



## AP<sup>®</sup> Government and Politics: Comparative 2001 Sample Student Responses

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client characterizes

Patron-~~client~~ politics ~~is~~ the relationship between representatives of the government, patrons, and clients, the citizens' <sup>interest</sup> groups themselves. Patron-client relationships are instrumental to political development in developing nations because they are a simple way to increase political participation.

Patron-client relationships are both advantageous and disadvantageous to the clients involved. A disadvantage is that patrons have no obligation to follow through with commitments to clients. Also, it is difficult for clients to contact patrons at times. Additionally, patrons have loyalties elsewhere, and they may conflict with the clients' desires. On the other hand, patron-client relationships are a great way for people to actively voice opinions in the political process. In developing nations, infrastructural systems for interest articulation and aggregation are often ~~lacking~~ lacking; thus, patron-client relationships help to ameliorate conditions that do not inspire public involvement. Patron-client relationships, because they increase public participation in politics, help nations to approach the goal of civil society.

In India, political structures help to encourage development of patron-client

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relationships in several ways. Firstly, India is a representative democracy. Like other democratic systems, India is partitioned into smaller subdivisions. Each division has an elected representative. This system promotes patron-client relationships because reelection is largely determined by constituent service. Politicians that fail to cultivate ~~and~~ necessary grassroots support will not be reelected in their districts. Thus, in India, it is to the advantage of both politicians and citizens ~~to~~ to create patron-client relationships. Knowing that a representative of government will ~~consistently~~ consistently endorse certain positions is important to the ~~country~~ Indian electorate, as it is in any ~~developing nation~~ developing nation. Patrons advocate specific agendas that are proposed by clients, specific interest groups. An example would be a religious interest group, such as a mosque, seeking to influence patrons (representatives) to favor their political views. In developing nations, it is ~~again here~~ simpler to participate at the group level than at the individual level, which is why patron-client relationships increase overall participation.

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Patron-client relationships play an important role in many developing nations. The relationship encourages participation and can help give the system legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The patron-client relationship is one in which the patron gives the client assistance (money, food, land, resources) or help with an individual problem, and in exchange the client gives the patron support by voting for him or by helping him organize a campaign. In developing countries, this relationship helps the government get rid of hostile or opposing views. It also builds a foundation of trust between the government and its people.

The patron-client relationship can be very beneficial to the client. If he is struggling financially, the patron can help him out by handing out money. The client thus has a friend who can get him out of trouble. The client also has an outlet to tell of his concerns, giving him a feeling that his opinion really matters. The client can get assistance if he is running for office. In some countries, the ultimate patron is the president. His clients can ask for help in strategies and for government funds in return for service and support. However, there is a downside for the client. The relationship almost becomes binding. The client cannot defy the patron or he will lose his support. Even if their opinions and views differ, the client must stand by the patron. Another problem can occur if the patron falls out of power. Then the client is left alone and helpless.

The structures of the political systems in developing countries feed into the patron-client relationship. In a country like Nigeria, the patron-client relationship is one of the only effective outlets for political participation. Although there are interest groups, they really have no

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voice in government policy and they are distant from the government. The patron-client relationship allows the citizens of Nigeria to have a direct appeal to the government. It also builds a sense of trust in the system. Even though Nigeria has had five military coups, the people still have a close tie with the government. The government is able to help them individually and directly, making the system appear legit. In Nigeria, the patron-client network also extends to patronage and a system that allows clients to hold office under their patrons. The system encourages the client to work hard for the patron, in hope of gaining a higher political office. The patron-client has sometimes been the only form of political participation in Nigeria and other developing countries. However, it is always seen as an effective way to gain support for a newborn democracy.

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Often times, developing nations new to active political participation, are characterized by patron-client relationships. Mexico, while an older democracy sometimes plagued with corruption, is no different.

In this type of politics, powerful elites serve as patrons for the poorer clients they represent in the government. Often times, these powerful patrons were once clients themselves, validating their source of political authority as success stories starting in the same positions as the clients they serve.

For the client, benefits include a stronger voice in the government and political protection. By pooling support under a particular patron, clients have a larger proportion of power and higher place in government than they would on their own. Civil rights, social programs, and relative autonomy can all result from their allegiance to a patron.

Patrons too gain from the arrangement for they are not simple generous volunteers. Patrons gain the power and prestige of a following. Seats in the government, appointments to judgeships or agencies, even media attention and personal wealth can result for the patron by treating his clients well.

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Formal governmental structures in Mexico not only allow but also encourage patron-client relationships in politics. For one, Mexican municipalities, similar to American counties, foster ~~the~~ poor clients' reliance on strong local politician-patrons. The Federal District of Mexico City is brimming with eager patrons for slum sub-districts.

Also, the direct representation of state legislatures and the federal Senate and House foster direct elite-underclass patron-client relationships in which lower's support uppers in making decisions for all levels - sometimes at the expense of clients who are giving up some sovereignty; this is a great disadvantage to clients. Even the president, directly elected but not accountable since he only serves one limited six-year term, can become a patron at the expense and aid of all Mexican clients.

In conclusion, developing nations' political structures - such as Mexico's - federal with power at multiple overlapping levels - encourage the formation of patron-client relationships. As an advantage, clients get a political voice and

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protection from elite patrons. Adversely,  
already disadvantaged → Clients may be exploited without  
their knowledge from above under  
the tremendous authority of patrons  
in developing countries — even  
developing democracies like Mexico.