Campaign Finance and State Capture: Evidence from Benin

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Motivation 1

- Africa: experienced major democratic progress but poor governance; free and fair elections, but weak political institutions
- Weak institutional development allowed for clientelistic promises to narrow groups of citizens and favor private use of local government resources (Fujiwara & Wantchekon, 2013), (Khemani, 2016)
- Result: slow growth, high level of corruption, chronically weak state capacity, poor service delivery and low extent of programmatic politics.
- Similar democratic backslide around the world: Eastern Europe (Poland and Hungary), Eastern and Central Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi) and Latin America (Venezuela and Brazil)
- Need to rethink Africa's democratic institutional engineering from 1990 to the present

Motivation 2

- When analyzing clientelistic contracts, political scientists and economists tend to focus on politician-voter relationships without paying attention to
 - who sponsors
 - Why they sponsor
 - What they get in return
- Focus on lack of voter accountability instead of centering on state capture as a source of mis-governance
- Naive/incomplete view that politicians have mandate from voters
- In reality, voters might have very limited policy influence. Corportations may hold all the keys for governance
- Politicians might be hostages of business interests, specially in weak states. Not the other way around.

Basic questions

- Who govern? Who holds the real power to design and shape policies? Voters? Interest groups (particularly domestic and international firms)? Politicians? Traditional Rulers?
- How is this power exercised or maintained?
- What are the implicit and explicit contracts between key actors in government?
- Why is this important? This contract is the *de facto* institution of democracy and governance

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Suggestive evidence: Africa

- Benin's institutional capture: Businessmen invest, on aggregate, a total of 7,567,560,000 F CFA (\$13,080,443.46) in the recent electoral campaigns, that amounts for 70% of total campaign costs in return of control of bureaucratic recruitment control, procurement, etc.
- Togo and Guinea's bribery scandal: Bolloré investigated for campaign contribution to African leaders in exchange of security port concessions
- **Nigeria's godfathers**: very elaborate contractual arrangements between firms, brokers, and politicians including
 - control of government, through minister/cabinet, agencies or bureaucratic positions
 - control of specific budget lines & public procurement reservation
 - enforcement of unwritten contracts through threats

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Gupta Brothers Highjacking South Africa

- Gupta brothers drained up to \$7billion from the national treasury helped by former-President Jacob Zuma (forced to resign)
- Hold multiple billionaire procurement contracts, and power even to appoint very high bureaucratic positions
- "State capture" = coup d'état, waged with bribery instead of bullets.¹



Figure 1: Former-President Jacob Zuma (left) accused of helping the Gupta brothers: Rajesh, Ajay, and Atul

Ch, Hounkpe & Wantchekon (2019)

Suggestive evidence: other developing countries

- **Brazil's corruptocracy**: President Michel Temer scandal on existent JBS corporate favoritism (world's largest meat-packer company)
 - JBS spent R\$600m on bribes for 1,829 candidates of 28 parties in various elections
 - Lula & Dilma's corruption scandals, and use of Brazil's Development Bank and Petrobras to serve private companies (Mussachio & Lazzarini, 2014)
- **Oderbrecht's hand**: \$788m in bribes across 12 countries to advance company's position in Latin America (Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, etc.), Africa (Angola, Mozambique) and Europe (Portugal)

Suggestive evidence: developed countries

- Europe's grease payments: briberies to expand market position in developing countries
 - Greece: Novartis scandal in Turkey (2016)
 - Germany: Siemens bribery in Argentina, Venezuela, Bangladesh and Iraq (2008)
 - France: LafargeHolcim money to armed groups in Syria (2016)
 - Italy: Eni and Shell bribe-paying in Nigeria (2011)
 - Norway: Telia telecom bribery in Uzbekistan (2017)
- Not restricted to democracies: JPMorgan Chase & Co's bribery allegations in Libya under Qaddafi's regime

Literature

- Mapping de facto institutions
 - Importance since Dahl's (1961) "Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City"
 - More recent literature on family networks, firms and politicians (Cruz, Labonne and Querubin, 2017; Singer, 2009; among others)
- Clientelism contract
 - Contracts between politicians and voters (Wantchekon, 2003; Stokes, 2005; Bardhan and Mookerjee, 2017, among others)
 - Clientelist contract with brokers (Larreguy et al. 2017; Gallego, Li & Wantchekon, 2018; among others)
 - Firms left aside
- Crony Capitalism and State Capture
 - Politician-Business ties (Klor, Saiegh and Satyanath, 2017)
 - Capture of local institutions among others (Beath, Christia and Enikolopov, 2011; Ch et al., 2018)
 - Lack how firm's strategic decision making is affected by uncertainty

Literature

• Civic Engagement, Information and Governance

- CDDs and grass-root deliberative institutions are the fastest growing form of development assistance
- Evidence on the effectiveness of these projects are mixed results, at best (Olken, 2010; Casey et al., 2011; Humphreys et al., 2012; Raffler et al., 2017; Devarajan et al, 2013, Khemani, 2016 to name just a few)
- Need to re-think development spending:
 - CDDs address only the tie between politicians and voters, leaving aside the clientelistic contract between firms, politicians, and brokers
 - On the structure between firms and politicians (cause)
 - Methodologically, we need to separate the intrinsic effect of institutions from the effect of policy (Atchadé, Nguimkeu, and Wantchekon, 2018)

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This project

- Propose unified framework that integrates business interests and clientelist contracts involving politicians and voters
 - Firms invest in politicians and get a payback in the form of policy concessions and/or government control, undermining democracy
 - Investments and interest groups' demands depend endogenously on electoral uncertainty
- Test this theoretical insight with novel database on contractual arrangements between politicians, brokers and businessmen in Benin

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Why Benin?

- High electoral competition
- A case of thriving democratization mixed with poor governance and various degrees of local state capacity
- Pseudo decentralized political system allows for local politicians to have substantial freedom to shape local campaigns and agree to different contractual arrangements with their financial sponsors.

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- **Hypothesis 1**: More political competition implies higher electoral uncertainty, then firms increase government control
- Hypothesis 2: Less political competition implies lower electoral uncertainty, then firms prefer indirect forms of government control
- **Electoral Paradox**: business interest may undermine democratic consolidation which thrives with electoral uncertainty
 - Democratic backsliding driven at least in part by businesses interests

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Preliminary Results

- On the characterization of firms' investments in Benin:
 - Firms account for an average of 54.3 and 76.3% of the total campaign costs for commune and legislative level elections, respectively.
 - 83% of commune-level politicians are affiliated to a firm (List experiment)
 - Affiliation decreases to 45.6 for MPs, and non significant (List experiment)
- On the determinants of the form of firms' investments and demands:
 - Electoral districts that experience lower electoral competition show weaker firms' capture preferences: 1 std dev. in winning margin decreases reliance of more direct forms of state capture by -0.1684 std. dev.
 - Key to identification: positive and non-significant results found for MPs elections (placebo)
 - 2 Electoral districts that suffer a collapse on the number of candidates due to 2018 Electoral Reform show weaker firms' capture preferences and more transfers to firms: collapse generated a decrease of -0.259 std deviations on firms' capture preferences and an increase of 0.483 std deviations on local-level transfers.
- Thus, paradoxically, democratic consolidation which thrives with electoral uncertainty is undermined by business interests

Data

- To measure firms' political investment:
 - Structured Interviews of key players: campaign managers, CEOs of political connected firms, local brokers, among others
 - Novel dataset with a sample of 311 Beninese politicians (Deputies, Ministries, Mayors, etc.) as well as political brokers covering Benin's 12 departments and 77 communes, and 117 electoral districts
 - Given the difficulty to identify potential subjects to survey, a snowball sampling technique (or chain-referral sampling) was used
 - Cover period from 1991 to 2019, especially on current elections
- To measure electoral uncertainty:
 - CENA 2015 electoral district results by party, for commune and legislative elections
 - Construct measures of effective number of parties by electoral district using Laasko-Taagepera and Molinar Index
- Quantitative analysis to assess the effect of uncertainty on political contracts

There's a great deal of variation in Electoral Competition



Figure 2: Electoral Competition in Benin, Commune elections 2015

Why Benin

Ch, Hounkpe & Wantchekon (2019)

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And there's a great deal of private campaign financing: 54.3 and 76.3% of total campaign costs, for commune and legislative elections



Figure 3: Ratio of firms funding to campaign costs by type of election

Ch, Hounkpe & Wantchekon (2019)

Campaign Finance & State Capture

More on Campaign Funding

- Financial package are about 10,900,000 F CFA (\$18,838.524) and 47,600,000 F CFA (\$82,288.818) for rural and urban municipal elections, respectively.
- 37,300,000 F CFA (\$64,470.847) and 67,600,000 F CFA (\$116,842.61) are invested on rural and urban legislative campaigns, respectively

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According to Politicians, firms's account for 17% of total funding

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Ν
Commune level					
National funding	0.01	0.04	0	0	117
Department funding	0.00	0.02	0	0	117
Party/Party Coalition funding	0.31	0.26	0	1	117
President/President Party funding	0.21	0.27	0	1	117
Local firms funding	0.10	0.11	0	0	117
National firms funding	0.06	0.10	0	0	117
Local politicians funding	0.05	0.12	0	1	117
Local/National unions funding	0.01	0.02	0	0	117
Pourcentage provenant de autres	0.39	0.26	0	1	75
Legislative level					
National funding	0.04	0.12	0	1	96
Department funding	0.00	0.01	0	0	96
Party/Party Coalition funding	0.31	0.24	0	1	96
President/President Party funding	0.20	0.20	0	1	96
Local firms funding	0.09	0.11	0	1	96
National firms funding	0.08	0.10	0	0	96
Local politicians funding	0.03	0.06	0	0	96
Local/National unions funding	0.00	0.02	0	0	96
Pourcentage provenant de autres	0.38	0.27	0	1	63

Table 1: Politicians' sources of funding

Ch, Hounkpe & Wantchekon (2019)

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More on politicians' affiliations

- Affiliation to firms cannot be asked directly to subjects
 - Problems include lying—and more generally *social desirability bias* (Graeme & Imai 2012; Glynn 2013; Corstange 2009)
 - As well as ethical problems (such as the potential to put subjects or enumerators in danger)
- List experiments are useful to reveal information about sensitive issues (Graeme & Imai 2012)
- We ran a list experiment on politicians affiliation to firms
- Results show that 83% of commune-level politicians are affiliated to a firm (result significant to the 1%), while 45.6% of MPs have firm affiliation (but non significant)

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Table 2: Funding type from Firms' to Politicians

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Ν
Commune level					
Financial instruments	0.78	0.42	0	1	117
Goods/non financial services	0.56	0.50	0	1	117
Economic/Political advisors	0.23	0.42	0	1	117
Labor for campaign	0.35	0.48	0	1	117
Provision of space	0.45	0.50	0	1	117
Support for advertisement	0.49	0.50	0	1	117
Other forms of financing	0.02	0.13	0	1	117
Legislative level					
Financial instruments	0.82	0.38	0	1	96
Goods/non financial services	0.65	0.48	0	1	96
Economic/Political advisors	0.25	0.44	0	1	96
Labor for campaign	0.48	0.50	0	1	96
Provision of space	0.46	0.50	0	1	96
Support for advertisement	0.44	0.50	0	1	96
Other forms of financing	0.02	0.14	0	1	96

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Empirical strategy

- We consider two alternatives:
 - Estimate effect of commune-level political competition (winning margin) on firms' capture preferences conditional on cross-municipal socio-demographic covariates, and surveyor fixed effects
 - Placebo test using legislative elections: MPs in Benin do not hold control over national or regional level procurementand budgeting, neither say on national or regional bureaucratic positions.
 - Exploit a quasi-exogenous shock introduced by the 2018 Electoral Reform that -among other features²- collapsed the existent multiparty system to a two-party block competition.
 - treatment group: electoral districts with multiple parties competing in 2015 who got collapsed in 2019
 - control group: districts already under a *de facto* two-party system in 2015
- Dependent variable: Firms' capture demands to politicians to proxy political investment and government capture

²Reform increased bail to contend for presidential election, decrease the amount of state resources to fund campaigns by 50%, introduced campaign_caps, etc. \Rightarrow \Rightarrow \Rightarrow

Ch, Hounkpe & Wantchekon (2019)

Parties collapse to proxy for electoral competition

• Proxy electoral competition by using the collapse in the effective number of parties due to the reform



Figure 4: Effective number of parties and electoral competition in 2015

Firm capture index

- refunds get a value of 0
- policies and program changes a value of 1
- support for future candidates close to firms' interests a value of 2
- control of a budget line a value of 3
- public procurement a value of 4
- patronage 5
- bureaucratic recruitment control a value of 6

Empirical strategy

Two specifications: OLS at the electoral district level:

$$y_d = \alpha + \gamma_d + \beta Winning Margin_d + \Phi X_d + \Theta W_i + \epsilon_d$$
 (1)

$$y_d = \alpha + \gamma_d + \beta \text{Electoral Reform}_d + \Phi \mathbf{X}_d + \Theta \mathbf{W}_i + \epsilon_d$$
(2)

where:

- y_d is either a dummy of any of the demands pushed by firms' on politicians or firm capture index in a district d
- Winning Margin_d for the 2015 commune-level elections;
- Electoral Reform_d is a dummy that takes a value of 1 if a commune-level electoral district had more than 2.5 effective number of parties as measured by a Molinar Index for the 2015 commune-level elections, and 0 otherwise;
- X_d is a vector of commune-level control variables
- W_i is a vector of politician-level characteristics
- γ_d district fixed-effect
- Standard errors clustered at the electoral district level

Ch, Hounkpe & Wantchekon (2019)

Preliminary Results

Table 3: Effect of Electoral Competition (winning margin) on Firms' preference for direct capture, Beta coefficients

Dependent variable: firm capture index						
	Municipal-level	Legislative-level				
Winning margin	-0.1684*** (0.0801)	0.0535 (0.0736)				
Observations	117	96				
R-squared	0.480	0.370				
Controls ^b	\checkmark	\checkmark				
Commune FE	\checkmark	\checkmark				

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the commune level; Significance-level: *** 0.1%; ** 1%; * 5%; and $^+$ 10%, refers to two-sided t-tests. Outcome measured in standardized terms.

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Table 4: Balance table, Politicians characteristics in electoral districts affected and not affected by Electoral Reform

	Mean Control	Mean Treatment	Diff	Diff. S.E.	р
Title: politician (=1) or broker (=0)	0.893	0.787	0.106	0.085	0.212
Mayor	0.036	0.045	-0.009	0.044	0.835
Age	46.500	45.854	0.646	2.313	0.780
Years living in region	39.429	39.933	-0.504	3.125	0.872
No education	0.107	0.011	0.096	0.039	0.015
Elementary	0.071	0.000	0.071	0.028	0.011
College 1st cycle	0.286	0.146	0.140	0.083	0.095
College 2nd cycle	0.143	0.202	-0.059	0.085	0.487
University 1st cycle	0.107	0.258	-0.151	0.090	0.095
University 2nd cycle	0.250	0.258	-0.008	0.095	0.930
Graduate	0.036	0.124	-0.088	0.066	0.184
Member Political Party	1.000	0.966	0.034	0.034	0.329
Participated in elections as candidate	0.786	0.764	0.022	0.092	0.814
Participated Commune-level Elections	0.955	0.956	-0.001	0.051	0.979
Participated Legislative-level Elections	0.136	0.147	-0.011	0.087	0.903
Num. Participations in Commune Elections	1.455	1.662	-0.207	0.193	0.287
Num. Participations Legislative Elections	0.182	0.147	0.035	0.097	0.721
Paty switch	0.429	0.651	-0.223	0.200	0.268
Paty switch 2	0.545	0.552	-0.006	0.226	0.978
Ideology reason	0.364	0.557	-0.194	0.122	0.116
Poor project definition	0.227	0.343	-0.116	0.114	0.314
Personal interest	0.318	0.457	-0.139	0.121	0.255
Opposition to movement	0.773	0.614	0.158	0.117	0.177
Movement towards opposition	0.000	0.086	-0.086	0.060	0.159
First time runner	0.214	0.247	-0.033	0.093	0.725
Hold political position	0.679	0.730	-0.052	0.098	0.599
Hold private position	0.321	0.337	-0.016	0.103	0.880

Table 5: Effect of Electoral Reform on Firms' demands

Dependent variable:

	refund	policies	program change	support candidate	budget line
Electoral Reform (decrease uncertainty)	-0.0000	-0.6481***	-1.0992***	0.0000	0.4829***
Observations R-squared Controls ^b Commune FE	117 0.327 ✓ ✓ procurement	117 0.544 ✓ ✓ patronage	117 0.466 ✓ ✓	117 0.415 \checkmark recruitment control	117 0.739 ✓ firm capture index
Electoral Reform (decrease uncertainty)	-0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.4374*** (0.0000)	-0.4365*** (0.0000)	-0.6061*** (0.0000)	-0.2595*** (0.0000)
Observations R-squared Controls ^b	117 0.508 √	117 0.402 √	117 0.494 √	117 0.506 ✓	117 0.391 √
Commune FE	✓	✓	√	√	

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Table 6: Effect of Electoral Reform on use of Nonprogrammatic Politics andTransfers to Business Interests

Dependent variable:	Non-conditional transfers	Pork expenses	Pro-business transfers	Non visible expenses
Electoral Reform (decrease uncertainty)	0.7186*** (0.0000)	-0.7240***	0.4834*** (0.0000)	-0.1202*** (0.0000)
Observations	117	117	117	117
R-squared	0.399	0.446	0.422	0.509
Controls ^b	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Commune FE	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark

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Proposal for Institutional Reforms

- Financial Disclosure
- Policy Deliberation
- Judicial Review of Political Appointments
- Anti-trust regulation
- Bottom up pressure for institutional reform

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Appendix

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Balance table, List experiment on Politicians affiliation to firms

	Mean Control	Mean Treatment	Diff	Diff. S.E.	р
Title: politician (=1) or broker (=0)	0.836	0.796	0.040	0.047	0.395
Deputy	0.047	0.071	-0.024	0.028	0.379
Minister	0.005	0.000	0.005	0.007	0.498
Mayor	0.066	0.020	0.045	0.027	0.093
Municipal Council Member	0.333	0.306	0.027	0.057	0.635
Cabinet Director	0.005	0.031	-0.026	0.014	0.060
Other	0.545	0.571	-0.027	0.061	0.660
Age	49.286	44.122	5.164	1.314	0.000
Years living in region	38.756	35.122	3.633	2.096	0.084
No education	0.019	0.010	0.009	0.015	0.578
Elementary	0.038	0.020	0.017	0.022	0.427
College 1st cycle	0.150	0.041	0.109	0.039	0.005
College 2nd cycle	0.155	0.122	0.032	0.043	0.451
University 1st cycle	0.169	0.153	0.016	0.045	0.725
University 2nd cycle	0.254	0.367	-0.114	0.055	0.040
Graduate	0.216	0.286	-0.070	0.052	0.181
Member Political Party	0.967	0.980	-0.012	0.021	0.544
Participated in elections as candidate	0.751	0.643	0.108	0.055	0.049
Participated Commune-level Elections	0.881	0.857	0.024	0.049	0.627
Participated Legislative-level Elections	0.362	0.397	-0.034	0.072	0.635
Participated Presidential-level Elections	0.013	0.016	-0.003	0.017	0.845
Num. Participations in Commune Elections	1.500	1.429	0.071	0.127	0.575
Num. Participations Legislative Elections	0.562	0.651	-0.088	0.141	0.531
Num. Participations Presidential Elections	0.006	0.063	-0.057	0.041	0.163
Paty switch	0.476	0.625	-0.149	0.109	0.170
Paty switch 2	0.739	0.667	0.072	0.141	0.610
Ideology reason	0.439	0.595	-0.155	0.071	0.029
Poor project definition	0.291	0.365	-0.074	0.066	0.263
Personal interest	0.534	0.432	0.101	0.071	0.156
Opposition to movement	0.568	0.514	0.054	0.071	0.448
Movement towards opposition	0.149	0.149	0.000	0.051	1.000
Running for next elections (2019)	1.319	1.286	0.034	0.057	0.554
Running for Commune Elections (2019)	0.724	0.671	0.053	0.066	0.429
Running for Legislative Elections (2019)	0.414	0.514	-0.100	0.072	0.166
Running for Presidential Elections (2019)	0.000	0.029	-0.029	0.014	0.041
First time runner	0.255	0.300	-0.045	0.065	0.490
Hold political position	0.779	0.724	0.055	0.052	0.293
Hold private position	0.352	0.388	-0.036	0.059	0.545

ListExperiment