

Political Behavior of Development Conference

MIT, Political Science - Friday October 28, 2016

OVERVIEW: Understanding political behavior in developing countries has recently regained momentum in political science. Research has emerged that tackles issues of racial and intergroup relations, determinants of political participation, partisanship and mobilization as well as the influence of informal institutions and elites on attitudes and behaviors. This research has grown to the extent that we can now discern the outlines of a new line of inquiry on the political behavior of development (PBD).

Studies of PBD focus on political values, ideology and expectations as well as behavioral outcomes, such as voting, political participation or protest. A frequent challenge confronting researchers of political behavior in developing countries is thinking about how to study and theorize about these phenomena in contexts where democratic institutions are weak, party and party systems are volatile, state capacity is low and/or regime changes are possible.

This conference seeks to stimulate questions and conversations on three broad research agendas. These three categories are not a comprehensive list of all research on PBD, but represent new and exciting avenues for research in developing contexts. These areas focus on electoral and non-electoral behavior, different types of political actors, as well as the generation of attitudes and expectations that influence political action.

MIT GOV/LAB Organizers: Daniel Hidalgo, Tesalia Rizzo, Leah Rosenzweig, and Lily Tsai

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RSVP by October 20, 2016: <https://goo.gl/QmuC2W>.

FRIDAY, October 28 **Samberg Conference Center, 50 Memorial Drive, Cambridge MA,
Sixth Floor - Dining Room #6**

8:30 - 9:00 AM *BREAKFAST*

9:00 - 9:30 AM Welcome and Introductions (**Lily Tsai**, MIT)
Framing Remarks

9:30 - 11:00 AM **Panel 1: Political Participation Beyond Ethnicity and Vote Buying**

For decades, the main theorized determinants of political participation in developing countries have been ethnicity and clientelism. Recent evidence, however, suggests that voters incorporate additional heuristics in their decision-making processes. What role do social norms play in motivating participation? How does corruption and

governmental performance shape political attitudes and behavior? What other factors influence an individual's decision to vote, engage with government, or conscientiously disengage from party politics?

- **Leah Rosenzweig**, MIT PhD Candidate - *"Voting for Status: Dependency and Political Participation in Tanzania"*
- **Cesar Zucco**, FGV Brazil - *"Partisanship, non-partisanship, and anti partisanship in Brazil"*
- **Gwyneth McClendon**, Harvard University - *"Salience and Coordination Jointly Moderate the Impact of Information on Vote Choice: Experimental Evidence from Benin"* (<https://goo.gl/er3fV1>)
- **Evan Lieberman**, MIT (Discussant)
- **Horacio Larreguy**, Harvard University (Chair)

11:00 - 11:15 AM COFFEE BREAK

11:15 - 1:00 PM **Panel 2: Expectations and Reality: How Perceptions Shape Political Behavior**

In low information environments, citizens' expectations of the state and public services may drastically differ from what the state's *de jure* responsibilities are. This gap between citizen expectations and reality may undermine accountability if citizens become cynical and politically disengaged. How well do citizens' perceptions of state and non-state actors correspond to actual performance? How do psychological biases affect these expectations and attitudes? How might factual information about the state's responsibilities to citizens encourage engagement and responsiveness? Do gender and cultural stereotypes influence citizens' expectations and trust in public officials, and why does it matter?

- **Jessica Gottlieb**, Texas A&M University - *"Greater Expectations? A Field Experiment to Improve Accountability in Mali"* (<https://goo.gl/aMnsGm>)
- **Sarah Bush**, Temple University - *"How Officeholder Gender Shapes the Political Engagement of Constituents: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Tunisia"*
- **Ben Morse**, MIT PhD Candidate - *"Confirmation bias and the catch-22 of state-building: evidence from the Ebola crisis in Liberia"*
- **Melani Cammett**, Harvard University - *"Political Context, Organizational Mission and the Quality of Social Services: Insights from the Health Sector in Lebanon"* (<https://goo.gl/SegPqq>)
- **Daniel Hidalgo**, MIT (Discussant & Chair)

1:00 - 2:00 PM LUNCH

Keynote: **David Nickerson**, Temple University

2:00 - 3:30 PM **Panel 3: Citizens and Middlemen: How Informal and Traditional**

Brokerage Shapes Political Behavior

Interactions with local elites and politically motivated intermediaries are an everyday occurrence for many citizens in developing countries. Whether they are traditionally legitimized, democratically elected or appointed, elites and intermediaries affect the distribution of public goods and services in significant ways. While it is well established that informal elites and partisan brokers affect election-day mobilization, we know much less about how citizens' quotidian interactions with brokers affect their attitudes and behavior beyond elections. . How do informal and formal elites shape community level opinions and behavior? Can informal elites and clientelistic intermediaries be held accountable? Do citizens opt out of a brokered and clientelistic system of distribution?

- **Kate Baldwin**, Yale University - *"The role community leaders and political chiefs play in local politics in sub-Saharan Africa"*
- **Tariq Thachil**, Vanderbilt University - *"Who do Brokers Serve? Experimental Evidence from Informal Leaders in India's Slums"*
- **Tesalia Rizzo**, MIT PhD Candidate - *"When Clients Exit: A field experiment in the provision of programmatic access to state services in Mexico"*
- **Susan Stokes**, Yale University (Discussant)
- **Danny Hidalgo**, MIT (Chair)

3:30 - 3:45 PM

COFFEE BREAK

3:45 - 4:30 PM

Small Group Breakouts & Discussion

4:30 - 5:00 PM

Concluding Remarks (**Lily Tsai & Daniel Hidalgo**, MIT)