THESIS TOPIC
Informal Institutions and Governance: Examining the Impact of Clientelism on Electoral Accountability in Rural Punjab, Pakistan

ABSTRACT
Elections are instruments of democratic good governance. These empower citizens to formally participate in the policy making process by expressing their will and choosing between policy alternatives presented by the contending candidates and political parties, and hold them accountable through their vote. Nonetheless, poverty and dependence undermines the choices of the electorates through patron-client networks. This study measures the extent to which electoral politics in rural Punjab is dominated by clientelism and examines its impact on electoral accountability in the country. Quantitative and qualitative evidence from district Kasur of the Punjab province suggests that electoral politics in rural Punjab is dominated by clientelism which undermines electoral accountability in the country. Correlational analysis of the three indices of; dependence, clientelistic voting choices and electoral accountability capacity suggests that more dependent a household is the more clientelistic it is in its voting choices and is less able to hold accountable its vote bloc leader or candidate for legislative assembly.

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