

Clientelism from the Client's Perspective: A Framework Based on a Systematic Review of Ethnographic Literature

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Abstract

Mainstream political science literature on clientelism has evolved quite separately from the ethnographic literature on the topic. Mainstream literature tends to emphasize the negative impact of clientelism, to focus on vote buying, and to study mainly the supply side of clientelism. In contrast, ethnographic literature often emphasizes the clients' agency and incentives, shows the diversity of clientelistic exchanges, and paints a far less negative and more diverse image of clientelism. This paper seeks to bridge the gap between the two strands of literature by constructing an inductive framework of clientelism from the clients' perspective. We undertake a systematic meta-analysis of ethnographic literature based on more than thirty ethnographic articles on clientelistic exchanges in different world regions. We apply a common coding scheme that focuses on the characteristics and welfare aspects of the exchange. Cluster analysis shows that there are four meaningful subtypes of clientelism; principal component analysis shows that these subtypes can be described by their location on two fundamental dimensions of clientelism: verticality and horizontality. Welfare implications appear to differ across subtype.

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1 Introduction

Clientelism, the exchange of particularistic goods for political support, has received renewed interest over the past fifteen years. In addition to reviews of the concept (e.g. Hicken (2011); Hilgers (2011); Stokes (2007*b*), several recent monographs and edited volumes have been published on the topic (some prominent examples, among many others, are Abente Brun and Diamond (2014); Corstange (2016); Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007); Kramon (2017); Nichter (forthcoming); Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno and Brusco (2013). Indeed, clientelism is not only widespread; large parts of the literature are moreover grounded in the conception that it has several negative externalities or at least, is something “less than ideal” (Hicken, 2011, p.290). In addition to concerns about democratic accountability (Stokes, 2007*a*; Stokes et al., 2013) it has been argued that clientelism results in an inefficient allocation of public resources that disproportionately impairs the well-being of the poor (Keefer and Khemani, 2004; Robinson and Verdier, 2013) and fosters inequality (De Ferranti, 2004; Pellicer, 2009).

Current work on clientelism comes from a variety of disciplines. Researchers studying clientelism include political scientists, ethnographers, area scholars, and economists. These different disciplinary perspectives, definitions and foci are likely to have contributed to the lack conceptual clarity noted in recent reviews of *clientelism* in political science, Hicken (2011) and ethnography Hilgers (2011).

Researchers in different traditions, are, indeed studying different types and aspects of clientelism. Most of the political science literature on clientelism since the 1990s has adopted a rather narrow perspective, essentially focusing on instrumentalist types, such as vote buying or electoral clientelism (see Lawson and Greene (2014)).¹ At the core of the interest are party, patron, or broker strategies and trade-offs whereas clients are generally conceptualized as rather passive and willing vote sellers. Possibly as a result of this perspective, political scientists tend to have a negative view of clientelism.

In contrast ethnographers emphasize the rich set of experiences, motivations and views by poor people in clientelistic settings. Whereas some authors’ work echoes the instrumentalist view of the exchange, where clients are shown to have a cynical attitude towards clientelism and politics in general (e.g. Lazar (2004) other work shows the social embeddedness of some types of clientelism where clients view the relationship in friendship-

¹Work explicitly acknowledging different types of clientelistic relationships is only starting to emerge. The starting point of this new work is the insight that different forms of clientelism not only differ in their mechanics but also have different implications, such as for example for the welfare of clients or the overall the stability of clientelistic politics (Gottlieb, 2017; Nichter, forthcoming; Pellicer, Wegner, Benstead and Lust, 2017).

style terms (e.g. Auyero (2000)). Ethnographic work also emphasizes the agency of clients and shows that clients often deliberately approach patrons or brokers rather than being targeted by them Auyero (1999). Possibly because of this more diverse picture and higher client agency, ethnographers often portray clientelism in a more positive light than mainstream political science literature, at least in certain contexts (e.g. Shefner (2013)).

In a nutshell, political science literature on clientelism has generated little systematic investigation on non-vote buying types of clientelism and the trade-offs faced by clients. The ethnographic literature on clientelism, in contrast, has generated an extremely rich picture of clientelism and poor people's experiences and views about it. However, it's very richness makes it difficult to understand whether these are just idiosyncratic local expressions of clientelism or can be generalized beyond the local context.

This paper seeks to bridge the gap between the different literatures by inductively constructing a heuristic framework of clientelism based on the clients' point of view. Our systematic meta-analysis is based on more than thirty ethnographic (or area study) articles on the client's point of view in different world regions. We apply a common coding scheme to the clientelistic experiences and relations described in the articles, following usual dimensions of clientelism mentioned in the literature. These include key characteristics of clientelistic exchange (e.g. what is being exchanged on what conditions, how frequent is the interaction, how hierarchical is the relation) as well as items capturing the welfare dimension (e.g. how much agency does the client have, how good of a deal does she get). We also note aspects of the environment such as the level of socio-economic development of the area. Articles are independently coded by four researchers; a subset is double coded in order to gain insights on the consistency of the scheme.

We apply cluster analysis to uncover the existence of different types of clientelism. Our preliminary analysis identifies four subtypes that are associated with distinct values of core dimensions of the coding scheme. We label these *vote-buying*, *relational*, *collective*, and *traditional*. Principal component analysis further reduces the complexity of the coded work and shows that there are two key dimensions that jointly define different types of clientelistic exchanges. The first dimension is the *verticality* of the exchange and taps into the relationship of the clients vis-a-vis the broker or patron: are they equals or does the patron have an elevated position (politically, socially, or economically) relative to the client? The second dimension is the *horizontality* of the exchange: are horizontal ties weak and clients attempting to improve their individual situation or are ties strong and clients attempting broader change to improve the situation of their community? Preliminary findings suggest that each of these dimensions is associated with particular aspects of client welfare.

While our findings are preliminary at this stage, we believe that this

paper has a number of potential contributions. First our typology of clientelism that is anchored in a systematic review of the ethnographic literature can contribute to resolving the lack of conceptual clarity discussed in the above mentioned reviews. Our four distinctive subtypes of clientelism capture most forms that have so far been discussed in the various literatures. The uncovering of what appear to be two defining, continuous, dimensions of clientelism from the clients' point of view further helps to systematize and accommodate many different forms of clientelism.

Second, our findings suggest that the welfare implications from a clients' perspective might differ across subtypes of clientelism. This implies that the desirability of some types might be higher from the clients' point of view and that the normative implications of clientelistic politics should be reconsidered.

At a more general level, our study underscores the importance of considering the clients' point of view in work on clientelism. The perspective and choices of clients are crucial for understanding the persistence as well as the implications of clientelism. It evidently takes two sides to sustain a clientelistic relationship and clientelism could hardly persist without clients willing to give up political voice in exchange for particularistic goods (see also Nichter (forthcoming) and Pellicer et al. (2017) for this point). If certain forms of clientelism deliver desirable goods from the perspective of the client (and if these goods are unobtainable via formal political channels) these forms are likely to persist.

Beyond the preliminary nature of our findings, it is important to note some additional limitations. These emerge from different dimensions of subjectivity in the exercise. Naturally, most texts do not systematically address our coding scheme and our data thus partly reflects a coder's interpretation of a particular piece of scholarship. Some share of the texts also do not necessarily address directly the client's perspective but reflect the views of key informants on clients, such as brokers, who might for example overemphasise how much is given to the client. Moreover, as our unit of observation is the clientelistic exchange, not the paper, there are judgment calls to make as to whether the described exchanges are similar or different in nature. We try to address part of this subjectivity issue with double coding and generally present findings for the whole sample as well as for those coding categories where there is most agreement across coders.

2 Conceptualizations of Clientelism in the literature

In this section, we discuss different approaches to defining and delimiting clientelism from other types of exchanges as well as some recent distinctions

between subtypes of clientelism. We also identify key dimensions along which clientelistic exchanges have been defined.

2.1 Defining and delimiting Clientelism

Clientelism vs. other political exchanges

Originally, based on research on “traditional societies” in the 1950, 1960s and 1970s, clientelism denoted a relatively narrow phenomenon. It was defined as “a long term relationship between two people of unequal status who have relatively regular personal interactions” and exchange “goods and services”. From the patron’s side, these goods and services may involve material resources, advice, or protection/ insurance, from the client’s side they involve political support or labor (Hilgers 2011, p.570). This definition separates clientelism from a host of other forms of particularistic exchanges such as vote buying or club goods.

In broader definitions of clientelism the unequal status and strong personal relationships were no longer mentioned and the concept came to mean an instrumental exchange. This is apparent in Kitschelt and Wilkinson’s (2007, p.2) definition according to which clientelism is a “*transaction* [our emphasis], the direct exchange of a citizen’s vote in return for direct payments or continuing access to employment, goods, and services” or Stoke’s (2007b, p.605) definition as “the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of the distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?”. These definitions capture a much wider series of empirical phenomena and there are relatively few particularistic exchanges that are excluded, for example pork, and certain types of club goods.

Lastly, another strand of the research, mostly produced by economists, has an even broader conception of the phenomenon. In his widely cited work, Wantchekon (2003) considers clientelism anything that is not a public good or otherwise serves the citizens of the country as a whole such as national unity or peace. Thus, clientelistic goods include local public goods, such as schools in addition to offers of patronage.

For this paper, the exact definition of clientelism is not relevant. Of importance, however, is the fact that we adopt a very broad conception, as the one by Wantchekon. This corresponds to our objective of including a large variety of work on the topic and identifying characteristics of different subtypes of clientelism that are relevant from the clients’ point of view.

Subtypes of Clientelism

In addition to the many efforts to distinguish clientelism from other types of political exchanges, recent literature has shown a renewed interest in

understanding difference between subtypes of clientelism.

Literature on clientelism from the 1960s/ and 1970s already acknowledged different subtypes although without building explicit typologies (e.g. Landé (1977); Silverman (1977); Weingrod (1968)). These distinctions became less prominent in recent decades during which most political science research focussed on vote buying. Current literature has become more attentive to the different logics and implication of different varieties of clientelism. Two of these recent attempts are Nichter (2014, forthcoming) and Pellicer et al. (2017).

Nichter (2014; forthcoming) distinguishes between *electoral* and *relational* clientelism. Nichter emphasises that clients engage in these for different reasons and that these types come with different trade-offs. Notably, electoral clientelism are one-shot exchanges during campaigns where votes are directly exchanged for some immediate material benefits such as money or small gifts/favours. Relational clientelism involves exchanges that include interactions outside election times where citizens approach patrons/brokers with requests, and, in exchange declare and show their support in addition to voting for the patron. Relational clientelism is deemed to be an insurance to shocks in the absence of a strong welfare state.

Taking up some of the older literature on the topic, Pellicer et al. (2017) distinguish between *modern* and *traditional* clientelism. They argue that these different types are sustained by different perceptions clients have about their ability to get policy based (programmatic) redistribution and about the legitimacy of unequal social arrangements. They show that modern and traditional types have different implications for client welfare, with traditional types delivering fewer benefits to clients.

These recent typologies show a growing awareness that there is a need to understand the mechanics and implications of different subtypes of clientelism. Different types appear to be associated with different social relations, client needs, and client welfare. Whereas this new scholarship provides relevant new insights, a more inductive and comprehensive typology, that allows to incorporate a broader range of these subtypes, is needed.

2.2 Characteristics of Clientelism

Hicken (2011) identifies four dimensions of clientelism that are emphasized in many definitions: contingency, dyadic relationships, hierarchy, and iteration. The only element that all definitions agree on is contingency: clientelism is a conditional exchange. The exchange does not have to be immediate and the promised goods do not need to materialize, but whatever is promised or given comes with strings attached at least in intention.

As evidenced by the above discussion, there is less agreement about the extent to which the other three elements need to be present for a relation-

ship to be identified as clientelistic. For our purpose, this is immaterial. Rather, we consider that dimensions deemed relevant in definitions of clientelism are a good basis for our coding scheme.

Dyadic relationship refers to characteristics of the relationship between client and broker (or client and patron, or broker and patron). A dyadic relationship is a “direct relationship involving some form of interaction between two individuals” (Landé, 1977, p.xiii). Such direct personal relationship is of course key in the original, narrow definitions but possibly less present when broader and contemporary forms are considered. We therefore seek to tap into various aspects of the personal relationship between clients and brokers/ patrons.

Hierarchy denotes the idea that the relations between clients and patrons are generally perceived to be asymmetric to the patron’s advantage. Yet, as discussed above, this notion is challenged in parts of the ethnographic literature and we will seek to assess the extent of asymmetry, the client’s agency and bargaining power, as well as alternatives to clientelism in our coding scheme.

Iteration refers to the ongoing nature of the relationship. In Hicken’s discussion, some degree of iteration seems to be taken for granted and he mentions a number of important implications, such as for example the reinforcement of norms of reciprocity. However, iteration is not necessarily present in descriptions of vote-buying clientelism. We will therefore assess the frequency of interactions as well as whether exchanges take place beyond elections.

While we use Hicken’s dimensions as our scheme’s backbone, we also include additional dimensions that we consider important. The most important additional dimension is whether the exchange happens at the individual level (with individual rewards) or at the collective level (with local club goods). This accommodates our broad definition of clientelism that includes anything that is not broad programmatic politics.

3 Coding ethnographic literature on clientelism

3.1 Procedure

Our aim is to review systematically ethnographic work that focuses on the clients’ perspective. Ideally, the work contains explicit quotes of clients or prospective clients describing their attitudes towards clientelism. We aim to include as many works as possible that fulfill these criteria. We seek to have a fair representation of different world regions but are of course constrained by the availability of relevant studies. Our primary focus is on

current works (from the 1990s onward), but we also consider major works from previous decades.

We selected papers with two main approaches. First we focused our literature research on publications in social science disciplines (anthropology, area studies, ethnology, political science). Our key-term was clientelism plus our perspective (e.g. "client point of view", "demand side", or "micro-") or discipline (e.g. ethnology, sociology, anthropology).² We expanded the yield of this research through snowballing. Second, we contacted various leading colleagues in the field of clientelism research (mostly authors of papers we found suitable) to ask about recommendations. This resulted in a body of literature of approximately 300 articles, books, and book chapters. In a next step we screened the literature according to two aspects. First, we limited the selection to those truly addressing political clientelism (i.e. the client has to contribute political support to the exchange). Secondly, we only used those articles that give information on a client's perspective. This leaves us with approximately 40 suitable papers in total.

The current (preliminary) analysis is based on 33 papers. Around 3/4 of the papers are from 1990 onward. Most of the papers focus on Latin America and Asia (80%) with five focusing on Europe and one focusing on Africa and the Middle East each.

We seek to capture the characteristics of clientelistic exchanges and relations depicted in the papers or book chapters, if possible from the point of view of the clients. We designed a questionnaire with our coding scheme that was answered for each work (see table1 below for descriptive statistics). This questionnaire included questions addressing the above mentioned characteristics of the clientelistic relationship. We also added subjective evaluations of the clientelistic relation, such as how much "agency" and how much "bargaining power" the client seems to have.

Papers sometimes describe more than one type of clientelistic relation and we seek to capture them separately. A good example of a paper containing more than one type of clientelistic relation is Auyero (2000). The paper describes an "inner circle" of clients that are related to the broker "through strong ties of long-lasting friendship, parentage, or fictive kinship" (p.64) and an "outer circle [of clients] who are related to brokers by weak ties." (p.66). Auyero makes the point that these relations have different characteristics, for example in their frequency, affection, and types

²Alternative terms to clientelism such as patronage, informal political exchange, caciquismo, neopatrimonialism did not lead to additional, relevant results. An important challenge in identifying scholarship fitting our criteria was that authors of relevant work do not necessarily conceive of their research as work on clientelism and hence do not use this term anywhere in the text let alone as keyword. Instead, much relevant work is conceptualized either as studies of elections and democratic representation or of socio-political relations.

of goods exchanged. Thus, the unit of observation is not the paper but the “clientelistic relation”. From the 33 papers we have coded so far, we extract 60 separate clientelistic relations.

The coding process was undertaken by the four authors of this paper. There was a pilot phase where all four coded the same papers to compare codes, ensure that all understood the concepts in a similar way, and refine the questionnaire. This process included two iterations of three papers. For the actual coding process, we sought to avoid that specific coders code specific types of paper. This was ensured by assigning papers to coders on the bases of the first letter of the author’s surname: One coder started with the letter A downwards, another from the letter Z upwards whereas the other two coders alternated between the top and bottom of the alphabet.

3.2 Variables and Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the main variables in our sample. We group the variables in four types. First context variables, such as the decade during which the fieldwork took place, or whether the setting is urban or not. Second, variables that describe the clientelistic relation, such as the goods exchanged, how hierarchical (vertical) the relation is, and whether the client is an individual or a group. Third, variables that help to evaluate the relation from the client perspective, such as the degree to which the client has agency or gets a good deal. Finally we also present some other variables of interest, such as whether the client is targeted by the broker (a prominent assumption in much quantitative political science literature on the topic), the extent to which the exchange is conditional, and the degree to which the paper has details on the client perspective.

Some variables are coded as zero/ one dummy variables whereas others are coded as scales ranging from 0 to 4. Some of the variables were categorical in the questionnaire and have been transformed into quantitative variables. For instance, the questionnaire asked about domains of interaction between the client and the patron/broker, which could be only political or also social (such as if the patron/broker is the chief), or also economic (if the client is employed by the patron/broker). This variable is quantified by recording the amount of domains of interaction, either 1, 2, or 3, coded as 0-2. The variable on coercion takes value 0 if there is no coercion, value 1 if the coercion is “passive” (withdrawal of benefits) and 2 if it is “active” (physical threats).

The table shows some variation in context, with some rural cases and some urban ones. There is also variation in the variables describing and evaluating the exchange. Variables always span the whole range of permitted values (0-4, or 0-1, or 0-2) and have an average often close to the middle of their range. This suggests that we get a spread but not overly

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	N
Context				
Decade fieldwork	1996.79	1950	2010	53
Economic development area	0.71	0	2	52
Urban	0.64	0	1	60
Characteristics relation				
Group exchange	2.77	0	4	61
Additional domains of interaction	0.78	0	2	59
Frequent interaction	0.44	0	1	57
Dyadic	2.48	0	4	62
Hierarchical	2.13	0	4	60
Broker Important	2.62	0	4	60
Broker interests aligned to client	1.53	0	4	59
Affective relation	0.32	0	1	53
Client gets money	0.55	0	1	62
Client gets infrastructure	0.55	0	1	62
Client gets gov services	0.42	0	1	62
Client gets insurance/ protection	0.32	0	1	62
Client gives vote	0.90	0	1	62
Client gives labor	0.39	0	1	62
Client gives loyalty	0.37	0	1	62
Evaluation relation				
Client has a choice	2.18	0	4	61
Agent gets a good deal	2.47	0	4	59
Client receives goods	2.90	0	4	61
Coercion	0.54	0	2	58
Others				
Patron gives conditionally	3.26	0	4	58
Client gives conditionally	3.13	0	4	60
Client targeted	0.36	0	1	56
Detail on client perspective	1.66	0	4	62

skewed distribution of types of exchange.

There are also interesting patterns in the data. Most of the exchanges are conditional, as standard definitions of clientelism require. At the same time, most clients are *not* explicitly targeted. This contrasts with much of the standard political science literature dealing with clients, which tends to assume that they become clients because they are targeted by brokers/patrons.

The table also shows a relatively low level of detail on the clients' perspective provided in the papers. Despite our best efforts, a majority of ethnographic papers focuses on brokers and patrons more than on clients. This implies that our coding exercise requires frequent judgment calls from the coder.

3.3 Coding challenges

There are several challenges in the implementation of our coding exercise. First, there is ambiguity in coding specific variables. Some of the concepts we seek to measure are subjective (e.g. bargaining power of the client). Even for concepts that are more objective, the papers are not always detailed enough in their description of the clientelistic relation.

Second, there is ambiguity in deciding how many and which specific clientelistic relations to code in one paper. Papers may describe different types of exchanges with varying detail and it is not straightforward to decide which of these types warrant a separate coding. For instance, a paper focusing mainly on a broker may describe the general clientelistic relation from the point of view of the broker and this relation would have some specific characteristics. But then a snapshot may be given about a specific client. Is this to be coded as one clientelistic relation, or as two? Or a paper may describe a broker engaging in different types of exchanges, but may not specify if each exchange occurs with a separate client or with the same client. Again, there is ambiguity whether to code one observation or two.

In order to gauge the extent of these problems, half of the papers were coded by two coders. Of the 14 double-coded papers, 5 had a different number of IDs. This means that in around 1/3 of the cases, coders did not agree in the amount of exchanges that the paper was providing information on. Most of the 9 cases where the coders agreed on the number of IDs, the number was 1. Moreover, of these 9 cases, the specific IDs referred to the same actual exchange in only 5 cases. We conclude from this that there was a strong ambiguity in terms of ID selection. The papers often describe different types of exchanges but it is not straightforward to decide which of these go together and the extent to which they should be lumped together in one case.

Table 2: Differences in coding

	Diff between coders	Diff over SD	Diff over range
Affective relation	0.75	1.59	0.75
Client gets money	0.67	1.33	0.67
Additional domains of interaction	1.00	1.34	0.50
Dyadic	1.33	1.00	0.33
Client gets infrastructure	0.33	0.66	0.33
Client gets gov services	0.33	0.67	0.33
Client gets insurance/ protection	0.33	0.71	0.33
Broker interests aligned to client	1.17	0.99	0.29
Broker Important	1.00	0.87	0.25
Agency	1.00	0.85	0.25
Coercion	0.50	0.67	0.25
Agent gets a good deal	0.83	0.95	0.21
Client receives goods	0.83	0.84	0.21
Hierarchical	0.67	0.53	0.17
Client gives vote	0.17	0.56	0.17
Client gives labor	0.17	0.34	0.17
Client gives loyalty	0.17	0.34	0.17
Group exchange	0.33	0.26	0.08
Frequent interaction	0.00	0.00	0.00

For 5 papers (6 IDs) where the same exchange was coded, we can compare the difference in actual codes between coders and check, for each variable, how large this disagreement is relative to the overall variability of the variable. Table 2 shows the results of the exercise. Each row refers to a different variable. The first column shows the average difference in codes between the two coders. The second column divides this difference by the standard deviation of the variable and the third divides it by the range of the variable. The table is ordered so that worse performing variables are shown first.

The table shows that most of the variables are coded quite similarly across coders. For most variables, the difference between coders is less than a standard deviation and less than a third of the range. There are some exceptions to this, notably, whether the relation is affective or not, the domains of interaction between client and patron, and whether the relation is dyadic or not and, surprisingly, whether the client gets or doesn't get money/ gifts as part of the exchange. These differences may reflect that, despite our best efforts, some concepts were not interpreted in the same

way by all coders (e.g. dyadic, domains of interaction). Other differences may reflect different judgment calls in a context where the paper was not specific enough (affective relation, received money/ gifts).

Overall, there are three conclusions from this exercise. First, there is substantial ambiguity regarding which and how many clientelistic relations to code. Second, when coding a given exchange, there is much less disagreement across coders. Third, some variables perform worse than others. In what follows, we thus always conduct two analyses: one where all variables are included and a second without the most controversial variables as a robustness check; this second type of analyses restricts the included variables to those with inter-coder difference lower than one third of the range of that variable.

3.4 Interpretation concerns

A last, potentially important, concern with the data we produce has to do with our own biases and pre-conceptions. In particular, our coding may reflect a pre-conceived framework of clientelism in our minds: We might believe that some characteristics of clientelism should be associated with another one. For instance, we may believe a priori that hierarchical clientelistic relations should include affection. We may then have a tendency to code these two features together in a paper even if it is not warranted by the information given in the text. Of course, we seek to avoid making this mistake consciously, but it may still occur to a certain degree unconsciously.

We have no way of quantifying the extent of this problem, but two considerations alleviate the concern in our case. First, most coding was done prior to the development of the framework that emerges from the analysis.³ Concerns about a pre-conceived framework would be more severe if the framework had been developed first, and the coding done after. Second, the fact that there are four separate coders implies that idiosyncratic associations in the minds of a coder are diluted in the final data. To the extent that coders have different unconscious associations in mind, they should not affect greatly the end result.

A relevant caveat that needs to be borne in mind when interpreting our results is that our data is not “objective” data from clients or prospective clients. It is data already filtered through the author of the papers we code. This has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that the author has already selected the most meaningful and representative instances of all her ethnographic exploration; the disadvantage is that our data includes, not only our biases and preconceptions, but also those of the authors of

³One of the authors started thinking deductively about the framework during the coding process, but this was not communicated in detail to the other members of the team; the contribution of this coder was less than 20% of observations.

the papers.

4 A typology of clientelism

4.1 Cluster Analysis

Our first objective is to derive a typology of clientelism from the data. This implies ascertaining if there are types of clientelistic exchanges with certain characteristics that make them distinct from others. This can be achieved by cluster analysis. Cluster analysis takes observations with given characteristics and breaks the observations into groups that are similar among themselves, but different from other groups. There are different ways of implementing a cluster analysis. We choose hierarchical clustering because this approach does not require the user to pre-specify the expected number of clusters in the data, as some other techniques do. This makes it best suited for an inductive, explorative, analysis like ours.

Hierarchical clustering works as a bottom-up procedure. We start with a dataset of our 60 ID observations reflecting 60 different instances of exchange in the literature. We consider only the variables reflecting the characteristics of the relation, such as frequency of interaction, whether the exchange is at the individual or group level, and so on, because we aim to use the evaluative variables for an analysis of the welfare implications of different types of clientelism later on. As mentioned above, we perform the analysis twice, first with all characteristics and second restricted to those characteristics with highest inter-coder agreement. We compute the distance between the different observations: instances of clientelistic exchange that have similar characteristics will be close to each other. The hierarchical clustering algorithm then joins the two that are closest to form a first cluster. It then computes an average of the characteristics of the cluster, recomputes the distance of this cluster to all other observations, and again chooses the observations/ clusters that are closest together.⁴ The next closest observations could be two “new” observations so that we would now have two different clusters, or it could be the original cluster with a new observation, so that we would have a three-observation cluster. We continue this procedure getting less and less clusters until we only have one big cluster including all observations.

The result of hierarchical clustering can be represented in a dendrogram which helps choosing a sensible number of clusters. A dendrogram displays the bottom-up approach of clustering more and more observations into fewer clusters. Figure 1 shows the dendrograms for the two hierarchical clustering exercises, with all and with the restricted set of variables. The

⁴We use the default method of “complete” linkage in the R function `hclust`.

comparing the value of one cluster to those of the others. For instance, the first characteristics is whether the exchange is at the individual or group level. Clusters 1, 3 and 4 have values relatively low in absolute value implying that they tend to have individual exchanges, but cluster 2 has an extreme (negative) value. Thus we can say that cluster 2 is characterized by an exchange at the group level.

Table 3: Characteristics of clusters

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Analysis using all variables				
Group exchange	-0.21	-1.91	0.40	0.27
Additional domains of interaction	-0.51	-0.11	0.21	1.04
Frequent interaction	-0.88	-0.22	0.61	0.61
Dyadic	-0.78	1.10	0.39	0.35
Hierarchical	-0.60	-1.38	0.54	0.74
Broker Important	-0.72	0.11	0.39	0.82
Broker interests aligned to client	-0.26	2.07	-0.22	0.59
Affective relation	-0.55	0.02	0.37	0.37
Client gets money	0.13	-1.11	-0.12	0.88
Client gets infrastructure	0.43	0.92	-0.37	-0.56
Client gets gov services	-0.10	-0.31	0.12	0.02
Client gets insurance/ protection	-0.76	-0.08	0.36	1.28
Client gives vote	0.32	0.32	0.32	-3.09
Client gives labor	-0.34	-0.84	0.16	1.16
Client gives loyalty	-0.59	-0.17	0.36	0.66
Analysis using most agreed variables				
Group exchange	0.44	-1.27	0.59	0.49
Frequent interaction	-0.88	-0.48	0.99	0.71
Hierarchical	-0.67	-0.35	0.63	0.89
Broker Important	-0.78	-0.12	0.52	0.91
Broker interests aligned to client	-0.58	0.67	-0.22	0.50
Client gives vote	0.32	0.32	0.32	-3.04
Client gives labor	0.17	-0.78	0.18	1.25
Client gives loyalty	-0.48	-0.20	0.34	0.89

Table 4: Most important characteristics of clusters

	Vote buying	Collective	Relational	Traditional
Analysis using all variables				
No Additional domains of interaction	Dyadic	Group exchange	Group exchange	Group exchange
No Frequent interaction	Broker interests aligned to client	Frequent interaction	Frequent interaction	Additional domains of interaction
No Dyadic	Client gets infrastructure	Hierarchical	Hierarchical	Frequent interaction
No Broker Important	No Group exchange	Affective relation	Affective relation	Hierarchical
No Broker interests aligned to client	No Hierarchical	Client gets gov services	Client gets gov services	Broker Important
No Affective relation	No Client gets money	Client gives loyalty	Client gives loyalty	Affective relation
No Client gets insurance/ protection	No Client gets gov services	No Broker interests aligned to client	No Broker interests aligned to client	Client gets money
No Client gives loyalty	No Client gives labor	No Client gets infrastructure	No Client gets infrastructure	Client gets insurance/ protection
				Client gives labor
				Client gives loyalty
				No Client gets infrastructure
				No Client gives vote
Analysis using most agreed variables				
No Frequent interaction	Broker interests aligned to client	Group exchange	Group exchange	Frequent interaction
No Hierarchical	No Group exchange	Frequent interaction	Frequent interaction	Hierarchical
No Broker Important	No Frequent interaction	Hierarchical	Hierarchical	Broker Important
No Broker interests aligned to client	No Hierarchical	Broker Important	Broker Important	Broker interests aligned to client
No Client gives loyalty	No Client gives labor	No Broker interests aligned to client	No Broker interests aligned to client	Client gives labor
	No Client gives loyalty			Client gives loyalty
				No Client gives vote

To easily identify the main characteristics of the subtypes of clientelism emerging in the four clusters, table 4 lists the most prominent characteristics of each cluster. We define these simply as the characteristics for which the standardized value in table 3 is more than 0.5 (an arbitrary value).

The first cluster displays few domains and low frequency of interaction, brokers who are not important in the community and whose interests are not aligned with those of the clients, no affective ties, and clients that do not provide loyalty nor get insurance/ protection. This corresponds quite clear to a one-shot instrumental type of *vote buying*. Similar characteristics appear when considering the restricted sample of variables; the only important addition in this latter analysis is “non-hierarchical” as a characteristics of the exchange.

The second cluster displays a type of clientelism that takes place at the group level. Clients get mainly infrastructure, as opposed to money or access to social services, and the interests of the broker are aligned to those of the clients. Similar variables appear in the restricted sample of variables, again complemented by the non-hierarchical nature of the relation. This corresponds to *group-based clientelism*, where the broker is a community leader that represents the community’s interests and bargains for local infrastructure.

The third cluster features an individual relation that is hierarchical, frequent and affective. Relative to other clusters, the client gets access to government services but not infrastructure, and gives loyalty. The broker interests are not aligned with those of the client. This corresponds to a *relational* type of clientelism.

Finally, the fourth cluster is quite similar to the third, but with some additional features. The relation is also hierarchical, frequent and affective, but the interaction is thicker in the sense that it applies to more domains and the broker is more clearly a relevant person in the community. The client does not get access to government services but rather insurance and protection. And the vote is not the main good given by the client. This clearly corresponds to a *traditional* type of clientelism.

In sum, the cluster analysis delivers four distinct clusters that clearly correspond to recognizable subtypes of clientelism: vote buying, group clientelism, relational clientelism, and traditional clientelism. Interestingly, three of them attempt in recent attempts to distinguish between subtypes, namely vote-buying (called electoral in Nichter and Peress (2017) and modern in Pellicer et al. (2017)), relational Nichter and Peress (2017), and traditional Pellicer et al. (2017). The only “new” type emerging from our analysis is group clientelism.

In which type of contexts do we observe these different types of clientelism? Table 5 shows the mean value of contextual variables for the different clusters. There is not a lot of difference between vote buying, collective

Table 5: Contexts of clusters

	Vote buying	Collective	Relational	Traditional
Analysis using all variables				
Decade fieldwork	2000	1995	1996	1982
Economic development area	0.73	0.50	0.72	0.25
Urban	0.70	0.75	0.60	0.25
Analysis using most agreed variables				
Decade fieldwork	2002	1999	1993	1982
Economic development area	0.83	0.64	0.69	0.20
Urban	0.77	0.69	0.56	0.20

clientelism and relational clientelism in terms of context variables. In contrast, traditional clientelism appears quite clearly in poorer and more rural places. In addition, papers describing this subtype are based on fieldwork that was conducted earlier relative to the other types. It is not clear if this results from a decreasing empirical importance of this subtype or from a decrease in research interest.

5 The two dimensions of clientelism

5.1 Principal Component Analysis

We have recorded many characteristics of clientelistic exchanges such as hierarchical, affective, or individual, the frequency and types of interaction, and so on. We have 13 such variables: 13 dimensions of clientelism. Together they describe a specific exchange with a fair amount of richness. However, 13 dimensions are too many to for building a tractable framework of clientelism. Tractability requires us to reduce the number of dimensions. At the same, as much of the original richness as possible should be kept in this reduction. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) achieves exactly that. This procedure essentially looks for combinations of variables that explain the most possible variation in the data as possible. These combinations are the principal components. The idea is that if there are, say, five characteristics that are very correlated with each other, a single combination of these variables can reduce dimensionality from five to one without losing much of the richness of the original data.

As with cluster analysis, there is no a priori way of knowing how many dimensions of clientelism are sensible. However, PCA provides guidance for that choice. PCA computes as many components as original variables and orders them by importance. The first components explain a lot of the variation of the original data and the following components explain the less and less. Figure A.1 in the appendix plots the percent of the variance explained by decreasingly important components, again separately for the

Table 6: PCA. Most important loadings

Vertical	Horizontal
Analysis using all variables	
Additional domains of interaction	Broker interests aligned to client
Frequent interaction	Client gets infrastructure
Hierarchical	No Group exchange
Broker Important	No Client gives labor
Affective relation	
Client gets insurance/ protection	
Analysis using most agreed variables	
Frequent interaction	Broker Important
Hierarchical	Broker interests aligned to client
Broker Important	No Group exchange
Client gives labor	No Client gives labor
Client gives loyalty	
No Client gives vote	

whole set of 13 variables and the restricted set of seven variables. The first and second components explain a large amount of total variation and the third and following components explain comparably little.⁵ We thus select two components.

The two components delivered by the PCA supposedly embody two “fundamental” dimensions that distinguish different types of clientelism. What do these two dimensions represent? To answer this question, we examine which original variables “load” strongly into our two new components. Such variables can be considered as defining characteristics of the respective dimensions. Table 6 lists the variables that load most strongly into the two components (with load more than 0.3, again an arbitrary threshold); table A.1 in the appendix shows the values of the loadings.

A good way to interpret table 6 is to think of each dimension (i.e. each of the two PCA components) as a continuum between two extremes. One extreme is characterized by the presence of the characteristics in the table, the other by their opposite. For example, the first dimension describes a continuum that features at one extreme characteristics such as hierarchy or frequent interaction and at the other extreme characteristics such as non-hierarchical and infrequent interaction, among others. The second dimension has at one extreme characteristics such as group level exchanges and, at the other, characteristics such as individual exchanges .

⁵The pattern is particularly striking when using all 13 variables; for the restricted sample of most agreed variables, there some ambiguity as to whether the 3rd component should be included as well.

5.2 The Horizontal and Vertical Dimensions of Clientelism

What do these fundamental dimensions of clientelism then represent? The first dimension clearly captures the degree to which the clientelistic relation is thick or thin, and vertical or non-vertical. The positive extreme of the dimension features thick relations (more frequent, over several domains, involving affection), and where the goods exchanged are valuable (clients get insurance/protection and give labor). The positive extreme also features a high degree of verticality (the relation is judged as hierarchical, the broker is important, the client gives loyalty).

An important insight from the PCA is that thickness and verticality go together to form a single dimension. This makes sense in the context of political clientelism, where a key feature of the exchange is political support. There is only so much political support that a regular client (a citizen) can give to a patron/broker. When the relation is strong and the goods exchanged are valuable, it is difficult for the client to reciprocate. Then, accepting a high degree of verticality and pledging loyalty can be a way for the client to help fulfill her side of the exchange. For this reason, we denote the first dimension as the *vertical dimension* of clientelism.

We propose that the vertical dimension captures a trade-off between autonomy and protection. The benefit of vertical types of clientelism is that they can provide a certain degree of insurance/protection that can be valuable when the income of the client is subject to economic shocks. The cost is that they require the client to relinquish autonomy to a greater extent.

The second dimension mainly captures an aspect of collectivity in the exchange and thus measures the strength of horizontal ties. At the one extreme, the exchange is at the group level and the clients get a collective good (infrastructure); interests of brokers and clients are aligned; the clients do not provide labor to the broker in the exchange.⁶ Therefore, we denote the second dimension as the *horizontal dimension* of clientelism.

We propose that the horizontal dimension captures an eminently political trade-off between improving one's own situation vs. improving the situation of the collective. In this sense, the trade-off in this types of clientelism resembles those of classic collective action problems.

⁶The only characteristic at odds with this interpretation is that at the positive extreme, the broker supposedly important in the community. However, this characteristic is only present when using the restricted amount of variables and even then loads comparatively little.

5.3 Subtypes of Clientelism on two dimensions

An interesting feature of PCA is that it delivers individual components that are linearly independent, i.e. largely unrelated. This means that the vertical and horizontal dimensions of clientelism are entirely distinct: this implies that all value combinations of verticality and horizontality are possible to describe subtypes of clientelism.

We can now put together our two types of analysis and represent the different types of clientelism from the cluster analysis in the two dimensions extracted from the PCA. Figure 2 shows the results again separately using all variables and those with best agreement.

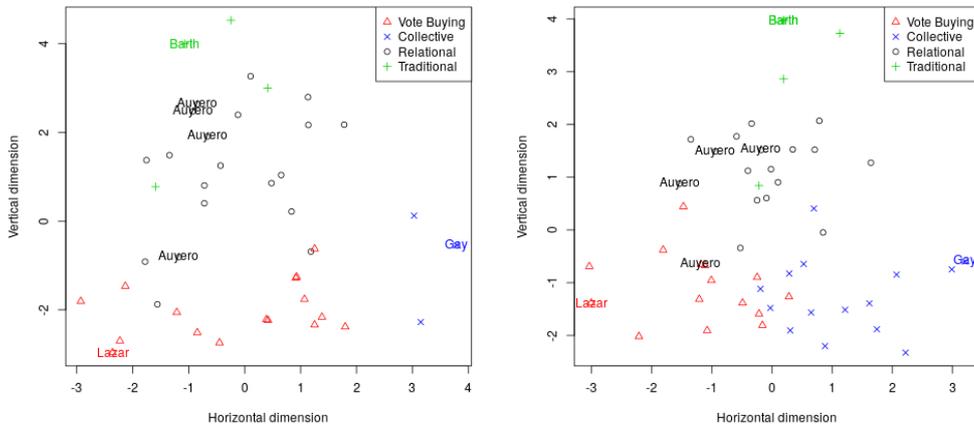


Figure 2: Clientelism clusters in the two first PCA dimensions. All variables and most-agreed variables

The four clusters tend to be placed in specific locations on the two dimensions and these locations are robust to the type of variables included. This implies that the two dimensions perform well in distinguishing between the four subtypes of clientelism we have identified above. This is the case even if our reduction of dimensions has been quite radical, from 13 to two in the case of all variables. It thus seems that the two dimensions constructed from the PCA do capture the essential features that distinguish different types of clientelism.

Moreover, the placement of clusters on the two dimensions is very sensible. The vote buying cluster is placed at the bottom-left. This corresponds to a type of clientelism where the exchange is rather individual, with little verticality, but also little horizontality. Group clientelism is placed in the bottom right. This is a case, where the verticality is as low as in vote buying, but where there is a high degree of horizontality. Relational clientelism, a thicker and more vertical relation than vote buying, is sensibly placed towards the middle in the horizontal dimension, but towards the top in the

vertical dimension. Traditional clientelism, the thickest and most vertical type of relation, is placed even higher than relational clientelism, at the top of the vertical dimension, but without a clear placement in the horizontal dimension.

To make our dimensions and clusters more concrete, we place well known ethnographic works on the two graphs. We show the location of the accounts of Auyero (2000) on Argentina as a paradigmatic example of relational clientelism; of Gay (1999) on Brazil as an example of group clientelism; of Lazar (2004) on Bolivia as an example of vote buying; and of Barth (1977) on Afghanistan as an example of traditional clientelism.⁷ The figures show that these paradigmatic accounts indeed represent relatively “pure” cases of each of the four types of clientelism.

In general, however, the clusters are not separate “islands” in the figures. Observations span the full length of the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. Our typology represents ideal types, but real instances of clientelism often share features of different types. For instance, it is quite common for clients to receive both money or little gifts for their vote and also some promise of infrastructure. Such a case would be placed towards the bottom middle of the figures: with little verticality and medium levels of horizontality.

6 Welfare implications

Our data can serve to provide insights on the welfare evaluation of different types of clientelism. Four variables in our data serve this purpose: recording the extent to which the client has agency, gets a good deal, receives the goods promised by the patron, and suffers from coercion. These variables were purposefully not included when generating the clusters or the horizontality/verticality dimensions. Therefore, we can assess how different subtypes of clientelism might differ in their welfare implications and whether the vertical and horizontal dimensions are associated with particular values of these variables.

To evaluate the welfare implications of different subtypes of clientelism, we collapse traditional and relational clientelism into one category because the traditional cluster is very small and relatively similar to the relational cluster. Table 7 shows the differences in the evaluation variables across different types of clientelism. There are some interesting patterns: relational clientelism features less agency and more coercion than the other two subtypes; clients in collective clientelism appear to get a better deal, possibly because they are also the most likely to obtain the goods promised

⁷The Auyero (2000) paper includes four observations because it includes two instances of exchange (the “inner circle” and the “outer circle”) and was coded by two coders.

Table 7: Evaluation of clientelism types

	Vote buying	Collective	Relational
Analysis using all variables			
agencyq	2.75	3.33	1.78
good _d dealq	2.62	4.00	2.57
goods _r receivedq	2.94	4.00	3.08
coercionq	0.34	0.00	0.59
Analysis using most agreed variables			
agencyq	2.73	2.40	1.76
good _d dealq	2.53	2.60	2.60
goods _r receivedq	3.07	2.87	3.05
coercionq	0.43	0.37	0.60

by the patrons. The patterns regarding collective clientelism are, however, only present when considering all variables, perhaps because the collective clientelism cluster is much smaller and “less diluted” in that case.

Can these patterns understood on the basis of our two fundamental dimensions of clientelism? Table ?? shows the result of simple OLS regressions of the evaluation variables on the vertical and the horizontal dimension. Standard errors are clustered at the level of the paper.

Table 8

	1	2	3	4
Analysis using all variables				
Horizontal dimension	0.145 (0.095)	0.198 (0.062)***	0.152 (0.061)**	-0.043 (0.048)
Vertical dimension	-0.195 (0.079)**	-0.018 (0.045)	0.041 (0.057)	0.022 (0.063)
outcome	Choice	Good deal	Receives goods	Coercion
N	42	42	43	41
Analysis using most agreed variables				
Horizontal dimension	0.052 (0.129)	0.105 (0.103)	0.032 (0.106)	-0.051 (0.062)
Vertical dimension	-0.184 (0.124)	-0.012 (0.073)	0.038 (0.08)	0.086 (0.086)
outcome	Choice	Good deal	Receives goods	Coercion
N	51	50	51	49

Robust standard errors in parenthesis. Signif. codes: 0.01 ‘***’ 0.05 ‘**’ 0.1 ‘*’.

The patterns in the table are quite striking. Different dimensions are associated with different welfare aspects of clientelism. Whether the clients have a agency seems to be negatively linked to the *vertical* dimension, with vertical exchanges implying less choice. But whether clients obtain a good deal and whether they receive what the patron promise appears to be positively linked to the *horizontal* dimension. The patterns are strong when all variables were considered to generate the dimensions, but are less clear, when the reduced set of variables were considered. Coercion does not appear to be related particularly to any dimension.

These patterns make a lot of sense under the light of our interpretation of the two dimensions. We proposed that the vertical dimension is the strength of vertical ties. This means that by engaging in a vertical clientelistic relation, the client establishes a strong relation with the patron or broker that requires her to give up voice. This, in turn, can explain why vertical relations are associated with less agency. And indeed, recalling that the traditional/relational types scored highest on the vertical dimension, we can now understand why these types appear to be associated with the least agency in table 7.

Our proposed interpretation of the horizontal dimension is that it reflects the strength of horizontal ties. With stronger horizontal ties that make prospective clients care about and trust others in the community, clients are able to offer patrons blocks of votes, which are valuable. This increases their bargaining power and allows them to negotiate a better deal from the patron. In turn, this helps understanding why collective clientelism that had the highest scores on the horizontal dimension is associated with better outcome for the clients.

7 Concluding remarks

This paper proposes a framework to understand clientelism from the clients' perspective. It is based on a systematic evaluation of ethnographic literature on the topic. Although the analysis is preliminary at this point and we plan to include more work, in particular on world regions that have been under-represented thus far in, we can offer some interesting first insights.

First, the exchanges described in a variety of ethnographic literature are far more than a collection of localized, idiosyncratic exchanges without generalizable patterns. The cluster analysis uncovered four subtypes of clientelism from this literature - each with a set of particular characteristics attached to it. This makes a strong case for political science literature on clientelism to expand its focus to include other subtypes. Second, it appears that these subtypes can be described parsimoniously by their location on two fundamental dimensions of clientelism: the vertical dimension, defined

by the strength of vertical ties between patron and client and the horizontal dimension, defined by the strength of horizontal, collective ties. Lastly, our preliminary results suggest that the more an exchange moves to the right of the horizontal dimension, the better a deal clients get whereas the more they move up on the vertical dimension, the less agency a client has in the relation.

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Appendix

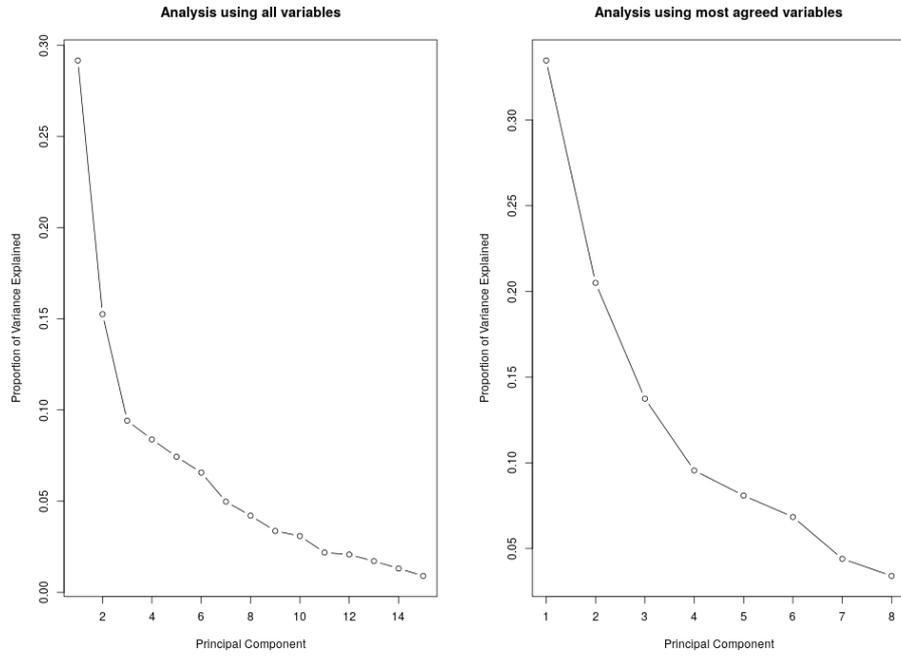


Figure A.1: Percent of the total variance explained by principal components. All variables and most-agreed variables

Table A.1: PCA. Loadings

	Vertical	Horizontal
Analysis using all variables		
Group exchange	0.15	-0.52
Additional domains of interaction	0.35	0.13
Frequent interaction	0.38	0.05
Dyadic	0.29	0.29
Hierarchical	0.32	-0.14
Broker Important	0.32	0.20
Broker interests aligned to client	0.05	0.39
Affective relation	0.32	0.13
Client gets money	0.04	-0.17
Client gets infrastructure	-0.18	0.44
Client gets gov services	0.07	-0.01
Client gets insurance/ protection	0.39	0.02
Client gives vote	-0.23	0.09
Client gives labor	0.15	-0.39
Client gives loyalty	0.23	0.03
Analysis using most agreed variables		
Group exchange	0.29	-0.54
Frequent interaction	0.44	0.22
Hierarchical	0.43	-0.02
Broker Important	0.37	0.38
Broker interests aligned to client	-0.03	0.60
Client gives vote	-0.37	-0.06
Client gives labor	0.31	-0.39
Client gives loyalty	0.41	0.09