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What Do Brokers Provide for Urban Slums?

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Abstract

Rapid urbanisation in developing countries has often resulted in slums with minimal public goods provision, where the poor rely on clientelist networks to provide for their basic needs. Using household-level data, this paper is the first to empirically document how political clientelism operates in Pakistani slums. It finds that urban brokers, unlike their rural counterparts, are unable to claim credit for public goods provision. Instead, they provide personalised and highly targeted services – such as dispute resolution and assistance with documentation. Moreover, unlike traditional clientelism, urban networks are found to be problem-solving and welfare-enhancing for slum dwellers.

KEYWORDS
brokers, Clientelism, Pakistan, patronage politics, slums

1 | INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the landscape of poverty has changed drastically as people migrated to urban centres in the hope of improving their economic well-being. Yet, high costs of living have meant that most poor migrants end up living in slums. Having typically started out as illegal squatter colonies, slums often fall outside the jurisdiction of the state. As a result, they have limited direct access to state resources. Instead, slum dwellers often establish clientelist networks, where influential slum 'brokers' help provide for their needs, including by facilitating access to state resources.

The need for slum communities to rely on clientelism is not unusual. While politicians regularly provide targeted and ad hoc public goods directly to poor citizens as part of their constituency services (Bussell, 2019; Rains & Wibbels, 2023), poor households in many developing countries can only access basic state-provided goods and services - such as healthcare, education, roads and property rights - through clientelist networks (see, for example, Majid & Memon, 2017; Hicken, 2011; Rains & Wibbels, 2023; Rains et al., 2018; Auyero, 1999). Here, the poor have

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to get brokers – typically local people with better connections and greater resources (Gottlieb, 2017) – to lobby politicians in exchange for their votes or other forms of political support (Young & Gay, 1995; see also Auerbach & Thachil, 2018; Shami, 2019; Martin, 2014; Stokes, 2013). However, not all state provision to the poor are routed through a broker. In decentralised governance structures, for instance, households can have direct access to local politicians (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2011; De & Nag, 2016). Moreover, during election seasons, politicians have an incentive to provide visible public goods, thereby resulting in ad hoc and sporadic provision independent of local clientelist networks. Even in these contexts, however, direct provision can involve local brokers as middlemen due to their intimate knowledge about the needs and socio-economic conditions of their base and about how to access state institutions (Auerbach & Thachil, 2018; Murillo et al., 2021).

Such networks can be beneficial for clients, who get better access to state institutions – such as the police and courts – and public services, such as healthcare and other targeted public goods (Zarazaga, 2014). They are also useful for politicians to generate political support, and they are particularly useful for brokers, who are rewarded by politicians through private and public benefits and by clients through economic rents (Stokes, 2013) and social status (Holland & Palmer-Rubin, 2015).

While literature on clientelism started out by looking at landlord-peasant relationships in rural communities (Scott, 1977), a growing literature is focusing on urban contexts so as to capture the geographical shift in the epicentre of poverty (see, for example, Auyero, 1999, Stokes, 2013, Gans-Morse et al., 2014, Auerbach & Thachil, 2018, Gottlieb, 2017; Murillo et al., 2021, Pellicer et al., 2020, Auerbach, 2019). Urban clientelist networks are often more fluid due to clients having greater exit options and greater competition among brokers who are unable to run monopolistic networks. This allows clients to negotiate better terms of exchange in the relationship (Auerbach & Thachil, 2018). Urban clientelist networks vary in nature, function and form, however, and are often highly adaptable to local contexts (see, e.g. Hicken, 2011; Van De Walle, 2007). This paper seeks to understand some of this variation by drawing on insights from the understudied case of Pakistan, a country that has oscillated between democracy and military dictatorship and can at best be described as an extremely young democracy (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2008; Talbot, 2009).

Drawing on original household-level data from slums in Lahore - a major cosmopolitan city and the centre of political power – I find patterns of urban clientelism similar to more advanced developing country democracies. As in Auyero's (2000) findings in Argentina, I show that brokers operate two sets of networks in Pakistan, one for their 'Core Clients', who form part of the broker's long-term and ongoing following, and another for their 'Peripheral Clients', who are more self-sustained and mainly engage with the broker during election cycles and demand goods and services linked to the electoral process. Yet, the nascent democratic institutions in Pakistan have left their mark on urban slums. Specifically, I show that while brokers have better access to state institutions than their clients, political parties have not managed to develop close relationships with brokers, which means brokers are less able to claim credit for public goods provision provided by a political party in power (see also Gottlieb, 2017). Instead, their main focus is on alternative, personalised and highly targeted services – such as dispute resolution and assistance with obtaining documentation. This is in contrast with the more-studied case of India, where brokers have been shown to rely on established political parties to negotiate better terms for their clients (see, for example, Auerbach, 2019; Jha et al., 2007; Rains & Wibbels, 2023). In addition to providing insights into urban clientelism from one of the largest, but understudied, countries in the world, the empirical evidence implies that clientelism functions differently in weak- or non-democratic systems where party structures are less developed. Thus, this paper adds to the wide literature on the role of brokers in different environments and how they influence development for different segments of the population (see, for example, Goodhand & Walton, 2023; Diprose, 2023 – for brokers' impact on women's engagement in development; Ehrhardt, 2023 – for brokers' role in empowering minorities and the contradictions they entail;, de jong et al., 2023 for role of brokers in conflicts).

The article is organised as follows: First, an overview of the literature on urban clientelism, highlighting the complexity of the relationship, is provided in Section 2. Next, the empirical findings are presented in Section 3. The paper highlights how slum dwellers engage in varying types of clientelist networks, each performing a different

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function. The data reveals that local brokers focus on providing highly personalised services, with the most targeted form of services reserved for their inner circle and loyal supporters. The last section presents the conclusions of the paper.

2 | VARIETIES OF URBAN CLIENTELISM

Clientelism is one of the most prevalent concepts in the development literature. Described as a relationship between unequals, the classic model was designed based on the interaction between rural landlords and their peasants (see Schmidt et al., 1977). In its extreme form, the network consisted of poor clients, who needed to access the resources of an asset-rich broker in order to ensure survival. Client demands focused on employment, housing, credit, social insurance and access to state resources. In return, they offered the landlord broker a guaranteed supply of labour, social following and political loyalty (see generally Scott, 1977). While the landlord valued the services clients offered, the demands of clients, on the other hand, were fairly inelastic as they dealt with services vital for their survival.

A key feature of these models was the absence of exit options. The few studies that considered the possibility of alternatives argued that they would cause the relationship to break down. Basu's (1986) model, for instance, was contingent on peasants lacking outside options. Similarly, Scott (1972) stipulated that the presence of uninhabited land would cause patron–client networks to break down as peasants would move to take advantage of these new self-sustainable options. Moreover, clientelism was seen to be a transitory phenomenon that would go away as countries achieved higher levels of economic and political development (see, for example, Schmidt et al., 1977; Scott, 1977). Thus, the implicit assumption was that the poor only engaged in this relationship if they were forced to.

However, the last few decades have seen major geographical and conceptual shifts in this literature. To start off, researchers are increasingly focusing on the urban poor, thereby mirroring the migration of poverty from rural villages. While this strand of literature started by relying on insights from rural networks (Jha et al., 2007), recent empirical studies have begun to rely on detailed household- and slum-level analysis in a variety of developing countries (see, for example, Nichter, 2018; Auerbach, 2019; Rains & Wibbels, 2023; Murillo et al., 2021; Berenschot & Aspinall, 2020; Gottlieb, 2017. Also, see Perllicer et al., 2020 for a meta-study of this literature). This has contributed to our understanding of different forms of clientelism, including when it increases the welfare of the poor (Perllicer et al., 2020). Hicken (2011), for instance, argues that in the presence of a predatory or exploitative state, clientelism can perform vital services for poor citizens. He further notes that modern clientelism can be different from traditional models studied in early literature, as levels of interaction differ considerably across networks. In 'political clientelism', clients and brokers only interact during election times, whereas in 'relational clientelism', interactions are cultivated over time and occur all year round. Both types have been found in urban settings, but the latter dominates in slums (Rains & Wibbels, 2023), as close-knit and settled communities allow clients to assess which brokers are able to provide for them, and brokers can in turn build a loyal following (Gottlieb, 2017). Within relational clientelism, client demands are still focused on satisfying their basic needs, but the level of dependence on the broker is not the same as in rural settings. This is partially driven by the increased competition faced amongst brokers and from the opportunities the city has to offer. Thus, the relationship can be largely functional in nature, used essentially as a problem-solving network where brokers help clients navigate the challenges in their lives (Auyero, 2000). In return, clients offer loyalty by agreeing to vote for the candidate the broker is supporting, opportunities for rent-seeking (clients may pay a 'fee' for the services the broker is offering) and social following (a large client base would enable brokers to negotiate better terms from other actors). This often results in different clientelist networks *within* slums, whereby brokers provide differentiated goods and services depending on the degree of loyalty among different slum dwellers (see Auyero, 1999; Yıldırım & Kitschelt, 2020).[1]

The function of the networks is bound to vary, however, based on the political environment of the country they are found in. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the use of the networks for politicians depends on political structures.

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While politicians in democracies use urban clientelist networks to build a loyal support base (Auerbach & Thachil, 2018; Hicken, 2011; Krishna, 2007), the ruling elite in non-democratic settings are more likely to rely on the networks to create regime dependence and legitimacy (see, for example, Fox, 1994; Grzymala-Busse, 2008; Faguet & Shami, 2022). Secondly, parties in more settled democracies are better able to enrol brokers, and thus their networks, into the party machine. As Auerbach (2019) demonstrates in the case of India, high levels of party organisation mean that successful brokers are brought into the party's fold, thereby making them party operatives.[2] Equally, Krishna (2007) and Rains and Wibbels (2023) find that brokers in India provide access to government offices/officials and help navigate the filling of official forms. In contrast, Gottlieb (2017) argues that in countries with lower levels of party organisation – driven, in turn, by lower levels of democratisation – brokers are not part of the party machinery and instead operate independent networks.

The lack of close and institutionalised ties between democratic parties and urban brokers has important implications for actors involved in the exchange. As politicians are less able to rely on brokers, they have a greater incentive to actively advertise their own role in providing for slum communities. Such provisions will tend to be ad hoc, highly visible and concentrated around electoral cycles. The relevance of brokers, therefore, is mainly in the context of more targeted goods that require household-level contacts and information.[3] This is an important, but more limited, role for brokers in the context of public goods provision – particularly in urban settings. For unlike in isolated rural villages, where brokers can act as coercive monopolists through their control over land (Shami, 2012), urban brokers compete with one another for a clientelist following and rarely have control over major income-generating assets (Stokes, 2013; Gottlieb, 2017; Mares & Young, 2016; Koter, 2013). This means they can mainly provide access to important but less tangible goods and services, such as dispute resolution or assistance in engaging with government bureaucracy. To explore these ideas, the empirical analysis below provides the first systematic analysis of clientelism in Pakistani slums.

3 | EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS[4]

The analysis makes use of an original household-level dataset from slums in Pakistan. Pakistan is a middle-income, developing country home to over 220 million people. It has high levels of inequality, with an estimated 28% of households living below the poverty line (Khan, 2015). Furthermore, over its 75 years of existence, the country has oscillated between democracy and dictatorship, which has significantly hampered political parties' ability to create credibility amongst voters (Talbot, 2009). As a result, patronage has remained the dominant tool for winning elections (Baken, 1992; see also Keefer & Vlaicu, 2008). Yet, research on the political economy of poverty in Pakistan has been limited, particularly in the urban economy. Within Pakistan, I look at slums in Lahore, the second-largest city in the country.

3.1 | Lahore

Lahore is the provincial capital of Punjab and a major cosmopolitan city that has been the seat of power for one of the major political parties for many decades. This has resulted in fairly stable political patronage structures. The city is home to approximately 11 million people, over 50% of whom are estimated to be living in slums (UN-Habitat, 2018), which in turn make up around 30% of Lahore's inhabited space (Khan, 2015). Described as areas with unsafe and congested housing, inadequate infrastructure and insecure tenure, slums initially arose following decolonisation in 1947, when Pakistan separated from India to become an independent state.

A massive influx of migrants significantly increased the population of the city, which lacked the capacity to house them. As a result, poorer migrants resorted to squatting on uninhabited land. The influx of migrants has continued over the years, as Lahore attracts people not only from villages but also from other smaller towns and

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cities.[5] According to government statistics, in the last 30 years, 20% of urban growth has been caused due to migration.[6] This has resulted in a 92% increase in slums in Punjab between the 1970 and 2017. A substantial portion of this increase is seen in Lahore, where these settlements in the same time period have grown by 74%.[7]

Government policy regarding slums has ranged from slum clearing to slum upgradation. The 1950s to end 1960s saw efforts by military and civilian governments to demolish these settlements (Malik et al., 2019). However, 1971 saw the election of Mr. Bhutto on a promise to feed, clothe and house the poor. His government's policies acknowledged that slums were a product of poverty and an inadequate supply of affordable housing and were thus likely to persist (Malik et al., 2019).[8] Therefore, in 1978, the government introduced a slum registration policy – which came into effect in 1985 – granting slums legal status based on two conditions: a) the settlement existing 23rd of March, 1985 and b) the settlement consisting of a minimum of 40 households.[9] Taking this a step forward, in 1990 the Katchi-Abadi's (the Urdu word for informal/non-permanent settlements) Act was passed, which resulted in the establishment of a dedicated government directorate meant to handle the upgrading and development of slums. The main purpose of this directorate is to register slums, grant citizens property rights and facilitate the provision of basic infrastructure. However, both interviews with officials from the Katchi-Abadi (slums) directorate[10] and a cursory look at promises made by politicians during election season,[11] confirm that slums are perceived to be an important vote bank by politicians. As a result, these communities tend to receive ad hoc provision of public goods, mostly delivered close to elections by local politicians.

3.2 | Slums of Lahore

Slums in Lahore are home to some of the poorest in the city, with 89% of residents estimated to be below the poverty line (Khan, 2015). The Katchi-Abadi (Slums) directorate classifies these settlements into two categories: registered and unregistered settlements. Registered slums are recognised by the Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate as being legal communities with a right to live on that land. Slum registration is important not only for obtaining legal status but also to place them under the jurisdiction of the municipal government. However, registration does not automatically give households' property rights. Residents have to apply separately,[12] but high bureaucratic costs have meant that instead of applying for property rights, households have opted to pay bribes to local officials to prevent eviction (Gazdar & Mallah, 2015).[13] Unregistered slums, on the other hand, remain illegal settlements. Nonetheless, being unregistered does not mean there is no public provision to these communities. While, as a matter of law, state resources can only be directed towards registered slums, politicians use their discretionary funds to provide patronage goods to residents in all slums – registered or not.[14]

Another factor in which slums vary across the city is their location. Geographically, slums are found both in the centre of the city and its outskirts. The definition of the city centre or inner city is based on population density and extent of built structures. The Katchi-Abadi (slums) directorate classifies densely populated regions with extensive buildings as inner city. In contrast, less densely populated areas with fewer built structures, found towards the fringes of the city, are categorised as outskirts. As can be imagined, inner city slums are significantly better off, as not only do they enjoy easier access to the opportunities the city has to offer, but their increased visibility should incentivise politicians to focus their resources on them so as to demonstrate their responsiveness to the wider population.

3.3 | Data

Within Lahore, surveys were conducted in 12 slums. A list of all slums along with their location and registration status was obtained from the Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate and verified with external sources.[15] From this population, a random stratified sample of 12 slums was selected. Stratification was done based on slum registration

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and geography. While half of the selected slums are registered, the other half are unregistered. Moreover, geographically, the sample slums are evenly distributed between the outskirts and the inner city. Variations based on geography and recognition generated four types of slums (Table 1). Sampling slums from each of these categories helps see whether location or legal status influences the functioning of clientelist networks.

Surveying slums is challenging as there are no official maps identifying households because slums seldom get surveyed or mapped by the state (Murillo et al., 2021). Therefore, for each slum, a map had to first be drawn up that identified the location of each household within the settlement. These households were then given an identification number. A sample map can be seen in Figure 1.

Households' identification numbers were entered into STATA to generate a random sample of 20% of households selected for surveying. The survey was orally conducted,[16] and covered areas such as public goods provision, voting patterns, local brokers, welfare schemes, social networks, household disputes, household needs, recent shocks and socio-economic conditions. For questions pertaining to needs, shocks and disputes, they were also asked who they approached to help ameliorate the situation. These questions helped provide a detailed understanding of the problems slum households face and the role clientelist networks play in their lives.

The data collection made use of a structured schedule that asked both open- and close-ended questions. This provided detailed quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to households' interactions with brokers. The qualitative data complements the quantitative one by informing us about the mechanisms behind the results and giving us a better understanding of the political economy of these slums. A total of 667 surveys were successfully completed. The sociodemographic characteristics of the interviewee can be seen in Table 2. All interviewees were over 18[17] and answered questions on behalf of the household, thereby providing household-level data.

Figures are number of respondents.

The quantitative data was used to conduct a logistic regression model to see who was benefiting from the services brokers have to offer while controlling for other factors.

TABLE 1 Sample distribution.

	Registered	Unregistered
Inner city	3	3
Outskirts	3	3

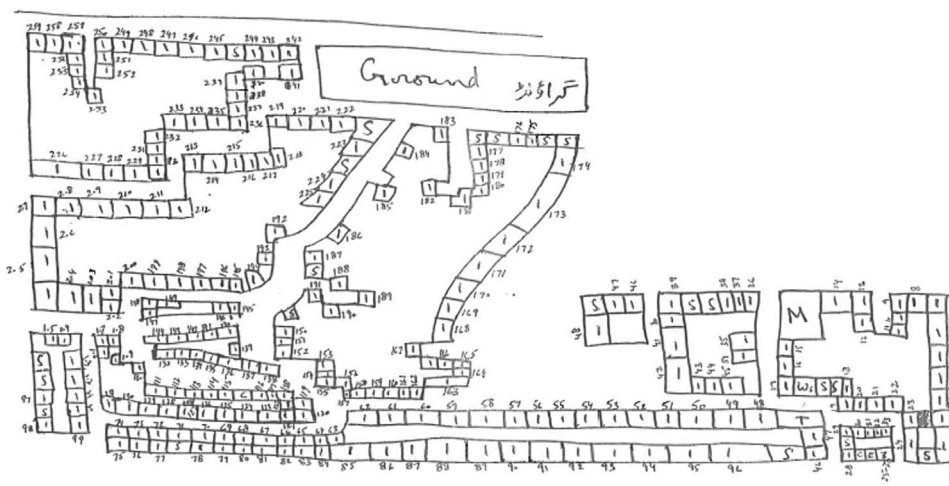

FIGURE 1 Map from one of the sampled slums. (The numbers/addresses on these maps were not entered in the survey so as to maintain anonymity.)

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TABLE 2 Socio-economic demographics of survey respondents.

Gender		**Household' primary occupation**	
Male	402	Day labourer	87
Female	265	Government servant	48
Slum type		Business/trader	74
Registered slum in inner city	223	Other jobs	458
Registered slum in the periphery	118	**Job tenure**	
Non-registered slum in inner city	176	**Status**	
Non-registered slums in the periphery	150	Permanent job	280
Literacy		Non-permanent job	387
Literate	521		
Illiterate	146		

$$y_{is} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 Inner_s + \beta_3 Reg_s + \beta_4 Inner_s * Reg_s + \beta_5 C.Client_{is} + \beta_6 P.Client_{is} + \beta_7 X_{is} + \beta_8 S.High_{is} + \beta_9 PR_{is} + \beta_{10} S_{is} + \varepsilon_{is} \quad (1)$$

The paper focuses on the provision of two personalised and targeted services. The first is assistance with informal dispute resolution pertaining to criminal or land grab issues, where the broker can substitute for failing state provision. Here, the broker would mediate the dispute himself, thereby circumventing the formal justice system. The survey asked who the household approached in the event of conflicts. These conflicts ranged from fights with neighbours (both physical and verbal), disputes over land or assets, petty theft, theft of neighbour's electricity[18] and so forth. y_{is} takes the value of 1 if the household says it approaches the broker in the event of a dispute. This service is typically time-consuming and involves occasionally sensitive interaction between brokers and slum households.

A less extensive yet personalised service is assistance with obtaining official documentation, such as titles/deeds for household's property, national identification card, registering for welfare schemes and so forth. Aside from legalising households' stay in the city, documentation is also needed to be included in the electoral register. Thus, it is important to be able to vote. Here, households were asked whether the broker assisted in obtaining documentation. y_{is} takes the value of 1 if the household answers yes.

$Inner_s$ is 1 if the household is situated in the centre of the city. For households situated in registered slums Reg_s is 1. Accordingly, $Inner_s * Reg_s$ captures households living in a registered slum in the inner city. These variables help determine whether the slum type influences brokers' targeting decisions. Turning to household-level characteristics, $C.Client_{is}$ is 1 if household i in slum s is a broker's core client. A household is classified as being a core client if it names the broker as its leader,[19] is part of his vote block[20] and regularly approaches him for day-to-day issues/concerns or questions. $P.Client_{is}$ captures the broker's peripheral clients and takes the value of 1 if the household is part of a broker's vote block but does not engage with him on a regular basis. This was determined by analysing households' responses to questions pertaining to whom they approach for a range of services. Hence, their interaction is mainly during election seasons. The reference category is non-clients.

X_{is} is a vector of household's economic characteristics that controls for the effect of wealth on households' chances of receiving assistance. It includes controls for a household being employed as a day labour, having a government job and being in the upper or lower wealth bracket. Following Majid and Shami (2024), wealth brackets were computed through principal component analysis (PCA), which generated three equal groups - rich, middle and poor (see also Filmer and Pritchett (2001) for details on the method used). Dummies are included for the rich and poor, and the middle class is the reference category.

$S.High_{is}$ equals 1 if the household has a diverse and active social network. Households' social diversity is calculated using PCA, similar to the computation for household wealth. An index measuring the strength of households' horizontal networks is computed using questions regarding how often households socialise, where they

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go, who they meet and what they talk about. The index splits households into three categories. At the top are households that meet with a diverse group of people almost daily, while at the bottom are those that hardly meet anyone outside their family. This is included based on Granovetter's (1973) classic argument that a diverse social network tends to offer a diverse set of resources/skill sets that households' can rely on to improve their well-being.

PR_{is} includes controls for households' ownership status. It captures whether household *i* in slum *s* has complete property rights, partial property rights[21] or is a squatter. Renters are the reference category. The last set of controls, S_{is}, is for socio-political indicators. It controls whether the household has resided in the slum since the 1970s and if it approaches formal institutions independently. While older residents tend to have well-established social ties, those using formal institutions directly demonstrate a sense of empowerment, as dysfunctional state institutions have been known to harass disempowered citizens (Shami, 2012). The error term, ε_{ij}, is clustered by slums.

Moreover, in order to test the fit of the logistic regression model, following Archer and Lemeshow (2006), the Hosmer–Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test was run (see also Menard, 2002 for details on applied logistic regression models). This tests the null hypothesis that the model is not a good fit. The p-values for the goodness-of-fit test are displayed at the end of each regression table – the null is rejected for all the regressions run.

3.4 | Sampled slums

Table 3 provides an overview of the socio-economic conditions in the different slums. As can be seen, households in inner-city slums are considerably better off on average than those living in the outskirts. A higher percentage of households in the inner city fall in the wealthiest bracket, have permanent jobs, have two income streams and fewer find themselves working as day labourers – a low-paid and exploitative form of employment. This was also obvious from observing the slums: inner-city slum houses have more permanent structures, whereas slums in the outskirts have a mixture of brick and more precarious housing made from tin, cardboard or cloth. One thing that stood out in stark contrast to descriptions of slums in India was the absence of any political posters of affiliations. This could be explained by the fact that brokers are independent of political parties and therefore do not promote them outside of electoral cycles.

Inner-city slum households are also better off socially with a larger percentage having a diverse social network than those in the outskirts. As mentioned earlier, this is important as social diversity improves the skill set and resources households can tap into to provide for their needs. Lastly, households in the inner city are more inclined to both use formal dispute resolution bodies (police and courts) and approach them independently. While this could partially be driven by their proximity to state organisations, it can also be seen as a signal of their 'empowerment' as they feel confident enough to go independently without fear of harassment. Although less pronounced, there are also considerable differences between registered and unregistered slums. Yet, despite these economic and social differences, over half the households are part of a clientelist network in all types of slums.

3.5 | Clients

Given that over 50% of households are engaged in clientelism (Table 3), the question then arises; who are the households that join these networks? Table 4 presents descriptive statistics about the socio-economic characteristics of only client households. A comparison with Table 3 reveals that while the average client household is worse off than the average slum dweller, the differences in clients' socio-economic conditions, across the settlements, closely follow those seen generally in the settlements. The Table highlights that not all clients are poor – they are in fact quite heterogenous – but also that not all poor households are clients. Around a quarter of households in the outskirts and in unregistered slums are classified as 'rich', while over 40% are 'rich' in inner city and in registered slums. Moreover, across all types of slums, around one-third of households belonging to a clientelist network claim

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TABLE 3 Summary Statistics.

	Inner city	Outskirts	Registered slums	Unregistered slums
Economic indicators				
House member is a day labourer	7%	18%	9%	14%
Poorest household in the slum	27%	43%	31%	36%
Wealthiest household in the slum	39%	25%	38%	29%
Household's average monthly expenditure ($)	206	190	205	194
Household has two income sources	43%	30%	33%	42%
Household member has a government job	7%	9%	8%	8%
Household member has a permanent job	73%	60%	70%	65%
Social indicators				
Household members have an inactive social network	31%	39%	34%	34%
Household members have a diverse and active social network	32%	26%	32%	28%
Household is part of a clientelist network	55%	57%	55%	57%
Political indicators				
Use formal dispute resolution bodies	52%	40%	53%	41%
Approach formal dispute resolution bodies independently	43%	35%	45%	33%
Household indicators				
House owned but not registered[%]	28%	52%	19%	57%
House owned and registered	37%	19%	59%	NA
Squatter	18%	15%	8%	26%
Resided in the slum since 1970s	50%	43%	59%	35%
Observations	399	268	341	326

[%]These households reported owning their house but not having the ownership registered with the state. Thus, they have de facto, but not de jure property rights.

to have a strong and diverse social network. This is similar to Auyero's (2000) finding that urban clientelist networks are problem-solving networks and therefore attract the economically and socially non-poor as well.

3.6 | Brokers

While the focus of the empirical study was on clients, household interviews did offer an insight into who brokers were and how their networks functioned. One of the main questions households were asked about brokers was what their source of authority was and why household's chose to follow them. When asked why the household joined their broker's network in inner-city slums responses ranged from: *"he listens to us and cooperated with the community"*,[22] *"he has political connections"*[23] and *"he has worked for the community"*.[24] Responses in the outskirts were not much different: *"he listens to everyone"*,[25] *"he is our political leader"*[26] and *"he does work for us and even invests his own funds into the community"*.[27] While some households claimed to join the network because of the brokers' wealth or his influence in their home village, this was never given as a primary or sole explanation for membership. Also, not a single household cited fear or coercion as a reason for joining the network. This is of course not to say that the urban poor are not exploited within these networks. As Mares and Young (2016) noted, brokers can withdraw access to the benefits they have to offer as a threat to non-complying clients. Instead, it highlights how contrary to traditional clientelism, this network is seen as one that helps solve problems and not as being exploitative.

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TABLE 4 Who are the clients?[a]

	Inner city	Outskirts	Registered slums	Unregistered slums
Economic indicators				
Day labourers	7%	21%	11%	15%
Poorest household in the slum	25%	43%	29%	36%
Wealthiest household in the slum	40%	24%	41%	26%
Household's average monthly expenditure ($)	192	181	199	175
Household has two income sources	45%	33%	36%	44%
Household member has a government job	7%	10%	9%	8%
Household member has a permanent job	73%	63%	72%	66%
Social indicators				
Household members have an inactive social network	28%	31%	28%	31%
Household members have a diverse and active social network	33%	32%	35%	30%
Household indicators				
House owned but not registered[%]	30%	50%	18%	58%
House owned and registered	36%	24%	63%	NA
Squatter	20%	16%	9%	27%
Resided in the slum since 1970s	52%	40%	58%	36%
Observations	220	153	186	187

[%]These households reported owning their house but not having the ownership registered with the state. Thus, they have de facto, but not de jure property right.
[a]This table restricts the sample to only client households. As a result, the number of observations is less than in Table 3.

From brokers' perspective, being a problem solver proves to be beneficial. When asked why households thought the broker helped them, one household's response was that it was because he wanted their votes.[28] Having control over clients' votes enables the broker to negotiate public and private goods for their own private use. Moreover, brokers are also known to charge a fee for some of the services they provide.[29]

In order to be able to enjoy these benefits, brokers need to maintain a high level of service provision, as membership in these networks is not seen as being permanent. Around 25% of households reported switching brokers over the last few years. When asked why they changed brokers, the responses were: *"we go to whoever does work for us"*,[30] *"the other broker didn't do work for us"*[31] and *"his performance was not satisfactory"*.[32] This illustrates a clear expectation among clients that if the network fails to meet their needs, they will switch to a broker better able to deliver.

3.7 | What clients receive

What services do slum households receive, and which households are the beneficiaries of them? To start off, I look at levels of public goods provision in the different slums. These provision levels were observed by the survey team, as accurate data on provision levels was not available.[33] I chose to focus on drains and paved streets as these two goods are very important for being able to get around in the slums. In the absence of functioning drains household waste flows directly onto the street. Moreover, rain has a detrimental impact on unpaved streets. As a result, the absence of both makes it difficult to walk around, thus making them highly valuable to households.

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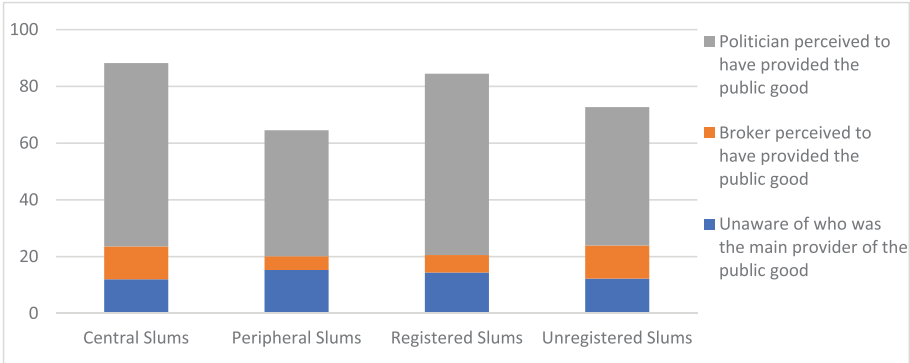

FIGURE 2 *Level of public goods provision across the slums. Notes*: 1) Provision to these slums is made through politicians' discretionary funds and not the state bureaucracy. 2) While provision levels were observed by the author, the question of who provided the public goods is based on households' perceptions.

Looking at public provision between slums, Figure 2 below shows that all 4 types of slums enjoy fairly high levels of public provision, with the lowest level being 65% in the outskirts. The figure also illustrates households' perception of who helped provide these goods.[34] We can see that across all the different slums, the majority of households believe the politician, and not the broker, provided them with these public goods. This belief most likely stems from the politician, or a member of his/her team, visiting during the project to emphasise the role they played in providing these goods. These results are also corroborated by a logistic regression model that asked if households believed that the broker played a role in providing them with public goods. Nothing in that regression was significant, so it was omitted from the main analysis for the sake of brevity. It is worth mentioning that the broker may indeed have played a role in the provision of these goods by filling out applications or by informing politicians of where the greatest need was. But ultimately, the vast majority of slum households attribute credit to the politician and not the broker. This is in stark contrast to Auerbach's (2019) finding in India where brokers, being party operatives, are always seen as playing an integral role in public provision. In Pakistan's case, since brokers are independent operatives, I argue politicians need to stake their claim firmly to ensure electoral support, as Lahore is an important electoral centre they cannot afford to ignore. Therefore, politicians use their discretionary funds to provide highly visible public goods to both registered and unregistered slums in order to gain votes, as by law, unregistered slums should not receive any public spending.[35] This provides supporting evidence for the claim that politicians provide public goods directly to these slums.

Figure 2 also highlights a significant difference between provision levels in the inner city and outskirts, with the former receiving much more. This is an interesting finding when viewed together with the descriptive statistics from Table 3. Households in inner-city slums do better on all indicators when compared to those living in the periphery. Therefore, if politicians wanted to reach communities most in need, they would focus on slums in the outskirts. While a counterargument could lie in the logistical ease of providing to inner-city slums, I argue this is unlikely to be driving the results as politicians, with the state bureaucracy at their disposal, have the logistical capacity to provide to the outskirts. This is validated by the close to 65% provision in the outskirts.

The inability of slum brokers to offer access to state resources as part of the clientelist exchange means that they need to focus on providing alternative, highly targeted and personalised services for their clients. In the Lahore slums, brokers achieve this through assistance with dispute resolution and obtaining documentation. Help with informal dispute resolution is valuable for slum residents who are unable or unwilling to approach formal dispute settlement bodies. But as it can involve sensitive personal information and requires trust and ongoing interaction, households are most likely to approach brokers they have a strong relationship with. On the supply side, as well,

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TABLE 5 *Did the broker help you with informal dispute resolution?*[a]

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	All slums	Inner city	Outskirts	Registered slums	Unregistered slums
Household resides in a registered slum	−0.081	0.014	−0.132***		
	(0.052)	(0.043)	(0.046)		
Household resides in a central slum	−0.072			−0.013	−0.091
	(0.062)			(0.046)	(0.060)
Household resides in a registered slum in the centre	0.058				
	(0.075)				
Household members have a diverse and active social network	0.098**	0.064	0.165**	0.102**	0.094
	(0.046)	(0.065)	(0.076)	(0.052)	(0.083)
Household is part of a broker's core network	0.184***	0.193**	0.153**	0.151**	0.231***
	(0.054)	(0.080)	(0.064)	(0.068)	(0.089)
Household is part of a broker's peripheral network	0.065	0.077	0.079	0.202	−0.009
	(0.107)	(0.222)	(0.110)	(0.224)	(0.106)
Household member works as a day labourer	−0.025	−0.018	−0.052	−0.071	0.019
	(0.061)	(0.121)	(0.085)	(0.087)	(0.084)
Household member has a government job	−0.032	0.071	−0.140**	−0.005	−0.060
	(0.053)	(0.061)	(0.069)	(0.064)	(0.086)
Poorest household in the slum	−0.075	−0.070	−0.076	−0.046	−0.109
	(0.049)	(0.066)	(0.084)	(0.058)	(0.085)
Wealthiest household in the slum	−0.027	−0.045	0.005	−0.020	−0.030
	(0.044)	(0.059)	(0.085)	(0.080)	(0.052)
Household has complete property rights	0.063	−0.012	0.180	0.084	
	(0.087)	(0.106)	(0.158)	(0.064)	
Household is a squatter	0.017	−0.008	0.050	−0.016	0.017
	(0.101)	(0.134)	(0.173)	(0.078)	(0.169)
House is owned but not registered with the land registry	0.051	0.068	0.040	0.107	0.017
	(0.106)	(0.129)	(0.197)	(0.135)	(0.160)
Household has resided in the slum since the 1970s	−0.008	0.047	−0.075	−0.007	−0.016
	(0.042)	(0.059)	(0.050)	(0.028)	(0.076)
Goodness-of-Fit (p-values)	0.8	0.8	0.67	0.47	0.56
Observations	667	399	268	341	326

Estimations are in percentages. Standard errors in parentheses.
[a]This regression drops the variable for households approaching formal institutions independently as households which do this will not be using the services of the broker for informal dispute resolution.
***$p < 0.01$, and **$p < 0.05$.

brokers should be more inclined to offer this service to core clients, as it can be costly and time-consuming. Table 5 runs the logistic regression model listed above to see who benefits from this service.

Column 1 runs the regression on the entire dataset, while Columns 2–5 disaggregate the dataset by the four slum types to see who within the different settlements has access to these services.[36] Each regression also runs a

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Hosmer–Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test, which is reported at the end of the table. The null is rejected in each case, highlighting that the model is a good fit. The Table finds that this service is reserved mainly for core clients. This is the case irrespective of the type of slum households reside in. This is not surprising when we factor in the sensitive nature of these services.

TABLE 6 Did the broker help you get documentation?

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	All slums	Inner city	Outskirts	Registered slums	Unregistered slums
Household resides in a registered slum	−0.105	−0.006	−0.158		
	(0.061)	(0.078)	(0.083)		
Household resides in a central slum	0.017			0.073	0.014
	(0.079)			(0.041)	(0.090)
Household resides in a registered slum in the centre	0.055				
	(0.083)				
Household members have a diverse and active social network	0.046	0.030	0.086	−0.021	0.115
	(0.051)	(0.063)	(0.094)	(0.077)	(0.075)
Household is part of a broker's core network	0.208***	0.180***	0.267***	0.224***	0.199***
	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.069)	(0.055)	(0.065)
Household is part of a broker's peripheral network	0.219***	0.292**	0.203	0.290**	0.195*
	(0.081)	(0.116)	(0.138)	(0.125)	(0.108)
Household approaches formal institutions independently	−0.027	−0.050	0.020	−0.001	−0.060
	(0.030)	(0.047)	(0.036)	(0.024)	(0.055)
Household member works as a day labourer	−0.044	0.053	−0.091***	0.035	−0.106**
	(0.062)	(0.156)	(0.028)	(0.139)	(0.042)
Household member has a government job	−0.055	0.016	−0.127*	−0.047	−0.072
	(0.053)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.060)	(0.079)
Poorest household in the slum	0.028	0.053	0.012	0.084	−0.027
	(0.046)	(0.067)	(0.063)	(0.093)	(0.045)
Wealthiest household in the slum	0.015	−0.015	0.086	0.067	−0.054
	(0.039)	(0.046)	(0.063)	(0.070)	(0.041)
Household has complete property rights	0.186***	0.210**	0.162	0.100	
	(0.059)	(0.083)	(0.186)	(0.083)	
Household is a squatter	0.112**	0.178***	0.020	−0.016	0.189***
	(0.053)	(0.050)	(0.104)	(0.143)	(0.023)
House is owned but not registered with the land registry	0.172***	0.242***	0.099	0.117	0.211***
	(0.050)	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.107)	(0.057)
Household has resided in the slum since the 1970s	−0.003	−0.078	0.111**	0.052	−0.060
	(0.052)	(0.076)	(0.050)	(0.047)	(0.101)
Goodness-of-Fit (p-value)	0.51	0.48	0.63	0.93	0.63
Observations	667	399	268	341	326

Estimations are in percentages. Standard errors in parentheses.
***$p < 0.01$, and **$p < 0.05$.

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Finally, Table 6 focuses on assistance with documentation for slum dwellers, and here the core driver is again whether a household is part of a broker's network. Once again, each iteration ran a goodness-of-fit test, the p-values of which are reported at the end of the table. As before, the null is rejected in each case, highlighting that the model is a good fit. In contrast to dispute resolution, however, both peripheral and core clients benefit from this service. As above, this could be both supply- and demand-driven; it is a less costly service for the broker, but also one where peripheral clients would be more inclined to ask for his assistance as it is less sensitive and requires less trust in the broker than dispute resolution. Moreover, documentation is important for registering to vote, and therefore, peripheral clients need it at election time.

A couple of subsidiary results are interesting as well. In the inner city and unregistered slums, brokers target permanent residents over renters, irrespective of their property rights status. As we saw earlier through qualitative interviews, a possible explanation may be that brokers face competition in these slums and therefore tend to be more pro-active in trying to recruit new clients, for instance by providing assistance with obtaining documentation. This service has the added advantage of making households eligible to vote, which would be useful for brokers if the household becomes a client. Lastly, in the outskirts, day labourers and households with government jobs are less likely to receive brokers' assistance with documentation. While day labourers tend to be ignored because of their low bargaining power,[37] for those with a government job, it is likely demand-driven as these households have access to formal institutions and therefore do not need to approach the broker for assistance.

Taken together, Tables 5 and 6 highlight how brokers unable to provide public goods to their clients instead have to focus on providing highly targeted and personalised goods and services that improve the day-to-day well-being of their clients. However, clients are not all equal beneficiaries. While core clients receive all services brokers have to offer, peripheral clients only get access to cheaper goods with electoral value.

4 | CONCLUSION

Compared to literature on rural clientelism, literature on urban clientelist networks is still in its infancy. This paper has provided the first systematic study of political clientelism in urban slums in Pakistan. The results show how urban clientelism in Pakistan is similar to that found in many other contexts. Slum brokers are not monopolists and instead face fierce competition from other brokers, which in turn creates fairly fluid networks focusing on problem-solving and other important services in the presence of a dysfunctional state. Although urban clientelism remains a 'loop-sided friendship' (Pitt-Rivers, 1954) even in the inner cities of Pakistan, it is more functional and differentiated than traditional models. This is exemplified not just by the fact that many households belonging to clientelist networks are relatively well off, and with active social networks, the survey also showed that 64% of households claimed to have joined the network because of brokers' ability to provide for their needs. Moreover, similar to other contexts, slum brokers distinguish between their clients based on their level of interaction. While core clients, who interact regularly with the broker receive goods and services of high value, peripheral clients, whose main interaction is during election seasons, receive cheaper goods, which also have some electoral value.

Importantly, however, the results also suggest that in contrast to recent work on slums in India, very few households give the broker credit for providing them with public goods as brokers are not part of the partisan machinery. This has a two-fold effect. Politicians favour slum residents that are visible to the largest number of voters – typically in the inner cities. Secondly, it changes the role of the broker in urban slums, who now have to focus on providing highly targeted and personalised services to their clients.

Future work should consider whether similar patterns are found in other weak democracies to better understand the conditions under which clientelist networks offer links to the state for the world's hundreds of millions of slum dwellers. In addition, how does urban clientelism impact the voting behaviour of slum households in local and national elections? Under what conditions are urban clientelist networks more or less reliable voting blocs compared to those in more established democracies? Answering these questions would give us important insights into how

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clientelist networks in slums can be better governed, and perhaps even relied upon, to help improve the welfare of the urban poor.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There are no conflict of interests.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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ENDNOTES

[1] In rural clientelist networks, monopolistic brokers (landlords) often have the power to vary public goods provision along kinship, class or other socio-economic lines (see, e.g. Schmidt et al., 1977; Shami, 2012). Urban brokers tend to face competition so have fewer opportunities for this.

[2] As Auerbach (2019) notes, this integration is evident from the fact that brokers proudly display the party symbols on their doors and place the party's political posters on their walls. This clearly signals not just their affiliation but also their loyalty.

[3] Even here, politicians cannot be sure about brokers' loyalty so have to invest in extra monitoring (Berenschot & Aspinall, 2020).

[4] The paper is a non-intervention study relying on anonymous survey data with participant consent and without personal identifiers in the data collection or presentation of results.

[5] Report from Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate, Pakistan.

[6] ibid.

[7] These figures were provided by the Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate.

[8] An internal report from the Kathi-Abadi (slums) Directorate acknowledges this as being a major explanation for the rise and growth of slums.

[9] Report from Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate, Pakistan.

[10] Rashid Mahmood, Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate, Personal Interview, Lahore, 10 April 2015.

[11] Just recently, the local newspaper reported that the Chief Minister of Punjab has announced that residents of Katchi-Abadis (slums) will be granted property rights. This announcement is very close to the election next year. https://www.brecorder.com/news/40165492/punjab-cm-for-giving-ownership-rights-to-dwellers-of-katchi-abadis

[12] As noted in the Katchi-Abadis (slums) report, these are awarded to households that can prove residence in the slum prior to the cut-off date.

[13] This was also confirmed in a personal interview with the Katchi Abadis Directorate. Rashid Mahmood, Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate, Personal Interview, Lahore, 10 April 2015.

[14] ibid

[15] A list of all slums in Lahore was also obtained from a local NGO working on slum improvement. The two lists matched, thereby verifying its completeness; see generally Rains et al. (2019) for an overview of the difficulties in surveying slums. Rains, Krishna and Wibbels (2019) used a similar method. However, their different lists did not tally due to which they resorted to satellite imagery.

[16] Before starting the interview, the purpose of the project was explained in detail to the participant. They were also informed that the data would be used to publish academic articles and were assured that their data would be anonymised. The interview was only conducted once the participants gave their consent to continuing.

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[17] From past experience doing surveys, I had learnt that people do not like telling or discussing their age. This is partially driven by bad record keeping – particularly amongst older respondents. Asking the question upsets respondents due which it was decided to omit it.

[18] This is done by extending a wire from another house's connection.

[19] The survey asked households who people of influence are in the slum, what the basis of their influence is and which influential, if any, the household aligns with.

[20] A vote block is a group of voters who join, under the leadership of someone of influence, and vote collectively. The survey asked if the household was part of a vote block and who the head of the block was.

[21] This occurs when the household has bought the land and has a signed contract on official "stamp paper", but the transaction is not registered in the land registry. This document has no legal standing.

[22] Household ID 1009, inner city, unregistered slum.

[23] Household ID 6031, inner city, registered slum.

[24] Household ID 6014, inner city, registered slum.

[25] Household ID 12029, outskirt, unregistered slum.

[26] Household ID 9023, outskirt, registered slums.

[27] Household ID 12062, outskirt, unregistered slum.

[37] In most cases, the main service these households receive is assistance with getting the job.

[28] Conversation with slums' residents at the local square, where people came to socialise. This was in a registered slum in the inner city.

[29] An example is commission for jobs brokered for the household.

[30] Household ID 4018, inner city, registered slum.

[31] Household ID 1041, inner city, unregistered slum.

[32] Household ID 10051, outskirt unregistered slum.

[33] Observing drains and paved streets involved walking around the slums and noting on the map the types of drains and streets neighbourhoods had. This provided accurate data on the level of provision in the different slums.

[34] For each of the public goods, households were asked who played a role in providing them.

[35] This was confirmed in interviews with officials from the Katchi-Abadi (slums) Directorate.

[36] Disaggregating the data allows us to observe any differences that are averaged out in the aggregate data.

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