Policy Deliberation and Electoral Returns: Experimental Evidence from Benin and the Philippines

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Acknowledgments


Outline

1 Motivation

2 Deliberative Campaign Experiments

3 Main Results

4 Conclusions
Outline

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2 Deliberative Campaign Experiments
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1. Motivation
2. Deliberative Campaign Experiments
3. Main Results
4. Conclusions
Outline

1 Motivation

2 Deliberative Campaign Experiments

3 Main Results

4 Conclusions
Clientelism profoundly shapes the conduct of democratic elections and government policies (Easterly and Levine [1997]; van de Walle [2003, 2007]):

1. State resources used for short-term electoral gains.
2. Voters make decisions based on immediate material gains (e.g., vote-buying, patronage, particularistic spending) rather than long-term policy.

Previous literature has focused on uncovering the structural causes of clientelism and its effects (Brusco et al. [2013]).
Motivation

• This research addresses institutional reforms that would facilitate the emergence of efficient redistribution (Dal Bo et al. [2008]; Olken [2008]), even under slow growth and weak state capacity.

• We focus on deliberative electoral campaigns (i.e., public town hall meetings where voters debate about programmatic policies) as a solution to reduce the prevalence of clientelism (Fujiwara and Wantchekon [2013]).

• We present experimental evidence on party-endorsed town hall meetings in Benin (Wantchekon [2013]) and in the Philippines (Fujiwara et al. [2014]).
Motivation

- Clientelistic platforms perform better than programmatic policies, as they generate a reciprocity between candidate and voters through the discretionary distribution of transfers (Wantchekon [2003], Finan and Schechter [2012]).

- However, programmatic policies under deliberation can generate this connection through a two-way communication campaign:
  - Horizontal Communication among voters.
  - Vertical Communication from voters to candidate.

Platform transparency and deliberation may make voters more receptive to programmatic policies.
Motivation

Deliberation could be a tool for both mobilization and support for programmatic policies.

1. Direct exposure on attendees:
   - *Voter coordination*. Learn about each other’s preferences and beliefs.
   - *Platform transparency*. Better understand the candidate’s platform.
   - *Platform customization*. Actively influence policy by debating with the candidate.

2. Indirect exposure on non-participants:
   - *Information sharing*. Learn about the candidate’s platform from attendees in your social network (Contagious voting as in Nickerson [2006, 2008]).
1. Town hall meetings have a positive effect on turnout and on electoral support for treated candidates/parties.

2. Presence of direct effects on attendees and of indirect effects on non-participants.

3. Homogenous effects of town hall meetings across all segments of the population consistent with same programmatic platform of candidates in Benin.

4. Heterogenous effects by education, income and gender consistent with the platforms of parties in the Philippines.

5. The effects are driven by audience effects and information sharing (in Benin) from meeting attendees.
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Among top ten most democratic countries in Africa.

31st in human development.

18th in economic governance.

Nonetheless, lower levels of FDI than Cote d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso.

Analysts have blamed poor economic performance on electoral corruption and patronage politics.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Benin Experiment

- March 2011 Presidential Campaign.
- The top three candidates collaborated with the experiment: Yayi Boni-incumbent (53.16%) Adrien Houngbedji (35.66%), Abdoulaye Bio Tchane (6.29%).

Randomized Block design.

1. Use RNG again, to select 5 villages in each district and assign two to treatment and 3 to control. We have 30 districts, 60 treatment villages and 90 control villages.

2. In collaboration with the campaign management teams, districts were assigned to ”treatment” candidates.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments

Benin Experiment
Traditional political parties as shifting coalitions of elite families. In fact, 50% elected politicians are dynastic (Querubin [2011, 2013]).

20% of the House of Representatives are elected through an alternative PR election of closed party-lists.

Party-lists are supposed to give representation to minority groups in Filipino society (e.g. peasants, urban poor, indigenous communities).

Each party that receives 2% of the total gets one seat and an additional seat for every 2% thereafter.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Philippines Experiment

- Two party-lists collaborated with the experiment: Akbayan (2 seats) and Umalab-Ka (no seat).

Randomized Block design.

- Use RNG to select 13 cities/municipalities. 7 cities belong to the National Capital Region (NCR) and 6 belong Calabarzon.
- Use RNG to select 3 villages in each district and assign 1 village to treatment and 2 villages to control. We have 13 treatment villages and 26 control villages.
Akbayan is one of the most prominent party-lists in the country, consistently winning a seat since its foundation in 1998.

Founded as a left pluralist national party, it is a multi-sectoral organization that runs mainly on a feminist and environmentalist platform.

It is comprised of labor, peasants, fisherfolk, urban poor, women organizations, and LGBT formations.
Umalab-Ka was founded in 2003, but it was until 2013 that it participated in the electoral process.

It is an organization aimed at the urban poor. Their legislative priority is to protect informal workers through social security programs.

It is composed mainly of drivers, street vendors, and house servants.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Philippines Experiment

Figure: Philippines Regions NCR and Calabarzon.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Philippines Experiment

Figure: Selected Cities for the Experiment.
Figure: City of Baras (Party Treatment: Umalab - Ka)
TREATMENT
Deliberative Campaign Experiments

Town Hall Meetings

- One staff and one candidate representative implemented between 2 and 3 town-hall meetings (around 40 participants each).

- Town hall meetings lasted 90-120 minutes distributed in three stages:
  - Introduction (10-15 minutes). Introduction to programmatic platform from the candidate.
  - Deliberation (70-95 minutes). Rounds of questions/comments and debate. Participants were encouraged to propose amendments to platform.
  - Resolution (10 minutes). Summary of meeting proceedings and commitment to transmit information to party leaders.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments

Town Hall Meetings: Benin

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Deliberative Campaign Experiments

Town Hall Meetings: Benin
Deliberative Campaign Experiments

Town Hall Meetings: The Philippines
Deliberative Campaign Experiments

Town Hall Meetings: The Philippines
CONTROL
Business-as-usual campaign. No instructions to candidates on what campaign strategy to follow.

Local brokers organized between two and three political rallies:

- Festive atmosphere with music, dance, and sometimes gift distribution.
- Speech (10 - 20 minutes). Candidate (or representative) gave a speech outlining the policy agenda.
- One-way communication without debate and voters’ participation.
- Mobile propaganda teams using a sound system roving within villages.
- Posters in visible public spaces with parties’ name and logo.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments

Control Villages: Benin
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Control Villages: the Philippines
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Control Villages: the Philippines
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Benin vs. Philippines

In the Benin experiments:

- Under deliberative campaigns (treatment), candidates offered universalistic policies (education, health, employment, corruption), as designed in advance and communicated to candidates.
- Under business-as-usual (control) candidates offer a mix of clientelistic and universalistic policies.

⇒ Politician’s platform is a function of treatment status

The treatment effect in the Benin experiment comes from a combination of both programmatic platform and deliberation.
Deliberative Campaign Experiments
Benin vs. Philippines

In the Philippines’ experiment:

- We try to isolate the effect of deliberation on electoral returns.

- We focus on legislative parties that offered specific programmatic platforms targeted to minority groups in both treatment and control villages.

- We study small parties that do not have the means to make credible clientelistic appeals (i.e., PL do not exert discretionary control over the distribution of goods to particular villages).

- Under a PR (closed list) system, party-lists have less benefits from modifying their platform in order to appeal to broader interests.

- Small evidence of vote-buying behavior in party-list election in the past (around 4% according to our post-electoral survey).
Outline

1 Motivation

2 Deliberative Campaign Experiments

3 Main Results
   • Treatment Effects
   • Conditional Effects
   • Attendance Effects
   • Causal Mechanisms

4 Conclusions
Table: **Treatment Effect on Turnout (Official Results)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Oposition</th>
<th>Yayi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>3.309*</td>
<td>2.654*</td>
<td>5.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.737)</td>
<td>(1.591)</td>
<td>(4.872)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>85.48**</td>
<td>87.59**</td>
<td>79.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.541)</td>
<td>(1.463)</td>
<td>(3.714)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Note: Clustered Standard Errors at the Commune Level.
Figure: Treatment Effect on Turnout (Official Results)
### Table: Treatment Effect on Vote Shares (Individual Results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall (1)</th>
<th>Oposition (2)</th>
<th>Yayi (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>5.988***</td>
<td>8.641***</td>
<td>-1.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.177)</td>
<td>(1.561)</td>
<td>(1.151)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>67.82***</td>
<td>57.92***</td>
<td>94.91***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.137)</td>
<td>(4.216)</td>
<td>(3.070)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 4529 3285 1244

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Clustered Standard Errors at the District Level.
Figure: Treatment Effect on Vote Shares (Individual Results)

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## Table: ATE on Party-list Vote Shares at the Village Level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall (1)</th>
<th>Akbayan (2)</th>
<th>Umalab-Ka (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>2.157*</td>
<td>2.683**</td>
<td>0.575*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.251)</td>
<td>(1.342)</td>
<td>(0.341)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.859***</td>
<td>4.548***</td>
<td>0.226***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.609)</td>
<td>(0.568)</td>
<td>(0.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Note: Robust Standard Errors in parentheses.
Figure: Heterogeneous Effects of Town Hall Meetings on Vote Shares.

Akbayan Cities

Umalab-Ka Cities
Figure: Conditional Effect on Turnout (Benin).
Figure: Conditional Effect on Vote (Benin).
Figure: Conditional Effects by gender (Philippines).
Figure: Conditional Effects by income (Philippines).
Figure: Conditional Effects by education (Philippines).
Table: **Effect of Attendance on Turnout (IV Results)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Oposition</th>
<th>Yayi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent variable:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Attendance</td>
<td>6.699*</td>
<td>5.446</td>
<td>9.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.753)</td>
<td>(3.663)</td>
<td>(9.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>84.81***</td>
<td>86.39***</td>
<td>78.69***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.762)</td>
<td>(1.767)</td>
<td>(4.533)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>4727</td>
<td>3472</td>
<td>1255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Note: Clustered Standard Errors at the Commune Level.
Note: 2SLS. Instrument: $Treat_i$. Instrumented: Individual Attendance.
### Table: Effect of Attendance on Votes (IV Results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
<th>Overall (1)</th>
<th>Oposition (2)</th>
<th>Yayi (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Attendance</td>
<td>11.45 (8.175)</td>
<td>16.62* (9.204)</td>
<td>-1.729 (5.311)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>66.36*** (3.725)</td>
<td>59.87*** (4.101)</td>
<td>91.44*** (2.856)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 4238 (1), 3073 (2), 1165 (3)

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01
Note: Clustered Standard Errors at the Commune Level.
Note: 2SLS. Instrument: $Treat_i$. Instrumented: Individual Attendance.
Figure: Effect of Attendance (Philippines).

Turnout

Vote (Overall)

Vote (Akbayan)

Vote (Umalab-Ka)
Causal Mechanisms

Town Hall Meetings may be effective because:

- they generate "transparent policy platforms" for attendees.
- they facilitate "voter coordination" among attendees.
- active information sharing by those who attended the meetings.

The results lend support to platform transparency (OLS) and activism (causal mediation analysis - Imai et al [2011]) mechanisms.
### Table: Treatment Effect on Mediator Variables (Benin).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable: Audience</th>
<th>Overall (1)</th>
<th>Opposition (2)</th>
<th>Yayi (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>0.802***</td>
<td>0.755***</td>
<td>1.129***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.172)</td>
<td>(0.190)</td>
<td>(0.175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.287***</td>
<td>1.326***</td>
<td>0.973***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.195)</td>
<td>(0.242)</td>
<td>(0.211)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 733 533 200

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Clustered Standard Errors at the Commune Level.

Audience: (1) The meeting helped you know what other villagers think.
Audience: (2) You get to know the candidate better after the meeting.
Audience: (3) You felt listened after the meeting.
### Table: Treatment Effect on Mediator Variables (Benin).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Oposition</th>
<th>Yayi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>0.430***</td>
<td>0.382***</td>
<td>0.455***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.066)</td>
<td>(0.059)</td>
<td>(0.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.177**</td>
<td>0.196**</td>
<td>0.254**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.081)</td>
<td>(0.073)</td>
<td>(0.092)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Note: Clustered Standard Errors at the Commune Level.

**Information Sharing:** Did you share information about the meeting with other people?
Figure: Causal Mediation Analysis (Benin).

Mediation Effect of "Audience"  Mediation Effect of "Information Sharing"
Figure: Treatment Effect on Audience (Philippines).
Figure: Causal Mediation Analysis (Philippines).
Conclusions

● We present deliberative campaigns as a complementary institution that limits the electoral appeal of clientelism.

● In addition, we show that voters seem to reward this campaigning strategy at the polls.

● Further research:
  ● In-depth analysis of the intrinsic institutional effects of town hall meetings from its policy effects by looking at meeting proceedings.
  ● Is the effect on attendees driven by horizontal communication or vertical communication, or both?
  ● Follow the process of voting contagion from attendees to other voters.
  ● Through which channels attendees share the information of the meetings with other voters?