. All other differences are significant at the .01 level.

Evidence from several countries, using a variety of research methods, thus shows that clientelist benefits generate feelings of obligation among voters. However, do feelings of obligation condition voting behavior? In our 2009 survey in Mexico, we asked half the respondents whether they would vote for the party with which they sympathized or the party that had resolved a legal issue for them in the past.[45] Only 30.2 percent inclined toward the party with which they sympathized whereas 54.4 percent chose the party that gave them a benefit in the past. Another 15.4 percent

were uncertain which party to choose. In other words, obligation stemming from past receipt of benefits weighed more heavily on voters than their current partisan sympathies.

As another test of the relationship between obligation and voting, we constructed an index of political obligation by adding responses from three questions that were asked of all respondents in our 2010 survey: how much obligation should Gabriel/Gabriela feel to vote for a party that gave him/her a) 500 pesos, b) a paid doctor's visit for his/her sick child, and c) a rooftop water tank in exchange for his/her vote. A separate item on the survey asked respondents whether a voter who lives in an area that suffers from water shortages should choose a candidate that offers him/her a week's worth of water before the election in exchange for his/her vote or one who offers nothing before the election but promises to improve the water system in the area if he/she wins. This question thus asks voters to choose between a pre-electoral selective benefit and a post-electoral community benefit. Although both types of goods are payoffs for electoral support, the selective benefit is much closer to the standard conception of clientelism in political science.

In logistic regression models where preference over candidates offering one or the other type of benefit is the dependent variable, the coefficient on the index of political obligation is correctly signed and significant at the .05 level (See Table 2). The magnitude of the effect remains virtually unchanged when we control for other variables that could plausibly affect orientations toward clientelism, including family wealth (measured by an inventory of common household items), education, feelings of political efficacy (measured by a standard question about whether or not respondents think that politics is too complicated for them to understand), and feeling thermometer ratings of the main political parties. We examine the effect of civic values, also included in the model, in a subsequent section. A simulation using the full model ("Model 5" in Table 2) shows that an otherwise average individual who feels the highest level of political obligation is 11 percentage points more likely to vote in a clientelist fashion than one who feels the lowest level of obligation. This change more than doubles (from 10 percent to 21 percent) the likelihood that an individual would do so, all else equal.[46]

One limitation of our design is that survey respondents were not given the opportunity to accept the selective benefit and defect from the clientelist exchange. Therefore, it is possible that our tests confound instrumental motivations and normative obligations for choosing the clientelist candidate. However, our scenario also does not imply any monitoring or sanctioning of the voter. Therefore, it is unlikely that our survey respondent presumes she will be sanctioned if she does not comply. Without this assumption, there is no reason the respondent would favor the clientelist payoff for instrumental reasons.

As a test of whether respondents may implicitly assume that clients face sanctions, we run separate models (#2 and #5) that include respondents' beliefs about ballot secrecy. If presumptions about sanctioning color respondents' answers, then respondents who feel their ballot is not secret should be more inclined to accept the clientelist payoff. However, the coefficient on belief in ballot secrecy is wrongly signed and does not reach statistical significance; its inclusion in the models also does

Table 2 Logistic Regression Models of Support for a Clientelist Candidate (Mexico)

	Model 1			*Model 2*			*Model 3*			*Model 4*			*Model 5*		
Variable	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig
Political Obligation Index	0.10	0.04	**	0.08	0.04	**	0.10	0.05	**	0.10	0.05	**	0.09	0.05	**
Belief in ballot secrecy				−0.47	0.32								−0.56	0.35	
Civic Attitudes Index							−0.08	0.05	*	−0.10	0.05	*	−0.09	0.05	*
Political efficacy							−0.15	0.34		−0.38	0.36		−0.01	0.13	
SES							−0.07	0.13		−0.01	0.13		−0.41	0.36	
Education							0.10	0.08		0.14	0.08		0.13	0.09	
PAN feeling thermometer										−0.08	0.07		−0.08	0.07	
PRD feeling thermometer										−0.03	0.06		−0.02	0.06	
PRI feeling thermometer										0.05	0.06		0.07	0.06	
Constant	−2.07	0.25	***	−1.74	0.31	***	−1.48	0.81	*	−1.50	0.92	*	−1.31	0.95	
Number of cases	314			305			294			284			278		

Source: Mexico 2010 Clientelism Survey.
Note: Dependent Variable is coded as 1 for voting for a clientelist party and 0 otherwise.
* p<.1, ** p<.05, *** p<.01, two tailed test.

not diminish the statistical and substantive significance of felt obligation in generating support for the clientelist candidate.

Evidence from a variety of sources thus supports the notion that (1) the provision of selective benefits produces feelings of obligation, (2) more valuable benefits produce greater obligation, and (3) feelings of obligation are associated with clientelist voting.

Clientelism Persists Despite Ballot Secrecy

Instrumental theories of clientelism rest on brokers' ability to circumvent the secret ballot. In contrast, our norms-based approach implies that voters spontaneously support the machine, even where ballot secrecy is secure. Ample evidence using research employing different methods supports this view.

Field research shows that clientelism persists without policing of voters' actions in many contexts. For instance, Van de Walle argues that individualized monitoring is implausible in Nigeria and Benin, which are known to feature clientelist politics.[47] Wang and Kurzman's detailed analysis of vote buying in a 1993 contest for county executive in Taiwan reaches the same conclusion: although the ballot was secret, operatives from the Kuomintang purchased 14,090 votes by relying on networks of trust and obligation.[48] In a number of other countries that lack strong party organizations, which could act as clientelist machines, analysts routinely report high levels of clientelism. For instance, Peru's parties are weak, highly fragmented, and poorly organized, yet 24.5 percent of voters in the 2010 elections reported involvement in clientelist exchanges.[49]

Nationally representative survey data also show that clientelism extends much further than does monitoring by brokers. For instance, in São Tomé e Príncipe, 90 percent of subjects said that brokers attempted to buy their political support in parliamentary elections, yet only 14 percent reported any attempt at monitoring or sanctioning.[50] As Vicente concludes, such findings support "the idea that self-enforcement may be the main mechanism by which vote buying works" in settings where such behavior is pandemic.[51]

In the same vein, survey data from Brazil indicate that many citizens would be willing to carry through on vote-selling transactions, even when the questions asked do not imply policing of voters' behavior (see Supporting Materials).[52] In our surveys in Mexico, respondents also perceived that the parties had a relatively limited capacity (or desire) to monitor votes: just 25.5 percent said that they saw party representatives inside polling places trying to determine which candidates voters chose, and only 12.1 percent reported seeing party representatives threaten to sanction voters. Nevertheless, 71.4 percent believed that parties regularly or sometimes tried to buy votes in their neighborhood, and 69.3 percent believed that people in their neighborhoods sold their votes. Thus, far more clientelism occurs than the parties' monitoring capabilities would seem to support.[53]

Obligation Produces Purely "Retrospective Voting"

In instrumentalist models of clientelism, voters care about the future payoffs they hope to receive from a clientelist party. If voters consider past performance, it is only as an indicator of the likely future stream of clientelist goods that they may receive by supporting the machine.[54] In our norms-based approach, by contrast, voters may make their choices based exclusively on retrospective considerations because they feel an obligation to support politicians who have done right by them in the past, regardless of what they stand to gain in the future.

The link between the provision of favors or services and retrospective voting is commonplace in developed countries under the name "constituency service." American congressmen devote enormous attention to this activity—between one quarter and one third of their time—and their efforts appear to pay dividends.[55] The dividing line between such constituency service and clientelism is not always clear. For instance, Japanese politicians maintain massive personal support networks (*koenkai*) that dole out cash gifts at funerals and furnish constituents with material benefits.[56] American political machines, as well as constituency service efforts in Ireland and Italy, similarly blur the distinction between these activities.[57]

Although systematic investigation of retrospective clientelist voting has been limited, available survey data demonstrate the behavior that we predict. The 2002 survey of Argentine voters that became the basis for Stokes' instrumentalist theory of clientelism included an open-ended question that asked those respondents who admitted to receiving gifts how the gift affected them.[58] The verbatim responses indicate that 14 percent felt an obligation to vote for the party that gave them the gift; 21 percent changed their vote because the party had helped them; 17 percent said they normally voted for parties that gave them things; and others reported vague positive sentiments based on retrospective considerations. None invoked prospective criteria.

Other data cast even more doubt on voters' use of prospective criteria. If clients think prospectively, then presumably they would only change their vote intentions to candidates that they think will win an election and thus be in a position to offer benefits in future elections. Testing this hypothesis requires panel survey data that allow observation of respondents' vote intentions over time. In the Mexico 2000 Panel Study, 30.9 percent of the respondents who admitted receiving a payoff changed their vote intention to the candidate that gave them the benefit, even though they thought that this candidate was unlikely to win the presidency. The most striking finding concerns the candidacy of leftist Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. As his ill-fated third run for the presidency wore on, belief that he would win plummeted. Yet among voters who reported receiving a payoff from Cárdenas's party in the last month of the campaign and later said that they voted for him, fully 48.6 percent thought that he was unlikely to win the presidency when polled less than a month prior to the election.[59]

These findings cannot easily be accommodated within the instrumentalist framework. Voters motivated by future payoffs would be foolish to choose a candidate that

they think cannot win and, therefore, will not have access the spoils of office that facilitate future clientelist payments.

If many clients do not make their vote choices with an eye toward future payoffs, then what motivates their choices? Our 2009 survey investigated this issue further. Half of the sample was asked how much obligation a hypothetical third person would feel to support a party that promised to deliver a particular good or service (e.g., a medical center) in the future; the other half of the sample was asked how much of an obligation the person would feel to support a party that had provided a good or service in the past. If voters ignore or discount past benefits, they would presumably feel much less inclination to vote for parties that did right by them previously than they would for parties that promised desirable benefits in the future. Yet the data show that this is not the case; respondents reported no greater inclination to support a party that promised to build a medical clinic in the neighborhood if it won the election there than one that reminded them it had built such a clinic in the past.[60]

If voters are motivated by purely retrospective considerations, then they may engage in altruistic punishment. That is, jilted clients may turn against the machine, even if they are still more likely to receive a future payoff from the party they previously supported than from an opposing party. In one particularly clever study, Finan and Schecter show that Paraguayan voters who exhibit greater reciprocity in experimental trust games devoid of any political content are more likely to be involved in clientelist exchanges.[61] Measures of reciprocity from the trust games also correlated highly with responses to a survey question about how likely interviewees would be to get back at someone who had wronged them—i.e., to practice altruistic punishment. Their findings imply that brokers consciously direct selective benefits to voters who are most likely to punish parties or candidates that spurned them and, by logical extension, that brokers target constituents who feel a high degree of obligation to reciprocate.

We tested for willingness to employ altruistic punishment using two items from our 2010 survey. The first asked whether a hypothetical voter should feel obliged to vote for a party from which she normally receives foodstuffs in exchange for her support, but which did not deliver anything this year. The second inquired whether respondents agreed with the statement "when someone takes advantage of me, I get them back" (the same item employed by Finan and Schecter).[62] Those who strongly agreed with the second statement—thus demonstrating a willingness to practice altruistic punishment in general—were much more likely to think that the spurned voter should choose a rival party rather than abstain after benefits were withdrawn ($\chi^2 = 4.14$ for three degrees of freedom, $p < .05$).

Civic Attitudes Discourage Clientelism

The extent of political clientelism clearly varies across different political contexts, and a viable theory of clientelism must account for such differences. As noted above, even if feelings of obligation are activated, other sentiments might diminish potential clients'

likelihood of following through on the bargain. A number of factors might serve as counterbalances to the obligation induced by clientelist exchanges; however, scholars' longstanding interest in the role of civic attitudes in undermining clientelism leads us to focus here on beliefs that prompt citizens to see clientelist exchanges as illegitimate.[63]

Field experiments show that civic attitudes influence the effectiveness of clientelist appeals. For instance, Vicente demonstrated that exposure to anti-vote-buying literature in São Tomé e Príncipe increased perceptions that other people in the neighborhood were voting their conscience and reduced the extent of vote buying.[64] In the same vein, Wantchekon showed that people in Beninese villages who were randomly selected to receive nationally-oriented, "programmatic" appeals were more critical of vote-buying than those in villages that received parochial appeals, indicating that the primes (experimental stimuli) can alter voters' susceptibility to clientelist exchanges.[65]

Surveys that include adequate questions on civic attitudes and clientelism suggest a strong relationship between the two across individuals. For instance, in the 2002 Brazilian Election Study, respondents who more strongly favored democracy as a system of government were significantly more likely to believe that voters should not accept selective benefits in return for their vote ($p < .01$). Likewise, respondents in the Mexico 2006 Panel Study who expressed support for democracy were more likely to reject the notion that a hypothetical third person should be willing to trade his vote for groceries ($p < .01$).[66] In both cases, these relationships survive controls for potential confounding factors like income, education, and age (See Supporting Materials for details).

Our 2009 survey in Mexico employed an experiment to test hypotheses about civic attitudes directly. Half of the respondents were asked whether they believed that it is important to live in a democracy (the civic prime), and the other half were asked whether they agreed that people did not get ahead unless they took advantage of others (the anti-civic prime). All respondents were then asked whether it would be acceptable or unacceptable for a person to exchange his or her vote for a job for a relative, followed by the question that the other half of the sample had received first. Thus, all respondents received the same questions, just in a different order. Despite the subtle nature of the experimental manipulation, differences between the two groups were substantial. Whereas 36 percent of respondents who received the anti-civic prime first were willing to accept the clientelist exchange, only 25 percent of those who answered the question on democracy first were similarly inclined ($p < .05$).

As a further test, we examined both the partial effect of civic attitudes on clientelist voting and the joint effect of civic attitudes and the index of political obligation presented above on voting for a clientelist party. These results appear in Table 2. We measured civic attitudes with a simple additive index of responses to items on how disappointed the respondent would be in a friend who did not pay his household electric bill, stole a soft drink from a store, did not pay bus fare, and earned money by selling marijuana. In logistic regression models that also control for feelings of political obligation and efficacy, household income, education, and partisan identification, the coefficient on the index of civic attitudes was correctly signed and always

significant at the .1 level or better. In simulations based on this model, a voter who is typical in every way but highly civically minded would be 16 percentage points less likely to cast her lot with a clientelist party than a non-civic voter, cutting support for the machine in half. A voter who reports the highest levels of obligation to patrons and the lowest levels of civic obligation would be more than 33 percentage points more likely to support the machine than voters who are the least civic-minded and the most clientelist in orientation.[67] Thus, whereas feelings of obligation encourage voters to support a clientelist party, feelings of civic duty discourage them from doing so, and priming civic values alters the perceived legitimacy of clientelist exchanges.

Conclusion

Scholars in the instrumentalist tradition have occasionally acknowledged that clientelist linkages can involve strong feelings of affect or obligation,[68] but instrumentalist accounts treat such examples as isolated exceptions or aberrations. We argue instead that the obligation to reciprocate constitutes a theoretically and empirically well-supported alternative basis for machine politics in a range of settings.

We do not argue that instrumental calculation is unimportant for clientelism; the credible promise of rewards coupled with the credible threat of sanctions is surely a feature of machine politics in many places. Rather, we suspect that there is substantial variation in the basis for clientelism across countries (or even across voters in the same country). In other words, there are likely to be (1) places where the absence of spontaneous support necessitates close monitoring of voters by the machine, (2) places where politicians can rely on norms of obligation to garner votes, and (3) places where brokers find recourse to both mechanisms.

One implication of our findings has to do with party structures. If voters spontaneously support patrons out of obligation, then clientelism may not require highly organized and deeply rooted political machines. For instance, Stokes argues that "The typical political machine (or clientelist party) is bottom-heavy, decentralized, and relies on an army of grassroots militants."[69] Such elaborate structures could certainly make clientelism based on reciprocity more efficient by helping brokers target voters who are most likely to reciprocate; however, where clientelism can survive without monitoring voters' choices, politicians who can distribute benefits through government agencies or much leaner and potentially temporary personalist organizations may be able to build clientelist relationships without deeply embedded machines. This fact may help explain the persistence of clientelist politics in democracies around the globe in a period when economic austerity and media-centered campaigning have diminished party density,[70] transformed mass parties into "electoral-professional" ones with far fewer local activists,[71] and undermined traditional political machines in many countries.[72]

Our conclusions have implications for efforts to curb machine politics. One obvious strategy—with which instrumentalist approaches to clientelism would presumably agree—is to eliminate the discretionary resources available to political parties and

candidates. Not only would restricting the flow of selective benefits prevent politicians from generating new obligations, the withdrawal of resources could also lead voters who had come to rely on such selective benefits to punish the party that suddenly failed to hold up its end of the traditional bargain between patrons and clients.

As long as such resources remain available, public policies designed to reinforce the secret ballot may prove insufficient to break up political machines. Efforts to instill civic values also have a role to play. Where norms of obligation underwrite clientelism, machine politics faces a serious challenge if citizens come to view clientelist transactions as illegitimate, feel obligated to vote their conscience, or come to view their patrons' support as a right rather than a gift.[73] These shifts in mindset constitute a key part of the "difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship"[74]—a transition that is all the more difficult because it requires not only institutional reform but also change in values.

NOTES

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43. Cash inducements may have made the transaction seem more transparently illegal and evoked countervailing obligations to obey the law.

44. For evidence from the 2002 Brazil Election Study, see the Supporting Materials.

45. The question was: "Let's suppose that there are two candidates for Deputy: Candidate A and Candidate B. You sympathize (*simpatiza*) more with the party of Candidate A, but Candidate B helped you resolve a legal issue (*gestionó para usted un trámite importante*). For which candidate would you vote?"

46. The 10 percent of respondents who reported asking a politician for a favor and the 6 percent who admitted willingness to exchange their vote for a payoff evidenced more obligation than those who had never asked for a favor ($p < .01$) and were unwilling to enter into a clientelist exchange ($p < .1$).

47. Van de Walle, 64.
48. Wang and Kurzman, 233.
49. Gonzalez Ocantos and Kiewiet de Jonge.
50. Vicente.
51. Vicente, 21.
52. Due to space constraints, the Supporting Materials are not in the print version of this article. They can be viewed in the online version, at www.ingentaconnect.com/cuny/cp. Supporting Materials are also available at http://web.mit.edu/polisci/people/faculty/chappell-lawson.html.
53. Respondents who believe their choices are monitored could underreport monitoring or over-report obligation. If our findings are an artifact of voter fear, then voters who believe the vote is not secret should report higher levels of obligation. We compared the obligation induced by the items that appear in Table 1 with perceptions of monitoring. Respondents who suspected that voting was monitored reported slightly greater obligation for three of the five items; however, these differences were minor and not statistically significant.
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57. Komito; Carlo Rossetti, "Constitutionalism and Clientelism in Italy," in Luis Roniger and A. Günes-Ayata, eds., *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994); Miriam A. Golden, "Electoral Connections: The Effects of the Personal Vote on Political Patronage, Bureaucracy and Legislation in Postwar Italy," *British Journal of Political Science*, 33 (2003), 189–212.
58. Stokes.
59. It is highly improbable that clients came to believe that Cárdenas could win during the final month of his flailing campaign; prior data on the same panel respondents show that 60 percent of voters who received payoffs by the end of April believed Cárdenas was less likely to win when re-interviewed at the beginning of June.
60. Respondents might not find the candidate's promises credible. The structure of our 2010 survey allows us to investigate this issue further. Immediately preceding the questions referenced above (about obligation stemming from a promised medical center in the future and a reminder of past improvements to medical services), half of the sample was primed with a question that featured a party that had made good on a prior promise; the other half was not. Primed respondents actually reported a *greater* inclination to support the party that reminded of a past benefit than one that promised a future one ($p < .1$).
61. Finan and Schecter.
62. Ibid.
63. Almond and Verba; Chubb.
64. Vicente.
65. Leonard Wantchekon, "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin," *World Politics*, 55 (Fall 2003), 399–422, footnote 20.
66. A separate survey in Argentina (see Stokes, 2005) shows that the correlation between clientelism and civic attitudes, though correctly signed, does not reach statistical significance. This null result is the only finding that does not support our argument from any available survey that contains the requisite items; it may be a product of the fact that only a small portion (13 percent) of respondents saw clientelist exchanges as legitimate.
67. Across all models in Table 2, first differences for political obligation and the joint effect of political obligation and civic duty are statistically significant at the 95% level. The effect of civic duty alone is significant at the 90% level.
68. Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 15.
69. Stokes, 2005, 317.
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