Course Description
This course provides an introduction to the implications of political clientelism for the quality of democracy. Though the decline of clientelistic practices – such as vote buying and patronage – in democratic contexts has often been predicted, they have proven to be highly adaptive strategies of electoral mobilization and party building. The puzzling persistence of clientelism in new and old democracies inspired researchers to investigate the micro-foundations and causes of this phenomenon. Only recently scholars have turned their attention to the effects of clientelism on the functioning and quality of different democratic institutions. According to these studies, clientelism may have two distinctive implications: (1) If parties in control of government focus their policy programs more likely on those voters that are not inclined to give their vote in exchange to material benefits, clientelism may lead to distorted representation. (2) If political elites face incentives to engage in rent-seeking and to generate targetable private goods, clientelistic practices may lead to inefficient policy implementation. We will analyze these phenomena with an international comparative perspective, with an emphasis on democratic systems in Latin America, Western Europe, as well as Central and Eastern Europe.

The course is structured as follows: The first part focusses on identifying the basic concepts of the course theme different conceptions of clientelism - like vote buying and patronage - and public policy. The second and third part will then be devoted to the study of different arguments in the research literature with respect to the relationship between clientelism and democracy: Firstly, that clientelism may lead to distorted representation, and secondly, that clientelism may lead to inefficient policy implementation. Thereby, we will especially focus on welfare related policy areas like social security, health care, and education.

Teaching Approach
The goal of the course is to augment each student's ability to analyze and evaluate complex social phenomena. More specifically, students will be trained to understand policymaking in different environments, to recognize the role of institutions and political actors within the political process, to improve their written and oral English skills, and to work in teams.

Course Requirements
All announcements and class related documents will be posted on the class shared course site at OLAT (https://www.olat.uzh.ch). Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before the class meeting, this is essential for full participation in the sections. Students should be able to understand and articulate themselves in English as this will be the general classroom language. Of course, perfection is not required but you should be able to make yourself understood. The term paper should be written in English as well. Course grades will be determined as follows: class participation including the preparation of short presentations and team projects (20%), seminar paper with a maximum length of 5000 words (80%).
Course Schedule

Basic Reading Recommendations (optional)


Class 1 (February 18): Introduction, Course Outline, Requirements

PART I: Theories and Concepts

Class 2 (February 25): What is Clientelism? (I)
Reading assignments:

Class 3 (March 4): What is Clientelism? (II)
Reading assignments:

Class 4 (March 11): What is Democracy? What is Democratic Quality?
Reading assignments:

Class 5 (March 18): Clientelism and Economic Development
Reading assignments:
PART II: Clientelism and Political Representation

Class 6 (March 25): Clientelism and Elections: Supply Side
Reading assignments:

Class 7 (April 1): Clientelism and Elections: Demand Side
Reading assignments:

Class 8 (April 22): Mixing Electoral Strategies I: Diversified Targeting
Reading assignments:

Class 9 (April 29): Mixing Electoral Strategies II: Segmented Representation
Reading assignments:

PART III: Clientelism, Policy-Making, and Policy Implementation

Class 10 (May 6): Clientelism and Government Spending
Reading assignments:
Class 11 (May 13): Clientelism, Welfare States, and Social Policy

Reading assignments:

Class 12 (May 20): Clientelism and the Bureaucracy

Reading assignments:

Class 13 (May 27): Concluding Session - What is wrong with Clientelism?

Reading assignments: