

## The Price of a Vote in the Middle East

Clientelism and ethnic favoritism appear to go hand-in-hand in many diverse societies in the developing world. But, while some ethnic communities receive generous material rewards for their political support, others receive very modest payoffs. *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East* examines this key – and often overlooked – component of clientelism. The author draws on elite interviews and original survey data collected during his years of field research in Lebanon and Yemen: two Arab countries in which political constituencies follow sectarian, regional, and tribal divisions. He demonstrates that voters in internally competitive communal groups receive more, and better, payoffs for their political support than voters trapped in uncompetitive groups dominated by a single, hegemonic leader. Ultimately, politicians provide services when compelled by competitive pressures to do so, whereas leaders sheltered from competition can, and do, take their supporters for granted.

DANIEL CORSTANGE is an assistant professor at Columbia University, a faculty fellow in the Association for Analytic Learning about Islam and Muslim Societies (AALIMS), and a member of Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP). His research has won awards in international relations, political methodology, and fieldwork. He has conducted field research in a number of Arab countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Yemen.

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The Price of a Vote makes an array of innovative and well-supported contributions to debates about clientelism and shows through meticulous analyses and a wealth of data the ways in which different forms of representation affect the dynamics of clientelism in societies with politicized ethnic and religious groups. The theory of the “ethnic monopsony,” which is contrasted to competitive and monopolistic forms of ethnic political dynamics, introduces a new way of thinking about the material payoffs of clientelism in the Middle East and beyond. Corstange’s book is a model of rigorous social science and empirical creativity.

Melani Cammett, *Harvard University*

Daniel Corstange’s book is a rich synthesis of intrepid field work and insight into the web of connections between patronage and ethnic politics. Combining fine-grained analysis with a surefooted mastery of theory, *The Price of a Vote* is an incisive portrait of the motives and mechanisms of politics in the Middle East and beyond. It will be read widely and profitably.

Donald L. Horowitz,  
*James B. Duke Professor of Law and Political Science*  
*Emeritus Duke University*

The study of clientelism takes a huge step forward with Daniel Corstange’s *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East*. Through incisive polling and extensive fieldwork, Corstange demonstrates that political patrons will offer meager inducements to their co-ethnics unless they are forced to compete for votes against rival providers of goods and services. His “ethnic monopsony” theory delivers scholars a powerful tool for explaining variations in clientelism, not only in the Middle East but wherever ethnicity shapes politics.

Jason M. Brownlee, *The University of Texas, Austin*

Corstange has written an extremely impressive book on patterns of clientelistic payoffs. Relying on extensive fieldwork and data collection in Lebanon and Yemen, Corstange builds a solid and insightful theory illustrating the influence of electoral competition on clientelism more generally. This first-rate work is admirable for its theoretical breadth, solid research, empirical richness, and methodological rigor.

Amaney A. Jamal,  
*Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics, Princeton University*

Why don’t all voters gain equally from supporting ethnic patrons? In this well-written book, Dan Corstange turns our attention to the importance of clientelist structures. Where intra-ethnic competition is absent – that is, in ethnic monopsonies – voters gain less from their support of co-ethnic candidates. The theory is clearly explicated, and the empirical evidence drawn from Lebanon and Yemen is rich, diverse, and compelling. This is an excellent contribution to the literature on clientelism, ethnic politics, and election in non-democratic regimes, with lessons that extend well beyond the Arab world.

Ellen Lust, *University of Gothenburg*

# The Price of a Vote in the Middle East

## *Clientelism and Communal Politics in Lebanon and Yemen*

DANIEL CORSTANGE

*Columbia University, New York*



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Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>xiii</i>
I Introduction	I
1.1 <i>An Empirical Puzzle</i>	2
1.2 <i>Ethnicity, Clientelism, and Development</i>	4
1.2.1 <i>Clarifying Terms</i>	4
1.2.2 <i>Diversity and Development</i>	5
1.2.3 <i>Clientelistic Constituencies</i>	7
1.2.4 <i>Ethnicity and Clientelism</i>	9
1.3 <i>The Argument</i>	10
1.3.1 <i>Uncertainty in Clientelistic Exchange</i>	10
1.3.2 <i>Monitoring and Delivering</i>	11
1.3.3 <i>Clientelism and Ethnic Networks</i>	12
1.3.4 <i>Ethnic Monopsonies</i>	13
1.3.5 <i>Observable Implications</i>	15
1.4 <i>The Evidence</i>	17
1.4.1 <i>Why Lebanon and Yemen?</i>	17
1.4.2 <i>Data and Methods</i>	19
1.4.3 <i>Findings</i>	21
1.5 <i>Plan of the Book</i>	23
2 Ethnic Constituencies in the Market for Votes	25
2.1 <i>Introduction</i>	25
2.2 <i>Transactions in the Market for Votes</i>	26
2.2.1 <i>Patron–Client Linkages</i>	27
2.2.2 <i>Barriers to Clientelistic Exchange</i>	29
2.2.3 <i>Tools to Reduce Transaction Costs</i>	32
	vii

2.3	<i>Ethnicity and Transaction Costs</i>	35
2.3.1	<i>Demand-Based Mechanisms</i>	36
2.3.2	<i>Transactions-Based Mechanisms</i>	38
2.3.3	<i>Transacting in Ethnic Networks</i>	39
2.4	<i>Ethnicity and Protected Vote Markets</i>	43
2.4.1	<i>Origins of Monopsony</i>	43
2.4.2	<i>Monopsony Maintenance</i>	45
2.5	<i>Implications</i>	47
2.5.1	<i>Market Power</i>	47
2.5.2	<i>Which Voters?</i>	48
2.5.3	<i>Elite Strategies</i>	49
2.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	50
3	<i>Communal Politics in Lebanon</i>	52
3.1	<i>Introduction: An Electoral Puzzle</i>	52
3.2	<i>Institutions and Communalism</i>	54
3.3	<i>Christian Competition</i>	57
3.3.1	<i>Competing Factions in the Independence Era</i>	57
3.3.2	<i>Rivalries and Splits in the Independence Intifada</i>	60
3.3.3	<i>Intensifying Factional Rivalries</i>	61
3.3.4	<i>Real if Uninspiring Choice</i>	63
3.3.5	<i>Christians in Demand</i>	66
3.4	<i>Shia Cartel</i>	67
3.4.1	<i>Emerging Competition in the Independence Era</i>	67
3.4.2	<i>Constrained Rivalry in the Post-War Era</i>	71
3.4.3	<i>Closing Ranks After the Independence Intifada</i>	72
3.4.4	<i>Uneasy Alliance</i>	75
3.5	<i>Sunni Monopsony</i>	77
3.5.1	<i>Pre-War Competition</i>	78
3.5.2	<i>Wartime Vacuum</i>	79
3.5.3	<i>The Post-War “Money Militia”</i>	80
3.5.4	<i>Maintaining Dominance</i>	83
3.5.5	<i>Sunni Dominance in Comparative Perspective</i>	86
3.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	89
4	<i>Communal Politics in Yemen</i>	90
4.1	<i>Introduction</i>	90
4.2	<i>Institutions and the Politics of Unification</i>	91
4.2.1	<i>Two Yemens</i>	91
4.2.2	<i>United Yemen</i>	93
4.3	<i>Communal Politics in United Yemen</i>	95
4.4	<i>Competition for Sunni Support</i>	99
4.4.1	<i>Conservative and Progressive Voters</i>	100
4.4.2	<i>Retribalizing Voters</i>	101
4.4.3	<i>Southern Voters</i>	102

## Contents

ix

4.5	<i>Stagnant Competition for Zaydi Support</i>	105
4.5.1	<i>Early Unity-Era Competition</i>	106
4.5.2	<i>The “Wahhabi” Push</i>	107
4.5.3	<i>Eliminating Zaydi Alternatives</i>	109
4.5.4	<i>The Patronage Pull</i>	113
4.5.5	<i>Zaydi Stagnation and Sunni Competitiveness</i>	116
4.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	117
5	<i>Contemporary Clientelism</i>	119
5.1	<i>Introduction</i>	119
5.2	<i>Parties and Programs</i>	120
5.3	<i>Personalized Politics</i>	125
5.4	<i>Partisanship in Comparative Perspective</i>	128
5.5	<i>Patrons and Clients</i>	131
5.6	<i>Communal Clienteles</i>	137
5.7	<i>Machines in Motion</i>	143
5.7.1	<i>Observing and Inferring Voting Behavior</i>	144
5.7.2	<i>Rural Clientelism</i>	150
5.8	<i>Conclusion</i>	154
6	<i>Captive Audiences and Public Services</i>	156
6.1	<i>Introduction</i>	156
6.2	<i>Cheap Votes and Poor Services</i>	157
6.3	<i>Hypotheses</i>	159
6.4	<i>Data and Methods</i>	160
6.4.1	<i>Outcomes: Electricity and Water Access</i>	161
6.4.2	<i>Model Setup</i>	162
6.5	<i>Findings</i>	164
6.5.1	<i>Electricity</i>	167
6.5.2	<i>Water</i>	169
6.5.3	<i>Obverse Dynamics in the Yemeni South</i>	170
6.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	173
7	<i>Intermingled Vote Markets</i>	175
7.1	<i>Introduction</i>	175
7.2	<i>Diversity and Patronage Targeting</i>	176
7.3	<i>Hypotheses</i>	178
7.4	<i>Data and Methods</i>	179
7.4.1	<i>Outcomes: Infrastructure and Public Sector Jobs</i>	179
7.4.2	<i>Model Setup</i>	181
7.5	<i>Findings</i>	183
7.5.1	<i>Services and Infrastructure</i>	183
7.5.2	<i>Public Sector Employment</i>	187
7.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	192



8	Perverse Competition and Personalized Patronage	194
8.1	<i>Introduction: Who Competes for Whom?</i>	194
8.2	<i>The Politics of Sycophancy</i>	195
8.2.1	<i>Political Dominance and Surplus Clients</i>	196
8.2.2	<i>Surplus Clients and Perverse Competition</i>	197
8.2.3	<i>Signaling with Sycophancy</i>	198
8.2.4	<i>Signaling Costs and Sycophancy</i>	200
8.3	<i>Hypotheses</i>	202
8.4	<i>Data and Methods</i>	203
8.4.1	<i>Outcomes: Public Display of Political Iconography</i>	203
8.4.2	<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	208
8.4.3	<i>Model Setup</i>	211
8.5	<i>Findings</i>	211
8.5.1	<i>Public Displays of Iconography</i>	212
8.5.2	<i>Connections and Iconography</i>	213
8.5.3	<i>Emphasizing Political Connections</i>	216
8.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	218
9	Conclusion	220
9.1	<i>Introduction</i>	220
9.2	<i>Reviewing the Scope of the Argument</i>	221
9.3	<i>Ramifications</i>	223
9.3.1	<i>Ethnic Politics</i>	223
9.3.2	<i>Clientelism</i>	225
9.3.3	<i>Democracy</i>	227
9.3.4	<i>Durability</i>	229
9.4	<i>Future Research</i>	234
	<i>Bibliography</i>	235
	<i>Index</i>	253

Figures

2.1	Patron–Client Exchange as a One-Shot Prisoner’s Dilemma	<i>page</i> 30
3.1	2007 By-Election Results: Sunni Landslide, Christian Cliffhanger	53
3.2	Lebanese Forces Campaign Billboard, 2009: (Left) Second Independence, (Right) Third Republic	63
3.3	Amal–Hizballah mural: “We all resist” (Beirut, Summer 2008)	74
3.4	Omar Karami Billboard: “Dignity ( <i>karama</i> ) is more precious than money” (Tripoli, summer 2008)	85
3.5	Omar Karami Billboard: “The Karamis: A family with roots” (Tripoli, summer 2008)	86
3.6	Parties’ Popular Support by Sect, 2005 and 2009–2010	87
4.1	Yemeni Self-Identification	97
4.2	Cloning in Yemen: Mastheads of the UPF’s <i>al-Shoura</i> Newspaper	110
4.3	Popular Vote Share in Parliamentary Elections, 1993–2003	116
5.1	Trust in Parties (Arab Barometer, First Wave)	129
5.2	Importance of Connections (Arab Barometer, First Wave)	130
5.3	Party-Distributed Ballots, Beirut (2009)	148
6.1	Effect of Political Domination on Access to Electricity	165
6.2	Effect of Political Domination on Access to Water	166
6.3	Southern Effect on Access to Services in Yemen	172
7.1	Distribution of Respondents at Different Levels of District Diversity	182
7.2	Political Dominance Decreases Electricity, Water, and Infrastructure Quality in Homogeneous Areas	186

xii		<i>List of figures</i>
7.3	Political Dominance, Mixed Neighborhoods, and Public Sector Jobs	189
7.4	Political Dominance, Mixed Neighborhoods, and Perceptions of Merit in Government Hiring	191
8.1	Lebanon: Hariri Political Imagery	204
8.2	Yemen: Salih Political Imagery	206
8.3	Public and Private Sector Jobs and Political Iconography	210
8.4	Dominated Constituents Display More Iconography	212
8.5	Effect of Connections on Iconography Display	215
8.6	Effect of Importance of Government Connections on the Increase in Iconographic Postings by Community Type	218

Tables

6.1	Summary Statistics for Electricity and Water Access: Means and Medians (Standard Deviations, Interquartile Ranges)	<i>page</i> 162
6.2	Electricity Outages (Ordinary Least Squares on $\sqrt{\text{hours/day}}$ )	167
6.3	Water Outages (Ordinary Least Squares on $\sqrt{\text{hours/day}}$ )	169
7.1	Diversity, Services, and Infrastructure	184
7.2	Political Dominance and Public Sector Jobs	188
7.3	Mixed Neighborhoods and Government Employment	188
7.4	Political Dominance and Perceptions of Merit in Government Hiring	191
8.1	Political Domination and the Display of Political Imagery	207
8.2	Explaining Political Iconography Display (Probit Regression)	214