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**QoG** THE QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTE  
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Box 711, SE 405 30 GÖTEBORG  
January 2023  
ISSN 1653-8919  
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# **Pre-suffrage impartiality, democratic experience and clientelism: How sequencing matters**

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## **Abstract**

It has been asserted that clientelism today is weaker in countries that were endowed with impartial public administrations prior to the extension of suffrage because the presence of bureaucratic checks undermines clientelism as a viable political strategy. We empirically examine this claim based on a cross-section of up to 136 countries. While we do not find evidence of a direct link between pre-suffrage impartiality and contemporary clientelism we do find evidence of an indirect effect working through post-suffrage democratic experience. Pre-suffrage impartiality in the guise of impartial public administrations or, more generally, the rule of law, enhances both democratic stability and democratic quality. Experience with democracy in turn helps rein in clientelism by increasing the credibility of programmatic promises thus reducing the need for vote-maximizing politicians to seek political support through clientelistic exchange.

## *Key words*

Sequencing, impartial bureaucracy, rule of law, democratic experience, extension of suffrage

## *JEL codes*

D72, D73

## *Acknowledgements*

The author has received funding from projects PID2019-104723RB-I00 and PID2020-113452RB-I00 of the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (Spain). Any errors are entirely his own.

## 1. Introduction

In a clientelistic political relationship the clients (citizens) offer political support to patrons (politicians), in exchange for benefits that include cash, consumer goods, preferential access to public services, favorable interventions with the public administration, and public sector jobs (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Hicken, 2011). Clientelism has been associated with a range of undesirable outcomes including corruption, tax evasion and the under-provision of public goods (Bardhan, 2022; Kyriacou, 2022). One notable strand of literature has argued that the prevalence of clientelistic relationships in a country may partly be the result of a specific historical sequence (Shefter, 1994). In those countries where a professional, impartial, and autonomous public administration emerged prior to the extension of suffrage, clientelism was held in check by it. Alternatively, when suffrage was extended before the existence of an impartial public administration, the absence of bureaucratic checks meant that clientelism was consolidated as a viable political strategy. Another line of work has identified democratic experience as an important determinant of clientelism. Where democratic experience is lacking, programmatic promises by vote-seeking politicians to provide public goods are not credible since credibility is established over time, and this leads them to seek political support by entering instead into patron-client relationships (Keefer and Vlaicu, 2008).

A third line of inquiry has linked a pre-democratic impartial bureaucracy to democratic survival and deepening (Andersen and Doucette, 2020). The reasoning is twofold. First, impartiality makes it less likely that the policies adopted by those elected will discriminate opposition groups thus reducing the latter's incentive to overthrow the status quo by non-democratic means. Second, it reduces the costs of incumbents of losing power thus facilitating the enfranchisement of new groups. This implies that historical sequencing can impact on clientelism directly, since the extent to which the public administration was impartial prior to the extension of the suffrage, potentially determines whether clientelism takes root once the franchise is extended, but also indirectly, since the degree of pre-suffrage impartiality may impact on democratic experience and from there the incentives of political operators to enter into clientelistic exchanges.

Existing evidence on the direct impact of historical impartiality on contemporary clientelism is limited to historical country cases. The indirect impact of historical impartiality on clientelism through democratic experience has yet to be formulated and empirically examined. In this article we will consider the potential direct and indirect effect of pre-suffrage impartiality on clientelism by way of the V-Dem data that provides information on a host of political variables including, clientelism, bureaucratic impartiality, the timing of the extension of suffrage and the quality of democracy over time (Coppedge et al. 2022a). Our empirical results, based on a cross-section of up to 136 countries does not support the assertion that the extent of impartiality prior to the extension of the suffrage directly affects contemporary levels of clientelism. Alternatively, we find robust support for the positive impact of pre-suffrage impartiality on democratic experience and, moreover, the positive effect of post-suffrage democratic experience on clientelism. Pre-suffrage impartiality contributes towards a longer and higher quality democratic experience and this in turn puts a check on clientelism.

This article is structured as follows. In the next section we review previous work that has examined how pre-suffrage impartiality can impact on clientelism and democratic experience as well as work linking the latter to clientelism. In section 3, we discuss the variables employed to capture the key concepts and present our empirical approach. We follow this, in section 4, by presenting and discussing the empirical results before concluding the article.

## 2. Literature review

The direct relationship between historical impartiality and clientelism was first raised by Epstein (1980) who argues that whether clientelistic politics emerged after the extension of suffrage to near universal white males depended partly on the prior existence of a meritocratic civil service. Where this was absent, the case of the United States, political parties turned towards patronage “as a significant organizational ingredient” (page 23). Alternatively, in Europe, the presence of an autonomous bureaucracy before the extension of the suffrage reduced the use of patronage as a political strategy.<sup>1</sup>

Inspired by Epstein, Shefter (1994) formulates the sequencing argument more clearly as follows:

Where the creation of a mass electorate preceded the establishment of civil service examinations or other formal procedures to govern recruitment into the bureaucracy, politicians were able to gain access to patronage for party building. The party organizations they constructed acquired a widespread popular base and the political capacity to successfully raid the bureaucracy for patronage, even after formal procedures governing civil service recruitment and promotion were enacted.

On the other hand, where formal civil service recruitment procedures were enacted, and a political constituency committed to their defense emerged, prior to the development of mass-based political parties it was likely that this “constituency for bureaucratic autonomy” would be able to prevent party politicians from raiding the bureaucracy. In such circumstances, politicians were compelled to build mass-based party organizations that did not depend upon patronage. Commanding such organizations, party politicians did not thereafter have an overriding incentive to extract patronage from the bureaucracy. (pages 14-15).

Shefter (1994) identifies two constituencies with an interest in an autonomous and merit-based public administration. First, an “absolutist coalition” that sought to increase state capacity to finance their military in the face of military competition with other states (see also, Weber, 1922/1978, and Rothstein and Teorell, 2015a, 2015b). Second, a “progressive coalition” in the form of a middle class who saw a professional public administration as a potential career path and as an instrument that could improve government’s capacity to promote industrialization and deal with its negative social consequences. He states that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the creation of a mass electorate, an absolutist coalition emerged in Germany and a progressive coalition did so in England. The absence of these coalitions and consequently that of an autonomous public administration prior to the extension of the suffrage, helps explain contemporary clientelistic politics in both southern Europe and the states of the Northeast and Midwest of the United States.

Fukuyama (2014) reiterates Shefter’s argument that the existence of an autonomous bureaucracy prior to the extension of suffrage put a break on the strength of patronage politics in Germany and the UK. Oppositely, clientelism took root in countries like Greece, Italy, and the United States where suffrage was expanded prior to the consolidation of an autonomous public administration. Fukuyama emphasizes the role of industrialization before the extension of the franchise as an important factor explaining the emergence of the middle class and, consequently, a merit-based public administration in the UK. In countries like Greece and (southern) Italy where industrialization came after the expansion of the franchise, there was no middle-class pressuring

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<sup>1</sup> Epstein himself traces elements of this insight to Viscount James Bryce’s (1888) *The American Commonwealth*.

for a meritocratic public administration. Even when industrialization did eventually arrive it was relatively weak and this limited private sector opportunities making access to public sector rents more attractive. Clientelism took root in those countries after the extension of the suffrage and persists until today.

Consider next how democratic experience can influence clientelism. Keefer and Vlaicu (2008) argue that if programmatic promises by politicians to provide public goods are not credible, vote-maximizing politicians will turn to political patrons or intermediaries who have established relationships with voters as clients. Political patrons, in turn, eschew programmatic promises to provide public goods because these would benefit both clients and non-clients, and prefer instead to mobilize voters by providing private benefits. Thus, credibility problems turn politicians away from programmatic policies towards clientelistic exchanges. To illustrate their argument, these authors undertake a comparative historical analysis of two old democracies namely, the United Kingdom and the Dominican Republic, and also consider specific country cases drawn from young democracies. The evidence from young democracies helps illuminate the link between democratic experience and clientelism while a reframing of their comparison of old democracies is useful to understand the direct link between historical impartiality and contemporary clientelism. Consider first their discussion of young democracies.

Because credibility must be earned over time, programmatic promises in newly established democracies may not be credible and this leads vote-maximizing politicians to turn towards clientelist politics. The direct implication that flows from this is that as countries accumulate democratic experience over time, clientelism should decline. Empirical evidence in support of this assertion has been provided by Keefer (2007) and Kitschelt and Kselman (2012). The former employs data of up to 106 countries over the period 1975 to 2000 to show that the number of years a country enjoys competitive elections is associated with the greater provision of public goods such as universal education, and lower provision of targeted private benefits such as public sector jobs. The latter propose that the relationship between democratic experience and clientelism may be non-linear. Promises by political patrons to clients may also suffer from a credibility problem which is mitigated as they deliver the private goods over time. Thus, clientelism may increase as we go from young to middle-aged democracies. Beyond that, as we go from middle-aged to older democracies, the credibility of programmatic policies should crowd-out clientelism just as Keefer and Vlaicu (2008) suggest. They employ a measure of clientelism obtained from an expert-based survey implemented in 2007 and 2008 and capturing the degree of effort exerted by candidates and parties to attract voters by promising individual benefits. In a cross-country sample of up to 88 countries, they regress this against a range of variables including one that reflects democratic experience. The purported quadratic relationship between democratic experience and clientelism is not robust to their full set of controls in their cross-country regressions while it emerges more robustly in regressions employing political parties as the units of analysis.

Keefer and Vlaicu's (2008) comparison of old democracies is useful in understanding the direct link between historical impartiality and clientelism. The authors explain that in the context of the gradual extension of suffrage in the United Kingdom in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "British politicians could make broadly credible policy appeals from the very beginning" (page, 389). While the authors don't identify the source of this credibility, they later go on to say that civil services reforms in the 1870s and 1880s, reduced public sector jobs as a source of patronage and helped strengthen the programmatic orientation of political parties. This is of course consistent with the historical sequencing argument and indeed, suggests an additional reason linking historical impartiality

directly to clientelism beyond the notion that impartiality acts as a break on clientelism: historical impartiality acted as a commitment device that increased the credibility of programmatic politics and reduced the need to rely on political intermediaries and through them, clientelistic exchange. This also helps illuminate the case of the Dominican Republic referred to by the authors. According to them, the political experience of this country has always been characterized by clientelism, the implication being that this is because programmatic promises in the Dominican Republic are not credible. Sequencing explains why this may be the case. Universal male suffrage was consolidated in the Dominican Republic in 1874 while in the UK this occurred in 1919. Prior to the extension of suffrage and based on indicators of historical impartiality that will be fully explained in the following section, bureaucratic impartiality was more than three times as high in the UK compared to the Dominican Republic. Clientelism took root in the Dominican Republic in part because the absence of impartiality there when suffrage was extended, meant that politicians faced no barriers when offering private benefits to voters in exchange for their political support and, relatedly, the alternative strategy of campaigning on a programmatic platform was not credible.

Finally, previous work has proposed that the existence of impartial bureaucracies prior to democratization, improves both democratic longevity and democratic quality. Lapuente and Rothstein (2014) compare the experience of Spain and Sweden after their extension of the franchise to all males and argue that the absence of a meritocratic bureaucracy in Spain helps explain violent class conflict there, while the existence of a merit-based public administration in Sweden helped resolve class conflict peacefully. In the absence of a meritocratic bureaucracy, emergent political parties gaining power in Spain granted public sector positions to core supporters, thus creating a political constituency with a strong interest in their party's continuous hold on power. This, together with the consequent exclusion of opposition party supporters from public positions contributed towards the polarization of Spanish society and acted as a catalyst of violent class conflict and ultimately civil war. Alternatively, the presence of a meritocratic public administration in Sweden, meant that political parties could not turn towards patronage as a strategy for political support and this reduced social polarization and contributed towards a peaceful resolution of social conflicts. Drawing from the example Republican Spain after the extension of suffrage (period 1890 to 1936) but also from the transition from authoritarian government to democracy in Venezuela (1958 to 1998), Cornell and Lapuente (2014) extend this argument to include the possibility that opposition groups in patronage-ridden settings, may take pre-emptive action in the form of military coups to the detriment of democratic longevity. Alternatively, the existence of more meritocratic bureaucracy in Spain after the transition to democracy starting in 1975, reduced the stakes involved with electoral turnovers and this undermined coup attempts and ultimately stabilized Spanish democracy.

Generalizing the just cited contributions, Andersen and Doucette (2022) argue that bureaucratic impartiality prior to democratization decreases the risk of democratic breakdown "because impartial bureaucracies are less likely to be captured by political interests and less inclined to be politically biased in delivering public goods like civil rights, health care, education and social transfers. Such bureaucracies oppose interparty or general political polarization and brutal fighting over the control of the state apparatus, which would otherwise incentivize incumbent takeovers and military coups d'état" (page number). But they add that impartial public administrations can improve democratic quality or deepening since, in its presence, "initial in-groups will be less inclined to reject the enfranchisement of new groups and install barriers to civil and political liberties for certain groups" (page number). To measure democratic breakdown, they turn to a dichotomous indicator from Boix, Miller and Rosato (2013) that classifies countries

as democracies when they enjoy free and fair elections with at least 50 per cent male suffrage. The variable is coded 1 in years of democratic breakdown, and 0 otherwise. To capture the extent of bureaucratic impartiality they employ a measure that reflects the rigor and impartiality of the public administration in the year of the first democratic transition in a country’s history. They find that historical bureaucratic impartiality is robustly and positively associated with democratic survival and the level of democracy both at the time of the democratic transition and on an ongoing basis. In their analysis of the determinants of democracy, Rød et al. (2020) similarly identify a rule-following bureaucracy as a robust determinant of democratic survival.

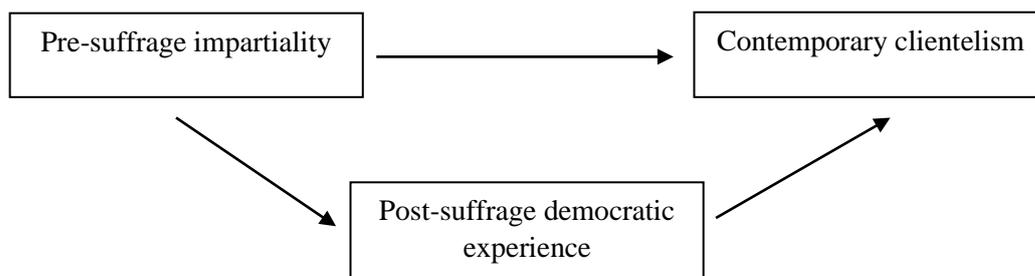


Figure 1. The causal channels

The above discussion is summarized in figure 1. Greater pre-suffrage impartiality can weaken contemporary clientelism either directly, since it makes it difficult for clientelism to take root after the extension of the suffrage, or indirectly by improving both democratic stability and democratic quality. The remainder of this article will empirically explore these direct and indirect effects by way of a cross-country sample of up to 136 countries. As such, it will go beyond previous work describing the direct effect of a meritocratic public administration prior to the extension of the suffrage on contemporary clientelism that is limited to specific country accounts. To the best of our knowledge, the indirect impact of historical impartiality on clientelism through democratic experience has yet to be formulated and empirically tested.

### 3. Data and empirical methodology

Our key variables are extracted from the V-Dem dataset (version 12) that covers a large cross-section of countries over time – for some countries the data starts in 1789 although country coverage increases markedly after 1900 (Coppedge et al., 2022a). Our measure of clientelism is the variable `v2xnp_client` that aims to capture the extent to which politics are based on clientelistic relationships that “include the targeted, contingent distribution of resources (goods, services, jobs, money, etc) in exchange for political support.” (Coppedge et al., 2022b, page 295). This index is defined on a range from zero to one and higher values indicate a greater prevalence of clientelistic relationships. It stems from the aggregation of a range of variables from the dataset namely, `v2elvotbuy`, `v2dlencmps` and `v2psprlnks`. Briefly, `v2elvotbuy` refers to the extent of vote and/or turnout buying in national elections, `v2dlencmps` refers to how “particularistic” or “public” are public expenditures and `v2psprlnks` reflects the most common form of linkage between the main parties and their constituents and ranging from clientelistic to programmatic. To measure contemporary clientelism, I employ the average values of `v2xnp_client` over the period 2000 to 2021. In our sample, this variable ranges from 0.02 in the Netherlands to 0.91 in Somalia with a mean value of 0.471 (see Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix for the descriptive statistics and the full list of countries and country codes respectively).

The degree of impartiality of the public administration is measure through variable  $v2clrspct$  that refers to how rigorous and impartial public officials are in the performance of their duties. Specifically, this variable “focuses on the extent to which public officials generally abide by the law and treat like cases alike, or conversely, the extent to which public administration is characterized by arbitrariness and biases (i.e., nepotism, cronyism, or discrimination).” (Coppedge et al., 2022b, page 178). Higher values of this variable imply a more impartial bureaucracy. To capture pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality, I turn to variable  $v2x\_suffr$  which measures the share of adult citizens as defined by statute that has the legal right to vote in national elections. This variable ranges from 0 to 1 and a value of 0.5 reflects universal male suffrage (Coppedge et al., 2022b). The pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality variable is calculated by taking the average value of  $v2clrspct$  for up to 10 years prior to the permanent extension of the franchise to all males (values of  $v2x\_suffr$  below 0.5). In our sample, this variable ranges from -2.893 corresponding to Zimbabwe, to 3.328 for New Zealand with a mean of -0.083.<sup>2</sup>

For robustness purposes we also employ the variable  $v2x\_rule$  that captures “[t]o what extent are laws transparently, independently, predictably, impartially, and equally enforced, and to what extent do the actions of government officials comply with the law” (Coppedge et al., 2022b, page 303). Higher values of this variable imply a stronger rule of law. This variable captures the degree of impartiality in the public administration but goes beyond it to also reflect impartiality in the judiciary and the executive branches. As such, it potentially provides a stronger test of the impact of historical impartiality on contemporary clientelism and democratic experience. Like the case of the pre-suffrage impartiality measure, the pre-suffrage rule of law indicator is calculated by taking the average value of  $v2x\_rule$  for up to ten years prior to the extension of the franchise to all males. The two indicators are strongly correlated (simple correlation of 0.7626, p-value of zero) which is not surprising since the rule of law measure contains the degree of bureaucratic impartiality but also because, as Fukuyama (2014) suggests, an impartial public administration may contribute towards the development of the rule of law. It could also be that the independent development of the rule of law in other spheres may spillover into the public administration. Figure 1A in the Appendix plots the pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality measure against the pre-suffrage rule of law index and confirms that the two are quite similar but not identical thus suggesting the usefulness of the latter for robustness purposes.

To measure democratic experience variable we turn to variable  $v2x\_polyarchy$  based on Dahl (1971) that reflects the extent to which the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved and has as its core value “making rulers responsive to citizens, achieved through electoral competition for the electorate’s approval under circumstances when suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations can operate freely; elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systematic irregularities; and elections affect the composition of the chief executive of the country. In between elections, there is freedom of expression and an independent media capable of presenting alternative views on matters of political relevance.” (Coppedge et al., 2022b, page 43). This variable ranges from a zero to one with higher values reflecting a fuller electoral democracy. To capture the post-suffrage democratic experience of a country, we sum up

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<sup>2</sup> In a small number of countries male suffrage is attained but then reversed only to return permanently at a future date. This is the date that we employ. Moreover, we drop 3 countries namely Croatia, Jordan and Lithuania. Croatia because the pre-suffrage data only covers 4 years, and these correspond with WWII (1941-1944). Jordan and Lithuania because the data only covers 2 years. For most other countries, the data covers the full ten years prior to franchise expansion to all males.

the values from the first year of stable universal male suffrage up to 2020. The variable ranges widely in our sample of countries from as low of 3.326 in Oman to a high of 125.869 for Australia.

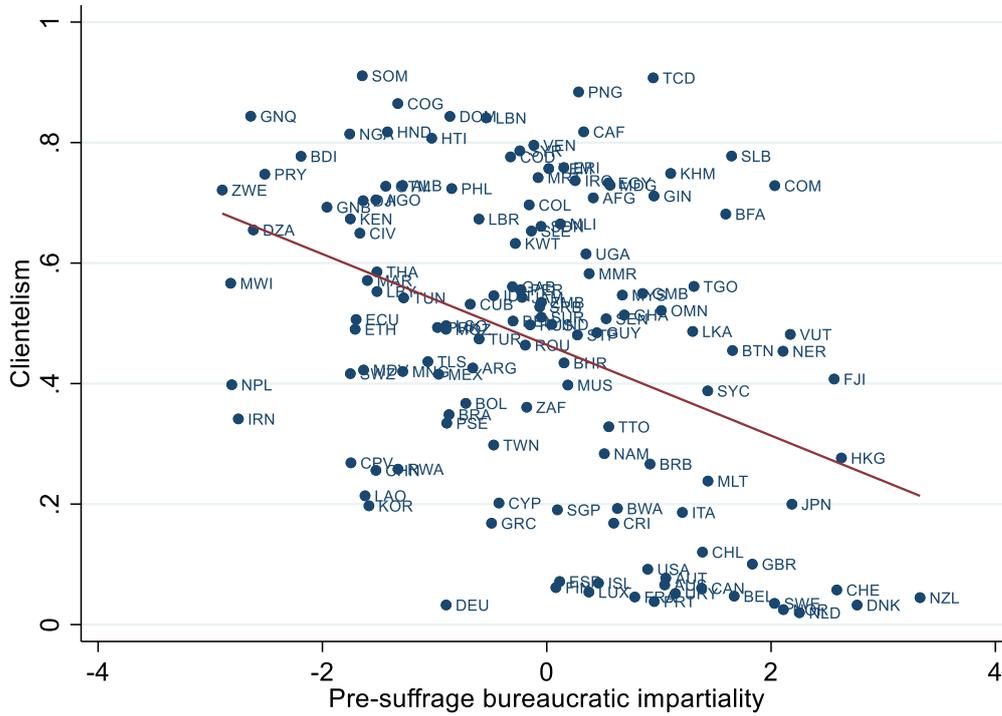


Figure 2. Pre-suffrage bureaucratic quality and contemporary clientelism.

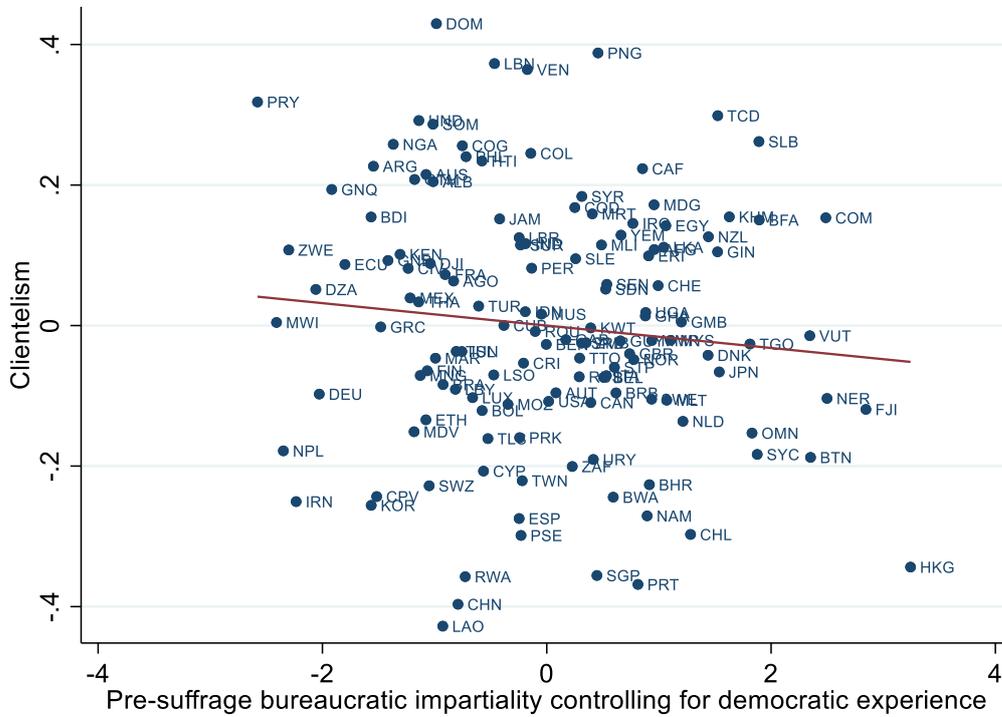


Figure 3. Pre-suffrage bureaucratic quality and contemporary clientelism (controlling for post-suffrage democratic experience).



expectation that the presence of an impartial bureaucracy before the extension of suffrage may have made it difficult for clientelism to take root. However, this negative and statistically significant relationship (simple correlation: -0.4027 with a p-value of zero) is markedly weakened when, moreover, controlling for democratic experience as shown in figure 3 (simple correlation: -0.1067 with a p-value of 0.2164). On the other hand, the indirect channel linking pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality to clientelism seems to emerge in figures 4 and 5. Figure 4 shows a strong negative relationship between contemporary clientelism and democratic experience even after controlling for pre-suffrage bureaucratic quality (correlation is -0.6446, p-value is zero) and figure 5 confirms the potentially positive impact of pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality on democratic experience (pairwise correlation is 0.4738 and p-value is zero). In figures A2, A3 and A4 in the Appendix we reproduce figures 2, 3 and 4 but using instead the pre-suffrage measure of the rule of law. The results are very similar.

We estimate the following models by way of OLS:

$$\text{Clientelism}_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{pre-suffr impart}_i + \alpha_3 \text{post-suffr dem exp}_i + \alpha_4 X_i + \gamma_i + u_i \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Post-suffr dem exp}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{pre-suffr impart}_i + \beta_2 Z_i + \gamma_i + e_i \quad (2)$$

where  $i$  are countries, clientelism is contemporary clientelism, pre-suffr impart is impartiality in the public administration or, more generally, the extent of rule of law, before universal male suffrage, post-suffr dem exp is accumulated democratic experience beginning with the permanent attainment of universal male suffrage,  $X_i$  and  $Z_i$  are control matrices,  $\gamma_i$  are regional fixed effects based on the World Bank's regional classification, and  $u_i$  and  $e_i$  are the error terms.

The control variables in each case aim to minimize omitted variable bias. When estimating equation 1, we control for contemporary levels of GDP per capita, democracy and net income inequality, as well as country size, the share of Muslims in 1900 and whether the country was a colony. GDP per capita is a vital control since scarcity constraints in poorer countries will tend to make voters more responsive to the selective benefits of clientelistic exchange (Scott, 1969; Stokes et al., 2013). Our indicator of GDP per capita is measured in PPP and constant 2017 US\$ and taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators. We take average values over the period 2000 to 2020. The need to control for the contemporary level of democracy is because our sample includes both democracies and autocracies and the nature of clientelistic exchange may differ in each context (Hicken, 2011). As this scholar explains, in democracies clientelism may mobilize political support while in autocracies it, moreover, may be a tool for political subservience. We employ the Polity2 measure and average it over the period 2000 to 2018 which is the latest available year (see, Marshall et al., 2020). Controlling for net income inequality accounts for the likelihood that inequality reinforces the asymmetric social relationships buttressing clientelism (Scott, 1972). We turn to disposable income Gini measure from Solt (2020) and take average values over the period 2000 to 2019 (latest available value). Similarly, controlling for the share of Muslims in 1900 – data from North et al. (2003), – helps account for the possibility that this hierarchical religion may underpin patron-client relationships (Kyriacou, 2020). Controlling for country area and whether a country was a colony may account for the possibility that country size (Veenendaal and Corbett, 2020) and colonial experience (Nathan, 2019), may influence patron-client relationships.

When estimating equation 2 we control for a range of variables that previous work has associated with democratization and democratic survival (see, Rød et al., 2020 for a recent survey of causal links and additional empirical evidence). Universal male suffrage was extended in most countries

in our sample in the latter half of the 19th century and before 1960 (see Table A2 in the Appendix). Because the dependent variable is democratic experience from the year suffrage was extended to all males, our control variables should ideally overlap with this period. We control for real GDP per capita in the form of the average value of our chosen indicator for the whole post-suffrage period since it has been pointed out that economic development can increase democratic stability. To measure GDP per capita, we turn to a historical series from Fariss et al. (2022) available in the V-Dem dataset. Income inequality is expected to negatively affect transitions to democracy as well as democratic stability. To account for economic inequality, we turn to a Gini index based on land inequality from Frankema (2010) covering the period from 1880 to the mid-20th century, that has been found to be strongly associated with contemporary measures of inequality (Kyriacou, 2020). We control for the share of Muslims in 1900 since previous work has associated a higher affiliation with this religion to lower levels of democracy. We account for country size on the assumption that smaller countries tend to be more democratic (Corbett and Veenendaal, 2018). We control for whether a country was a colony because this may positively affect its democratic experience (Barro, 1999). Finally, we control for the pre-suffrage level of democracy to account for the possibility that it, rather than pre-suffrage impartiality, drives post-suffrage democratic experience. To do this, we employ the average values of the  $v2x\_polyarchy$  measure over the 10 years prior to the attainment of permanent universal male suffrage. The resultant indicator – which recall can theoretically range from zero to one – varies considerably in our sample from a minimum of 0.012 in Angola to a maximum of 0.614 in Denmark.

#### 4. Empirical results

Table 1 reports the results obtained when estimating equation 1 above. Columns 1 to 4 correspond to regressions of contemporary clientelism on pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality while columns 5 to 8 employ instead pre-suffrage rule of law. We take a stepwise approach: first we omit all controls and then gradually introduce them together with the regional fixed effects. We find a robust negative association between GDP per capita and clientelism as well as a robust but positive relationship between clientelism and the share of Muslims in 1900. More importantly, while pre-suffrage impartiality has a negative impact on contemporary clientelism in the absence of controls, both the statistical significance and economic impact of this variable decline as we introduce the control variables and disappears in columns 4 and 8 when accounting for a country's post-suffrage democratic experience. Alternatively, democratic experience is negatively associated with contemporary clientelism something which is consistent with Keefer and Vlaicu's (2008) suggestion that because in older democracies vote-maximizing politicians can make credible programmatic promises, they don't need to turn towards clientelistic exchanges to mobilize political support. Thus, we find that pre-suffrage impartiality does not affect clientelism directly but does so indirectly through post-suffrage democratic experience. Our findings parallel those reported by Gjerløw et al. (2021) who also employ V-Dem data to empirically consider the sequencing argument in relation to economic growth and find little support for the idea that the existence of an impartial public administration prior to democratization matters for future income levels or growth rates.

In Table 2 we report the results obtained when regressing the post-suffrage democratic experience variable on the pre-suffrage impartiality measures. Again, columns 1 to 4 employ pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality and columns 5 to 8 use pre-suffrage rule of law. In columns 1 and 5 we regress democratic experience on pre-suffrage impartiality in the absence of controls and find a positive relationship that is statistically significant. The strength of this positive relationship is reduced but statistical significance is maintained as we introduce the controls in columns 2 to 4

and 3 to 8 respectively. Post-suffrage GDP per capita and the pre-suffrage level of democracy are robustly and positively associated with democratic experience while the share of Muslims in the population in 1900, and to a lesser extent whether a country was a colony displays a negative relationship. The results reported in Table 2 are consistent with Andersen and Doucette's (2022) finding that bureaucratic impartiality prior to democratization decreases the risk of democratic breakdown and improves democratic quality or deepening.

In Table 3 we explore the robustness of the findings reported in Table 1. We do this by introducing additional control variables. Thus, we control for urbanization rates (World Bank data) because the greater anonymity of cities, together with the secret ballot, may undermine vote buying (Stokes et al., 2013). We account for the ethnic heterogeneity (Alesina et al. (2003) measure), because it can support clientelism insofar as ethnic identity leads voters to support co-ethnic political patrons and makes it easier for patrons to target their clients (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007). Controlling for the share of oil rents (World Bank data) is appropriate given the negative impact of oil dependence on democracy reported by previous work (see, for example, Ross, 2001). Including a dummy variable selecting for countries with a Soviet legacy can help account for a range of unobservable characteristics derived from such a common heritage. We control for colonial duration because it could be that it is the length of the colonial experience rather than simply whether a country was a colony that may impact on the variables of interest (Olsson, 2009). We include a variable that counts the years since universal male suffrage was attained to account for the possibility that post-suffrage democratic experience is simply higher in countries attaining suffrage earlier. We control for the mean value of clientelism in the twenty years after universal male suffrage is attained to consider the possibility that pre-suffrage impartiality may negatively impact clientelism after suffrage is attained and this effect persists over time. Finally, we control for the contemporary levels of impartiality to consider the possibility that it is not democratic experience but rather contemporary impartiality that impacts on contemporary clientelism.

We again find robust evidence that GDP per capita is negatively associated with clientelism while the relationship with oil rents and years since suffrage is positive. More importantly, our key findings are maintained. Post-suffrage democratic experience has a statistically robust and negative impact on contemporary clientelism while we don't find any direct effect due to pre-suffrage impartiality. These results are maintained when we limit our sample to democracies by selecting for values of Polity2 above zero (columns 2 and 7), and when we employ a pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality measure that follows the V-Dem codebook recommendation to rely on point estimates for country-variable-years with four or more expert ratings ( $n_r > 3$  in column 3).<sup>3</sup> They are also robust to the inclusion of the mean value of clientelism in the twenty years after the introduction of suffrage as well as measures of contemporary impartiality. Both these variables have the expected sign and are statistically significant. Post-suffrage clientelism is positively associated with contemporary clientelism while the relationship with contemporary impartiality is negative. Although not shown, we also consider the inverted U-shaped relationship between democratic experience and clientelism following Kitschelt and Kselman (2012) but do not find the quadratic term to be statistically significant. Again, our main results are maintained.

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<sup>3</sup> Selecting for democracies with Polity2 values above 5 yields the same results.

Table 1. Clientelism, pre-suffrage impartiality and democratic experience.

	Dependent variable: Contemporary clientelism							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality	-0.075*** (0.014)	-0.030** (0.012)	-0.023* (0.013)	-0.013 (0.014)				
Pre-suffrage rule of law					-0.500*** (0.064)	-0.233*** (0.069)	-0.193** (0.086)	-0.133 (0.093)
Post-suffrage democratic experience				-0.003*** (0.001)				-0.003*** (0.001)
Contemporary GDP per capita (log)		-0.104*** (0.015)	-0.117*** (0.027)	-0.093*** (0.030)		-0.095*** (0.016)	-0.111*** (0.027)	-0.092*** (0.029)
Contemporary democracy		-0.003 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.005)	0.001 (0.005)		-0.001 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)
Contemporary income inequality		0.004* (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)		0.003 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)
Area (log)		-0.002 (0.008)	-0.004 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.008)		-0.005 (0.008)	-0.007 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.009)
Share of Muslims 1900		0.169*** (0.053)	0.130** (0.058)	0.114** (0.056)		0.156*** (0.055)	0.123** (0.060)	0.109* (0.057)
Colony		0.048 (0.052)	0.078 (0.065)	0.096 (0.064)		0.065 (0.051)	0.107 (0.067)	0.120* (0.065)
Constant	0.464*** (0.020)	1.204*** (0.213)	1.377*** (0.287)	1.297*** (0.291)	-0.500*** (0.064)	-0.233*** (0.069)	-0.193** (0.086)	-0.133 (0.093)
Regional fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	136	117	117	117	135	116	116	116
Adjusted R-squared	0.156	0.594	0.613	0.627	0.285	0.615	0.627	0.639

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Table 2 Democratic experience and pre-suffrage impartiality

	Dependent Variable: Post-suffrage democratic experience							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality	9.369*** (1.690)	2.111** (1.043)	2.419** (0.927)	4.709*** (1.360)				
Pre-suffrage rule of law					60.655*** (7.717)	18.864*** (6.241)	21.130*** (5.819)	26.121*** (9.135)
Post-suffrage GDP per capita (log)		5.148*** (1.736)	3.602 (2.226)	6.511** (3.135)		4.482*** (1.638)	2.731 (1.998)	5.298* (3.045)
Pre-suffrage democracy		111.157*** (13.535)	86.233*** (23.026)	62.710*** (23.639)		99.390*** (14.207)	75.873*** (22.227)	66.710*** (24.519)
Area (log)		0.471 (0.705)	0.622 (0.785)	1.597 (1.231)		0.650 (0.714)	0.794 (0.800)	1.908 (1.265)
Share of Muslims 1900		-15.371*** (3.404)	-10.843*** (4.073)	-22.502* (11.979)		-14.721*** (3.453)	-9.775** (4.163)	-19.885 (12.282)
Colony		-10.507*** (3.708)	-6.514 (4.488)	-4.871 (6.830)		-10.816*** (3.588)	-7.548* (4.496)	-6.093 (6.762)
Historical land Gini				0.147 (0.121)				0.098 (0.123)
Constant	34.413*** (2.104)	-21.476 (19.688)	6.650 (31.748)	-36.790 (44.337)	2.839 (3.444)	-25.850 (19.316)	1.487 (30.185)	-43.481 (41.933)
Regional fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	136	132	132	89	135	131	131	89
Adjusted R-squared	0.219	0.699	0.718	0.711	0.379	0.709	0.728	0.711

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Table 3. Clientelism, pre-suffrage impartiality and democratic experience: Robustness

	Dependent variable: Contemporary clientelism								
	(1)	(2) Democracies	(3) nr>3	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7) Democracies	(8)	(9)
Post-suffrage democratic experience	-0.006*** (0.002)	-0.005*** (0.002)	-0.010*** (0.003)	-0.005*** (0.002)	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.003** (0.001)
Pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality	0.002 (0.013)	-0.010 (0.014)	0.004 (0.016)	0.006 (0.012)	0.002 (0.011)				
Pre-suffrage rule of law						-0.067 (0.090)	-0.138 (0.102)	-0.019 (0.087)	0.090 (0.069)
Contemporary GDP per capita (log)	-0.121*** (0.035)	-0.126*** (0.038)	-0.088** (0.036)	-0.111*** (0.035)	-0.074** (0.030)	-0.119*** (0.035)	-0.122*** (0.038)	-0.112*** (0.035)	-0.056** (0.027)
Contemporary democracy	0.007 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.008)	0.009* (0.005)	0.006 (0.005)	0.010** (0.004)	0.007 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.008)	0.006 (0.004)	0.016*** (0.005)
Contemporary income inequality	0.001 (0.002)	0.003 (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Area (log)	-0.014* (0.008)	-0.029*** (0.010)	-0.016 (0.011)	-0.010 (0.008)	-0.014** (0.007)	-0.015* (0.008)	-0.032*** (0.011)	-0.011 (0.008)	-0.010 (0.006)
Share of Muslims 1900	0.053 (0.065)	0.013 (0.058)	0.028 (0.081)	0.062 (0.065)	0.047 (0.056)	0.061 (0.064)	-0.009 (0.059)	0.069 (0.064)	0.022 (0.050)
Colony	0.126* (0.067)	0.143 (0.098)	0.144* (0.077)	0.133** (0.065)	0.087 (0.061)	0.130* (0.068)	0.161 (0.099)	0.134** (0.067)	0.059 (0.057)
Contemporary urbanization	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Ethnic heterogeneity	-0.065 (0.073)	0.015 (0.070)	-0.020 (0.099)	-0.066 (0.071)	-0.049 (0.065)	-0.068 (0.073)	0.001 (0.066)	-0.065 (0.071)	-0.047 (0.061)
Contemporary oil rents	0.007*** (0.002)	0.005* (0.003)	0.005* (0.003)	0.006*** (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.006** (0.003)	0.006*** (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
Soviet legacy	-0.079 (0.068)	0.021 (0.049)	-0.102 (0.076)	-0.058 (0.070)	-0.106 (0.077)	-0.075 (0.071)	0.011 (0.048)	-0.056 (0.072)	-0.142** (0.058)
Colonial duration	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)

Years since suffrage	0.002*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.004** (0.002)	0.002** (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Post-suffrage clientelism (+20 mean)				0.181** (0.080)				0.171** (0.081)	
Contemporary bureaucratic impartiality					-0.095*** (0.023)				
Contemporary rule of law									-0.642*** (0.119)
Constant	1.552*** (0.324)	1.708*** (0.333)	1.339*** (0.376)	1.359*** (0.335)	1.177*** (0.277)	1.586*** (0.323)	1.783*** (0.328)	1.385*** (0.342)	1.267*** (0.227)
Regional fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	110	83	90	110	110	110	83	110	110
Adjusted R-squared	0.702	0.787	0.615	0.715	0.773	0.704	0.793	0.715	0.814

Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## 5. Conclusion

Previous work has suggested that the existence of an impartial bureaucracy before the extension of the suffrage undermined the adoption by emergent political parties of clientelism as a voter mobilization strategy and that this helps explain the weakness of clientelism in contemporary societies. In this article we empirically explore the impact of pre-suffrage impartiality on contemporary levels of clientelism based on a cross-section of up to 136 countries. While we do not find that pre-suffrage levels of impartiality directly affect clientelism, we do find an indirect effect passing through post-suffrage democratic experience. Historical impartiality promotes the stability and quality of democracy over time and this in turn increases the credibility of programmatic promises by political parties and, consequently, reduces their need to turn towards patron-client networks to mobilize voters.

In other words, sequencing matters for clientelism but not in the way proposed by previous work. Having impartial institutions before the extension of suffrage reduces contemporary clientelism because it contributes towards democratic stability and quality. Before ending, it is important to remember that the key event driving our empirical strategy is the attainment of universal male suffrage. We measure historical impartiality before this and democratic experience after this. While universal male suffrage is an important step towards democracy it is one of several steps that include universal female suffrage, the eligibility to stand for public office, free and fair elections, freedom of association and expression and an independent and capable press (Dahl, 1971). As such, future work could consider the extent to which the effect of sequencing analyzed in this article is robust to the timing of these additional elements of democratization.

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## Appendix

### A1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Contemporary clientelism	136	.471	.252	.02	.911
Pre-suffrage bur. impartiality	136	-.083	1.348	-2.893	3.328
Pre-suffrage bur. impartiality_nr	109	-.188	1.274	-2.893	2.767
Pre-suffrage rule of law	135	.51	.273	.018	.994
Post-suffrage democratic exp.	136	33.64	26.648	3.326	125.869
Contemporary GDP pc (log)	127	9.106	1.238	6.706	11.581
Contemporary democracy	127	3.988	5.733	-10	10
Contemporary inequality	131	40.357	8.162	24.683	64.524
Area (log)	135	11.915	2.294	5.704	16.611
Share of Muslims 1900	134	.197	.341	0	1
Post-suffrage GDP pc (logs)	134	8.552	.983	6.746	10.806
Pre-suffrage democracy	135	.153	.126	.012	.614
Historical land Gini	90	60.223	16.828	.532	90.9
Contemporary urbanization	133	55.677	23.599	10.765	100
Ethnic heterogeneity	131	.452	.274	0	.93
Contemporary oil rents	131	4.369	10.046	0	47.435
Colonial duration	123	124.016	131.941	0	475
Years since suffrage	136	79.772	32.554	14	180
Post-suffrage clientelism (+20)	136	.534	.229	.037	.945
Contemporary bur. impartiality	136	.465	1.471	-2.223	3.92
Contemporary rule of law	136	.556	.304	.029	.999

Notes: Does not include dummy variables.

## A2. List of countries and country codes

Afghanistan (1924)	AFG	Ecuador (1930)	ECU	Liberia (1948)	LBR	Sao Tome & Principe (1975)	STP
Albania (1921)	ALB	Egypt (1936)	EGY	Libya (1956)	LYB	Senegal (1946)	SEN
Algeria (1963)	DZA	Equatorial Guinea (1982)	GNQ	Luxembourg (1919)	LUX	Serbia (1921)	SRB
Angola (1975)	AGO	Eritrea (1956)	ERI	Madagascar (1957)	MDG	Seychelles (1967)	SYC
Argentina (1857)	ARG	Eswatini (1964)	SWZ	Malawi (1964)	MWI	Sierra Leone (1958)	SLE
Australia (1858)	AUS	Ethiopia (1956)	ETH	Malaysia (1955)	MYS	Singapore (1959)	SGP
Austria (1907)	AUT	Fiji (1963)	FJI	Maldives (1933)	MDV	Solomon Islands (1964)	SLB
Bahrain (1972)	BHR	Finland (1907)	FIN	Mali (1957)	MLI	Somalia (1956)	SOM
Barbados (1951)	BRB	France (1848)	FRA	Malta (1947)	MLT	South Africa (1995)	ZAF
Belgium (1894)	BEL	Gabon (1957)	GAB	Mauritania (1957)	MRT	South Korea (1949)	KOR
Benin (1956)	BEN	Germany (1871)	DEU	Mauritius (1949)	MUS	Spain (1891)	ESP
Bhutan (2008)	BTN	Ghana (1951)	GHA	Mexico (1842)	MEX	Sri Lanka (1932)	LKA
Bolivia (1953)	BOL	Greece (1843)	GRC	Mongolia (1924)	MNG	Sudan (1949)	SDN
Botswana (1961)	BWA	Guatemala (1946)	GTM	Morocco (1963)	MAR	Suriname (1949)	SUR
Brazil (1950)	BRA	Guinea (1957)	GIN	Mozambique (1976)	MOZ	Sweden (1922)	SWE
Burkina Faso (1957)	BFA	Guinea-Bissau (1973)	GNB	Namibia (1989)	NAM	Switzerland (1874)	CHE
Burma/Myanmar (1948)	MMR	Guyana (1952)	GUY	Nepal (1952)	NPL	Syria (1928)	SYR
Burundi (1960)	BDI	Haiti (1951)	HTI	Netherlands (1918)	NLD	Taiwan (1947)	TWN
Cambodia (1956)	KHM	Honduras (1945)	HND	New Zealand (1879)	NZL	Thailand (1933)	THA
Canada (1921)	CAN	Hong Kong (1990)	HKG	Niger (1957)	NER	The Gambia (1960)	GMB
Cape Verde (1975)	CPV	Iceland (1916)	ISL	Nigeria (1955)	NGA	Timor-Leste (1977)	TLS
Central African Republic (1957)	CAF	India (1950)	IND	North Korea (1949)	PRK	Togo (1957)	TGO
Chad (1957)	TCD	Indonesia (1956)	IDN	North Korea (1898)	NOR	Trinidad & Tobago (1946)	TTO
Chile (1950)	CHL	Iran (1912)	IRN	Oman (2002)	OMN	Tunisia (1956)	TUN
China (1947)	CHN	Iraq (1926)	IRQ	Palestine/West Bank (1996)	PSE	Turkey (1924)	TUR
Colombia (1936)	COL	Italy (1913)	ITA	Papua New Guinea (1951)	PNG	Uganda (1962)	UGA
Comoros (1957)	COM	Ivory Coast (1957)	CIV	Paraguay (1870)	PRY	United Kingdom (1919)	GBR
Costa Rica (1914)	CRI	Jamaica (1944)	JAM	Peru (1956)	PER	USA (1920)	USA
Cuba (1902)	CUB	Japan (1926)	JPN	Philippines (1937)	PHL	Uruguay (1919)	URY
Cyprus (1960)	CYP	Kenya (1963)	KEN	Portugal (1950)	PRT	Vanuatu (1975)	VUT
Democratic Rep Congo (1960)	COD	Kuwait (1991)	KWT	Republic of Congo (1957)	COG	Venezuela (1947)	VEN
Denmark (1916)	DNK	Laos (1957)	LAO	Romania (1919)	ROU	Yemen (1971)	YEM
Djibouti (1957)	DJI	Lebanon (1923)	LBN	Russia (1918)	RUS	Zambia (1964)	ZMB
Dominican Rep (1874)	DOM	Lesotho (1965)	LSO	Rwanda (1955)	RWA	Zimbabwe (1979)	ZWE

Note: Year permanent universal male suffrage attained in parenthesis.

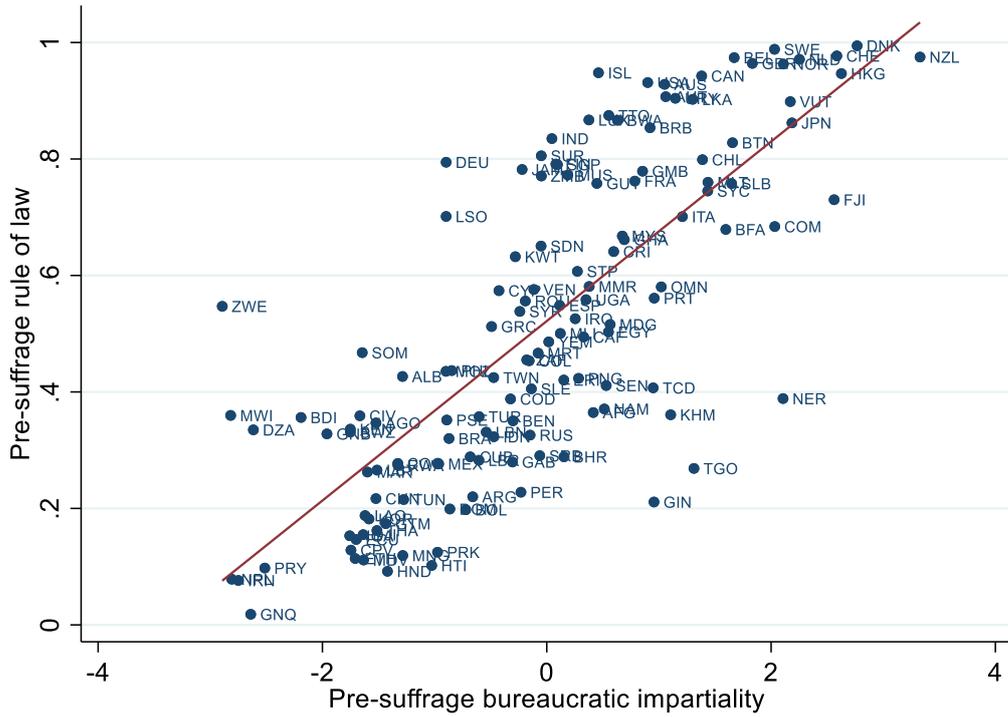


Figure 1A. Pre-suffrage bureaucratic impartiality and pre-suffrage rule of law.

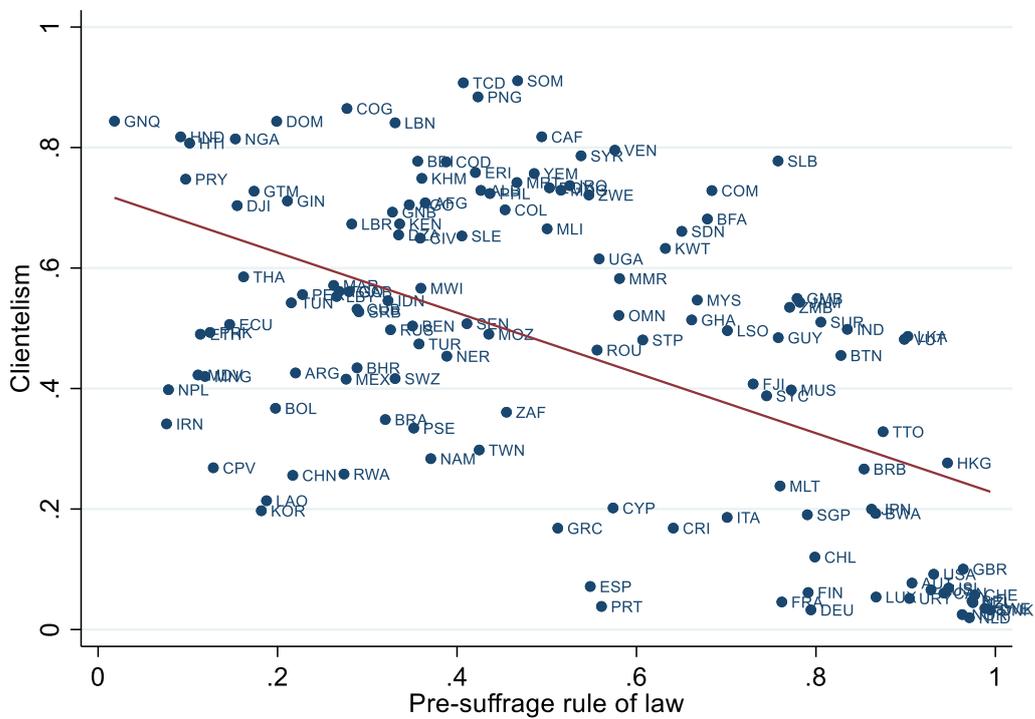


Figure 2A. Pre-suffrage rule of law and contemporary clientelism.

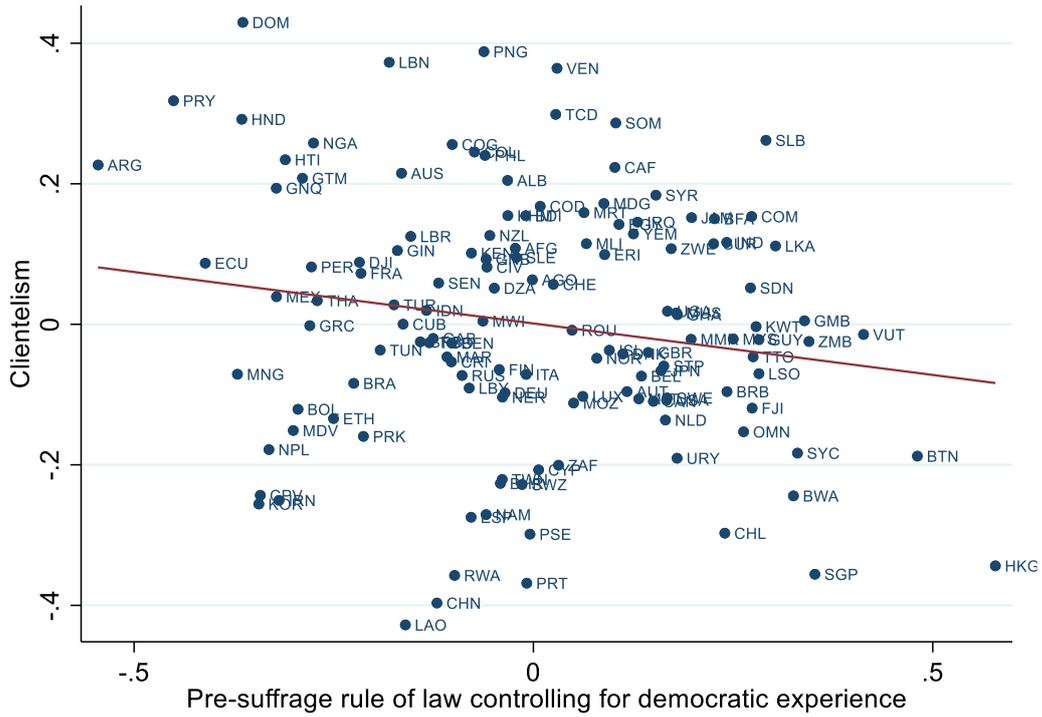


Figure 3A. Pre-suffrage rule of law and contemporary clientelism (controlling for post-suffrage democratic experience)

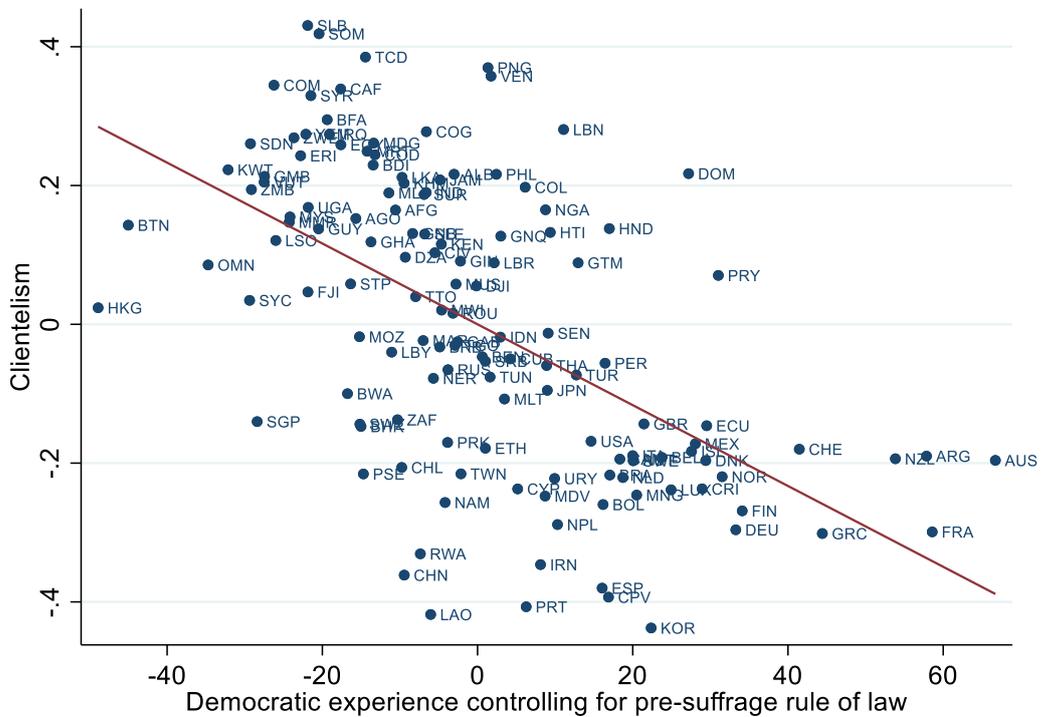


Figure 4A. Post-suffrage democratic experience and clientelism (controlling for pre-suffrage rule of law).

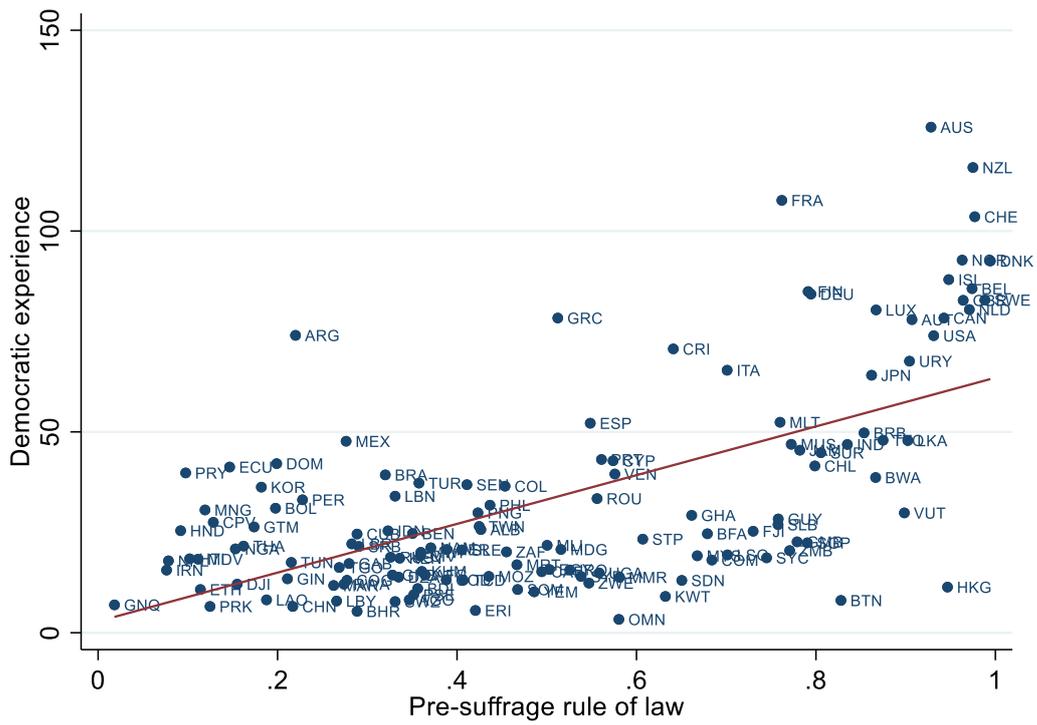


Figure 5A. Pre-suffrage rule of law and post-suffrage democratic experience.