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Revisiting clientelism: A network analysis of problem-solving networks in Argentina

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ABSTRACT

Clientelism is a problem-solving network where brokers solve voter problems by providing material and non-material resources in exchange of political support.

The literature emphasis on political networks ignores the existence of non-political networks, such as money lending, childcare, and counseling, that also contribute to solve voter problems. This paper uses original data collected by the author in Villa Angel, a densely populated working-class neighborhood located on the outskirts of Buenos Aires City, to show that a broker's central position in non-political networks explains his or her ability to influence vote choice. Consequently, to understand the effects that problem-solving networks have on political behavior, researchers and policy makers have to pay attention to the overlap and relationships between political and non-political networks.

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1. Introduction

Clientelism is a problem-solving network, where the flow of goods is conditional upon its political payment in electoral support. Voters engage in clientelistic relationships to solve their everyday problems by exchanging electoral support for goods. Without networks of party brokers, parties are unable to use clientelistic strategies to mobilize voters given that they are unable to target and deliver goods to voters, as well as to monitor their electoral responses. Party brokers are individuals that represent, either formally as elected candidates or informally as not-elected candidates, a political party in a neighborhood. Yet, besides the significant role that party brokers and political networks play in the literature to explain how clientelism works, we have little systematic information about them.

Existing explanations assume that party brokers influence voter turnout and choice by solving their everyday problems. Voters participate in rallies and support the party candidate either because they feel they have to reciprocate brokers for solving their problems or because they fear being stripped from benefits if they fail to participate. Without resources brokers will be unable to solve voter problems and voters will not be subjected to follow brokers out of gratitude or fear. Yet, if voters' everyday problems are not been solved through political, but non-political networks, the causal argument needs to be revisited. By studying political and non-political problem-solving networks, this paper shows that it

is a broker's capacity to solve problems and not his or her political affiliation that explains his or her capacity to induce voters to turn out and support the party. Moreover, a broker's capacity to solve problems is not necessarily determined by his or her political affiliation. In fact, this paper shows that a broker without political affiliation is more effective in mobilizing voters than a broker with political affiliation.

Assuming that a broker's partisanship affiliation explains his or her access to resources fails to recognize cases where brokers without a partisanship affiliation are equally or even better able to solve voter problems. Although brokers representing an incumbent party are more likely to have access to information and contacts in the municipality that enable them to get a bed in a public hospital, inform their voters about temporary work opportunities at City Hall, and about the distribution of bags of food, this paper shows that it is a broker's capacity to have access to goods that explains their success in mobilizing voters. Hence, as long as brokers are effective in solving voter problems, they are likely to succeed in mobilizing voters regardless of their partisanship affiliation.

Yet, though partisanship and access to goods could be, and in most cases are, correlated; in cases where these two do not overlap it is important to notice that brokers could have other, alternative, and even more effective paths to get access to goods.

By studying the political and non-political networks residents of a working-class neighborhood in Buenos Aires employ to solve their problems, this paper shows that in focusing on formal or informal political representation, scholars and policy makers fail to identify individuals who, besides not being affiliated with any political party, are, nevertheless, much more influential in affecting voter turnout and choice. By non-political problem-solving

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networks, I refer to relationships that enable voters to solve problems unrelated to politics such as money lending, babysitting, and counseling. The study presented here examines the effect non-political networks have on political networks. Specifically, I study how non-political networks have a significant effect on voter turnout and choice.

This paper takes advantage of original data collected by the author over four months of fieldwork in Villa Angel, a densely populated working-class neighborhood located on the outskirts of the Buenos Aires City. By studying the political and non-political networks that women living in the neighborhood employ to solve their everyday problems, this work challenges the assumption that party brokers are the most influential actors in shaping voters' decisions to turn out and support political parties.

2. The political effects of non-political problem-solving networks

Building on network analysis' understanding of power as inherently relational, I claim that brokers do not have power in the abstract, but in concrete situations where voters followed them. This implies that broker's ability to influence vote choice varies based on their positions in problem-solving networks. This paper hypothesizes that a broker's central position in non-political networks explains their ability to influence vote choice. I argue that brokers who only focus on political issues, such as voter mobilization to participate in rallies and elections, could be less effective in influencing vote turnout and choice than brokers who focus on non-political, everyday problem-solving networks such as childcare and counseling.

Classic (Schmidt et al., 1977; Scott, 1969) and recent (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Schaffer, 2007; Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2008; Stokes, 2007) studies on political clientelism mention the important role that networks play in providing goods to voters. Calvo and Murillo (2004) write that "political networks built around party activists, supply politicians with information about the voter's needs and the expected returns from targeting different types of voters" (p. 2). Yet, as Auyero (2000) highlighted a decade ago "little is known about the actual workings of clientelist networks at the grassroots level in contemporary Latin America" (p. 74). His seminal contribution about Peronist networks in Villa Paraiso highlighted the importance of problem solving in poor people's everyday life. Still, the focus of his work was on interpreting the "subjective dimension" of Peronist clientelism (p. 75) by examining how voters understood those exchanges.

Scholars have provided different, although often complementary, reasons to explain why voters support brokers. In Argentina, the works of Auyero (2000), Brusco et al. (2004), and Stokes (2005) represent the different explanations advanced to answer the same question. On the one hand, Auyero (2000) argues that the reasons are found in enduring relationships and in the history of shared cultural representations. The author claims that it is not "because favors, goods, and services circulate one way and support attendance and rallies, and – ultimately – votes circulate the other way, the former are causing the latter, that is, that votes and support come because of goods, services and particular favors" (p. 23). In this view, clientelism reinforces existing relationships where clients follow brokers. On the other hand, the works of Brusco et al. (2004) and Stokes (2005), show how strategies of perverse accountability such as buying and monitoring voters explain voters' electoral participation. Through survey data from three Argentine provinces (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Misiones), Brusco et al. (2004) shows that clientelistic inducements act as probabilistic selective incentives by inducing voters to view the future flow of valued goods as conditional on their support for the machine. With

regard to norms of reciprocity, the authors find that the capacity of handouts to generate feelings of gratitude and a sense of obligation are limited. In addition, they demonstrate that poor voter assessments of past government behavior (retrospective support) and future programs (prospective support) are not significantly different from those of wealthier voters.

Whereas Auyero's (2000) study aids the understanding of voter participation in terms of shared cultural practices, Brusco et al. (2004) and Stokes (2005) focus on the ability of brokers to monitor voters during elections. My work challenges these explanations by questioning the assumption that voters follow party brokers' advice in making electoral choices. Instead, I argue that voters follow individuals who are central to solving their everyday problems. In this regard, party brokers' capacities to influence voters' electoral choices vary based on their ability to solve voter problems. Extant work mistakenly assumes that brokers are key agents in solving voters' everyday problem. Yet, in cases where party brokers are unable to provide solutions or other agents are able to solve problems it is unclear who is influencing voters' electoral choices.

Building on Auyero's (1999, 2000) research on Peronist survival networks, this paper focuses on studying problem-solving networks, regardless of their relationship with politics. Auyero's argument sustains that brokers solve voter problems by controlling information and resources that they obtain through their formal or informal affiliation to the Peronist party. Without political linkages brokers are unable to control information and resources and thus cannot solve problems and build a following. Yet, by studying non-political problem-solving networks, I find that politics is one among many sources to solve voter problems. By focusing on several problem-solving networks, I show that individuals who hold central positions in both non-political and political networks are more effective in influencing voter participation than individuals who only hold central positions in political networks.

The argument advanced in this paper claims that a party broker is not necessarily the most important actor in influencing voter participation in a neighborhood. I argue that voters follow the advice of individuals who help them by solving their problems, regardless of their partisan affiliation. A broker who is not affiliated to a party but is, nevertheless, effective in solving voter problems is more likely to influence a voter's decision about which rally to attend and for whom to vote than a broker who is affiliated to a party but unable to solve the voters' problems. It is a broker's capacity to solve problems and not his or her political affiliation that explains their capacity to influence voter participation at rallies and voter choice on Election Day. Consequently, in order to identify effective from ineffective brokers, scholars and policy makers alike should observe who is solving problems in the community; and not who is formally or informally representing the party in the neighborhood.

This paper claims that voters ask for political advice from different individuals, including the party broker. Yet, at the time of deciding whose advice to follow, that is, in which rallies to participate and for whom to vote for at the ballot box, voters follow brokers who are more effective in solving their everyday problems. In this regard, I criticize the assumption that party brokers will always be more effective in influencing voters' political decisions to participate at rallies and elections and vote for their candidate. Instead, I contend that voters will support party brokers only in cases where the party brokers are also the most effective brokers in solving their problems.

Therefore, I question the assumption that party brokers are, by definition, important political actors. Instead, I argue that to understand who is an important party broker we need to look beyond political networks. By measuring the centrality of individuals in political and non-political networks, we enhance our understanding of the multiple relationships that take place in each

Table 1
Hypotheses and expected findings.

		Centrality in political problem-solving network	
		High	Low
Centrality in non-political problem-solving network	High	*Effective* party broker	*Social* broker
	Low	*Ineffective* party broker	Ineffective party and social broker

neighborhood and gain a better understanding of who is influencing whom.

Table 1 illustrates the implications of my argument and highlights how it differs from existing explanations. In the lower-right corner are individuals who do not hold a central position in either political or non-political networks and are therefore ineffective in influencing voter turnout and choice. In contrast, in the upper-left corner are brokers who enjoy high centrality in both networks and are therefore effective in influencing voter turnout and choice. In the lower-left corner are brokers who although holding central positions in political networks, are ineffective in affecting voter turnout and choice. I hypothesize that it is the combination of a broker's centrality in political and non-political networks that makes her effective in influencing voter turnout and choice. Hence, centrality in political networks alone does not necessary translate to efficacy in persuading and mobilizing voters.

Social brokers who hold central positions in non-political networks, but low centrality in political networks have the potential to become party brokers. In choosing to represent a political party in the neighborhood, social brokers could become party brokers. Yet, as long as brokers prefer not to work for politicians in the neighborhood, their centrality in non-political networks will not translate into political capital.

In studying the overlap between political and non-political problem-solving networks, this paper contributes to further building theories of clientelistic linkages by advancing a distinction between social and political brokers. To be effective in mobilizing voters to turn out and vote, brokers not only have to hold central positions in political, but also in non-political networks. I also argue that social brokers have the potential to become party brokers, if they prefer to participate in political networks.

3. Case selection and data

To test the theory advanced in this paper, I study the networks the *manzaneras* living in Villa Angel employed to solve their problems. *Manzaneras* are women who distribute benefits from the *Plan Vida* (Program for Life) in the neighborhood. *Plan Vida* is the largest food-distribution program in Argentina, targeting infants and pregnant and nursing mothers by providing them with milk and cereals daily, eggs weekly, and sugar monthly. Beneficiaries receive the goods from the hands of a *manzanera*, who in exchange for participating in the program obtain the same benefits as those enrolled in the program, irrespective of whether they are pregnant, nursing, or have infants.

The plan won national visibility in 1997, three years after it was launched, when its creator and director, also the wife of the governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, Chiche Duhalde, decided to run for national deputy. As the largest electoral district and a stronghold of the Peronist party, the province of Buenos Aires became the election's battleground. The combination of poverty and voter concentration in the Great Buenos Aires, where one quarter (8.7 million residents) of the country's total population resides in 1.2% of the territory, with the highest percentage of unemployed and illegally employed workers.

The concentration and visibility of the *manzaneras* in Greater Buenos Aires inevitably put these women at the center of the political campaign. At the time of the election there were 27,355 women distributing *Plan Vida*'s goods to 838,615 beneficiaries in 1704 neighborhoods in the Greater Buenos Aires.[1] The public opinion associated *Plan Vida* with traditional forms of political clientelism where the votes of the poor are bought with minor consumption goods—in this case with food.

This paper uses information gathered through four months of ethnographic work in Villa Angel, a working-class neighborhood in Greater Buenos Aires, which is representative of a larger universe of cases in the province. In Villa Angel, most residents live in precarious and overcrowded homes that do not have indoor plumbing. They lack employment, health insurance, and the children suffer from malnutrition and treatable diseases. The extent of the effects unemployment has had in the community is devastating. Among the families of most beneficiaries, *Plan Vida* was not only contributing to feeding children, but entire families. Among the 5000 people that live in Villa Angel's 40 blocks, 70% are children and teenagers, and 8.4% are senior citizens. Women on average have five children, more than half of the population has not finished high school, and a significant number of household heads, particularly women, have not finished primary school. Based on these indicators, municipal authorities chose residents of Villa Angel to receive the goods of the *Plan Vida*.[2]

Ethnographic data includes a field diary, direct observations and participation in delivering goods for the program during four months of fieldwork in 2000, transcripts of recorded in-depth interviews with *manzaneras* and beneficiaries that lasted on average 3 h each, and archival research in municipal, provincial, and national newspapers.[3] To trace changes in the community over time, I conducted follow-up interviews with the *manzaneras* in Villa Angel in 2002, 2005, and 2009. During these years, I did not gather systematic data about the problem-solving networks, but, rather, traced changes in the relationships Rosa, Carmen, Magdalena, and Eve had among themselves and with the neighbors of Villa Angel. I used this information to provide an analytical narrative of the construction, reproduction, and changes observed in the problem-solving networks of Villa Angel.

Network data was gathered by administering a survey to the 20 *manzaneras* in charge of delivering *Plan Vida*'s goods in Villa Angel. The neighborhood's social worker, the director of the school, and the director of the community center (*sociedad de fomento*) selected a group of women who had young children, and/or tended to volunteer in the community to distribute the program. Fig. 1 provides a map of Villa Angel illustrating the 40 blocks that compose a geographically limited neighborhood where *manzaneras* deliver goods to the beneficiaries who live on their block or in a contiguous one.

In delivering goods to neighbors on a daily basis, *manzaneras* were effective in gathering information about residents that ranged from their personal problems to their electoral preferences as well as building and sustaining networks to solve problems. Studying
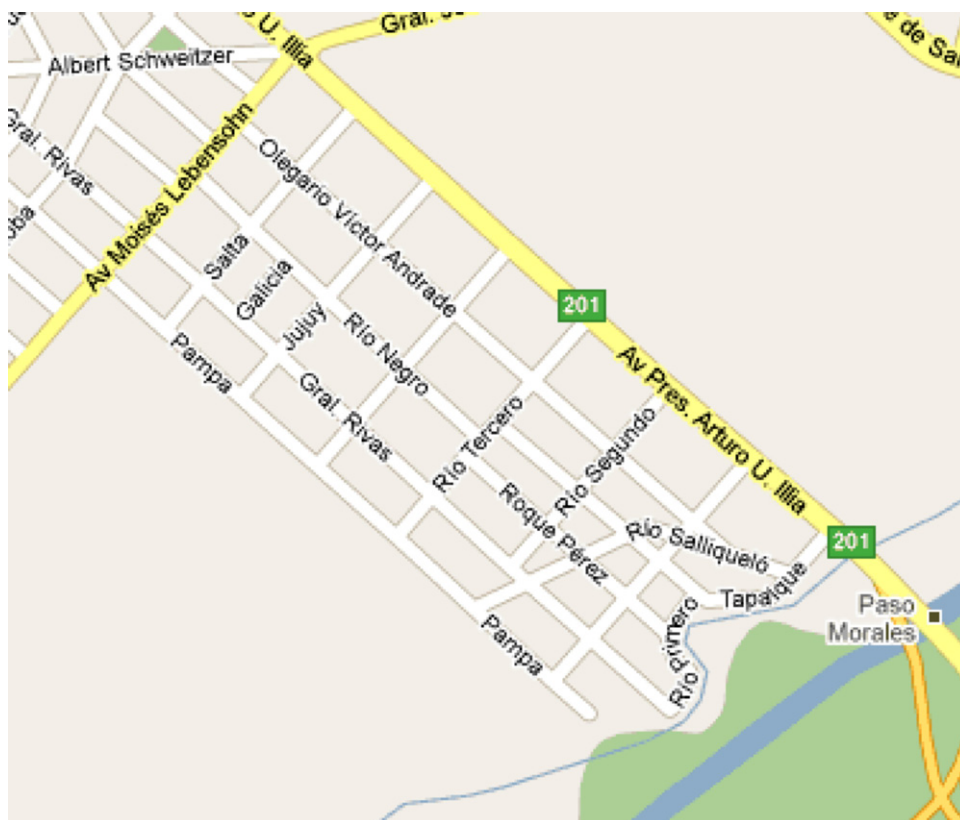
Fig. 1. Map of Villa Angel.

the unexpected effects of the *Plan Vida* in the *manzaneras*, Szwarcberg (2011) shows how the program has enabled many of the participants to enhance their ability to negotiate their role and status within their communities. In this article, I focus on studying how *manzaneras* solve their everyday problems with regard to money lending, political advice, baby sitting, and counseling. I focused on these four networks because they represent the more frequently mentioned problems of residents in Villa Angel. Ethnographic work conducted in the neighborhood by a group of local sociologists for the Center for Latin American Social Policy at the University of Texas provides further support to the findings presented in this article.[4]

Building on the *manzaneras' responses* to a closed-question survey described in Table 2, I constructed four matrices that capture the flow of material and non-material resources exchanged to solve problems. Matrix I captures Villa Angel's *money lending* structure. It is based on the responses of those who both give and ask for loans. The type of loans analyzed here involved small amounts of money, and are generally used to pay the utility and telephone bills, to do grocery shopping, to buy college supplies, or to buy medicine. Matrix II examines *political advice*, i.e. who advises whom regarding for whom to vote in the upcoming election. Matrix III captures who people trust to look after their children—babysitting—in case they have to leave them alone to go to the hospital, to work, or to visit some relative. Matrix IV shows who discusses with whom

their personal problems when asking for advice. This is what I refer to as *counseling*.

This paper studies the problem-solving networks employed by Villa Angel's *manzaneras*. By focusing on the *manzaneras*, I was able to survey every subject involved in the networks while controlling for variation in the community's history and macro socio-economic indicators that could have affected the network's respondents employed to solve their problems. Case studies, such as the one proposed here, contribute to generate hypotheses while providing causal insights into the mechanisms at play in problem solving. Still, one of the limitations of conducting a small-N study concerns generalizability.

While this study focuses on the *manzaneras*, qualitative work conducted in the neighborhood (Kessler et al., 2009) and ethnographic data collected by the author suggest that these women are indeed representative of the beneficiaries who live in Villa Angel. As a result, in studying the *manzaneras* in particular, I am gaining important insights in understanding how Villa Angel's residents solve their everyday problems.

The overlap and interactions among political and non-political problem-solving networks are not particular to Buenos Aires, Argentina, or Latin America. Indeed, there are good reasons to expect that the relationships investigated in this paper also take place in other neighborhoods, cities, and countries. Further research is needed to either validate or refute the theory and findings advanced in this article.

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[4] I refer to the paper presented by Kessler, Gabriel, Fernando Santiago, and Marina Garcia for the program on "Self-sustaining Community Development in Comparative Perspective" Center for Latin American Social Policy, University of Texas. The title of the project was: "*La articulación de actors en el desempeño de las políticas sociales. Estudio de caso: la comunidad de Barrufladi en el Conurbano Bonaerense.*" (The articulation of actors in social policy. "Case Study: The community of Barrufaldi in the Great Buenos Aires.")

4. Puzzle and hypotheses

Villa Angel is a stronghold of the Justicialist (Peronist) Party (*Partido Justicialista*, PJ). Rosa was the party representative in the neighborhood, and following existing theories, I expected her to have a significant effect on voter turnout and choice. Yet, contrary to

Table 2
Questions and problem-solving networks.

Problem-solving networks	Question
Political advice (Matrix I)	During elections, when you have to choose who to vote for. Who do you ask for advice?
Money lending (Matrix II)	When you are out of cash and you need money to pay utility bills, buy food and/or school supplies for your children, whom do you ask to lend you some money?
Babysitting (Matrix III)	When you have to go to work, to attend a doctor's appointment, or to go somewhere that demands that you leave your children alone. Whom do you ask to babysit your children?
Counseling (Matrix IV)	When you have a problem or you feel like talking about personal issues. With whom do you share your feelings, with whom do you talk with?

the received wisdom, I found that Carmen, another resident of Villa Angel without any partisanship affiliation, played a more important role in influencing voter turnout and choice than Rosa, a Peronist party broker. Why was Carmen, a resident of Villa Angel without any political affiliation, more effective in persuading voters to turn out and support a party candidate than Rosa, the party broker?

To answer this question, this article studies the centrality of individuals in both political and non-political problem-solving networks. To understand who is the most effective broker in a given locality, it is not enough to identify the political broker. One needs to observe who is solving voters' everyday problems. As the case of Villa Angel nicely illustrates, while people turned to Rosa to be told who to vote for, they chose to follow Carmen's advice because she was better able to solve their problems than the Peronist party broker.

To show that what determines a party brokers' capacity to influence voter turnout and choice is his or her centrality in the non-political networks, I measure and compare brokers' centrality in political and non-political networks. By graphing and measuring networks in Villa Angel, I show that Carmen's centrality in the non-political networks of Villa Angel makes her more effective than Rosa, who only holds a central position in the political network of the neighborhood. Still, correlation is not causation, and to explain what makes the non-Peronist's broker more effective than the Peronist's broker, I provide an analytical narrative (Bates, 1998) that examines Carmen's strategic actions to accumulate power and preserve it by inhibiting competing ties and becoming a close friend of potential rivals.

5. Graphing and analyzing problem-solving networks in Villa Angel

To test the hypotheses advanced in this paper, I study Villa Angel's problem-solving networks by graphically illustrating and measuring these networks. Fig. 2 graphs the political network showing that while everyone but Nélida and Rosa ask for Carmen's advice, Marta, Nancy, Jacinta, Gladys, Roa, Carmen, Hilaria, Laura, and Huga do not consult Rosa. Fig. 2 also shows Magdalena's potential of becoming a party broker. As I will argue below, Magdalena is what I called a social broker, i.e. an influential actor who can easily turn out to be party broker. Yet, Magdalena's potential as a considerable contender for political power will be discarded after a closer analysis of her own weaknesses.

I define and measure an individual's weaknesses and strengths in the problem-solving networks by counting the number of people they contact to solve their problems. Intuitively, the more resourceful the individual, the fewer the individuals she will need to get in touch with to solve her problems. Still, as this paper shows, resourceful individuals who would not need others help to solve their problem, could, however, ask for help from others for strategic purposes. In cases where asking others for help contributes to building meaningful relationships based upon trust and loyalty, I expect

to observe brokers acting strategically to ask for help even though they actually do not need those favors to solve their problems.

These definitions of weakness and strength in problem-solving networks have clear implications for measurement. In frequently asking others for help or assistance in solving problems, weakness is high outdegree. In contrast, strength is high indegree in that others ask more frequently for the individual's advice and help to solve their problems.

Fig. 3 illustrates the problem-solving network of money lending that represents who asks for monetary loans from whom in Villa Angel. As it graphically shows, Carmen, Rosa, and Gladys are Villa Angel's moneylenders. Even when other actors like Magdalena, Eve, Nélida, and Cecilia are also engaged in money lending, they do not do it with the same intensity as those mentioned above. Moreover, assuming that centrality in this network is based on being recognized as someone who gives money loans; we expect that those interested in being acknowledged as moneylenders will try to hide their insolvency.

Consequently, we would expect that in cases of financial problems, money lenders will only ask money from those who will make their vulnerability the least visible. Fig. 3 provides evidence for this argument showing that while Rosa turns to Carmen and vice versa, Gladys recurs to Eve and Carmen, and the non-money-lenders: Magdalena, Eve, Nélida, and Cecilia ask for money from at least two more individuals each.

Regarding Magdalena's central position in this network, I argue that she enjoys a central position as a moneylender even though her weakness surpasses her strength. This could be interpreted as either downplaying Magdalena's centrality in the network or as a strategy used for building power. This last one will consist in purposely instituting a reciprocity measure with those who asked for money. For instance, Magdalena asks for money when she does not need it "so people do not feel guilty to ask money from me."[5] Yet, this explanation does not account for why Magdalena asks for money from more people than those who asked her. If, as she declares, her intention is to avoid people's feeling of shame when asking her for money: why does she also ask for money from those who do not recur to her? This fact remains puzzling.

It is worth noting Gladys's centrality as a moneylender. This fact, combined with her central position in other non-political networks, demonstrates that her behavior is consistent with her declared willingness not to get involved in politics. That is, even when she is an effective figure in the neighborhood she decides not to engage in providing political advice.

Women in Villa Angel have on average five children and thus childcare is a crucial problem-solving network for residents in the neighborhood. To work part-time, to attend a hospital appointment, to visit some relatives, or in any other event that requires leaving the children alone, Villa Angel's residents have to resort to

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[5] Interview conducted by the author in Villa Angel, Argentina; my translation. This and all subsequent translations from the Spanish are by the author.
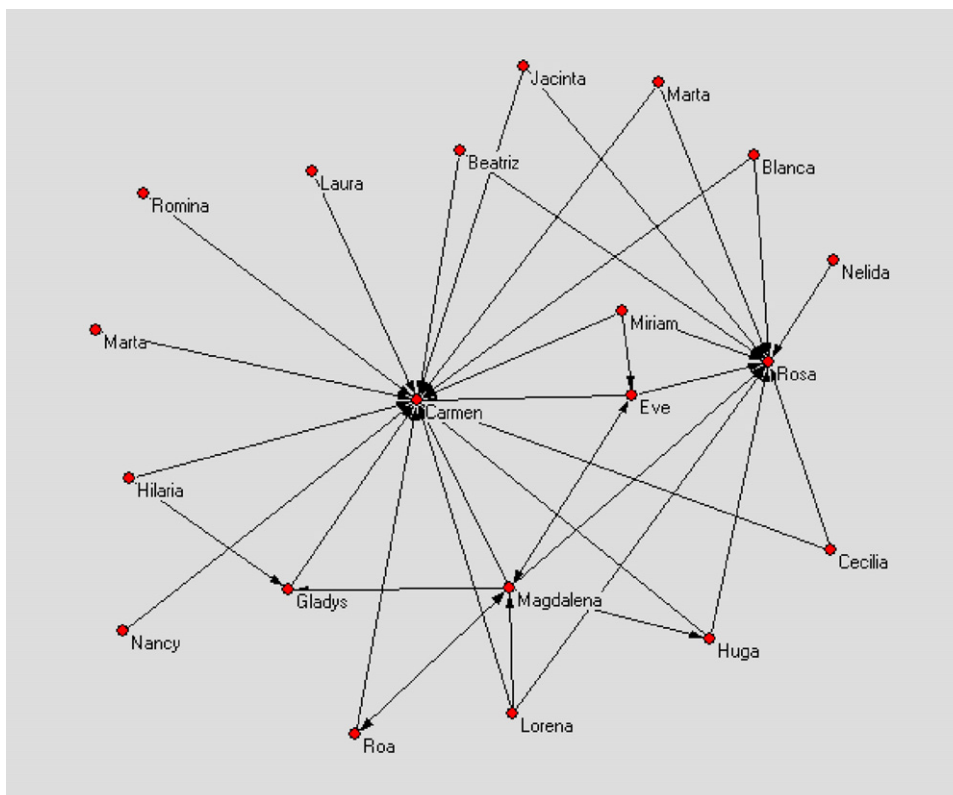
Fig. 2. Political advice problem-solving network. *Note*: Lines with arrowheads imply that an individual is asking for political advice from another individual. The direction of the arrow shows who is asking for political advice from whom. Thus, in cases where the arrows go only in one direction, it implies that an individual is asking for political advice, and cases where arrowheads go in both directions, it implies a mutual exchange of political advice.
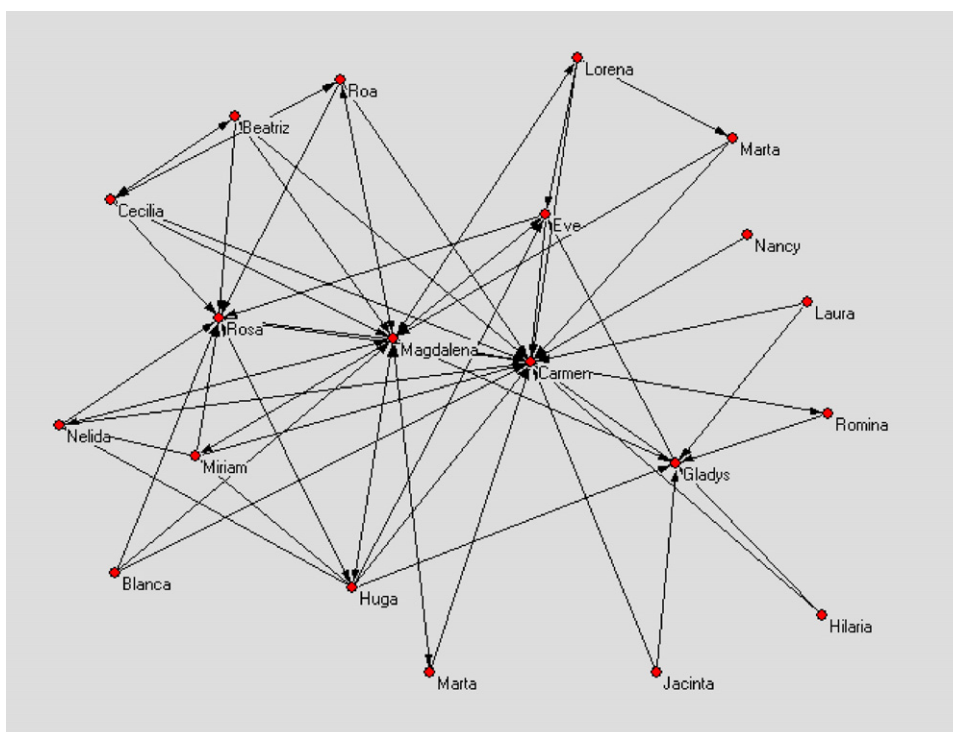
Fig. 3. Money lending problem solving network. *Note*: Lines with arrowheads imply that an individual is asking for money from another individual. The direction of the arrow shows who is asking for money from whom. Thus, in cases where the arrows go only in one direction, it implies that an individual is asking for political advice, and cases where arrowheads go in both directions, it implies a mutual exchange of money.
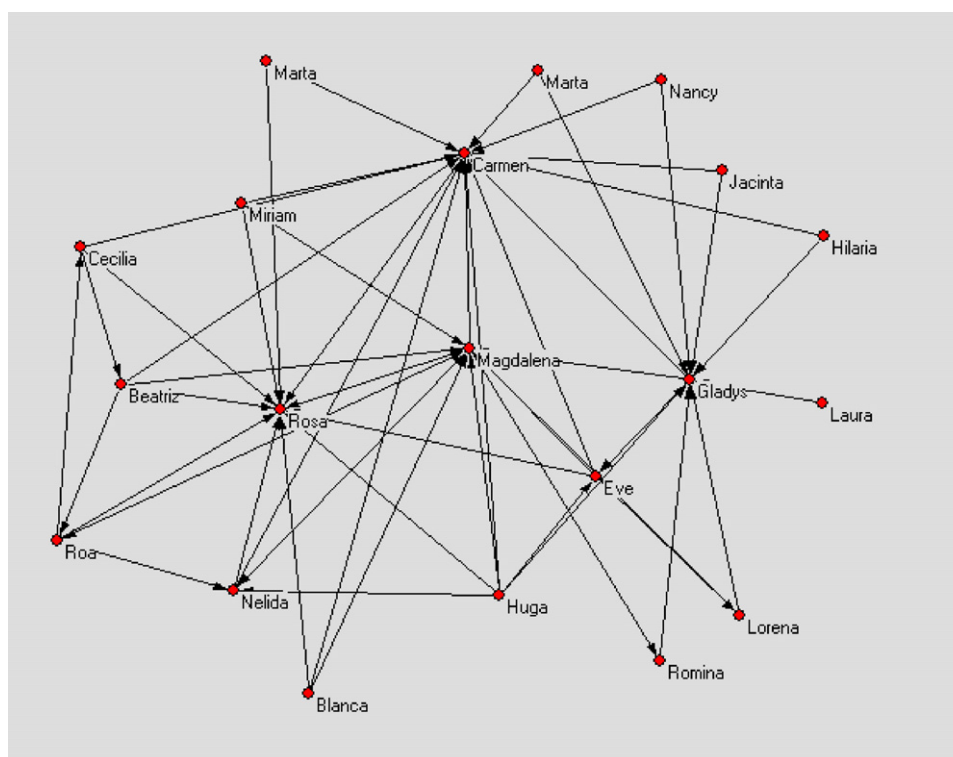
Fig. 4. Babysitting problem solving network. *Note*: Lines with arrowheads imply that an individual is asking another individual to babysit their children. The direction of the arrow shows who is asking for a babysitter from whom. Thus, in cases where the arrows goes only in one direction, it implies that an individual is asking for a babysitter, and cases where arrowheads go in both directions, it implies a mutual exchange of babysitting duties.

babysitters. Hence, besides being key actors in the neighborhood, babysitters serve to identify whom residents consider worthy of trust. Given that what babysitters do is to look after the residents' children, we assume that Villa Angel's residents are going to entrust them to those who they believe are the best ones. In words of one of the interviewees: "I want to leave my children with someone that will look after them as if she were their real mom."[6] Following this argument, I analyze babysitting patterns in Villa Angel to determine who really trusts whom. In Fig. 4 we can observe who asks whom to take care of their children, as well as to observe that Carmen, Rosa, Gladys, and Magdalena are Villa Angel's babysitters.

Since in investigating babysitting we are considering trust, it is interesting to examine how those who enjoy the most effective positions in this particular network relate to each other. In this regard, I want to spell out not only who trusts them to take care of their children, but also whom they trust to do the same, i.e. their weaknesses. In studying who babysits the babysitters' children, it is interesting to note that while Carmen and Rosa are the Villa Angel's residents' favorite babysitters; they have an asymmetrical relationship between themselves regarding taking care of their children. While Carmen only chooses Rosa to take care of her children, Rosa does not do the same. Hence, it seems that in this particular network Carmen's weakness is bigger than Rosa's. This fact is easily explained if we take into account that Rosa's children are old enough not to need someone to look after them.

Indeed, a counterargument could be advanced highlighting reciprocity norms. To put it simply, we can argue that the sheer fact that Rosa never asks anyone to take care of her children, makes people less willing to ask her for this favor. However, this counterargument is discarded by examining Carmen's case. Whereas she is the one who babysits most of Villa Angel's residents' children;

she only asks Rosa to babysit her children. And, moreover, she is still able to achieve the highest centrality in this problem-solving network.

Gladys and Magdalena are also relevant babysitters of Villa Angel. Hence, this non-political problem-solving network also illustrates their effective positions in the neighborhood. In the following section, I will analyze Gladys and Magdalena's potentiality to become, as Carmen and Rosa, party brokers, but before, I turn to study the last non-political problem-solving network of Villa Angel: counseling.

Assuming that friends are those individuals to whom we entrust our feelings, I explore whom Villa Angel's residents considered to be a friend. I illustrate the answers obtained in Fig. 5. Since friendship implies asking for advice from those whom one trusts, by comparing these results with the ones obtained regarding political advice, I am able to test if people actually differentiate between actors based on trust and obedience. That is: do people ask political advice of the same people that they ask for advice regarding events of their personal life? The answer is: not necessarily. Simply, by observing both figures that illustrate political advice (Fig. 2) and counseling (Fig. 5) networks, we can see that while Carmen and Rosa's centrality is consistent in both networks, this is not the case for Gladys and Magdalena. This finding reinforces the implications of my argument about Magdalena's and Gladys' potential to become party brokers.

It is interesting to note that Carmen and Rosa differ significantly in their interactions with friends. While the first one asks for advice from nine people, Rosa only asks Carmen for personal advice. This fact highlights Carmen's strategic action to build relationships of trust and loyalty with Villa Angel's neighbors. While Carmen could only ask Rosa for advice and vice versa; Carmen, however, decides to share a small part of her own life, her problems, with others to enable their identification with her. Carmen purposely seeks to build relationships of trust and loyalty by asking others for advice, as she told me, "by sharing some of my problems with them (Villa

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[6] Interview conducted by the author in Villa Angel, Argentina.
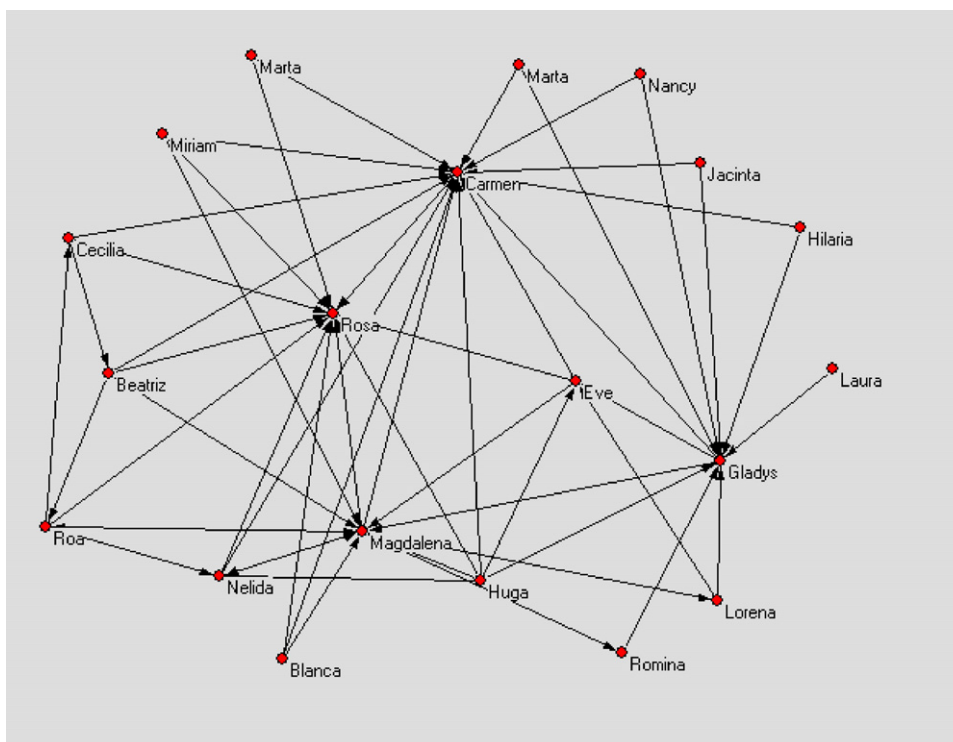
Fig. 5. Counseling problem solving network. *Note*: Lines with arrowheads imply that an individual is asking counsel from another individual. The direction of the arrow shows who is asking counseling from whom. Thus, in cases where the arrows go only in one direction, it implies that an individual is asking for counseling, and cases where arrowheads go in both directions, it implies a mutual exchange of counseling.

Angel's residents), by showing them that I also have problems, they feel sympathy for me. They understand me."[7]

Even if we take into account that Carmen also has problems, we should also consider that she has access to more resources to solve them. Therefore, acknowledging the fact that she is more effective than anyone else in Villa Angel, I argue that Carmen asks for personal advice as a strategy to have more friends and, ultimately, more power.

Table 3 presents indegree and outdegree centrality measures for the five problem-solving networks existing in Villa Angel. I interpret outdegree as an indicator of weakness given that it illustrates how many individuals one has to contact to solve a problem. In contrast, I interpret indegree as an indicator of strength given that it measures how many individuals contact one to solve their problems. In observing the results presented on Table 3, one can easily distinguish the prominent role that Magdalena, Gladys, Eve, Carmen, and Rosa fulfill in the problem-solving networks of Villa Angel.

With regard to political advice, we observe that while Rosa gives advice to 10 women, she does not ask anyone about which rallies to participate in, nor does she ask advice about who to vote for. Carmen does the same, but she provides political advice to 7 women more than Rosa. Eve, Magdalena, and Gladys also discuss politics, but give advice as much as request it, although in uneven quantities. For instance, while Magdalena provides political advice to 4 women, she asks for advice from 6 women. Carmen is the most asked for money actor in Villa Angel, with 19 women asking her for help. Rosa follows Carmen by helping 12 women to finance their expenses. Magdalena, interestingly, asks more than she gives money to other women. Likewise with babysitting, Carmen takes care of more children than Rosa, and in contrast to her, she also

asks—although only to one resident—to have their children taken care of. The counseling network also shows intense interaction among women in Villa Angel. Carmen, Rosa, and Gladys provide counseling to 17, 11, and 10 women respectively, but only Carmen asks for counseling to a significant number of women (9). Rosa and Gladys, on the other hand, almost do not share their problems with other women.

Table 4 provides degree centrality measures for the problem-solving networks of Magdalena, Gladys, Eve, Carmen, and Rosa. In using degree centrality measures of the networks, I find further support to my previous interpretation of the results. For instance, we observe that with regard to political advice, Carmen and Rosa provide advice well above the mean; moreover, Carmen has the largest value (of 17 while the maximal possible value is 19). Likewise, with regard to money lending, Carmen also gets the highest centrality in the network. Most women, except Eve and Magdalena, are asked for money much more than they asked others for it. With regard to babysitting, all selected women are asked to take care of more children on average than other women; and with regard to counseling most of them ask and receive counseling above average, with the exception of Eve who is asked for advice less than average.

In studying betweeness centrality measures for problem-solving networks also presented on Table 4 we observe the high centrality of Magdalena and Eve showing their potential to become party brokers. In contrast to Carmen and Rosa, Magdalena and Eve have a less direct, in-between linkage with several women in Villa Angel. This is the case in the non-political problem solving networks, and most definitely in the political network. Magdalena's and Eve's betweeness centrality in the political network is above average, indeed Magdalena has the highest score in the political advice network, illustrating her potential to translate her betweeness to direct linkages to voters. That is, in case either Magdalena or Eve seek to work for a party representative in the neighborhood, they are likely to effectively persuade voters to turn out and support the party.

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[7] Interview conducted by the author in Villa Angel, Argentina.

Table 3
Problem-solving networks.

Manzanera	Political advice		Money lending		Babysitting		Counseling	
	Weakness	Strength	Weakness	Strength	Weakness	Strength	Weakness	Strength
Marta	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
Nélida	1	0	3	3	3	3	3	3
Nancy	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	0
Cecilia	2	0	4	3	3	2	3	4
Jacinta	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0
Blanca	2	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
Gladys	1	3	2	8	3	9	2	10
Roa	2	1	5	3	4	0	4	3
Rosa	0	10	1	12	0	11	1	11
Magdalena	6	4	13	7	6	8	10	9
Carmen	0	17	1	19	1	15	9	17
Hilaria	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
Lorena	3	0	5	1	3	1	4	1
Huga	3	1	7	2	6	0	3	0
Marta	3	0	2	1	2	0	2	0
Miriam	3	3	3	1	3	0	3	2
Eve	3	2	3	4	3	4	4	3
Beatriz	2	0	4	2	4	1	4	3
Laura	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0
Romina	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0

Table 4
Degree and betweeness centrality measures for problem-solving networks.

Name	Money lending		Political advice		Babysitting		Counseling	
	Outdegree	Indegree	Outdegree	Indegree	Outdegree	Indegree	Outdegree	Indegree
Degree centrality								
Magdalena	13	7	6	4	6	8	10	9
Gladys	2	8	1	3	3	9	2	10
Eve	3	4	3	2	3	4	4	3
Carmen	1	19	0	17	1	15	9	17
Rosa	1	12	0	10	0	11	1	11
Betweeness centrality								
Magdalena	128		17		42.83		45	
Gladys	55		0		28.33		13.33	
Eve	60.5		4		1.83		3	
Carmen	6.5		0		5		96	
Rosa	0		0		0		0	

High betweeness centrality implies that Magdalena's and Eve's help and advice are already being sought in different problem-solving networks in Villa Angel. The sheer fact that other women seek their advice demonstrates their potential to use those demands to build relationships of trust and loyalty. In the case that either Magdalena or Eve, or even both, decide to become party brokers, they could ask women to support their party candidate in exchange for listening to them, providing advice, and solving their problems.

Overall, the findings presented in this section show that contrary to the literature's predictions, in Villa Angel the non-Peronist's broker is more effective than the Peronist's broker. Still, to understand the linkage between political and non-political networks, we need an account that explains how Carmen has managed to accumulate power, and inhibit successful competition. In the following section I explain how Carmen had accumulated power in the problem-solving networks, and how she has managed to conserve it.

6. Analytical narrative: political networks and party brokers

To understand the mechanisms through which social brokers become party brokers, this section traces Carmen's political trajectory. At the outset, it is interesting to note that Carmen's rise as a party broker was the outcome of intended and unintended consequences. While Carmen acted strategically to increase her central positions in Villa Angel's problem-solving networks; she was also benefited by the existing antagonistic relationship between Rosa and Gladys.

Carmen became a party broker by strategically using Rosa's conflictive relationship with Gladys to position herself in a better place within the neighborhood's problem-solving networks. Once Carmen became a central actor in the existing problem-solving networks, she was offered work by a political candidate in Villa Angel. Party brokers represent party candidates in their area of influence; and as in this case, because Carmen was the most influential actor in Villa Angel she was offered a party job. Given that politicians need votes, it is no surprise that they provide resources to operatives who can best supply them with electoral support.

As to Carmen's relationship with politicians, I argue that her successful way of engaging in politics has allowed her to remain an independent party broker. By independent I refer to Carmen's ability to negotiate with different party candidates during election times. In contrast to Rosa, Carmen is not a Peronist identified with the party, and political leaders know that to win Villa Angel's votes they have to obtain Carmen's endorsement.

Carmen enjoys what Padgett and Ansell (1993) define as positional play. Similar to their description of Cosimo's style of control in Florentine politics; Carmen is able to analyze politicians' tactics without being forced to clarify her line of action. As a result of her independence, Carmen has managed to get resources from

Table 5
Political and social brokers.

		Political problem-solving network	
		High	Low
Non-political	High	Carmen: effective party broker	Magdalena and Eve: social brokers
problem-solving network	Low	Rosa: ineffective party broker	Gladys: ineffective party and social broker

competing party candidates, thereby reinforcing her power and centrality in Villa Angel's non-political networks. Carmen was better able to negotiate with several party candidates for material and not-material goods for the community and thus built a bigger following than Rosa who only received goods from the Peronist party.

Up to this point, I explained how Carmen rose as Villa Angel's broker, but I have not analyzed how Carmen has managed to preserve the political power that she has accumulated. To answer this question I examine the relationship between Carmen and Rosa. Building on their testimonies, I discovered that Carmen and Rosa had decided to divide Villa Angel's political territory to avoid competing for voters' support against each other. Through experience, Carmen and Rosa had learnt that competition between brokers diminished the quantity of resources available for the community and as a result, they preferred to avoid political competition. While both brokers benefit from this agreement, Carmen's greater centrality enables her to obtain more resources from politicians than what she would have received if competing with Rosa.

Still, this agreement between Carmen and Rosa does not explain how Carmen has managed to be more influential among Villa Angel's residents than Rosa. To comprehend this we need to understand how Carmen relates with those actors who hold central positions in the neighborhood: Gladys and Magdalena. Gladys is a central actor in the non-political problem-solving networks of Villa Angel, and thus a potential adversary of the already existing party brokers of the neighborhood. In this regard, it is interesting to explore the different relationships that Carmen and Rosa have with Gladys. While Gladys, who explicitly declares her unwillingness to get involved in politics, has an excellent relationship with Carmen, she has a profound rancor and animosity towards Rosa.

To understand the relationship between Rosa and Gladys one needs to acknowledge that both ran the only two soup kitchens of Villa Angel. These soup kitchens, however, provided different services to their beneficiaries. Rosa's soup kitchen was politically oriented, providing services to beneficiaries in exchange for their participation in elections and party rallies. Gladys' soup kitchen, on the contrary, had a religious orientation and required that beneficiaries said grace before meals and attended church as often as they could given their personal commitments and responsibilities. Gladys was unable to comprehend Rosa's constant animosity towards her, given that she was acting to help the community.

As a consequence of Gladys and Rosa's antagonism, Carmen's central position in Villa Angel was strengthened. Carmen had an excellent relationship with both of them. Thus, the straightforward question is if Carmen had purposely crafted this antagonism. Here my answer is negative, I argue that what explains Gladys and Rosa's rival relationship was Rosa's constant aggressive behavior towards Gladys. Solely because both of them owned the only two soup kitchens of Villa Angel, Rosa inevitably considered Gladys as her natural adversary. Gladys, on the contrary, was not interested in competing politically against Rosa. As the evidence presented in the previous section shows, Gladys did not engage in providing political advice and thus she was puzzled and hurt by Rosa's attitude towards her.

The evidence presented in this narrative of the relationship among Gladys, Rosa and Carmen suggests that Carmen's centrality in the political network of Villa Angel was not only the result of her strategic action, but also of her adversaries' mutual misunderstanding.[8] Like Gladys, Magdalena also held a central position in the non-political problem-solving networks of Villa Angel. Carmen comprehended Gladys' and Magdalena's influential positions in Villa Angel, and accordingly, tried to keep a good relationship with them. This resulted in a tactful way of keeping them under her radar while also leaving them enough space to build relationships with other women without interfering. It even served to highlight the importance of their own relationship with her. That is, while Carmen allowed her potential competitors spheres of influence, she also controlled them and consequently, controlled the size of these spheres.

In his work on Villa Paraiso, Javier Auyero (2000) reports a similar finding regarding the party broker of that neighborhood: Rolo Fontana. This actor "would 'play chess' with his appointments, and, as soon as someone amassed too much personal power, he would 'cut off his head'" (Auyero, 2000, p. 100).

7. Conclusions

I began with a puzzle. Scholars, politicians and observers from different social-science disciplines claim that party brokers are the key actors in clientelistic problem-solving networks. Yet, I showed that this is not the case in an Argentine working-class neighborhood: Villa Angel. The task was to explain why in Villa Angel the Peronist's broker was less effective than the non-Peronist's broker. By following network analysis in defining brokers as actors who hold central positions in problem-solving networks, I was able to explain why the non-Peronist broker was more effective in mobilizing voters than the Peronist broker. I also spelled out the conditions under which an actor not involved in the Peronist Party was able to gain and accumulate power to become the most important party broker of the neighborhood.

I argue that what accounts for a broker's centrality in the political network is to be found in the relative positions that she holds in non-political problem-solving networks. Accordingly, to identify an effective party broker, it is necessary to observe her position in all the existing non-political problem-solving networks.

The beginning of this paper provided empirical evidence that verified my theoretical argument that it is the centrality that an actor holds in all the non-political problem-solving networks that makes him or her a successful party broker. Moreover, my theoretical claim, strengthened by its correspondent empirical test, disproves the literature's and politicians' assumption that the party broker is always an actor who has a party affiliation. The second part of this paper provided a historical account to show how Carmen rose as Villa Angel's party broker, overcoming the accumulated

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[8] In this case, I find an interesting analogy with the driving dynamic of patrician marriage described by Padgett and Ansell in "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400–1434" (1993). Rephrasing the authors' (1993, 24) story, my argument is that "in almost Hegelian fashion, Rosa (instead of their oligarchs) molded the networks (in her case, an animosity relationship with Gladys) of her own destruction."

power of the Peronist broker. By examining what I defined as Carmen's strategic action, I demonstrated how she was able to sustain her effective position by forgoing competition with Rosa, and by becoming a trusted friend of Magdalena and Gladys.

Building on these findings, I conclude my analysis by showing how the cases examined in this paper fit my theoretical framework of distinguishing brokers based on their centrality in political and non-political problem-solving networks. By comparing centrality measures among problem-solving networks, I classified Carmen as an effective party broker, Magdalena and Eve as social brokers, Rosa as an ineffective party broker, and Gladys and the remaining *manzaneras* as ineffective political and social brokers. Table 5 shows the classification by placing *manzaneras* in cells based on their centrality in political and non-political problem-solving networks.

The difference between Carmen and Rosa highlights the argument advanced in this paper: by simply measuring centrality in political networks, policy makers and scholars fail to understand and explain differences in brokers' efficacy in mobilizing voters and electoral support for the party. That is, while Rosa has a formal affiliation to the political party and a high centrality in political networks, her low centrality in non-political problem-solving networks transforms her into an ineffective party broker. In contrast, Carmen's high centrality in both networks makes her the most influential actor in gathering party support.

This paper demonstrates that Carmen is more effective in persuading voters than Rosa because she does not only provide voters with political advice, but counsels them, takes care of their children, and lends them money to pay overdue bills and get food. Hence, to identify an effective party broker, scholars and policy makers should not focus only on political problem-solving networks. By studying the existing problems in a community and the actors who are solving those problems, we will be better equipped to identify effective party brokers.

Beyond providing insights in identifying and understanding variation in brokers' efficacy to turn out voters and electoral support, the argument advanced in this paper suggests a causal mechanism through which actors could become effective party brokers. In studying the cases of actors who hold key positions in non-political problem solving networks, this paper shows social brokers' potential to become party brokers. If Magdalena and/or Eve decide to extend their sphere of influence, they have the potential to influence political outcomes in Villa Angel. Furthermore, they could be even more effective in turning out voters than Rosa, the formally recognized party broker of Villa Angel.

To conclude, this paper shows the importance of studying the overlap between political and non-political networks to understand who are the actors that are more likely to turn out voters. Moreover, this paper provides insights to comprehend the potential of several actors to become party brokers, as well as to explain why some brokers succeed in being effective in turning out voters over time, while others fail. Overall, this paper shows that by only studying political networks, policy makers and scholars alike fail in understanding that non-political problem-solving networks have a significant effect on political and non-political actors that participate in non-political networks to solve their everyday problems.

Acknowledgement

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