

Proposed Research

2008-2011 Persistent Poverty and Upward Mobility Theme Project
Institute for the Social Sciences, Cornell University

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I propose to use my research allocation to help me advance my book project on the relationship between political clientelism and democracy. As I suggested in my earlier proposal to the theme project, I hypothesize that democratization changes both the nature and the function of political clientelism in political systems. I would like to test this hypothesis with contemporary empirical materials from the Africa region, as well as historical materials from the industrialized countries. Political clientelism is one kind of linkage between citizens and politicians, and is closely related to others, including service provision. My project's link to the ISS theme project's concerns should be clear, since the provision of social services is one of the main mechanisms of poverty alleviation and social mobility. The impact of democratization on service provision and in bringing about forms of clientelism that are more overtly redistributive, will be one of the issues I wish to investigate in field work in the next year or so. The research for this book will include archival and library research, field work in at least two African countries, and some data and statistical analysis. At present, I foresee the field work involving mostly interviewing of elites, notably of political parties and members of national legislatures, possibly during an electoral period.