

Introduction to Planning Institutions and Processes in Developing Countries (11.701)
Assignment 3, due October 22, Wednesday
(covering Sections VI-VIII) on the syllabus, covered in class on 10/6-11/4)

Section VI covers three quite different cases in which authors studied policy initiatives that have been widely considered to be successful—new public management (Pollitt), microcredit (Jain & Moore), and creation of individual property tenure/rights as a way of endowing people with assets and as a condition for investment in improved agriculture. In each of these cases, the authors show that (1) the empirical assumptions behind the policy were wrong, and cite empirical evidence to the contrary; (2) agreeing that the policies were successful (in 2 of the 3 articles)—at least some of them and/or in some places or sectors—the authors suggest that the reasons for their success are *different* than those usually put forward; these misinterpretations of the reasons for success lead to the “wrong” lessons being learned from the “successful” experiences; and/or, finally, (3) they explain why these wrong interpretations survive so robustly, and make some suggestions—explicitly or implicitly—about how to change policy and program advice in a way that better represents reality.

Write a few pages responding to the following questions (when possible, note any similarity that runs across at least two of the cases):

1. What are the wrong assumptions that have been made?—state them for each case.
2. What are the wrong lessons that have been learned, and why are they wrong?
3. What do the authors think about why these wrong interpretations have had such staying power? Do you have any additional explanations for this?

Sections VII and VIII cover issues of corruption (VII) and traditional clientelistic programs and patronage politics. Like corruption, we usually associate clientelism and patronage politics—and the “traditional” systems of which they are a part—as inhibiting development seriously. In brief, they are associated with backwardness, and reducing them is considered a prerequisite for development. The readings assigned in these two sections show that corruption and clientelism, though often dragging down development, can also co-exist in reality with positive outcomes; in one pair of readings, the authors show that clientelism in one set of programs is directly *linked*—in political-economy terms, to positive policy changes in another area (which set of readings is that, and how does the link work?).

Drawing on these readings, address the following questions; in so doing, it will help—for some of your responses—to assume that corruption is a constant in the environment, and that direct approaches to reducing corruption are not possible or will not have much effect (because they too are subject to corruption or clientelistic criteria for application).

1. For what types of activities, and under what circumstances, are programs less vulnerable to corruption and clientelism? What makes them less vulnerable? In answering this question, distinguish between these “generic” traits of programs and the following question, which touches on how programs can actually be designed to reduce corruption.

2. Some of the readings show that programs have reduced corruption and clientelistic influences through indirect mechanisms such as changed incentives and disincentives—rather than through direct monitoring and punishment. What are these cases, and how did this mechanism work?

3. Are there instances in which traditional clientelistic politics (often including corruption) has been the context out of which progress has emerged?—in the form of development, an improvement of services to the poor, etc. Why in this instance and not in the others? How/why did it work? Why in these cases and not others in which the clientelistic and “traditional” setting was the same?

In responding to the two sets of questions posed in this assignment, you may also bring in examples from your own reading or experience, as long as they are presented in the context of the readings assigned. In some cases, it may be easier to respond to all or some of the questions as a group—whichever lends itself most to making your arguments and bringing in the evidence. ***By the end of the paper, you should have referred to all of the required readings.***

The assignment should be no longer than 6 double-spaced pages or 1,500 words, ***whichever is shorter***. The papers can also be shorter, and should have at least ***one-inch margins*** for written feedback. Be sure to check your word count, as mentioned in class. The assignment is due by the ***end of the day on Wednesday, October 22 (note that this is one day later than the October 21 listed in the syllabus)***. Hard copies of the papers should be delivered to Prof. Tendler’s mail slot and to Teaching Assistant’s mailbox in. For last-minute delivery only, send electronic copies (with a request to print). Students who will be out of town on the due date of the paper should send it electronically. ***No late papers will be accepted, and students should not miss class in order to complete a paper.*** Late-paper grades will be automatically reduced.