Uncertainty, Political Clientelism, and Voter Turnout in Latin America

Why Parties Conduct Rallies in Argentina

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When the leaders of political machines distribute targeted payoffs to voters, they do so by way of party brokers or intermediaries. Given that party brokers could use the goods to generate cash for themselves or to increase their own local power, why is it that they actually deliver goods to voters? In cases where voters turn out and vote for the party regardless of whether they receive benefits in exchange, brokers' actions are open to moral hazard. Indeed, it is logical to assume that brokers will charge bosses a commission for delivering goods and mobilizing voters. The challenge bosses face is that brokers do not charge them a commission so high as to completely distort the efficiency of their investments in buying support.

This article builds on the literature on clientelism and machine politics by assuming that brokers are independent agents who will take whatever course of action leads to their personal benefit given the limitations inherent in the choices the party boss and voters make.[1] I define brokers as local elected officials, as councilmen who represent a party in the precincts in which they live. Councilmen's social proximity to voters enables them to learn about individual voter political preferences and propensity to turn out to vote, as much as to monitor their political behavior. In contrast to party activists and volunteers, brokers are interested in pursuing a career in politics and getting reelected. A party boss is the mayor who commands brokers by distributing political promotions. Mayors' political careers depend upon their ability to get votes for their party and thus will always seek to maximize the party's vote share.

While councilmen can be reliable brokers who distribute inducements to maximize the party's vote share because they believe in the party's program, mayors are unable to determine councilmen's reliability without monitoring their ability to turn out voters. Councilmen's opportunities to appropriate party goods for self-enrichment vary depending on mayors' expectations of voter turnout and the voters' propensity to participate in the precinct the councilor represents. Councilmen in high-support precincts, where voters are likely to support the party regardless of whether they receive clientelistic inducements, have more opportunities to increase their wealth by selling the goods than brokers in low-support precincts, where voters' support is conditional upon receiving handouts.[2]

Information about voter turnout at the level of the precinct provides mayors with a baseline for evaluating a councilor's performance. Still, this information is insufficient

to persuade councilors to maximize party votes. I argue that mayors combine information from turnout at rallies and elections to diminish the risks of moral hazard.

Moral Hazard and Asymmetric Information in Party-Voter Linkages

To explain why voters hold their promises to support the party candidate that provides them with goods, Susan Stokes argues that machines monitor low-income voter choices, holding them "perversely accountable."[3] Understanding clientelistic relationships as ongoing, voters fulfill their commitment because they are afraid of being punished. Building on Stokes's idea that parties monitor vote choice, and Simeon Nichter's contribution that parties monitor turnout, current research examines different combinations of vote buying and turnout buying.[4] Still, at the core of the discussion is the assumption that clientelistic parties are able to perfectly target and monitor voters with goods. This assumption fails to recognize the intermediary role played by brokers in distributing goods and monitoring voters. Without incorporating into the analysis the costs of brokers' commissions for their services, extant explanations misinterpret the effects that the distribution of clientelistic goods has on voters.

Take for instance Juan Carlos and Domingo, two Argentine Peronist councilors in charge of neighboring precincts of similar sizes in the municipality of José C. Paz in Buenos Aires, who received the same number of mattresses, construction materials, and food boxes to distribute among voters four days before a party rally with President Nestor Kirchner and his wife, Cristina Fernandez.[5] Juan Carlos distributed the goods to voters who were likely to turn out if they received something in exchange. Domingo, instead, sent some of his activists to distribute food boxes and sold the construction materials and mattresses to make some extra cash. The day of the election, Domingo managed to turn out more voters than Juan Carlos. Domingo's larger voter turnout was not the result of distributing goods, but rather of a tendency to widespread participation among voters in his precinct. Hence, although Juan Carlos had distributed the goods and mobilized more voters than he would have otherwise, Domingo still turned out more voters than Juan Carlos.

Even though mayors have information about voters' participation and choice from past elections, these data do not enable them to predict whether voters would have behaved differently had they not received a clientelistic inducement. Unless mayors experiment by giving and taking away goods from councilors to test the responses of their constituencies, mayors are unable to determine if turnout is the result of the distribution of party goods or voters' propensity to participate.

In an in-depth analysis of party-voter linkages, Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson accurately point out that politicians prefer to use clientelism when they can predict voters' electoral conduct and elasticity.[6] Still, the authors do not explain how politicians make these predictions. Brokers are the party agents who possess the information that could enable bosses to make accurate predictions. Thus, while Kitschelt and Wilkinson effectively recognize the existence of principal-agent problems

and the need for "finely balanced systems of incentives" for patronage-based party-voter linkages to work,[7] they do not explain either the mechanisms politicians use to predict or the incentives they employ to force brokers to distribute goods.

The argument presented here focuses on the strategies party bosses use to distinguish between reliable and unreliable brokers. Besides identifying reliable party agents, bosses also seek brokers that are likely to turn out as many voters as possible at the lowest cost. In this regard, party leaders seek agents that are both reliable and effective. Due to space constraints and theoretical concerns, I focus on party brokers' reliability instead of their efficacy in mobilizing voters,[8] and propose a full-fledged theory of the incentives and mechanisms bosses employ to overcome the principal-agent problem between bosses and brokers.

Incentives and Voter Turnout at Rallies and Elections

A party boss will collect as much information as possible to hold brokers accountable for their distribution of goods to voters. Information about precinct-level turnout in previous elections provides mayors with a baseline for evaluating councilmen's abilities, even though the data do not necessarily reflect councilmen's efforts, but rather voter preferences. Survey data are unlikely to provide accurate information because voters are likely to falsify their preferences to avoid being punished, or to receive more goods if they believe that pretending to be swing supporters will enable them to obtain more benefits.

To diminish the risk of moral hazard, mayors will motivate councilmen to reveal their ability to mobilize voters at rallies. In contrast to compulsory voting in elections in countries like Argentina, voters' participation in rallies is voluntary, and thus their willingness to participate and councilmen's ability to mobilize them explains turn out. Voters who choose to participate in rallies independently are easily distinguishable from mobilized voters because the latter do not wear any identification, such as councilor-made hats and t-shirts, to signal them as mobilized party supporters.

Rallies also force voters to choose a councilor with whom to attend and their decisions are made public enabling mayors to avoid miscalculations. More important, rallies enable bosses to adjust the distribution of goods before an election, avoiding a suboptimal allocation of goods and possibly contributing to gaining more votes by redistributing resources to reliable brokers in precincts with historical levels of low turnout.

To induce councilors to mobilize and persuade as many voters as possible to participate in rallies, mayors promise to distribute party goods and political promotions according to councilors' turnout numbers. At the municipal level, where political machines are anchored and most rallies take place, mayors decide the political future of councilors by enabling or blocking career promotions. In countries like Argentina that employ a system of proportional representation with closed-listed ballots, mayors' decisions about a candidate's position on the ballot determines his or her likelihood of getting elected and reelected.

Assumptions and Hypotheses

Classic works on distributive politics assume that parties use outcome-contingent transfers to allocate resources among districts.[9] The logic implies that machines will gather precinct-level data about voter turnout and choice to target goods to core or swing precincts based on the number of votes the party received in a previous election. However, outcome-contingent transfers do not enable party leaders to distinguish whether the outcome is the result of the clientelistic transfers or voters' propensity to turn out and vote for the party. Party mayors, for instance, can effectively gather information about voter turnout at the precinct level and thus evaluate a broker's performance based on the number of voters that participate in rallies and elections in his or her precinct. In using only precinct-level data to reward or punish councilors, mayors are likely to reward councilors that pocket clientelistic inducements instead of distributing them, and punish councilors that use goods to solve voters' problems but represent low-support precincts where the results potentially could be worse without clientelistic inducements.

I argue that mayors will compare voter turnout at elections and rallies to infer councilmen's reliability and decide whether to reward or punish party agents. Cases where turnout at rallies and elections differs provide mayors with more information than cases with similar levels of voter participation at both instances. Councilmen that succeed in mobilizing voters to participate at rallies and elections could be either reliable party agents who distribute goods, or unreliable councilors that represent the party in core precincts.

With regard to voter turnout at elections, brokers can either succeed or fail in meeting their party bosses' expectations. In the case of party rallies, brokers can fail or succeed in mobilizing voters, but they can also surprise bosses by turning out more voters than expected. Table 1 illustrates the implications of my theory and highlights how it differs from existing explanations.

Table 1 Hypotheses and Expected Findings

		Voter turnout at Rallies		
		Above expectations	Expected	Below expectations
Voter Turnout at Elections	Expected	*Reward*	*Reward*	***Punish***
	Below	***Reward***	***Reward***	*Punish*

Note: The bolded are cases where author's expectations differ from those in the literature.

In the upper-right corner are councilmen who succeed at turning out voters in elections, but not at stimulating rally turnout. The literature predicts that councilmen who turn out as many or even more voters in elections than in the past will be rewarded. In contrast, I hypothesize that the difference between low turnout at rallies and high

turnout at elections enables mayors to identify councilors as unreliable and punish them accordingly. In the lower-left corner are councilors who succeed only in turning out voters to rallies. Again, the literature assumes that these councilors will be punished given their failure to sustain or boost the party's vote share. In contrast, I hypothesize that mayors will reward councilors who are clearly identified as reliable as well as councilors who turn out the expected number of voters at rallies.

Data

This article combines quantitative and qualitative data gathered between June 2005 and December 2006 across Argentine municipalities. Argentina shares the characteristic features of many new democracies: institutional weakness and political instability,[10] with an institutionalized party system,[11] and political parties with stable roots in society and solid party organizations. The two majority parties, the *Unión Cívica Radical* (UCR) and the (Peronist) *Partido Justicialista* (PJ), maintain territorial control over the municipalities by combining a common history that created "communities of fate,"[12] and "electorates of belonging,"[13] with clientelistic inducements.[14]

To test the effects of voter turnout in candidates' careers, I trace the political trajectories of party brokers in two Argentine provinces, Buenos Aires and Córdoba.[15] I selected the municipalities of José C. Paz, San Miguel, and Bahía Blanca in Buenos Aires; and the cities of Córdoba, Río Cuarto, Villa María, and Colonia Caroya in Córdoba due to their regional differences in levels of economic development, demographic characteristics, and electoral patterns.[16] Although not a representative sample, these municipalities comprise considerable variation in the independent variables used in quantitative studies of vote buying and clientelism, such as partisanship, incumbency, population, housing quality, income, and education, to provide suggestive findings.

To measure whether voter turnout at rallies and elections matches party bosses' expectations, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with party leaders in the selected municipalities after the national election of October 2005. Although it was a mid-term election, in 2005 the Peronist party was going to define its leadership and thus the future president of the country. As a result, this election was much more central and competitive than the presidential election of 2007.

To test the effects of voter turnout in brokers' political careers, I traced their political trajectories after the election of 2005. By combining information from printed party ballots at the municipal, provincial, and national levels with electoral data from the Minister of Interior, the Electoral Provincial Judiciary, and the Electoral Municipal Judiciary, I was able to establish if candidates ran in the following election, for which office, in which position, and if they were elected or reelected. Still, factual information did not provide me with enough insights about the decision-making rationale of candidates and party bosses at the time of making the party ballot. I employed over 100 recorded in-depth interviews with councilmen that lasted on average three hours in each municipality, and archival research to trace political agents' careers before, during, and after the 2005 election.

To understand how party leaders' evaluate their agents, I conducted in-depth interviews with the mayors of Río Cuarto, Villa María, Colonia Caroya, José C. Paz, and Bahía Blanca, as well as with party leaders of the opposition parties in each selected case. During these interviews, I asked party bosses if brokers had met their expectations in turning out voters during the 2005 election.[17] In cases where I was unable to interview party bosses, I conducted semi-structured interviews with main advisors and/or private secretaries to gather information about bosses' assessments of candidates' electoral performances.

Table 2 describes the sources of information used in this paper. Column 1 gives the names of the municipalities, and column 2 the number of elected councilmen participating in the 2005 election in each municipality. Column 3 indicates the number of party bosses and advisors interviewed in each municipality.Columns 4 and 5 provide the number of in-depth and semi-structured interviews with party brokers respectively. Finally, column 6 describes the sources of archival research in each municipality. Besides gathering local information about the election in each municipality, I consulted *Clarín*, *La Nación*, and *Página/12* for general information at the national level, *Clarín* and *La Nación* for provincial information in Buenos Aires, and *La Voz del Interior* in Córdoba.

Descriptive statistics provide information about general patterns that, combined with qualitative information, establish plausibility for the hypotheses proposed in this article. Ethnographic data were collected in each selected municipality over two years, during which I had the opportunity to participate in party rallies during the campaign leading up to the 2005 election, on Election Day, and after the election in Buenos Aires, and a primary election in Córdoba in 2006.

In 2005 half of the candidates in Buenos Aires were running to get elected or reelected as the local legislature in the province is renewed by halves every two years. In contrast, candidates in Córdoba, were campaigning to show their ability to turn out voters for the party to be considered for reelection in the upcoming election of 2009. This is because, in contrast to Buenos Aires, voters in Córdoba elect their mayors and councilors together every four years.

Comparisons between the strategies pursued by candidates in Buenos Aires whose tenure was going to be renewed in two years and those who were running for reelection and election in 2005 did not show dramatic differences. Neither did the strategies of candidates who were on the top of the closed list, at the cut point where candidates could either succeed or fail in getting elected, or even below the cut point where candidates were positive that they were not going to get elected. This finding reinforces the argument advanced in this article that candidates have to constantly show their ability to turn out voters.

Voter Turnout at Rallies

In using voter turnout at rallies to test a councilor's reliability, mayors encourage brokers to turn out as many voters as possible, and make every single voter mobilized visible to the party boss. Incentives to maximize voter participation induce candidates to buy turnout

Table 2 Data gathered by the author between June 2005 and December 2006

Municipality	Number of councilmen participating in the 2005 election	Number of party bosses and advisors interviewed	Number of in-depth interviews with party brokers	Number of semi-structured interviews with party brokers	Archival research (municipal level)
Córdoba Capital	31	5	20	11	*La Voz del Interior* *La Mañana de Córdoba*
Río Cuarto	19	2	15	4	*El Puntal*
Villa María	12	3	9	3	
Colonia Caroya	7	2	5	2	*La Voz del Interior* *La Mañana de Córdoba*
José C. Paz	20	5	20	0	*La Hoja*
San Miguel	24	3	17	7	*La Hoja*
Bahía Blanca	24	4	15	9	*La Nueva Provincia*
Total	137	24	101	36	*La Voz del Interior* *La Mañana del Córdoba*

by distributing clientelistic inducements to individual and groups of voters. The following vivid description of rally participants illustrates how brokers buy the support of individual voters with boxes of food and of gangs with free cocaine and alcohol.

> "The majority were very young people, kids [pibes] of sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen years old. They didn't seem to be party activists. To tell you the truth, they look like a terrible mafia [tenían una pinta de mafia terrible]. The atmosphere was strange, very

> crazy. I saw people sitting in the grass with infant babies surrounded by gang members with guns [calzados]. Some of them passed out from the alcohol and others were out of control for the coke [merca] and next to them was a family that I believe was there for the box of food."[18]

In Argentina, different studies have shown the role unions play in mobilizing voters to political events such as rallies.[19] More novel and less studied is the support provided by evangelist groups.[20] While the Catholic Church has a policy of not endorsing political candidates explicitly, evangelical churches do not have such a constraint and negotiate accordingly with politicians that secure more benefits for them.[21] Indeed, this was the case of the successful *Partido en Comunión* (Party in Communion) in José C. Paz that got two councilmen elected in 1999. Soccer hooligans are also employed by all parties to organize the security, entertainment (mostly to play the drums), and provide attendance at party rallies.[22] One famous hooligan leader declared that the most important party leaders frequently came to buy their support.

> "Everyone [politicians] comes to ask us favors….Do you want me to give you a list with all the politicians that gave us tons of money to play drums and bring soccer fans to their rallies?"[23]

Argentine hooligans became so skillful in mobilizing people that they began selling their tactics to soccer clubs elsewhere in Latin America. In a report published by *Olé*, an Argentine daily newspaper devoted to soccer, Rafael Di Zeo, the leader of Boca Juniors' hooligans, said that groups such as his are considered "the Harvard" of hooligans worldwide.[24]

These testimonies highlight the paradoxical effects of the incentives mayors provide to determine their agents' reliability. In using turnout to establish reliability, mayors induce councilors to mobilize any voter, regardless of her partisan preferences, and spend scarce resources hiring the support of groups such as hooligans. Councilors interested in getting reelected are thus induced to buy turn out.

> "This is very simple. You are worth as much as the number of voters you can mobilize. You have a prize, a number. Your number is how many people you can carry to a rally and how many votes you can give in an election."[25]

Councilors who invest in buying turnout also seek to make their investment visible and thus will distribute free t-shirts and hats to voters to display at rallies. Councilmen also make a strategic use of space, concentrating the voters they have mobilized near banners that allow mayors to easily count their heads. The fact that every party symbol contributes to making a councilor's following visible supports my contention that rallies are about councilors signaling to mayors their ability to turn out voters, and about mayors counting voters.

In evaluating agent performances, party bosses, irrespective of location and partisanship, highlight the same factors. In the words of former and current mayor of Colonia Caroya, "at rallies, I *expect* a certain number of voters based on how competitive the election is, how well (or not) the economy is doing, how good the leading candidate is,

and how many goods I gave the broker."[26] Expectations thus varied based on a combination of political, economic, and social circumstances at the national and local level, with the amount of goods individual party agents received to distribute to voters before the election.

In conducting fieldwork before the election in José C. Paz and San Miguel, and a couple of months after the election for the remaining cases, I listened to party bosses' recollect their recent evaluations of brokers' performances at both rallies and elections. Whereas it is plausible that some bosses adjusted their evaluations to the electoral results, the time they took to think about their responses and the testimonies I gathered from other key informants and party brokers made me confident about the accuracy of the results.

Candidates can either succeed or fail in fulfilling the party boss's expectations. Moreover, in the case of rallies, candidates can even exceed the expectations by mobilizing more voters than expected. Still, as the results of party bosses' evaluations of brokers' ability to mobilize voters to rallies shown in Table 3 illustrate, less than 10 percent of agents mobilized more voters than expected. The majority of the candidates (51.82 percent) failed to fulfill bosses' expectations, and over a third (38.69 percent) of the sample managed to mobilize as many voters as expected.

Table 3 Party Boss Evaluations of Brokers' Abilities to Turn Out Voters at Rallies

		Voter Turnout at Rallies	
		Number of candidates	%
Did the broker turn out the expected number of voters at party rallies?	Yes (*Above* expectations)	13	9.49
	Yes (Expected)	53	38.69
	No (*Below* expectations)	71	51.82
Total		137	100

Voter Turnout at Elections

In countries where voting is compulsory, as in Argentina, and turnout numbers are considerably high in international comparison,[27] party bosses are unable to determine if voters turn out because they are mobilized, have strong partisan preferences, or a combination of both. Whereas mayors and councilors can monitor voter turnout, they are still unable to monitor vote choice. Recent literature combines formal models and empirical evidence to test what type of voters a political party subjected to a budget constraint will target with clientelistic inducements.

Voters are defined as core supporters when they vote for the party regardless of whether they receive material rewards in exchange for their vote, as swing voters

if they vote for the party only if they receive a material reward, and as opposition voters if they never support the party regardless of whether they receive clientelistic inducements. Building on the classical studies of Gary Cox and Matthew McCubbins,[28] and of Dixit and Londregan[29] current studies focus on how clientelistic parties combine strategies of persuasion and mobilization,[30] and vote buying and turnout buying,[31] to win votes.

This article focuses on the relationship between bosses and brokers and therefore assumes that brokers target either core or swing voters or that brokers combine strategies of persuasion and mobilization to turn out voters. Asymmetries of information are the result of party bosses' ignorance about the type of voters that live in brokers' precincts.

In evaluating the ability of a party broker to mobilize voters on Election Day, bosses take into account how many voters the agent mobilized in the past adjusted by the popularity of the party's nominee, the economic situation, and certain contextual events such as media scandals that can affect the popularity of a party or candidate before an election. In contrast to rallies where in a few cases brokers surpassed bosses' expectations, in elections brokers either succeed or fail in obtaining the expected electoral outcome. Table 4 provides statistics for party bosses' evaluations showing that, like at party rallies, the majority (62.77 percent) of party brokers failed to fulfill the bosses' expectations. Over a third of councilmen (37.23 percent) succeeded in turning out as many voters as expected in their precincts.

Table 4 Party Boss Evaluations of Brokers' Abilities to Turn Out Voters at Elections

		Voter Turnout at Elections	
		Number of candidates	%
Did the broker turn out the expected number of voters and votes in the precinct he or she represents?	Yes	51	37.23
	No	86	62.77
Total		137	100

Causality and Measurement

In Argentina party bosses distribute rewards to reliable brokers and punishments to unreliable ones by assigning candidates' positions on the party closed ballot. As a result, we expect to observe that candidates who succeed in turning out voters are rewarded with higher-ranked positions, while those who fail are punished with lower-ranked positions. Positions on the party ticket thus provide information about the boss' assessment of brokers' reliability, and by tracing changes in a candidate's positions on the ticket we could measure their reliability (or lack of it) for the party boss.

The distribution of electable positions that are high in demand and scarce in supply inevitably leads to conflicts between candidates and the mayor. In both Buenos Aires and Córdoba, former and current councilmen frequently complained about the positions they had been assigned on the ballots after their hard work in legislating for the mayor because of their utter failure to build a political base and display it at the rallies. Those in charge of making the party ballot were also well aware of the consequences of their decisions, as the mayor of Río Cuarto explained when talking about councilors' responses to their positions on the ticket.

> "One has to distribute positions based on the number of votes each candidate can give to the party. I understand that this upsets councilors who work hard but who are unable to mobilize voters; however, in the end, we all want to win the election, and you win elections with votes, not with good intentions."[32]

In comparing candidates' positions, I establish the cut points in the elections in which the candidate got elected in 2003 (all candidates in Córdoba, and half of the candidates in Buenos Aires) and in 2005, and compare it with the position they were assigned in 2007 (all candidates in Córdoba and half of the candidates in Buenos Aires) and 2009 (candidates elected in 2005 in Buenos Aires). Based on this information, I establish whether a candidate received a better, equal, or worse position in the following election.

Another indicator is reelection. In contrast to ballot position, in which the outcome depends only on party bosses' evaluations, the possibility that reliable candidates get reelected varies based on a combination of factors that are not under their control, such as the charisma of the party nominee, the economic situation, the performance of other parties, and the social context. Thus, a candidate can succeed in getting reelected with a small turnout or lose with a high turnout conditional upon the turnout of the opposition. Still, reelection serves to provide more metrics, although imperfect, about the effects of reliability on a candidate's political career.

Voter Turnout and Reliability

To test the argument advanced in this article, I recorded the performance of party brokers at rallies and in the 2005 election, and observed whether the party boss either punished or rewarded party agents in the upcoming election. Table 5 shows how many candidates ran in the following election, given their ability to turn out voters at rallies and in the 2005 election. Among the sixty-three candidates that ran in the subsequent election, fourteen ran for higher positions than those they held in the past election, twenty-nine ran for similar positions as those they held, and twenty ran for lower positions. Only thirty-one candidates succeeded in getting reelected.

The results support this article's thesis that party bosses compare information from voter turnout at rallies and elections to infer a broker's reliability and distribute rewards and punishments accordingly. For instance, all candidates that turned out more voters than expected at rallies were reelected regardless of not fulfilling the

boss's expectations for voter turnout for the election. In this regard, it is important to note that five candidates were even rewarded with higher positions despite failing to generate voter turnout at the election. On the other hand, candidates who failed to turn out voters at rallies were not reelected, and only three of them ran for similar positions. These candidates were local celebrities, including two athletes and one actress, and thus were likely to get reelected regardless of their inability to mobilize voters to participate in rallies. Councilors who do not enjoy the same name recognition as celebrity candidates comprehend that actresses and athletes belong to a different category and are thus not evaluated on the basis of turning out voters at rallies.

Table 5 Party Brokers' Positions on Party Ticket and Reelection based on Voter Turnout at Rallies and Elections

		Voter Turnout at Rallies		
		Above expectations	Expected	Below expectations
Voter Turnout at Elections	Expected	N=5 *Positions:* 5 better positions *All reelected*	N=25 *Positions:* 10 didn't run 1 worse position 10 same positions 4 better positions *13 Reelected*	N=21 *Positions:* 13 didn't run 5 worse positions 3 same positions *None reelected*
	Below	N=8 *Positions:* 2 didn't run 1 same position 5 better positions *6 Reelected*	N=28 *Positions:* 17 didn't run 11 same positions *7 Reelected*	N=50 *Positions:* 32 didn't run 14 worse positions 4 same positions *None reelected*

While quantitative data demonstrate the relationship and effects of voter turnout at rallies and elections in a candidate's political career, in tracing candidates' trajectories across the selected municipalities, I examined the mechanisms that explain the observed outcomes. I found that party brokers get promoted only after proving to the party boss that they are reliable agents. Once a reliable agent succeeds in getting elected, he has access to material and nonmaterial resources that enable him to get more followers. Yet, brokers have to systematically demonstrate their reliability to

continue having access to this flow of resources. The political careers of two brokers representing neighboring precincts in José C. Paz illustrate the importance of continuously proving a broker's reliability.

Matilde and Alicia began their political careers as community organizers in their precincts.[33] They were both Peronist party activists in charge of a welfare program targeted at pregnant women and infants. Based on their community work and their daily interaction with voters delivering the welfare program goods, Matilde and Alicia succeeded in building a following that they mobilized to rallies and elections.

After observing the ability of these women to turn out voters, the party boss decided to give them similar amounts of party goods to sustain and build a bigger party constituency. For over three years, Matilde and Alicia showed similar turnout numbers at rallies and elections and both were selected to participate on the party ticket in consecutive positions. While neither of them got elected the first time they competed, both continued distributing goods and solving problems through a network of contacts in the municipality. After participating in four elections, both got elected as councilwomen in 1999.

Following the election, Matilde and Alicia had more access to party goods and contacts that enabled them to solve more voter problems. Both candidates distributed goods and favors to voters in exchange for their participation. Yet, while Alicia chose to concentrate her efforts on solving the problems of her community, Matilde chose to build an alliance with a union representative in José C. Paz. The union leader had a reputation as a mafia boss and was accused of drug trafficking on several occasions, although none of the accusations could be proved.

At the time of the rallies, the union mobilized voters from the poorest and most dangerous precincts in the municipality to support Matilde's candidacy. Most of the voters who held Matilde's signs in party rallies had no idea who Matilde was, and not even which party she represented as a series of articles written by local journalist Fabián Domínguez in *La Hoja* demonstrated.[34]

Matilde's followers easily doubled those of Alicia at rallies and elections, and when after four years in office, the party boss made the party ballot, Matilde received a much higher-ranked position than Alicia. Notwithstanding, as the testimony of the President of José C. Paz's legislature quoted below suggests, bosses and brokers have heterogeneous views about the desirability of buying voter support.

> "I am against distributing goods to voters to participate in politics. I am against getting the vote of someone who is drunk and high all day."[35]

Yet, despite the opposition of several party members to the use of clientelistic strategies to turn out voters, by promoting candidates who succeed in mobilizing voters regardless of the strategies they use to achieve their goal, political leaders support the use of clientelism. Experience teaches candidates about the efficacy of clientelistic strategies to turn out voters and thus brokers who risk losing their offices if they fail to mobilize voters are likely to use clientelism.

After the election Matilde and Alicia remained politically active, but Alicia received fewer goods than Matilde, making it harder for her to sustain her following. Slowly,

Alicia's not-so-loyal followers began to participate in rallies and elections with an emerging Peronist activist who ran a soup kitchen and distributed another welfare program. By the time I left José C. Paz, Alicia was still interested in a political career but knew she did not have enough followers to make it to the party nomination. Matilde, in contrast, was a reelected councilor with a following three times bigger than the one she had when she began her political career.

The political careers of Matilde and Alicia illustrate a pattern I observed across municipalities. Brokers have to continuously demonstrate their reliability to get promoted. In this case, if Alicia had followed Matilde's path by building alliances with organized groups to mobilize more voters to rallies and elections, she too would have been rewarded. Matilde's union linkage provided her candidacy with more resources than she would have otherwise had as a councilor. By using these resources to mobilize voters to rallies and elections, Matilde showed the mayor her ability to build effective and reliable alliances that provide the party with electoral support. Reliability is therefore a necessary and in some cases sufficient condition to succeed in a political career, and is not related to the quality of political participation, but simply to the quantity of voters that turn out at rallies and elections.

By measuring a broker's reliability in every election, the party boss succeeds in selecting and rewarding candidates who contribute the most votes to the party. In understanding political parties as organizations that seek to maximize votes, this article focuses on the strategies party leaders employ to achieve this goal. In promoting candidates only based on their ability to turn out voters, party leaders implicitly foster the use of clientelistic strategies of political mobilization.

Voter Turnout at Rallies Beyond Argentina

To indicate the scope of my theory, I draw on original data collected during six months of fieldwork in Lima, Peru, and on a rich secondary literature on clientelistic parties and machine politics in Mexico and Brazil,[36] showing that politicians compare voter turnout at rallies and elections to reduce uncertainty. During the 2006 presidential campaign in Peru, I participated in over thirty rallies for the three main contenders, Alan García (Peruvian Aprista Party, APRA); Ollanta Humala (Union for Peru, UP); and Lourdes Flores (National Unity, UN). At each rally, I observed Peruvian candidates from different parties using the same strategies to turn out voters as Peronist and Radical brokers in Argentina.

In his memoirs about the presidential campaign of 1990, the acclaimed writer and front-runner presidential candidate, Mario Vargas Llosa, describes the problems, challenges, and continuous headaches he experienced when having to organize party rallies and distribute candidacies.[37] In his narrative about the organization of the rally to celebrate his party's, *Libertad* (Freedom) coalition with *Acción Popular* (Popular Action) and the *Partido Popular Cristiano* (Popular Christian Party) Vargas Llosa recalls being aware of the opportunity the rally would provide to parties to display the number of voters they

could mobilize. He remembers having explicitly asked party leaders of the coalition to ask candidates not to divide voters by making them easily identifiable to a specific party.

> "Contrary to what was agreed to unify the groups of supporters to show the fraternal spirit of our political alliance each group of voters only applauded and cheered his political leader to prove how many voters they had mobilized."[38]

The Peruvian newspapers, *El Comercio* and *La República*, described how voters at the rally were purposely seated in different sectors of the stadium to identify the number of voters each party had mobilized to the rally.

Political parties historically have engaged in "turnout-enhancing bribery" by distributing goods to individual and groups of voters to encourage them to participate in rallies and elections.[39] Clientelistic mobilization works when voters are likely to participate in exchange for a small good.

> "Mexico is a very poor country with enormous disparities. For a lot of people, one kilo of sugar or beans is more important than a vote. There are unscrupulous political operatives who know these needs and will find ways to capitalize on them."[40]

This was the declaration of José Woldenberg, President of Mexico's Electoral Federal Institute (IFE), talking about the use of clientelistic mobilization in Mexico. Turnout contributes to sustaining hegemonic-party autocracies, such as the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI), by diffusing an image of invincibility that discourages party splits and strategic voting.[41] Besides contributing to shaping the incumbent's image of invincibility, voter turnout enables party leaders to monitor party operatives.

During the Argentine national election of 2009, I interviewed brokers in San Luis, a center-west province of over 447,000 inhabitants that has been governed by the brothers Adolfo and Alberto Rodríguez Saá since the return of democracy in 1983. Throughout my stay in the municipalities of Villa Mercedes and San Luis Capital, innumerable political activities took place not only daily, but often twice or three times a day. This is yet another indicator of the Peronists' use of incessant and intense campaigning as a strategy to diffuse their image of invincibility. However, the story behind these high levels of mobilization in San Luis is more complex.

Invited to a rally by Nélida Perez, a party broker who lives and works in a neighborhood built by the government in Villa Mercedes, I asked her why the governor would spend time campaigning in a precinct he knew he would carry. Why not instead visit a swing precinct where his presence could contribute to changing voters' minds? On our way to the rally, Nélida explained that the governor was not concerned about getting votes, but monitoring brokers' reliability.

> "Here everyone votes for the Rodríguez Saá. Alberto [Rodríguez Saá] knows this. He is not here to get the votes, but to monitor us. They use rallies to see who is working in the neighborhoods, who is solving people problems."[42]

Although further research is needed, this case suggests that rallies are vital tools for party leaders to gather information about their agents' reliability. Thus, besides dissuading opposition parties, rallies contribute to the party's organization by enabling party leaders to identify reliable brokers.

Geert Banck's narrative about Brazilian political parties' failure to organize a civic protest rally during election time in the state of Espírito Santo further supports my argument.[43] In mid–August 1992 Brazil was in the midst of an electoral campaign, an economic recession, and an unprecedented political crisis that would later lead to the impeachment of President Fernando Collor de Mello. Joining pro-impeachment rallies across the country, voters in the state of Espírito Santo began organizing a *carreata* (car rally). A multiparty platform led by the *petista* incumbent mayor, Vítor Buaiz, met to organize the rally.

> "Part of the debate was about the fact that it was election time and all participants would be likely to use their own campaign slogans, merely adding some anti-Collor phrases. Buaiz was pushing hard to have a real non-partisan rally with themes such as ethics in politics, restoration of dignity and the defense of democracy as a way to building a more just society.…The next Sunday morning many cars assembled in the Tancredômo, the local version of the Sanbôdromo, the famous Rio carnival parade place. As well as carrying anti- Collor slogans, practically all the cars were also very visibly adorned with the names of candidates and their party colors and symbols. The drivers parked their cars near their candidate's van or truck, which was packed with loudspeakers and propaganda materials. Some had so many election banners that the anti-Collor slogans were almost invisible as were some of the black flags.[44]

Even though Banck uses this event to study personalism in the Brazilian body politic, his fieldwork and ethnographic data provide further support for my theory about the political effects of rallies. The idea of holding a nonpartisan rally was a total failure because politicians use rallies to get votes as much as to monitor their brokers; and as a result, "each group of canvassers went its own way to and minded its own (election) business."[45]

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this article shows that party bosses make comparisons between a candidate's performance at rallies and elections over time to identify reliable party agents and distribute rewards and punishments accordingly. In studying the mechanisms party bosses employ to monitor brokers, this article highlights the importance of incorporating brokers' agency to understand how party bosses solve the principal-agent problem.

Reliable agents are important for party leaders to secure the distribution of scarce party goods to voters. Using reliable brokers, however, does not guarantee winning elections. Even when every mobilized voter does not change his or her vote inside the voting booth, mobilized voters alone do not define electoral outcomes. Yet, while reliable brokers are unable to secure electoral victories, they nevertheless provide parties with a solid base of votes that could turn out to be key in defining highly contested elections. Moreover,

besides mobilizing voters, reliable brokers provide party leaders several needed services, such as organized squadrons of party activists that paint walls with the name of the party nominees, post party signs, distribute party literature, and provide security at rallies.

Political parties need these services to conduct campaigns and get votes. In cases where sustaining networks of party brokers that are likely to charge commissions becomes more expensive than engaging in programmatic politics, political leaders will consider abandoning spending goods in sustaining brokers and monitoring structures. Moreover, it is not unlikely that the impossibility of perfectly distinguishing between reliable and unreliable brokers could eventually lead party leaders to look for alternative strategies that do not require intermediaries.

While programmatic politics has always been the only possibility for campaigning and gaining votes for parties that lack access to particularistic inducements and networks of party activists and brokers, it can also become an option for incumbent parties that seek to get rid of unreliable brokers. A research agenda that seeks to explain transitions from clientelistic to programmatic politics will benefit from incorporating the strategies and incentives party brokers and bosses use to mobilize voters.

This article focuses on the strategies party leaders employ to determine the reliability of their agents by monitoring their ability to turn out voters at rallies and elections. When voter turnout decreases together with bosses' abilities to monitor brokers, party leaders might consider alternative strategies to mobilize voters. In this regard, the transition away from clientelistic strategies is a response to bosses' inability to monitor brokers' reliability. If brokers continue turning out voters, party bosses have no incentives to change strategies. On the other hand, if brokers fail in turning out voters and bosses are unable to monitor if brokers distribute party goods, bosses are likely to consider abandoning clientelistic politics.

Instead of spending scarce party resources in sustaining a network of brokers that fail in turning out the expected number of votes, bosses will invest in media campaigns that contribute to get out the party message. Yet, for the transition to be effective and permanent, bosses will have to find that programmatic politics delivers similar or bigger returns than clientelistic politics.

NOTES

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1. Susan C. Stokes, "Political Clientelism," in Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson, *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Frederic Charles Schaffer, *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007).

2. Here I assume that preferences among voters are homogeneous; thus the effect of receiving a clientelistic inducement will have the same effect among all voters. If voters have different probabilities to turn out and vote for the party if given a particularistic good, then brokers will make different decisions about whom to target with particularistic benefits.

3. Susan C. Stokes, "Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina," *American Political Science Review*, 99 (August 2005): 315–25.

4. Simeon Nichter, "Vote Buying or Turnout Buying? Machine Politics and the Secret Ballot," *American Political Science Review*, 102 (February 2008): 19–31; Thad Dunning and Susan C. Stokes, "Clientelism as Persuasion and Mobilization," Unpublished manuscript, 2009; Jordan Gans-Morse, Sebastián Mazzuca, and Simeon Nichter, "Who Gets Bought? Vote Buying, Turnout Buying, and Other Strategies," *Weatherhead Center for International Affairs*, Working Paper 09-0006, Harvard University, 2009.

5. The last names of these councilmen have been concealed to ensure anonymity.

6. Kitschelt and Wilkinson.

7. Ibid, p. 8.

8. In examining the efficacy of clientelistic strategies, Weitz-Shapiro shows that clientelistic strategies are effective in Argentine municipalities with high poverty and intense political competition, and Camp and Szwarcberg find that intraparty competition in low-income Argentine neighborhoods induces brokers to be more efficient in distributing particularistic rewards to voters. Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, "What Wins Votes: Why Some Politicians Opt Out of Clientelism," *American Journal of Political Science*, 56 (July 2012): 568–83; Edwin Camp and Mariela Szwarcberg, "Competitive Clientelism," Paper presented at the meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, 2011.

9. Avinash Dixit and John Londregan, "The Determinants of Success of Special Interests in Redistributive Politics," *The Journal of Politics*, 58 (November 1996): 1132–55; Gary W. Cox and Matthew D. McCubbins, "Electoral Politics as a Redistributive Game," *Journal of Politics*, 48 (May 1986): 370–89; Assar Lindbeck and Jorgen Weibull, "Balanced Budget Distribution as Outcome of Political Competition," *Public Choice*, 52 (1987): 273–97.

10. Steven Levitsky and María Victoria Murillo, *Argentine Democracy: The Politics of Institutional Weakness* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

11. Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

12. Spencer E. Welhofer, "Strategies for Party Organization and Voter Mobilization: Britain, Norway, and Argentina," *Comparative Political Studies*, 12 (July 1979): 169–204, p. 171.

13. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 267.

14. Juan Carlos Torre, "Citizens versus Political Class: The Crisis of Partisan Representation," in Levitsky and Murillo, eds., pp. 165–80; Javier Auyero, *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Steven Levitsky, *Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America: Argentine Peronism in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Ernesto Calvo and María Victoria Murillo, "Who Delivers? Partisan Clients in the Argentine Electoral Market," *American Journal of Political Science*, 48 (October 2004): 742–57; Mariela Szwarcberg, "Making Local Democracy: Political Machines, Clientelism, and Social Networks in Argentina," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2009.

15. Buenos Aires is the financial, productive, and political center of the country, whose voters have the capacity to choose the country's president given the size of the province's electorate. For instance, José C. Paz, one of the municipalities examined here, has more voters (120,000) than the Argentine province of Tierre del Fuego (98,829). Córdoba is the second largest electoral district after the province of Buenos Aires.

16. José C. Paz and San Miguel are representative of the municipalities of the *Conurbano*. The Conurbano comprises one-quarter (9,910,282 inhabitants) of the country's total population in 1.2 percent of the territory with the highest percentage of unemployed and illegally employed workers. Bahía Blanca, in contrast, has a similar population to José C. Paz and San Miguel, but it is located in the southern area of Buenos Aires. The city of Córdoba and Río Cuarto are the two larger and most important municipalities in Córdoba, followed, among others, by Villa María. Colonia Caroya is a small municipality located near the city of Córdoba.

17. To measure if party brokers had failed or succeeded in meeting the party boss's expectations in turning out voters at (1) rallies and (2) elections, I used the following question: "In evaluating the number of voters [name of the broker] had mobilized to [(1) rallies, (2) the 2005 election], would you say that [he/she] succeeded in meeting your expectations?" I expected party bosses to answer either yes or no, but surprisingly found another answer regarding party rallies. As reported here, in the case of party rallies several bosses answered that brokers had surpassed (*sobrepasar*) their expectations.

18. This description comes from an attendant to a rally in the province of Buenos Aires in 1996. My observations made almost ten years later support this testimony. Quoted in Daniel Otero, *El Entorno: La Trama Intima del Aparato Duhaldista y sus Punteros* (Buenos Aires: Nuevo Hacer, 1997), p. 57.

19. Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, The Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Levitsky.
20. Pablo Semán, *La religiosidad popular: creencias y vida cotidiana* (Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2004).
21. Tomás S.Gutiérrez, *El Hermano Fujimori* (Perú: Archivo Histórico del Protestantismo Latinoamericano, 2000).
22. Pablo Alabarces and María Graciela Rodríguez, *Cuestión de pelotas: fútbol, deporte, sociedad, cultura* (Buenos Aires: Atuel, 1996); Gustavo Veiga, *Donde manda la patota: barrabravas, poder y política* (Buenos Aires: Agora, 1998); Gustavo Grabia, *La Doce: la verdadera historia de la barra brava de Boca* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2009).
23. Quoted in Veiga, p. 7.
24. *Olé,* October 22, 2006.
25. Interview conducted by the author with Mario, a Peronist councilor in José C. Paz, Buenos Aires, September 2005.
26. Interview conducted by the author in Colonia Caroya, Córdoba, March 2006.
27. Darío Canton and Jorge Raúl Jorrat, "Abstention in Argentina Presidential Elections, 1983–1999," *Latin American Research Review*, 38 (February 2003): 187–201; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "Voter Turnout Website," 2009, available at http://www.idea.int/vt/country_view.cfm?country=AR.
28. Cox and McCubbins.
29. Dixit and Londregan.
30. Dunning and Stokes.
31. Gans-Morse et al.
32. Interview conducted by the author in Río Cuarto, Córdoba, May 2006.
33. The last names of these two councilwomen have been concealed to ensure anonymity.
34. See *La Hoja*, August, September, and October 2001.
35. Interview conducted by the author with the President of José C. Paz's legislature, José Mondoví, Buenos Aires, September 2005.
36. On Mexico, see Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, Federico Estévez, and Beatriz Magaloni, "*Strategies of Vote Buying: Poverty, Democracy and Social Transfers in Mexico*," Unpublished manuscript, 2008; Jorge I. Domínguez and Chappell H. Lawson, *Mexico's Pivotal Democratic Election* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Jorge I. Domínguez, Chappell H. Lawson, and Alejandro Moreno, *Consolidating Mexico's Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). On Brazil, see Robert Gay, "The Even More Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Brazil," in Patricia Fernández-Kelly and Jon Shefner, eds., *Out of the Shadows: Political Action and the Informal Economy in Latin America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Frances Hagopian, Carlos Gervasoni, and Juan Andres Moraes, "From Patronage to Program: The Emergence of Party-Oriented Legislators in Brazil," *Comparative Politics Studies*, 42 (March 2009): 360–91; David Samuels, "From Socialism to Social Democracy: Party Organization and the Transformation of the Worker's Party in Brazil," *Comparative Political Studies*, 37 (November 2004): 999–1024.
37. Mario Vargas Llosa, *El pez en el agua* (Lima: Alfaguara, 2005).
38. Ibid, p. 104.
39. Gary W. Cox, "Swing Voters, Core Voters, and Distributive Politics," in Ian Shapiro, Susan C. Stokes, Elisabeth Jean Wood and Alexander S. Kirshner, eds., *Political Representation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 344.
40. Wayne A. Cornelius, "Mobilized Voting in the 2000 Elections: The Changing Efficacy of Vote Buying and Coercion in Mexican Electoral Politics" in Domínguez et al., eds., p. 47.
41. Gary W. Cox, *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Magaloni.
42. Interview conducted by the author with Nélida Perez, Villa Mercedes, San Luis, July 2009.
43. Fieldwork was conducted by the author in the State of Espírito Santo during the campaign visit of Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1996, and the campaign for mayor of Vitória, the state capital, in 1992. Geert A. Banck, "Personalism in the Brazilian Body Politic: Political Rallies and Public Ceremonies in the Era of Mass Politics," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 65 (December 1998): 25–43.
44. Ibid, pp. 38–39.
45. Ibid, p. 39.