

# Pre-Analysis Plan for “Clientelist Candidates and Voting Behavior in Brazil”

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## 1 Introduction

This document presents a pre-analysis plan for a survey that will be conducted in Brazil during the country’s 2018 general election cycle (October). The objective of the study is to investigate how voters process, react to, and act on information about political candidates engaging in clientelist or other types of particularist behavior. How does hearing about a candidate’s use of particularist appeals affect voters’ likelihood of voting for the candidate? How do the details of a clientelist exchanges affect how people view the exchange’s moral or legal acceptability? I will attempt to answer these questions through the use of two conjoint experiments.

This document was sent to EGAP shortly after the launch of the survey. The responses are being gathered by a survey firm, and I have not seen (nor can I see) any responses collected thus far. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (IRB #19008) on August 29, 2018. The study is supported by the Lemann Institute for Brazilian Studies at the University of Illinois.

## 2 Motivation

In the political science literature, scholars often argue that clientelism – that is, the system of relationships between political elites and citizens based on repeated exchanges of money, goods, or services for political support – is initiated and sustained by elites seeking to expand or maintain their power. One common view suggests that officeseeking politicians who worry that they cannot win an election based on programmatic appeals alone attempt to build their support network by offering direct, individualized, private rewards to voters. Clientelist politicians hire brokers to distribute benefits to voters and to monitor the behavior of their clients at the voting booth. Because they are aware that the patrons will find out if they shirk on their promise, voters use their ballot not to express their political preferences, but to show compliance with the vote buying agreement. This type of relationship is said to be undemocratic because it inverts the normal accountability

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function of elections; instead of voters using the ballot box to hold elected officials accountable for poor performance, candidates use elections as a means of ensuring that voters are not renegeing on their promise to vote as instructed. Because these clients do not vote their conscience, moreover, the politicians that are elected tend to serve the interests of a narrow group of elites rather than the public as a whole.

This conventional account suggests that the electorate, on the whole, dislikes clientelism as an institution. While individual voters sometimes choose to sell their vote, they do so reluctantly, as they face significant disutility from forgoing the opportunity to express their preferences. Voters who do not engage in clientelism, moreover, disapprove of the system as they see it as a form of electoral manipulation. Vote buying is illegal in nearly every democracy around the world, suggesting that clientelist behavior is treated as a crime rather than a normal form of politics. Additionally, survey evidence shows that questions about vote buying are subject to considerable social desirability bias, indicating that voters stigmatize clientelist behavior (Gonzalez-Ocantos et al 2012; Gonzalez-Ocantos, Kiewiet de Jonge, and Nickerson 2014).

However, as Schaffer and Schedler (2007) discuss, clientelism, and its more specific form of vote buying, can have unique meanings across different cultures, economic contexts, geographic units, and political systems. While scholars tend to think of vote buying as a simple market transaction involving the exchange of some form of payment for the service of voting in a particular way, ordinary citizens could ascribe a very different significance to offers of material support: It may be interpreted as an advance payment for electoral services, a wage for working with the campaign, a gift, a reparation for wrongs suffered in the past, an affront to the voter's self-respect, a threat or form of pressure, a sign of virtue or goodwill, a sign of vice or immorality, or a sign of electoral strength.

Other recent research has found results that suggest clientelism may not be universally disliked by voters. Survey and qualitative evidence from India, Latin America, and Africa shows that citizens are more often than not the ones that initiate contact with politicians to demand goods or services, contrary to prevailing elite-driven models that focus on how parties target groups of voters (Auerbach and Thachil 2018; Nichter and Peress 2016). This result echoes the ethnographic accounts of political machines as "problem solving networks" in Argentina (Auyero 2000; Szwarcberg 2015). There, clientelist parties act as a support line for residents of marginalized communities, providing everything from baskets of food to babysitters at the client's request. Other authors have found in places where the ballot is secret that many clients who receive gifts return the favor only out of a feeling of reciprocity toward the patron (Finan and Schechter 2012). The fact that some ordinary voters like clientelist handouts may explain why some anti-vote-selling "education campaigns" fail to meet their objectives (Schaffer 2007b).

That clientelism is a valence issue is also questionable in light of another common assumption in political science that pork barrel spending (state or national funding for local projects in a representative's district), constituency service, and other types of particularist behavior (policy-makers more generally catering to a narrow interest group rather than the voters in their district

as a whole) are rather popular. Studies from countries ranging from the United States, to Brazil, Germany, India, and China show that politicians have strong incentives to not only focus their campaign strategies on a narrow electoral base – one of the main normative criticisms of clientelism – they actively advertise nonprogrammatic behavior (Alvarez and Saving 1997; Ames 1995; Lancaster 1986; Lancaster and Patterson 1990; Luo et. al 2010; Mahaeshwari 1976).

Do voters condone or condemn clientelist exchanges? Under what conditions do they see them as more or less acceptable? Where do they draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior? Do their attitudes about clientelism affect their overall evaluation of candidates? This project will investigate these questions through an original survey in Brazil featuring two conjoint experiments.

### 3 Design

This study will center on a online survey of 2,000 adult, voting-eligible Brazilian citizens. The questionnaire will include about 45 questions and will take about 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be hosted on Qualtrics, with all randomized components produced by the site’s software.

Participants will be recruited by the survey firm Offerwise. They have a pool of over 700,000 potential respondents from Brazil, from which they randomly draw 2,000 individuals and invite them to participate. Offerwise has promised the sample to have a distributions over age categories, socioeconomic level (ABCDE), region, and gender that roughly reflect population parameters (according to the Brazilian census). Thus, after assessing the demographics of the initial respondents, they will resample from specific groups in their database to ensure nationally representative distributions over these four characteristics.

The structure of the survey is as follows:

- Demographic information – Income, education
- General political opinions – Party ID, ideology, vote intention, political interest
- Conjoint #1 – Choice between two hypothetical candidates
- Conjoint #2 – Evaluation of potentially clientelist situation
- Knowledge battery and predictions for election.

The first conjoint will attempt to simulate how a voter may make an electoral decision in a legislative race. The purpose of this experiment is to assess both how favorable respondents feel toward different types of particularist behavior and how much their attitudes about these behaviors weigh into their overall judgment of political candidates. It will present a profile of two candidates for a state deputy election, giving information about each candidate’s “campaign promises” (particularist behavior), in addition to their party, main issue priority, previous performance, corruption allegations, and electoral base location. After reading the two profiles, respondents will be asked to judge which of the two candidates they would be more likely to vote for. They will also be asked which they see as more *honest* and ideologically *left-of-center*. The purpose of these two questions

is to assess the mechanism behind any effects I might find with the question about vote choice. For example, respondents may dislike politicians that give clientelist rewards either because they see them as more corrupt/dishonest or because the clientelist behavior signals something about their ideology or future behavior in office (see Kramon 2016). Each respondent will be shown four sets of profiles and questions.

The randomized elements of the candidate profiles are as follows:

- **Party:** [PT/PP/MDB]
- **Principal Issue Priority:** [improve the economy of the state / improve the economy of the state through a reduction in government spending / improve the economy of the state through an increase in investment in the public sector]
- **Campaign Promises:** The candidate promised to [serve the best interests of his state / provide building materials to [families who need help finishing construction of their homes / families who need help finishing construction of their homes and pledge to vote for the candidate / communities that need help finishing construction on hospitals / communities that need help finishing construction on hospitals and deliver him lots of votes]].
- **Previous Performance:** During time as mayor, municipality saw a [rapid/steady] [increase/decline] in economic growth
- **Transparency:** [An audit conducted by a federal anti-corruption agency revealed [0 / 2 / 6] irregularities in the finances in the mayor's municipality / no information available].
- **Electoral Base:** Most of this candidate's supporters live [near you/far from your municipality]

The second conjoint experiment will provide a vignette of a hypothetical interaction between a politician and a voter involving a potentially clientelist exchange. Various details of the exchange will be varied, including whether there is an explicit quid-pro-quo condition attached to the offer, the type of inducement given, whether the politician will monitor the client's vote choice, the recipient's political affiliation, and whether the benefits are given directly to voters or through a community leader. The purpose of this experiment is to examine if respondents disapprove of clientelist exchanges and, if so, which aspects of the exchange bother them. Respondents will be asked to rate both the moral and legal acceptability of the politician's behavior (on five-point bipolar Likert scales). They will also be asked what the potential recipient should do in response to the offer from the politician – accept the offer and vote for the candidate, accept the offer and vote for someone else, refuse the offer and vote for someone else, or refuse the offer but still vote for the candidate. The possible randomized profiles are given below:

“Suppose a candidate for state (or district) deputy is talking with a voter who [frequently/rarely] has trouble making ends meet. The voter usually [supports/does not support] the politician's party. After the conversation, the candidate offers her [money / medicine / access to a surgery / a job] [*end of paragraph* / in exchange for her vote. To ensure that the voter votes for him, the politician

says he will [trust in the voter / send a campaign manager to accompany the voter to the polling station]].”

**OR**

“Suppose a candidate for state (or district) deputy is talking with an influential leader of a relatively [poor/wealthy] community. The community usually [supports / does not support] the politician’s party. After the conversation, the candidate offers [money from the state government for the community / to construct a hospital in the community / to help members of the community resolve health problems / to give jobs to members of the community] [*end of paragraph* / in exchange for the leader’s help in winning votes in the community. To ensure that he wins votes in the community, the politician says he will [trust in the leader / check the results of the election in the area]].”

## 4 Hypotheses

### 4.1 Conjoint #1

The three main hypotheses for the first conjoint experiment have to do with the effect of the different treatments in the “campaign promises” item. The four treatments indicate to respondents that the candidate engages in different types of particularist behavior, all of which commonly occur in Brazil. The treatments vary along two dimensions: Quid-pro-quo (QPQ) vs. non-quid-pro-quo offers (i.e. goods are given on the condition that the recipient vote for the benefactor, or good is given unconditionally) and private vs. public goods (i.e. good is for private consumption or is made available to members of the public or a specific community). The different types of particularist behavior described by the treatments in this conjoint experiment are laid out in a 2 by 2 format along the two dimensions in Table 1.

Table 1: Types of Particularist Behavior

	<b>Quid-pro-quo Goods</b>	<b>Non-quid-pro-quo Goods</b>
<b>Private Goods</b>	Clientelism, Vote buying	Electoral handouts, Nonconditional benefits to individuals (Kramon 2016; Stokes et. al 2013)
<b>Public Goods</b>	Community clientelism, Vote brokerage, Collective monitoring (Gingerich & Medina 2013; Rueda 2017)	Pork

### 4.1.1 Main Hypotheses

I expect that respondents will have a strong aversion to quid-pro-quo offers, that is, where a politician gives some benefit on the condition that the recipient(s) vote for him/her. Clientelism (gift-for-vote exchanges) are thought to hinder the accountability function of elections by preventing citizens from making an autonomous voting decision. If citizens fear losing out on material payoffs by not voting for their patron, they will not use the ballot to express their true preferences (Lyne 2007; Schaffer 2007a). In turn, politicians will not feel compelled to appeal to the median voter; to stay in power, they just need to distribute a sufficient amount of targeted goods and find a way to punish individuals that do not fulfill their end of the bargain. Thus, according to theory, voters who want to elect the best possible candidate should not support candidates that offer clientelist rewards. Those candidates are dishonest in that they do not represent their constituency by winning popular support but by buying votes.

- *Hypothesis 1: Quid-pro-quo Particularist Goods* – Respondents will have an aversion toward quid-pro-quo particularist benefits. They will be less likely to support, and see as more dishonest, politicians who give clientelist (i.e. quid-pro-quo) benefits compared to control and non-quid-pro-quo conditions. Conversely, politicians who give non-clientelist benefits will be seen as more honest and popular than control and QPQ treatments.

I also predict that respondents will have a preference toward public/community goods rather than private ones. A common normative critique of clientelism asserts that the system produces efficiency losses by shifting politicians' focus to a narrow interest group rather than the public as a whole (Baland and Robinson 2007). Supplying private, consumable goods for individual voters comes at the cost of investment in public infrastructure, which would serve many more people dollar-for-dollar. Voters feel the private benefits given to the politicians' clientele come at the expense of goods that could and should benefit them.

- *Hypothesis 2: Private Particularist Goods* - Respondents will have a preference for public goods. They will be more likely to support, and see as more honest, politicians that give public particularist goods compared to those that give private particularist goods.

Next, I expect that voters will be more likely to support politicians from their area of residence. Voters feel politicians from their city know local issues better than candidates from other areas and that local candidates are "one of them". In addition, being from the same area may lead voters to believe the politicians will direct state funding to the voter's city once they are elected. In other words, these voters might feel that they will be the beneficiaries of the candidate's particularist behavior. Thus, being located in the politician's base of support increases the likelihood of support not only independently (through changing voter attitudes about the politician's motivations or competence), but by changing attitudes toward particularist behavior (either attenuating negative attitudes or enhancing positive attitudes toward such behavior).

- *Hypothesis 3: Electoral Base* – Respondents will be more supportive of candidates when they live near the candidate’s base of support.
  - *Hypothesis 3b: Local Particularist Goods* – There will be an interaction effect between particularism and the candidate’s electoral base. Respondents who live in the politician’s base area will be more supportive of their particularist behavior (i.e. they will judge candidates who give non-QPQ benefits more positively, and judge those who give QPQ benefits less negatively, compared to politicians who give the same benefits but do not live in the respondent’s area).

A summary of the main expectations for conjoint #1 are given in Table 2. Respondents should have the greatest aversion to “classic” clientelism, that is, the treatment where the politician offers individual voters private goods (material to construct homes) on the condition that he receives their vote. I predict respondents will judge candidates who give material to communities to construct hospitals in exchange for votes will be judged more negatively than those candidates in the control group (serve the interests of the state), though the size of the treatment effect will be less than it is for the private-QPQ treatment. As shown in the the right column of Table 2, I predict non-quid-pro-quo particularist behavior will be rewarded by respondents. Respondents will like politicians that unconditionally give construction materials to families who need help finishing construction on their homes compared to control group politicians, and they will like even more those that promise to help finish construction on hospitals. For candidates from the respondent’s area (respondents that live in the politician’s base), I predict respondent’s will judge clientelist (QPQ) particularist behavior less negatively and non-QPQ behavior even more positively.

Table 2: Expectations for Particularism Treatments in Conjoint #1

	<b>Quid-pro-quo Goods</b>	<b>Non-quid-pro-quo Goods</b>
<b>Private Goods</b>	Material for houses (for vote) -- <i>Very disliked</i>	Material for houses <i>+ Liked</i>
<b>Public Goods</b>	Material for hospitals (for vote) <i>- Disliked</i>	Material for hospitals <i>++ Very well-liked</i>

#### 4.1.2 Secondary Hypotheses

I have several hypotheses about the effect of the other randomized components of the conjoint design.

- *Hypothesis 4: Particularist Goods and Ideology* – Respondents should see those who give particularist benefits (pork, handouts, and clientelist rewards) as more leftist compared to those in the control condition.

- According to Kramon (2016) and Schaffer and Schedler (2007), clientelist offers can act as a signal that the candidate is committed to providing more resources for the poor once they are elected.
- *Hypothesis 5: Co-Partisanship* – Respondents will be more likely to support candidates from their party (or those who are in coalition with their preferred party).
  - Although parties are not particularly strong in Brazil, those who do identify with a certain party are likely to use the label as a cue about the candidate’s ideology or behavior once in office.
- *Hypothesis 6: Ideology* – Respondents will be more likely to support candidates who share a similar ideology. Thus, those who identify as leftists will be more likely to support candidates whose principal priority is to increase investment in the public sector, and those who identify as right-wing will be more likely to support candidates whose principal priority is to reduce government spending.
  - Voters want politicians that will implement policies that comport with their beliefs about the best way to solve state and national problems.
- *Hypothesis 7: Performance* – Respondents will be most likely to support candidates whose municipalities saw a rapid increase in economic growth during their previous term, followed by those whose municipalities saw a steady increase, steady decline, and rapid decline.
  - Especially in the absence of strong party or ideological cues, voters will use previous performance as a heuristic to judge their competency and ability to perform well in their new position.
- *Hypothesis 8: Corruption* – Respondents will be more likely to support candidates whose municipalities had no budgeting irregularities compared to the control condition and less likely to support candidates whose municipalities had two or six budgeting irregularities compared to control.
  - Corruption is a hot-button valence issue in Brazil’s 2018 election. Voters will be much less likely to support someone who has found to be corrupt.
- *Hypothesis 8b: “Rouba mas faz”* – The negative effect of revealed corruption on respondent evaluations of politicians will be attenuated for those politicians who had good performance in their previous mandate.
  - A popular adage about the problem of corruption in Brazil is that some politicians “rouba, mas faz” (steal, but they get things done). If the candidate is shown to be particularly competent, voters may be more likely to forgive irregularities in their budget reporting.

- *Hypothesis 9: Respondent education* – The highly educated are more likely than the less well-educated to punish candidate for particularist behavior.
  - The more highly educated tend to have stronger democratic values, meaning they have stronger preferences against particularist behavior (particularly illegal behavior like vote buying) and stronger preferences for programmatic policymaking.
- *Hypothesis 10: Respondent income* – Wealthier respondents will be more likely than poorer respondents to punish candidates for particularist behavior.
  - Wealthier people have longer time horizons and derive less utility from immediate payoffs, meaning they have a preference for programmatic policymaking instead of particularism.

## 4.2 Conjoint #2

I expect that characteristics both of the specific transaction at hand and of the respondent will affect attitudes toward potentially clientelist exchanges.

### 4.2.1 Characteristics of the Transaction

- *Hypothesis 1: Quid-pro-quo Exchanges* – Respondents will judge a clientelist situation as more unethical and illegal if the politician requires a quid-pro-quo exchange from the potential recipient.
  - See justification above for why voters may dislike quid-pro-quo exchanges. Respondents will see QPQ exchanges as a form of vote buying, which is illegal and frowned upon in Brazil.
- *Hypothesis 2: Private Goods* – Respondents will judge a clientelist situation as more unethical and illegal if the politician offers the benefit directly to an individual voter rather than to a community leader.
  - See justification above for why voters prefer public to private goods. Distribution of private goods deprives resources from citizens and communities that need them. Benefits given to or through community leaders will be seen as serving a greater segment of the public/constituency compared to goods given directly to voters.
- *Hypothesis 3: Switch Buying* – Respondents will judge a clientelist situation as more unethical and illegal if the potential recipient usually does not support the candidate’s party (i.e. they would switch their vote as a result of accepting the offer).
  - Clientelism is often thought to be normatively troubling because it allows politicians to control the votes of their clients at will. However, if the recipient of a clientelist good already supports the candidate, there has been no change to the outcome of the election or the behavior of the voter and politician.

- *Hypothesis 4: Recipient Neediness* – Respondents will judge a clientelist situation as more ethical if the potential recipient is in greater need.
  - Respondents will have more sympathy for a politician who engages in questionable behavior if they are helping someone who needs immediate help.
- *Hypothesis 5: Type of inducement* – Respondents’ attitudes toward the ethicality and legality of the clientelist transaction will depend on what type of inducement is offered. They will judge offers of money as most unethical/illegal, followed by material/physical inducements (medicine/hospital), then jobs, then services (access to surgery/help resolve health issues).
  - I predict that respondents discriminate between different types of clientelist rewards – candidates that provide *services* for voters will be judged less harshly than those who provide *material goods*. Politicians are often expected to and rewarded for performing constituency service, as elected representatives have the power to help individual citizens resolve specific issues that cannot be solved through other means. From fieldwork in Brazil, I have observed that there while many voters and candidates decry vote buying and clientelism, politicians are the same time happy to perform special services for voters that request them. On the other hand, offers of money and material goods seem to them to be a more flagrant violation of democratic rules and norms. They argue that candidates who buy votes this way are not spending time getting to know their constituents or the issues that their communities are facing – instead they campaign by standing outside the voting booth, handing out cash to random passersby.
- *Hypothesis 6: Monitoring* – Respondents will judge a clientelist situation as more unethical and illegal if the candidate attempts to monitor the client’s vote choice.
  - The right to a secret ballot is the cornerstone of democratic elections, and this idea is deeply ingrained in Brazil. I predict that respondents will have a strong reaction against politicians that attempt to monitor someone’s vote choice, as this infringes on the right to free political expression.

#### 4.2.2 Characteristics of the Respondent

- *Hypothesis 7: Ethicality, Legality, and Anti-Clientelism* – The more unethical or illegal respondents rate a clientelist transaction, the less likely they are to say the potential recipient should accept the benefit and vote for the candidate.
- *Hypothesis 8: Respondent Income and Refusal/Defection* – More wealthy respondents will be more likely than poorer ones to say that the potential recipient should refuse the clientelist offer. Wealthier respondents will *not* be more likely than poorer ones to say recipient should take the reward and vote for a different candidate.

- Wealthier people tend to associated vote buying with the poor and poverty politics and are thus more likely to stigmatize those individuals who sell their vote (Schaffer 2007b).
- **Hypothesis 9: Respondent Education and Refusal/Defection** – Better educated (measured by degree obtained and political knowledge battery) respondents will *not* be more likely than less educated to say recipient should refuse the offer. Better educated respondents will be more likely than less well-educated to say person should accept offer and vote for a different candidate.
  - More educated responses will be more likely to say the recipient should “take the money and run” rather than saying they should refuse clientelist offers outright. The better educated tend to see vote buying as an institutional problem rather than a problem with individual voters, so they will see less of a problem with a voter taking advantage of a corrupt politician (as long as they vote with the conscience in the end).

## 5 Analysis

I plan to test these hypotheses by following estimation strategies described in Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014) using the “cjoint” R package. With the conjoint designs I will be able to estimate the marginal effect of each component on respondent evaluations of candidates and clientelist exchanges. Estimates of the Average Marginal Components Effect (AMCE) for each attribute can be made simultaneously in one regression, allowing for easy comparison across different components. In conjoint 1, the AMCE can be thought of as the effect of each consideration on the probability of choosing a candidate; in conjoint 2, it gives how much the respondent’s belief about the morality or legality of the clientelist transaction changes as a result of that attribute. The Average Component Interaction Effect (ACIE) gives the effect of an attribute at different levels of another attribute. That will allow me to test Hypotheses 3b and 8b in conjoint 1 which involve interaction effects. Whenever I estimate regressions with all conjoint attributes I will also include a few covariates to increase efficiency. These covariates include the respondent’s education level, income/wealth, and region.

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