

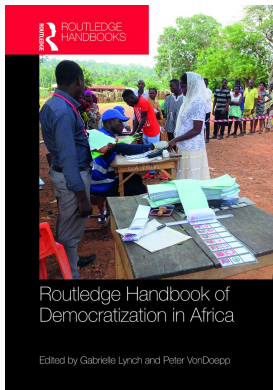
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Gabrielle Lynch, Peter VonDoepp

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CLIENTELISM

Jorge Gallego and Leonard Wantchekon

Clientelism is generally accepted to be widespread across sub-Saharan Africa due to the reliance of many leaders or “patrons” on the distribution of personal favors to their constituents or “clients” in exchange for political support (Wantchekon 2003). However, while this relationship is often appreciated by “clients” as a means to access scarce resources, it skews the distribution of resources, undermines the quality of public services, and distorts some of the basic roles of the state (Khemani 2015; Colonnelli, Prem, and Teso 2018; Dixit and Londregan 1996). As a result, where clientelism prevails, programmatic politics—i.e., the case in which voting decisions depend on policy proposals—tends to be weak and some of the basic tools of political accountability work in either a less efficient way or do not exist at all.

This chapter builds on the existing literature on the problem of political clientelism in emerging African democracies.¹ It starts by distinguishing between different concepts commonly associated with the phenomenon, such as vote buying, patronage, prebendalism, pork barrel politics, and machine politics. The chapter then analyzes the role of brokers or intermediaries in clientelistic networks and problematizes a common depiction of political clientelism as a simple dyadic relationship between a voter and a candidate. Third, the chapter highlights how much of the existing literature has focused on vote buying and on the electioneering component of the process to the neglect of other common aspects of clientelism. In so doing, the analysis questions a common assumption that vote buying is a simple transaction between candidates and voters, whereby, if the citizen or client receives more cash or private goods from a politician, he necessarily complies and votes for them. Instead, we claim vote buying does not always materialize into a complete transaction and that the real distortions to development caused by clientelism transcend election day. This underscores why some forms of clientelism, such as patronage and prebendalism, deserve greater attention than they usually receive. The final section turns to short- and medium-term strategies for overcoming clientelism. The conventional wisdom is that patron–client relationships will weaken once countries achieve certain levels of economic and political development. However, given that short- and medium-run strategies are necessary to break the poverty trap that clientelism builds upon and exacerbates, this chapter instead points to the potential role of deliberation, information, and institutions.

The many faces of clientelism

Definitions vary, but clientelism is generally understood as transactions between politicians and citizens, whereby material favors are offered in return for political support (Wantchekon 2003; Stokes 2005; Hicken 2011; Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, and Nichter 2014), which may include the vote (Gallego 2015, 2018b). A close look at this definition reveals that it serves as an umbrella term for different political practices in which unequal vertical relationships take place. In turn, clientelism can vary in terms of its scope and timeframe. In what follows, we trace the distinctions along these dimensions in order to understand the differences between tribute, elite, and mass clientelism on the one hand, and between vote buying, patronage, prebendalism, and machine politics, on the other.

With regards to the scope of relations, van de Walle (2007) distinguishes between tribute, elite, and mass clientelism. Tribute clientelism refers to the practice of gift exchange in peasant societies, whereby patrons and clients respond to sentiments of reciprocity and trust. Mass clientelism, which is strongly associated with patronage, is defined in terms of the utilization of state resources for political clients. Finally, elite clientelism, closely connected to prebendalism and corruption, occurs when public office is used to gain personal access to state resources.

Clientelism also varies in terms of the timeframe in which the relationship occurs. This includes whether the connection centers around elections, and, if so, how far it extends beyond them. For example, vote buying or electoral clientelism (Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, and Nichter 2014) is a common scenario in which the candidate, usually through intermediaries, intends to influence voting decisions (Stokes 2005; Hicken 2007; Lehoucq 2007; Schaffer 2007; Vicente 2014) and turnout (Nichter 2008; Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, and Nichter 2014). The main distinction between electoral clientelism and other forms of clientelism is that when vote buying occurs, the majority of benefits are distributed during the electoral campaign when handouts can take various forms, cash being perhaps the most popular, but which can also include food, alcohol, medicines, construction materials, and other gifts (Guardado and Wantchekon 2018).

However, uneven relationships of exchange between politicians and their (potential) supporters also often extend beyond the campaigns—from general patronage through to prebendalism. General patronage, which is a particular form of clientelism,² includes the allocation of public resources, such as jobs or contracts, in exchange for political support (Colonnelli, Prem, and Teso 2018). Hence, it differs from the more specific concept of vote buying in several ways. First, the transaction can span a longer period of time and is not necessarily limited to the electoral campaign. Second, and in contrast to cash or food distributed around elections, goods such as contracts and jobs represent a stream of benefits, which, while more valuable to clients, creates more distortions to the economy. Consequently, such patronage can hardly be universal. Instead, jobs and contracts are often secured for influential agents or brokers who are able to mobilize blocks of voters for patrons or “Big Men” (Smith and Bueno de Mesquita 2012).

Prebendalism is a relatively extreme form of clientelism, whereby public officials are allowed to pocket part of the public revenues they have control over. Under most forms of patronage, some form of public service delivery can take place, albeit inefficiently, on the side of the broker. When prebendalism takes place, the patron simply extracts public resources for their own benefit, leaving little or nothing to the community who in turn enjoy almost no control over the patron or public officials. Hiring a strategic broker to occupy a senior position in the customs office is patronage; allowing that broker to manipulate import and export taxes with impunity so that he can enrich himself is prebendalism (van de Walle 2007).

Clientelism and its various forms are also associated with other concepts widely used in the study of American politics; namely, pork barrel and machine politics. Pork barrel politics

is a phenomenon studied in the context of the American Congress (Cox and McCubbins 1986; Lindbeck and Weibull 1987) and refers to the distribution of discrete and highly divisible benefits targeted to specific populations or areas (Evans 2011). The distinction between distributive politics and pork barrel benefits is similar to the comparison between clientelism and programmatic politics: pork barrel is a form of redistributive policy that seeks to mobilize support, but which is inherently inefficient as the cost of these projects tends to exceed the public benefits (Mayhew 1974).

In contrast, machine politics is usually used in the context of urban politics in the US, particularly at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and refers to the system in which political parties—rather than individuals—distributed benefits to their constituency in exchange for political support (Scott 1969). Nonetheless, this phenomenon of having parties distributing particularistic benefits to voters has been frequently observed elsewhere, especially in the developing world.

Brokers and networks in political clientelism

Clientelism is often presented as a simple dyadic relation between a patron and client (Lande 1977; Stokes 2007). However, in recent years the literature has also focused on the role of intermediaries and brokers in an effort to disentangle the structure of clientelistic networks (see Baland and Robinson 2007; and Keefer and Vlaicu 2008 for early accounts). In agrarian and less developed economies, the notion of dyads makes more sense, because in such contexts it was easier for patrons to establish direct relations with clients. But with industrialization, urbanization, and population growth, direct links between politicians and their constituencies often become loosened in ways that facilitate the emergence of brokers as key actors in the political process.

In most cases, the literature on clientelistic brokers has focused on their role in the context of vote buying relations or its variations. Some authors have focused on the relationship between candidates and brokers, while others on that of brokers and voters. Larreguy, Marshall, and Querubín (2016), for instance, studied voter mobilization through hired brokers, and emphasized the moral hazard problem faced by politicians when relating with intermediaries. Brokers have incentives to shirk. As a result, parties obtain higher benefits from this relationship when monitoring capabilities are greater and when intermediaries are able to mobilize citizens who otherwise would not vote. In this vein, Larreguy (2013) has shown how the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) uses election results to monitor brokers, while Larreguy, Marshall, and Querubín (2016), also in reference to Mexico, underscore the role that partisan attachment plays at disciplining brokers.

Stokes et al. (2013) also analyze the relationship between brokers and parties around election day; but in their account the relevant informational problem is adverse selection, where the political alignment between intermediaries and candidates is taken for granted, and the party's problem is to select the best brokers. Similarly, Camp (2015) analyzes the collective action problem inherent to the relationship between parties and brokers, as the latter can only cultivate small groups of voters, so that their individual efforts only marginally affect the probability of victory of their candidates. Camp also highlights one of the ways in which parties can solve the collective action problem inherent to relying on brokers: patrons offer private rewards, such as career advances or pecuniary resources to brokers, in exchange for blocks of votes.

Other authors have focused on the relationship between brokers and voters. For example, Rueda (2014) shows that brokers make voters comply by conditioning future transfers on candidates achieving an optimal threshold of votes. Similarly, Gingerich and Medina (2013) argue that discipline is achieved through the promise of a fixed benefit to a group of individuals sharing a common trait once a candidate is elected.

In the context of African politics, these topics are of particular interest as it has become increasingly accepted that ethnic appeal is not the only mobilization option for African politicians (see Long; and Koter, this volume). Intermediaries—traditional and religious leaders—play a crucial role in mobilizing voters from different ethnic groups in countries like Benin, Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Kenya, and Botswana, albeit at varying levels (Koter 2016). In a similar vein, and using data from 180 regions in eighteen African countries, Baldwin (2014) finds that African political leaders may prefer to concede power over the allocation of land to community leaders, in exchange for support from non-co-ethnics. In a related piece and drawing on evidence from Zambia, Baldwin (2013) finds that voters have incentives to follow intermediaries and support their candidates if they anticipate that this support will improve the provision of public goods. Similarly, de Kadt and Larreguy (2018) find that in the former Bantustans of South Africa, alignment between traditional chiefs and the incumbent African National Congress boosted electoral support for the party.

The role of voter social networks has also received attention. For example, Cruz (2019) outlines five reasons why party machines, in general, prefer to target voters with larger social networks (friends and family ties). First, they are easier to identify and engage with, which reduces logistical costs (Wang and Kurzman 2007). Second, the social multiplier effect is higher, resulting in larger positive externalities for vote buyers (Schaffer and Baker 2015). Third, social ties signal reciprocity, and reciprocal voters respond more to clientelistic transactions (Finan and Schechter 2012; Lawson and Greene 2014). Fourth, social ties may facilitate direct connections between voters and clientelistic actors, such as brokers and candidates (Cruz, Labonne, and Querubín 2017). And finally, the costs of monitoring can be lower when ties abound (Cruz 2019).

Another strand of the literature on clientelistic brokers studies the connection between illegal armed groups and political parties. “Armed clientelism” (Gallego 2017) is a particular form of patronage in which violent organizations, such as cartels, mafias, guerrilla groups, and paramilitaries, act as brokers between candidates and voters. This particular form of clientelism has been reported in diverse settings, such as US cities in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth (Gosnell 1937) up to today,³ as well as in villages in Nigeria (Collier and Vicente 2014), slums of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil (Hidalgo and Lessing 2015), districts in Jamaica (Haid 2010), and Colombian municipalities (Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos 2013; Gallego 2018a).

The main feature of armed clientelism is that when illegal organizations control entire regions of a country, they can mobilize votes in favor of candidates in exchange for favorable legislation, lower levels of prosecution, or greater economic opportunities in legal and illegal markets. In Africa, the wave of democratization following the collapse of the Soviet Union took place under the shadow of political institutions that enabled the use of illegal electoral strategies, including the main ingredients for armed clientelism: clientelism and political violence (Collier and Vicente 2012). Nigeria’s 2007 presidential election is a good example of when political figures recruited gangs and criminals to intimidate voters and to alter electoral outcomes (HRW 2007). However, while all of this research on brokers or intermediaries helps us to better understand the African context, its focus on elections risks ignoring the broader realities of clientelism and patronage politics.

Democratization and the need to look beyond vote buying

While different forms of clientelism exist in democratic contexts, many studies have focused solely on vote buying (see, for instance, Brusco, Nazareno, and Stoker 2004; Finan and Schechter

2012; Kramon 2009; Stokes 2005; Stokes et al. 2013; and Nichter 2008). This is problematic for several reasons. First, most studies have focused on the demand side of the relationship—why and how politicians do it—while ignoring the supply side—i.e., whether voters comply with the agreement. Second, even if gifting during campaigns does help “buy votes,” other manifestations of clientelism seem to be more important.

Determining whether citizens comply and honor this tacit agreement remains an open question. For example, Guardado and Wantchekon (2018) argue that, while there is ample evidence that candidates target voters with handouts that often include cash, it is unclear if these gifts cause an increase in turnout and/or votes in favor of the distributing politician. To study this problem, the authors used post-electoral surveys from African countries, including one conducted in Benin after the 2011 presidential election, Round 3 of the 2005 Afrobarometer series, which was conducted in eighteen countries, and one from Round 5 of the 2012 Afrobarometer section in Benin. They found that, in many cases, vote buying transactions were incomplete as cash handouts appeared to have little or no effect on votes or turnout, while voters considered the vote to be secret.⁴ Consequently, if monitoring the vote is difficult for candidates and political machines, it comes as no surprise that compliance may not occur in many cases. The situation is further complicated if more than one candidate competes for the vote using electoral handouts in a multiparty context.

Other authors have also found vote buying to be an incomplete transaction (Lindberg and Morrison 2008; Bratton 2008; Conroy-Krutz and Logan 2012). Using information from a survey in two recent elections in Ghana, Lindberg and Morrison (2008) found that only one-in-ten voters was decisively influenced by clientelism or ethnicity when casting a vote. In the context of Nigerian election campaigns, Bratton (2008) reveals how most citizens consider vote buying and electoral violence to be infractions of public morality, and that when confronted with these situations, voters defect from the agreement. Similarly, Conroy-Krutz and Logan (2012) found little support for the claim that, in 2011, Uganda’s President Museveni benefited significantly from vote buying strategies. According to the data, self-reported recipient beneficiaries of handouts during the election were not more likely to have supported Museveni at the polls than non-beneficiaries.

All these findings raise the question of why candidates would distribute cash to begin with when it may not effectively secure votes. Scholars exploring this puzzle have proposed different explanations. For example, Schaffer and Schedler (2007) and Keefer and Vlaicu (2008) claim that handout delivery is necessary to enhance credibility, while Kramon (2016) suggests that handouts signal a commitment to future redistribution. For both, handouts serve as signals of reliability in a context of uncertainty and lack of trust (also see Banegas 2002; Nugent 2007; Schaffer and Schedler 2007). In a similar vein, Chauchard (2018) and Guardado and Wantchekon (2018), argue that handout delivery, even if ineffective, is the result of a political equilibrium in which candidates cannot deviate, since other parties are following the same strategy. Hence, handout delivery is a direct consequence of political competition. In turn, many also highlight the ways in which popular expectations of assistance by those who are relatively wealthy and powerful extends far beyond the election period and vote buying to include the promotion of local interests, assistance, and displays of generosity—from the funding of new classrooms to regular contributions for funerals and weddings (Conroy-Krutz and Logan 2012). The implication is that politicians cannot simply buy votes in the short term, but instead need to establish reputations as effective patrons or help to assist and defend their constituents. However, patronage in this more established and long-term sense not only distorts the ways in which income is distributed, but can easily morph into more exclusive forms of patronage that benefit an increasingly small circle of elites.

Patronage and prebendalism in emerging African democracies

As argued above, patronage and prebendalism are manifestations of clientelism that distort in many important ways how income is redistributed. Robinson and Verdier (2013) argue that employment in the public sector is a credible method of redistribution that ties candidates to voters in a context in which political commitment is challenging. However, according to the authors, this form of clientelism generates an underprovision of public goods, so that citizens become more dependent on the politician and find employment in the bureaucracy increasingly attractive. In turn, they argue that clientelism is more likely in societies with low levels of productivity and high levels of inequality because, in such places, it is easier to buy votes with jobs than cash, and public sector positions are known to be more lucrative.

However, this account fails to recognize how jobs are scarce resources and are allocated strategically to key actors in the society; namely, to those who guarantee the highest reward to the politician. At the same time, patronage frequently evolves into corruption and prebendalism in such a way that the strategic allocation of public positions and contracts to friends and allies guarantees not only higher odds of staying in power, but also direct or indirect access to public resources for personal enrichment (van de Walle 2007; Burbidge and Philp, this volume). In turn, “patrons” can come to extract more resources than they redistribute, as arguably occurred in Mobutu’s Zaire, leading analysts to talk of a predatory or kleptocratic state (Luiz 1997).

The form and consequences of patron–client relations are also affected by important structural changes. First, migration—especially from rural to urban areas—drastically alters the nature of clientelism (Archer 1990). Koter (2016), for instance, has shown that incumbent presidents are more successful in rural areas because intermediaries are able to establish stronger bonds than in urban centers. In addition, face-to-face interaction between candidates and voters is less likely in urban areas, which also means that programmatic politics occupies a more important role.

Second, democracy in developing countries differs in many important aspects from democracy in developed countries. For instance, electoral competition is often more complex with a plethora of political actors and movements, which coexist with relatively weak political parties (Carbone 2007). This is important for an understanding of clientelism, because if parties are weak and short-lived, it is harder for candidates to cooperate with voters, as is often the case in the context of repeated interactions.

Third, the means of political communication have changed drastically in the past few years, with online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook emerging as important channels by which politicians can communicate with potential supporters (Gallego et al. 2017). In the context of African democracies, there are significant potential benefits to be gained from closing the digital gap so that candidates who lack the resources or networks to access traditional media, public resources, powerful brokers, or consolidated machines, can gain new ways of communicating with potential supporters. However, the proliferation of echo chambers in social media, which enable users to only follow like-minded people and consume information that serves to confirm their original biases (Tucker et al. 2017), the use of profiling to target propaganda and “fake news” to particular sections of society, and ability of wealthier politicians to hire bloggers and public relations companies, raises concern about the real effect that social media may have on democratization and clientelism (see also Tettey, this volume).

Overcoming clientelism: deliberation, information, and institutions

How can a country overcome clientelism and make programmatic politics the *modus operandi* of its political system? Stronger political institutions, economic growth, and development have

been the common answer. However, good governance and development are undermined by patronage politics and take time to emerge, which begs the question of whether people should wait until stronger institutions are built or countries achieve higher levels of development and growth, or whether there are short- and medium-run strategies to overcome clientelism? This question has no simple answer. However, in recent years, a number of studies—most of them using experimental methods and some of them focused on Africa—have sought solutions through a focus on deliberation, information, and/or institutions.

In this way, Fujiwara and Wantchekon (2013) have explored the role that public deliberation can play in undermining clientelism. For this purpose, the authors conducted a field experiment in the context of the 2006 presidential election in Benin. With the cooperation of the leading presidential candidates, the authors randomized the types of electoral campaigns conducted in certain villages. In control locations, standard clientelistic strategies were used, which in essence corresponded to political rallies in which food and cash are distributed and little or no space is devoted to the discussion of public policies. In contrast, in treatment villages, public deliberation was enacted in such a way that party delegates presented candidates' policy platforms first, and then citizens had the chance to publicly deliberate on the issues they considered most important for their communities. Overall, the experiment found that in treatment locations people self-reported lower levels of clientelism, resulting in a reduction of the number of votes for the "dominant" candidate. Fujiwara and Wantchekon (2013) concluded that in clientelistic environments incumbent candidates have more opportunities to buy votes, but that new mechanisms, which provide information and enable deliberation, counteract their competitive advantage.

In a related experiment, Wantchekon et al. (2017) show that in the context of Congressional elections in the Philippines, town hall meetings in which citizens publicly deliberate on policy platforms are beneficial to the party-lists implementing them. As opposed to the previous experiment, the authors kept the policy platforms debated by parties constant, and only changed the mechanism used to deliver it. The authors concluded that deliberation is an effective way of delivering campaign messages, not only because they induce changes in attendees' attitudes and behavior, but also because positive spillovers take place as messages are shared by participants with non-attendees. The study also found this effect to be greater on targeted voters, such as women in the case of feminist platforms and low-income voters for pro-poor platforms. The results suggest that the positive effect of town hall meetings is driven mainly by attitudinal changes of voters, as they become aware of the programmatic policies that matter the most to them. Overall, the results of Wantchekon et al. (2017) are in line with those of Esterling, Neblo, and Lazer (2011), who in the context of Congressional elections in the US, found that citizens who debate and deliberate with candidates are more likely to become better informed about policy-relevant issues.

In sum, these deliberation experiments show that meetings and debates with candidates or party representatives may help to counteract clientelistic strategies and enhance programmatic politics. However, it is not clear what is driving this result: the fact that people feel empowered since they now can publicly express their opinions, or the fact that in these meetings information is provided and, in turn, citizens become aware of those issues that are more salient and important to them.

Another strand of the literature on clientelism and vote buying has explored the role that information provision plays in reducing clientelism. In a seminal study conducted in the two-island African country of São Tomé and Príncipe, Vicente (2014) analyzed the effects of a voter education campaign against vote buying. In collaboration with the National Electoral Commission of the country, the author randomized, at the enumeration level, the distribution and discussion of leaflets that stressed the illegal nature of vote buying and found that such

voter education helped to decrease the idea that the money offered by the candidates affected the results. In voter education areas, turnout was also lower, while the vote share of the electoral challenger decreased. Vicente claimed that this result reflected the fact that the campaign reduced vote buying because, in a country like São Tomé and Príncipe, the delivery of cash in exchange for votes is a strategy typically available to challengers, while incumbents can establish other clientelistic relationships.

Green and Vasudevan (2016) conducted a similar experiment that used an information campaign to reduce support for politicians who buy votes. This time, in the context of Indian elections, the authors used radio advertisements to provide voters with information regarding the negative economic consequences of supporting vote buyers. The authors found that the ads reduced, from 4 to 7 percentage points, the vote share of parties previously identified by a team of journalists as prone to using vote buying strategies. This is an interesting strategy that can potentially be implemented in African countries in which it is difficult to conduct door-to-door campaigns and where the radio remains a highly popular mass medium.

In a similar vein, Aker, Collier, and Vicente (2017) conducted an experiment in advance of the 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections in Mozambique, to determine if information can increase the levels of political participation and the demand for accountability. When comparing the effectiveness of an SMS education campaign, an SMS hotline to report electoral misconduct, and the distribution of a free newspaper containing electoral information, the authors find that the three strategies increase participation but only newspapers led to higher demand for political accountability, measured as the proportion of citizens sending text messages about their policy priorities. Reports of electoral irregularities also decreased in these places. The implication is that programmatic politics can also be enhanced through the strategic use of traditional media, such as newspapers.

These studies reveal that information campaigns might be effective at reducing the propensity of certain types of voters to sell their votes. However, it is unclear how candidates and parties might respond. If candidates lose votes because some citizens become more informed, it is likely that certain brokers—especially those who are able to mobilize voters independently of their levels of information, such as the violent brokers who prevail under armed clientelism—will become more important. This crowding-out effect might have the unintended consequence of diminishing vote buying, while augmenting other types of clientelism. In short, if incumbents face more stringent conditions for getting individual votes, then jobs and contracts might appear as substitute strategies to win elections.

To some degree, whether communities naturally engage in participation and deliberation, and whether they have access to relevant information on politicians and public policies, depends on existent formal and informal institutions. In particular, social norms determine to a great extent the levels of civic engagement achieved by communities, which in turn impacts the effectiveness of bottom-up accountability mechanisms to discipline candidates and bureaucrats. In this way, Dasgupta (2016) shows how in rural India villages, access to public services, and the level of effort exerted by politicians to provide them, largely depends on the level of local civic engagement. This begs the question of what types of institutions may increase the levels of public engagement.

Conclusion

The literature on clientelism and vote buying has grown at a rapid pace in the last few decades. Yet, many important questions remain unanswered, especially for those interested in studying

politics and democratization in the African context. In this chapter we have reviewed some of these topics. Starting with a discussion of some of the basic concepts that relate to the umbrella term of clientelism, we traced the differences and commonalities between popular concepts such as vote buying, patronage, prebendalism, pork barrel politics, and machine politics. In all cases, the concept refers to a relationship in which goods and services are provided in exchange for political support, but the timing, nature of the rewards, and consequences of these practices vary.

Recently, brokers have been studied in greater detail with some scholars focusing on the relationship between politicians and brokers, while others have studied the connection between brokers and voters, and a burgeoning literature seeks to understand the nature and characteristics of clientelistic networks. While all of these studies are useful for a complete understanding of the problem, we argue that more attention should be given to forms of patron–client relations that go beyond vote buying during election campaigns.

While some recent studies have proposed strategies and mechanisms for overcoming clientelism, we cannot wait until poor countries achieve higher levels of development and growth to see a transition from clientelism to programmatic policies. Rather, we need to learn more about the potential positive effects that innovations in terms of deliberation, information, and institutions can bring to clientelistic societies.

We would like to finish this chapter by outlining some areas for future research based on the arguments presented above. First, even though the literature on brokers continues to expand, more theoretical and empirical studies explaining the role of intermediaries, in the context of patronage and prebendalism, are needed. What type of institutional reform is needed to consolidate a professional civil service in developing contexts, in order to weaken the ties between patrons and brokers? Gallego, Li, and Wantchekon (2018) provide an interesting theoretical setup in this direction, but more research on this topic is needed. Second, and in terms of how clientelism evolves and adapts to new political conditions, it is important to grasp a better understanding of the effects that the Internet and social media have on patron–client relationships. Can closing the digital gap be an effective strategy to curtail the preponderance of brokers and to weaken clientelism?

Finally, more causal research is needed in order to understand what type of institutions may complement information and deliberation strategies for overcoming clientelism. What is the role of runoff elections? Can debates enhance deliberation and complement town hall meetings? What is the connection between the public financing of campaigns and clientelism? Research along these lines is crucial if we are to better understand how African countries can overcome clientelism and consolidate programmatic politics in the short and medium term.

Notes

- 1 For more general accounts, see Stokes (2005); Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007); Schaffer (2007); Hicken (2011); and Gallego and Wantchekon (2012).
- 2 Note that in many cases the terms clientelism and patronage are used interchangeably. However, it is important to acknowledge that other forms of clientelism exist as well, and in fact, in certain contexts of low development, clientelism can only manifest through prebendalism or vote buying (van de Walle 2007).
- 3 See, for instance, www.chicagogmag.com/Chicago-Magazine/January-2012/Gangs-and-Politicians-An-Unholy-Alliance/.
- 4 According to the 2012 Afrobarometer, 82 percent of respondents across thirty-one African countries believe it is unlikely that powerful actors can find out how they voted.

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