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Introduction

Clientelism and ethnic favoritism, in combination, riddle the diverse societies of the developing world. Politicians dole out patronage rewards to coethnics by building schools in their villages, paving roads in their neighborhoods, packing the civil service with community members, handing out medicine to supporters, and "fixing" their parking tickets. In exchange, citizens offer up their political support to elites not because of programs or ideology, but rather because of payoffs facilitated by shared ethnicity. To most people, then, the "who gets what" questions of day-to-day politics appear to have ethnic answers.

As familiar as this stylized account of ethnically-based clientelism may be, it misses a crucial part of the story. To wit: the purported beneficiaries of ethnic favoritism, the mass constituents whose support puts their coethnics in power, often receive meager rewards in exchange. They may get jobs in the civil service but are paid a pittance to do them, a school for their village without desks or even roofs, or a dirt-floor building for a health clinic without staff or electricity. Ethnic favoritism can help us explain why desirable resources flow along ethnic lines, but it cannot explain why, for many people, the flow is closer to a trickle than a deluge. How, then, can ethnic favoritism coexist with ethnic neglect? Why would citizens tolerate poor services instead of shopping their political support around? Under what conditions can politicians get away with taking their coethnic constituents for granted?

The answer I propose in this book is the ethnic monopsony: a political constituency defined along communal lines that is dominated by a single, vote-buying patron or party. Clientelistic relationships are susceptible to uncertainty and opportunism, but ethnic networks facilitate patron–client exchange between coethnics by reducing their transaction costs. These transactions-based advantages, however, segment the vote market into ethnic constituencies with high barriers to entry and exit. When coethnic elites vie against each other for support within their community, they compete to provide benefits

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to community members to win their backing. When, in contrast, a single, hegemonic leader dominates an ethnic group, the absence of credible coethnic rivals shelters that leader from internal contestation for community support. Protected from competitive pressures, monopsonists enjoy the luxury to pick and choose which coethnics to patronize, and offer more modest rewards than a competitive market would fetch. The end result is fewer and cheaper payoffs for constituents in dominated communities.

This introductory chapter lays out the book's broad themes, sketches its theoretical arguments, and summarizes its core findings. I begin with a motivating empirical puzzle: why would constituents in politically pivotal ethnic communities tolerate meager rewards for their political support? Next, I synthesize what we think we know about ethnicity and clientelism, and then develop the book's main theoretical claim about ethnic monopsonies. After introducing the book's main research venues – Lebanon and Yemen, two diverse societies in the Arab world – I summarize some of the book's main empirical findings.

1.1 AN EMPIRICAL PUZZLE

Communal politics animates much of the day-to-day distributional competition over "who gets what" in Lebanon and Yemen. Although political parties in both countries solemnly commit themselves to pursue "development," "state-building," and "the rule of law," few people pay much attention to these claims. Instead, politicians spend most of their time jockeying on behalf of constituencies based on sect, tribe, extended family, and region over who gets hired into the civil service, where the roads get paved, and who keeps their electricity longest. Some constituencies, of course, appear to enjoy privileged access to state resources by dint of the political influence of their representatives. But while ethnic favoritism may be rampant, just below the surface, so is neglect.

Consider, for example, the dynamic among Lebanese Sunnis, whose hegemonic leader can tap both state resources as well as his own multibillion-dollar fortune to dispense as patronage. Some Sunnis have benefited handsomely from their political connections, of course, yet many mass constituents see little of this largesse. A traditional notable from the city of Tripoli – alternately Lebanon's "second city" and its "capital of the Sunnis" – has repeatedly emphasized this grievance, such as in this speech to his fast-dwindling supporters:

Where in Tripoli is the state, which had showered promises upon it just before the last elections? Where is the state's electricity and water? Where are the health and educational services, and relief for the poor? … Are you not the inhabitants of the largest Sunni city in Lebanon? Do you not live in the poorest city in Lebanon?[1]

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[1] The speaker is Omar Karami, scion of Tripoli's most prominent notable family and a former prime minister who has been eclipsed by the Saida- and Beirut-based Hariri family. See "Karami launches harsh attack on Geagea: we are the Sunni Unionist Arabs," *al-Nahar*, 21 April 2007.

Notwithstanding the historical rivalry between Sunni elites from Lebanon's major cities, it is difficult to reconcile the high degree of support for a single leader within the Sunni community with the apparent neglect suffered by his coreligionists in a city they dominate demographically and politically. At a minimum, it might encourage us to revisit what we think we know about clientelism and communal politics.

In Yemen, meanwhile, Zaydi Shia tribesmen can ask themselves many of the same questions that Lebanese Sunnis ask.[2] Despite the widely-held perception that the ruling regime is dominated by tribal figures, the Zaydi regions are among the poorest, least developed, and most lawless in the entire country. The paramount shaykh of the country's most powerful tribal confederation – also the speaker of parliament – frequently highlighted the material deprivation of the tribes and urged the state to provide them with basic services and infrastructure:

Transforming a tribesman from a warrior to a farmer is very easy to achieve, especially if agricultural and irrigation projects are established, wells are dug, and roads are run to his lands.[3]

Yet, as another eminent shaykh with a senior post in the ruling party observed:

No doubt about it: right now, no services or infrastructure are going out to the tribal areas … [even though] everyone wants to put down his gun, go to school, take his kid to a clean clinic, and drink clean water.[4]

Hence, the tribes, ostensibly key constituencies for the ruling party, have seen only meager rewards for their political support, although some of the shaykhs have been well-compensated for delivering their tribes' loyalty. Again, we might wonder why the tribesmen would put up with this state of affairs – or if they even have a realistic choice.

As with any two societies, Lebanon and Yemen have their share of idiosyncrasies and differ in non-trivial ways. Nonetheless, they also share crucial similarities, and we see variations on the same basic story playing out in both

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The "capital of the Sunnis" moniker comes most recently from Tripoli MP Muhammad Kabbara (a member of Hariri's parliamentary bloc), although various versions of the same descriptive trope have been in circulation for decades. See "Kabbara to Khazen: Tripoli is the capital of the Lebanese Sunnis" and "Tripoli to remain patriots' capital, Karami says," *NOW Lebanon*, 13 and 17 December 2010, respectively.

[2] Zaydis (sometimes known as "Fivers") form a branch of Shia Islam that concentrates in Yemen and differs doctrinally from the largest branch of Shiism ("Twelvers") that prevails elsewhere in the Muslim world, particularly in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon. For overviews of doctrinal details, see the early chapters in Coulson (1964) and Momen (1985).

[3] Shaykh Abdallah bin Hussein al-Ahmar was, until his death in late-2007, the paramount shaykh of the Hashid tribal confederation and long-running speaker of parliament. The quote comes from Yahya's (2004, 23) hagiography.

[4] Interview, senior shaykh, Bakil tribal confederation, Sanaa, February 2006.

places: constituents who should be well-compensated as members of pivotal communities instead face neglect from their leaders. The core dynamics that make these two countries worth comparing form a mix of communial politics, clientelism, and starkly divergent competitive environments within their different constituencies.[5]

1.2 ETHNICITY, CLIENTELISM, AND DEVELOPMENT

Although scholars across the social sciences had long studied ethnic and communal politics in the developing world, cross-national work in the late-1990s that linked Africa's economic underdevelopment to its ethnic diversity inspired a massive body of research on the connections between social diversity and development. Meanwhile, a revival of scholarship on clientelism and machine politics in the developing world emerged in the 1990s and 2000s, revisiting and extending an older body of work on patron–client relationships that had stagnated after the 1970s. I briefly review some of the core ideas in these literatures, and then synthesize them to form the backdrop against which I develop my main argument about ethnic monopsonies.

1.2.1 Clarifying Terms

In everyday language, people use terms such as "race," "ethnicity," "tribe," and "sect" to refer to social categories that appear to be loosely similar to one another, but sometimes imply that a particular cleavage is qualitatively distinct from other types. Scholarly use of the terms, however, focus on the ascriptive, descent-based attributes – real or putative – of these social categories. Consequently, here, and throughout the rest of the book, I follow Horowitz's (1985, 41) inclusive conception of ethnicity "that embraces differences identified by color, language, religion, or some other attribute of common origin." Notwithstanding ongoing debates over conceptualization and operationalization, this definition has become the de facto standard in academic studies of ethnicity, at least among political scientists.[6] Ascription is, of course, a simplifying assumption, and societies employ numerous ways to bend their own classification rules; the key characteristic, as I develop later in the book, is that ethnic groups have high, rather than insurmountable, barriers to entry and exit. This expansive

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[5] To varying degrees, each component of this mix features the distributive politics found throughout both the Middle East and the developing world more generally. Binder (1999); Blaydes (2011); Collins (2006); Daghir (1995); Davis (2008); Jabar and Dawod (2003); Joseph (2008); Khoury and Kostiner (1990); Lindholm (1986); Makdisi (2008); Peteet (2008); Richards and Waterbury (1996); Rida (1992).

[6] Precursors to Horowitz's (1985) definition can be found in, for example, Kasfir (1976, chs. 2–3) and Melson and Wolpe (1970). Compare Posner (2005) and Chandra (2006) for some of the contemporary debate, as synthesized in Varshney (2003, 2007).

definition enables us to make meaningful comparisons across similar cleavage structures regardless of the nominal differences that distinguish groups. Hence, I use the terms "ethnic" and "communal" interchangeably, and introduce variations on the main theme for sectarian and tribal groups as needed.

Informally, people use the term "clientelism" to refer to a wide range of normatively undesirable transactions between politicians and their supporters, ranging from explicit vote buying to more ambiguous exchanges such as pork-barrel politics and constituency service. More precisely, however, scholars define clientelism as contingent, direct exchange of material rewards for political support.[7] As states democratize or otherwise make use of electoral mechanisms to allocate resources, votes have become the most common resource that the average client can offer, although politicians may also value other forms of support such as participation in rallies or riots, especially when playing a "dual game" to influence institutional rules as well as win electoral support.[8] In return, patrons offer money, a breathtakingly wide range of consumer goods, subsidized school fees, medical care, utilities, access to government permits and licenses, exemptions from the rule of law, and public employment.[9] The distinguishing characteristic of clientelistic exchange is not the targeting per se, but rather the quid pro quo: only compliant voters receive rewards, at least in principle. Such transactions are not so simple in practice, of course, and many of the phenomena we associate with clientelism and machine politics are, in fact, efforts to monitor and enforce the quid pro quo – points to which I return in detail later in the book.

1.2.2 Diversity and Development

Ethnic competition has long been suspected of impeding development, and cross-national empirical research appears to bear out this suspicion. Beginning

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[7] Compare Kitschelt (2000); Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007b); Stokes (2007); Wantchekon (2003); Weitz-Shapiro (2014). Early studies of clientelism by political scientists drew heavily on work from anthropology and sociology, the two disciplines in which the concept of clientelism originated. Perhaps as a result, early generations of theorizing emphasized the affective and face-to-face nature of the patron–client relationship (Lemarchand, 1972; Lemarchand and Legg, 1972; Powell, 1970; Scott, 1969, 1972; Weingrod, 1968). Later generations, however, have downplayed these elements as non-central to "modern" or "mass" clientelism, in which the number of personal relationships a patron would need to maintain would be far beyond any individual's capacity. Hence, subsequent work has focused heavily on the role of brokers as intermediaries between politicians and clients (Auyero, 1999, 2001; Johnson, 1986; Kasara, 2007; Stokes et al., 2013).

[8] See Cammett (2011, 2014); Huntington and Nelson (1976); Mainwaring (2003); Schedler (2002).

[9] For examples, see Auyero (1999, 2001); Bates (1981); Blaydes (2011); Cammett (2011, 2014); Cammett and Issar (2010); Chubb (1982); Corstange (2012b); Jamal (2007); Robinson and Verdier (2013); Schaffer (2007b); van de Walle (2007).

with Easterly and Levine's (1997) seminal but controversial article that connects Africa's slow rate of economic growth to its high degree of ethnic diversity, many studies have linked diversity to underdevelopment via the underprovision of productive public goods, poor macroeconomic policy choice, excessive government consumption, corruption, insecure property rights, and political instability.[10]

Although this line of inquiry has identified several intriguing empirical regularities, the microfoundations of these aggregate outcomes are unclear. Most explanations invoke some form of ethnic favoritism in the political allocation of scare resources, but at least three broad families of mechanisms could account for such behavior. One set rests on shared tastes, another on technology, and a third on strategic selection – put another way, "what people want," "ease of use," and "self-fulfilling prophecies," respectively.[11]

The first family of mechanisms rests on individual tastes and preferences. Simplistic versions claim that people have a natural affinity for coethnics and prefer to cooperate with them, but such explanations have largely been discredited in recent work and find little empirical support.[12] A more compelling version of the argument holds that people cooperate with coethnics not simply because they are coethnics, but rather because they share similar tastes in outcomes. Nonetheless, it is not immediately apparent how to apply this claim to competition over material resources – for example, why people should have diverging preferences over infrastructure such as schools on the basis of ethnicity rather than income or residential location.[13]

An alternate set of mechanisms posits an ethnic information advantage: social networks are much denser within groups than across them. People consequently enjoy better information, direct and indirect, about in-group members than out-group members, so they are better able to monitor each other's

[10] Among an ever-growing list of studies, compare Alesina et al. (1999, 2000); Alesina and La Ferrara (2005); Annett (2001); Arcand et al. (2000); Baldwin and Huber (2010); Collier (1999); Collier and Hoeffler (1998); Easterly and Levine (1997); Fearon and Laitin (2003); Keefer and Knack (2002); Knack and Keefer (1995); Mauro (1995, 1998); Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005).

[11] Habyarimana et al. (2009) offer the three families synthesis; compare also Alesina et al. (1999); Miguel and Gugerty (2005).

[12] For an overview of the theoretical debates, see Varshney (2003, 2007). For empirics, see Habyarimana et al. (2009). A slightly more developed version of the natural affinity argument is that people hold other-regarding preferences for their coethnics, although why altruism should be directed specifically at coethnics is usually left unspecified beyond occasional invocations of evolutionary biology (Hammond and Axelrod, 2006; van den Berghe, 1978). While we might be able to imagine such a mechanism functioning within small-scale kin groups, it is difficult to imagine how it could apply – directly, at least – to large-scale ethnic groups in which two randomly-selected members are, for all practical purposes, unrelated.

[13] Compare, for example, Alesina et al. (1999, 2000), and counterpoints in Habyarimana et al. (2009).

activities and sanction misbehavior.[14] These explanations commonly side-step questions about choice of network, its maintenance, and opportunistic switching between them, however. The last family of mechanisms posits that people select coethnic partners strategically because they expect coethnics to cooperate and non-coethnics not to do so, although the origins of this self-reinforcing equilibrium are usually unspecified.[15] Such an equilbrium is, however, a valuable club good, the provision of which should suffer from free-rider problems and opportunistic deviations.

These various explanations all purport to account for what we observe as ethnic favoritism, although some claims are more compelling and empirically better supported than others.[16] In isolation and in the abstract, each attempts to account for greater within-group cooperation, but many observers have argued that ethnicity becomes especially salient in the context of competition over material resources.[17] Consequently, we need to understand how greater cooperation in the abstract translates into political constituencies and the political allocation of scarce resources among them. In jumping from social links to political ones, it helps to examine the phenomenon of clientelism as one prominent form of political linkage.

1.2.3 Clientelistic Constituencies

What links politicians to their constituents? In the idealized responsible partisan model, we imagine that politicians offer policy programs that spell out what they intend to offer constituents in exchange for the latter's political support. Ideologies and party labels, in turn, summarize the contents of the programs and translate them into convenient information shortcuts. Whichever party wins the election then implements its program; the electorate rewards competent parties with reelection, and punishes incompetence or broken promises by voting them out of office in the next election.[18]

As normatively attractive as this idealized story may be, programmatic linkages are *not* the primary mechanisms connecting most of the world's population

[14] See Bowles and Gintis (2004); Fearon and Laitin (1996); Greif (1994, 2006); Habyarimana et al. (2009); Miguel (2004); Miguel and Gugerty (2005).

[15] Compare Bowles and Gintis (2004); Chandra (2004); Greif (1994, 2006); Habyarimana et al. (2009); Horowitz (1985). Note that the strategic selection mechanism shares with tastes-based explanations the risk of being tautological: coethnics interact with coethnics because coethnics interact with coethnics.

[16] Habyarimana et al. (2007b, 2009) find significant empirical support at the individual level for the technology and strategic selection mechanisms, but no evidence that the simple tastes mechanism operates. Also see Miguel (2004) and Miguel and Gugerty (2005) for evidence consistent with technology and strategic selection.

[17] See, for example, Bates (1974, 1983b); Chandra (2004); Collier (1999); Eifert et al. (2010); Fearon (1999); Horowitz (1985, 1999); Posner (2005).

[18] See Kitschelt (2000, 2010) for a discussion of the responsible partisan model.

to most of the world's politicians. In many developing-world societies – whether governed by democracies or electoral autocracies – clientelism, rather than programs, links politicians to their constituents. In such environments, party programs are frequently non-credible, uninformative, or non-existent, hence sharply curtailing the effectiveness of programmatic linkages. Although parties may trumpet their ideologies in the relevant venues, relatively few "true believers" expect them to pursue, much less fulfill, their programs when in office. The vast bulk of voters, in contrast, discount programmatic promises.[19]

As described previously, clientelistic transactions are contingent, direct exchanges of political support for material rewards, which can take a wide variety of forms in practice – seemingly limited only by the imaginations of voters and the parties that cultivate them. Although patrons may engage in distributive targeting of excludable goods, a lively debate surrounds the question of which voters they actually target. One set of arguments holds that core supporters – loosely and variably defined as ideological voters, those "on the network" for patronage distribution, or even simply coethnics – are easier to reach and can be rewarded more efficiently. Core supporter arguments face two broad challenges, however: why parties would pay for votes they already expect to receive, and why unaffiliated voters would not just declare themselves as core supporters and dilute the patronage resources available. Hence, dissenting views argue that "near-median" voters are decisive in elections, so parties target inducements to swing voters rather than their core supporters. Yet these claims face the critique that there should be few core ideologues to neglect in clientelistic systems, while enforcing the quid pro quo is likely to be harder among swing voters. Consequently, a third batch of arguments suggests that parties diversify their targets under different conditions, sometimes focusing on core or swing, and sometimes pursuing both.[20]

Targeted rewards and quids pro quo are central features of clientelism. Connecting these components to ethnic politics means understanding how ethnicity facilitates precision targeting and enforceable exchanges of rewards for support. In the context of doing so, we can also conceptualize how ethnicity delimits the otherwise ambiguous sets of core and swing voters, and whether or not there can be a swing within the core.

[19] For reviews on clientelistic linkages in the abstract, see Hicken (2011); Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007a); Stokes (2007). On ineffective programmatic linkages, see Blaydes (2011); Keefer (2005, 2007); Keefer and Vlaicu (2008); Magaloni (2006); Stokes et al. (2013).

[20] A formal literature continues to investigate the conditions under which a party would favor one strategy over the other (Cox, 2010; Cox and McCubbins, 1986; Dal Bó, 2007; Dekel et al., 2008; Dixit and Londregan, 1996; Gans-Morse et al., 2014; Lindbeck and Weibull, 1987). A burgeoning empirical literature finds support for both predictions (Blaydes, 2011; Calvo and Murillo, 2004, 2013; Cammett, 2011, 2014; Fleck, 1999, 2001; Magaloni, 2006; Nichter, 2008; Stokes, 2005; Stokes et al., 2013; Weitz-Shapiro, 2014).

1.2.4 Ethnicity and Clientelism

How can we connect what we know about ethnicity with what we know about clientelism? Even though they are distinct concepts, a voluminous body of evidence documents ethnic favoritism in the allocation of material resources – which appears to confirm that there is an empirical affinity between ethnicity and clientelism. Ethnicity seems to be about how politicians define their constituencies, and clientelism is about how they service and maintain those constituencies. Why, though, would a patron prefer an ethnic clientele over some other kind?

All ballots are equal at the counting stage regardless of who casts them, so politicians must have auxiliary reasons for cultivating coethnic support. Meanwhile, a job is a job and a bag of rice is a bag of rice regardless of who supplies it, so constituents, too, must have reasons for supporting coethnic politicians beyond the mere coincidence of shared ethnicity. If the commodities being traded – votes and material rewards – are valuable independently of who supplies them, *ethnicity's contribution must come from facilitating trades, not in determining what gets traded*.

What do existing theories suggest about how ethnicity could facilitate clientelistic exchange? Although shared-tastes stories offer little direct help, information technology mechanisms make coethnic transactions cheaper, and strategic selection mechanisms make such exchanges more credible. Additionally, given the stylized facts about ethnic favoritism and ascriptive social categories, ethnic constituencies seem to follow the core model: politicians reward their coethnic supporters and do not bother to expend resources on non-coethnics. Taking these dynamics to their logical conclusion, there should be no swing voters at all when all constituencies are ethnically based because people cannot "swing" between ascriptively defined ethnic groups.[21] Yet, rather than assume ethnic groups to be undifferentiated monoliths, it is important to recognize within-group diversity and contestation – that is, the degree to which there may be within-group swing voters with an outside option or alternate bidder for their votes.

Observing ethnically-based clientelism, and explaining the mechanisms that support it, does not yet tell us much about how the benefits of coethnicity are shared out between patrons and clients. Rewards may indeed flow along ethnic lines, but we cannot yet explain when the flow is a deluge and when it is a mere trickle. It is much easier to understand why constituents support their coethnic politicians when the rewards for doing so are lucrative than miserly.

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[21] Compare the "election as census, census as election" observations in Chandra (2004); Ferree (2006); Horowitz (1985); Kertzer and Arel (2002); Maktabi (1999). The commonly made simplifying assumption of perfect ascription implies infinite entry and exit costs. In practice, of course, fixed boundaries are rarely fixed in an absolute sense, and people may shift the boundaries and group definitions for strategic purposes (cf. Bowles and Gintis, 2004; Fearon, 1999; Ichino and Nathan, 2013; Posner, 2005).

Yet pittances are frequently what constituents get – why do they tolerate it? And how can politicians get away with it? This book's answer is ethnic vote monopsonies, the theory of which I sketch in the next section.

1.3 THE ARGUMENT

Under what conditions must elites promote the welfare of their coethnic mass constituents, and when can they take those same constituents for granted by offering minimal rewards for political support? This book argues that competition within ethnic groups, or the lack thereof, explains who elites can neglect and who they cannot. Defining constituencies with ascriptive membership rules cuts off constituents' exit options and makes them captive audiences for communal elites. Enforcing in-group unity, in turn, cuts out the electoral competition that would otherwise bid up the value of their votes. When hegemonic elites can form ethnic monopsonies, they become the sole credible buyers of their communities' votes. Favoritism and neglect are, therefore, joint outcomes of this constituency-building process. Elites favor their coethnics *because* their votes are cheap relative to others. Constituents, in turn, tolerate meager rewards in the absence of within-group competition because they have little choice in the matter.

1.3.1 Uncertainty in Clientelistic Exchange

As sketched earlier, clientelism is a prominent mechanism linking politicians to their constituents in the developing world where programmatic linkages are non-credible and ineffective. It is a form of distributive politics that revolves around the contingent exchange of material resources and political support. Clientelism heavily emphasizes the quid pro quo of the exchange. Enforced reciprocity means that patrons employ what Magaloni (2006) has called a "punishment regime" in which they funnel benefits to compliant supporters and withdraw them from deviants. They emphasize this regime because clientelistic exchange occurs against a backdrop of opportunism that, if unchecked, would undermine the possibility of exchange.

Both patrons and clients face temptations to cheat each other in every transaction, the patron by taking the client's vote and withholding the payoff, and the client by taking the patron's reward and staying home – or, worse still, voting for the patron's opponents. They transact in a strategic environment akin to a prisoner's dilemma: exchange makes both better off, but both also face incentives to renege on their partners. Both, consequently, have incentives to develop mechanisms to make their promises of exchange credible. Nonetheless, several important asymmetries in the relationship compel patrons to invest in tools to operate the punishment regime in an efficient manner.