



You are conducting a literature review on decentralization. You want to know if electing local leaders—rather than having leaders appointed by the central government—leads to more effective and transparent local government.

Below are three extracts from articles that are relevant to your topic. Read each extract and make notes on the information you will need to answer your research question. Then write an argument summarizing the literature you have found.

Extract 1. This extract has been adapted from *The Emergence of Local Capacity: Lessons From Colombia* (World Development, Vol. 25, No. 7, pp. 1029-1043, 1997) by Ariel Fiszbein.

A key finding of the study is the close link between political reforms in Colombia and capacity development. The experience of these municipalities shows that competition for political office opened the doors to responsible and innovative leadership that became the driving force behind capacity building. It was the combination of the added responsibilities, more resources, and political reforms that created the environment conducive to the emergence of effective local governments.

In effect, the political environment within which local governments operate experienced significant changes. Starting in 1988, mayors—previously appointed—have been popularly elected: Changes in the electoral system for local officials and members of Congress have made the process more transparent and fair. One good example was the introduction of a system under which voters receive their ballots—which include photographs of candidates—at the election site, thus reducing opportunities for vote manipulation.

A reduction in clientelism* and more transparent and fair electoral practices have conferred more legitimacy to the leadership role of mayors in the public's eye and made the position more attractive and competitive. An important result has been a renovation in municipal leadership. A majority of the mayors that were in office in the sixteen municipalities at the time of our visits could be considered "political outsiders," with backgrounds in the private sector or coming to the public sector as professionals or through civic movements independent of traditional parties.

*Clientelism: When political support is given in exchange for goods and services.

Extract 2. This extract has been adapted from *Clientelism and Portfolio Diversification: A Model of Electoral Investment with Applications to Mexico* by Beatriz Magaloni, Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, and Federico Estevez (a chapter in *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition* edited by Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson: Cambridge University Press, pp. 182-203).

The defining trait of clientelism is that it involves direct exchanges between patrons and clients in which political support is traded for benefits and services. Under what conditions do politicians attempt to buy votes through the provision of private goods, rather than through the provision of public goods? To answer this question, this chapter develops a model of electoral investment and demonstrates its usefulness in the context of the erosion of hegemonic party rule in Mexico.

The gist of the model is the following: An incumbent party seeking reelection must decide how to allocate a basket of discretionary transfers to voters. These transfers range from private goods that can be individually targeted to public goods that are targeted to a jurisdiction or consumed by all voter groups across several jurisdictions.

The data show that political competition impacts clientelism. As we expected, holding development levels constant, political competition induces politicians to invest more in public good provision in an attempt to cater to wider and more heterogeneous electorates. Note that at high levels of electoral competition, clientelism is abandoned very quickly.

Extract 3. This extract has been adapted from *What Wins Votes: Why Some Politicians Opt Out of Clientelism* (American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 56, No. 3 (July 2012), pp. 568-583) by Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro.

In this article, I develop a measure of clientelism that treats it as a method of distribution. I aim to maintain the richness of qualitative work and its focus on how policy is implemented. At the same time, this measure is collected for a sufficiently large number of units such that I am able to document variation in the use of clientelism and to test hypotheses about the causes of that variation while controlling for possible confounding factors. In particular, I focus on whether or not local executives (mayors) are personally involved in the selection of beneficiaries for a large food distribution program across a sample of over 120 small and medium-sized Argentine municipalities. Before turning to the empirical data, I first turn in more depth to the question of why some politicians might opt out of clientelism.

In order to answer this question, I shift the analysis of clientelism away from an exclusive focus on the poor recipients of government goods and consider clientelism's effects on the voting behavior of the nonpoor. While clientelism may gain votes from the poor, it is likely to cost a politician support from the middle class. Clientelism thus creates an electoral trade-off, a trade-off that should be especially relevant when political competition is high. In contrast, where competition is low, this trade-off is less likely to affect politician incentives. Incorporating the reaction of the nonpoor to clientelism suggests the usefulness of examining the interaction between poverty and political competition in order to predict clientelism. High competition should be compatible with clientelism when poverty is high, but should decrease the incentives for clientelism where poverty is low. In contrast, where political competition is limited, we should not expect constituent poverty to shape politician incentives to use clientelism.

Homework

Write an argument on electoral competition and accountability supported by the research in the extracts above.