

Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism

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Part I

Modalities of Distributive Politics

Chapter 1

Between Clients and Citizens: Puzzles and Concepts in the Study of Distributive Politics

Markets distribute goods. The drive to earn and to consume moves steel from Anshan to Minnesota, nannies from Brixton to Hampstead, and credit from Wall Street to Athens. Indeed, the movement of steel, nannies, and credit is in a sense what markets—for goods, services, and finance—*are*.

Politics also distributes goods. Government programs channel cash, jobs, credit, and myriad other resources to citizens; elected officials mete out benefits to favored constituencies; and political parties distribute everything from leaflets to liquor in search of votes. And taxes and transfers redistribute income, often from wealthier to poorer citizens.

The political distribution of goods is more controversial than is their distribution through markets. We expect markets to move valued resources across space and populations. But while few would object to all forms of political distribution, nearly all would object to some forms of it. In any democracy there is broad agreement (though not consensus) that political authority rightly transfers resources across generations by

using tax proceeds to fund the education of children or protect of the elderly from penury. Agreement about distribution through social welfare programs or against the risk of unemployment is also broad, though far from universal. But other kinds of political distribution and redistribution—say, contracts that go to politically connected private firms or cash payments in return for votes—are broadly reviled. Indeed, while some forms of political distribution are unquestioningly accepted, others are punishable with prison terms.

Political authorities make choices about distribution. When these authorities' hold on office depends on their winning elections, their choices become bound up with political strategies. And the modes of strategic distribution vary widely. For a sense of this variation, consider some examples.

Progresa/Oportunidades, Mexico. A federal anti-poverty program in Mexico, *Progresa* (later called *Oportunidades*), distributes cash to 2.5 million families. As de la O explains, “The resources of the program and the formula to allocate them are described in detail in the federal budget, which is proposed by the executive but approved in the Chamber of Deputies.”¹ Cash goes to mothers in families whose household income is in the bottom two deciles of the national distribution and who keep their children in school and take them for medical checkups. An agency of the federal government administers *Progresa/Oportunidades*. Beneficiaries have bank accounts, linked to ATM-style cards, into which the funds are deposited. Compliance with legal criteria of distribution is audited through random-sample surveys, and is high: the criteria for inclusion closely match the profile of beneficiaries.²

Emergency Food Aid, Argentina. A municipal social worker in a provincial town in Argentina receives, one by one, townspeople lined up outside her office door. They

¹de la O 2011, p. 39.

²See especially Ana de la O Torres, 2011, *Democracy and Cash Transfers: The Silent Transformation of Social Assistance in Latin America*. Unpublished manuscript, Yale University. See also Fiszbein and Shady, 2009.

are seeking to be placed on a list of beneficiaries for an emergency food program. The social worker's desk is replete with photographs of Juan Domingo Perón and Evita Perón, founders of the mayor's party. The mayor's office repeatedly intervenes to check the list, modifying it in ways that will generate votes. Weitz-Shapiro, who interviewed the social worker and studied the program, found partisan intervention to modify recipient lists of beneficiaries in 85 of the 127 municipalities she studied.³

La Efectiva, Mexico. As part of his 2011 campaign for the governorship of the State of Mexico, the PRI candidate, Eruviel Ávila, signed voters up at campaign events for another ATM-style card, this one called "*La Efectiva*," The Effective One. If he won, Ávila promised, card holders would receive payments that could be used toward two out of a long list of promised state-wide programs, including health care and food support for women; educational, sports, and cultural scholarships; old-age pensions; home improvement projects, and agricultural subsidies. The campaign distributed more than two million cards. The effort elicited personal appeals from residents, some posted on Ávila's website. "Denise," for instance, wrote, "Good afternoon, Eruviel! I'm a high school student and I wish to ask your help to get a scholarship. I have an excellent grade point average . . ." ⁴

Housing Improvement Program, Singapore. The government of Singapore invested heavily in improvements and maintenance of housing, and openly used the program as a tool to reward constituencies that voted for the ruling party (PAP) and punish those that voted for the opposition. As Tam reports, in 1985 the National Development Minister explained in a news conference that "we must look after PAP constituencies

³Weitz-Shapiro 2011.

⁴See *La Jornada*, 26 September 2011. The campaign's URL is <http://eruviel.com/mi-blog/piensa-en-grande-con-la-efectiva>. The tactic, with its apparent linkage of public benefits to electoral support, was controversial, and drew formalized complaints from competing parties. As of this writing, the Instituto Federal Electoral had not decided on these complaints.

first because the majority of the people supported us.” When an opposition MP inquired about the treatment of residents in opposition constituencies who had voted for the PAP, Teh replied ‘It is regrettable, but it can’t be helped.’”⁵

The examples display stark differences. In *Progresas/Oportunidades*, the criteria of distribution are public and the public criteria are binding. In the Argentine emergency food program, by contrast, local authorities and operatives subverted formal rules of distribution with hidden ones that promoted their electoral objectives. Both *La Efectiva* and the Singapore housing maintenance program openly linked access to public benefits to electoral support. In the Mexican setting, this linkage made the strategy both scandalous and possibly illegal;⁶ in Singapore, an authoritarian state, the linkage was not passively accepted—hence the challenging questions from journalists and opposition politicians—but it seemed unsurprising. Another striking difference is that *Progresas* goes out of its way to depersonalize distribution, replacing campaign workers and party operatives with bureaucrats; *La Efectiva* and the Argentine program involved face-to-face contact and direct party involvement.

Other instances like the second two are easy to find, and not just in Latin America or in the developing world. And though *Progresas*-like distributive strategies are more common in wealthier than poorer countries, in later pages we will cite well-researched instances from wealthy democracies—places like Sweden, Australia, and the United States—that look more like *La Efectiva* than *Progresas*.

What’s more, contemporary advanced democracies were once riddled with electoral exchanges in line with the Argentine and second Mexican examples. A seasoned American political boss, looking back on his career heading New York’s Tammany machine, mused

⁵Tam, p. 17.

⁶This and similar strategies elsewhere in Mexico have elicited formal complaints, lodged with the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE). As of this writing the IFE

If there's a fire on Ninth, Tenth, or Eleventh Avenue, for example, any hour of the day or night, I'm usually there with some of my election district captains as soon as the fire-engines. If a family is burned out . . . I just get quarters for them, buy clothes for them if their clothes were burned up, and fix them up till they get things runnin' again. It's philanthropy, but it's politics, too - mighty good politics. Who can tell how many votes one of these fires bring [sic] me? *The poor are the most grateful people in the world.*⁷

British elections in the 19th century, in turn, featured agents whose job it was to purchase votes. One explained,

Retaining fees of two guineas or more were sometimes paid as a preliminary earnest of the candidate's good will. "I asked for their votes," said one canvasser, "but you might as well ask for their lives, unless you had money to give them."⁸

This book is about distributive practices that politicians use to try to win and retain office. We examine especially closely the strategies of clientelism, machine politics, and patronage, all of them non-programmatic distributive strategies—a term we define in the next section. Understanding how the strategies of distributive politics differ from one another, how they work, and why they change helps shed light on basic questions that have preoccupied scholars for decades. Consider a society that undergoes a transition such that voters who used to trade their votes for cash, poverty relief, or help obtaining a job now offer their votes to parties that promise, and deliver, public policies of which they approve. Most—ourselves included—would consider this a shift from a less to a more democratic polity. Our study sheds light, then, on processes of democratization

⁷Riordan, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, p. 64, emphasis ours.

⁸Seymour, p. 394.

and democratic consolidation. What's more, parties responsive to the first kind of voter distribute favors and largess to individuals, whereas parties responsive to the second kind of voter have incentives to construct a welfare state. The story of the demise of clientelism and machine politics is, in this sense, the prehistory of the welfare state.

1.1 Conceptualizing Modes of Distribution

Many conceptual distinctions can be drawn among distributive strategies. We might distinguish programs generating public goods from ones targeting individuals.⁹ Public goods may benefit all contributors, or they may subsidize public expenditures of narrower geographic constituencies.¹⁰ Benefits may be irreversible (bridges) or reversible (public employment).¹¹ Parties make long-term and slow-moving investments in basic programs but campaign, on the margin, offering “tactical distributions.”¹² Incumbents alone may control benefits exclusively (political monopoly) or they may be controlled by opponents who are economic monopolists.¹³

These are all real differences and have been shown to entail distinct political dynamics. Our scheme is distinctive in that we develop it with one eye on the empirical world and another on normative democratic concerns. We focus on two distinctions. One is between what we call *programmatic* versus *non-programmatic* distribution. The other is between unconditional benefits and conditional exchanges. We turn to the programmatic/non-programmatic distinction first; it is depicted as the top branch in Figure 1.1.

⁹See, e.g., Lizzeri and Persico.

¹⁰This is the definition of *pork-barrel politics* offered by Aldrich.

¹¹Baland and Robinson.

¹²Dixit and Londregan, 1996.

¹³Medina and Stokes 2007.

1.1.1 Programmatic Distribution

For a distributive strategy to be programmatic, in our usage, two things must be true. First, the criteria of distribution must be public. Often, though not always, a public discussion precedes the crafting of distributive policies and their implementation. Even when *ex ante* public debates are absent—when distributive policies, for instance, are the product of internal governmental discussions or bureaucratic processes—the criteria of distribution are available for public discussion.

Secondly, the public, formal criteria of distribution must actually shape the distribution of the resources in question. Hence, for a scheme to be programmatic, the criteria that guide distribution must be:

1. Formalized and public, and
2. Shape actual distribution of benefits or resources

The conceptual distinction between programmatic and non-programmatic distribution is not merely academic. All democracies have laws against vote trafficking. In places where these laws are enforced, judges have to draw lines between the legal deployment of resources by ambitious office-seekers and the illegal purchase of votes. When they do, publicity comes into play.

As an example, the United States Supreme Court in 1982 found that promises of material benefits made openly in campaigns and aimed at broad categories of cities did not constitute vote trafficking and hence were legal. The court wrote,

We have never insisted that the franchise be exercised without taint of individual benefit; indeed, our tradition of political pluralism is partly predicated on the expectation that voters will pursue their individual good through the

political process, and that the summation of these individual pursuits will further the collective welfare. *So long as the hoped-for personal benefit is to be achieved through the normal processes of government, and not through some private arrangement, it has always been, and remains, a reputable basis upon which to cast one's ballot.*¹⁴

This had not been a private, secret offer, the court reasoned; rather it was “made openly, subject to the comment and criticism of his political opponent and to the scrutiny of the voters.”¹⁵

Yet perhaps the idea that much distributive politics is filtered through public deliberations and constrained by formal rules is quixotic. Was the court correct, with regard to the U.S. or any other democracy, that programmatic politics—open, public offers of material benefits, subject to debate—constitutes the “*normal* process of government”? Indeed, there is substantial evidence that the court’s theory is an accurate depiction of distributive politics in many democracies. Mexico’s *Progresa* program is an example, and one that shows that open and binding rules can constrain distribution in developing democracies as well.

Notice, however, a selection bias in the literature. Evidence of bias in the distribution of public resources is noteworthy, whereas reports of programmatic distribution have a dog-bites-man quality. Therefore the academic literature offers much more evidence of the former than the latter. Still, scholarly accounts of partisan bias in the allocation of public programs often contrast this bias with what is considered normal and proper in the national setting under consideration.

In Western Europe, patterns of public spending typically shift when the partisan

¹⁴Brown v. Hartlage p. 456 of U.S. 57, emphasis added.

¹⁵Brown v. Hartlage p. 456 of U.S. 57.

identity of governments changes. Even when they are constrained by international markets and institutions, such as the European Union, scholars identify predictable partisan differences in spending priorities.¹⁶ In the U.S. as well, where the ideological distance between the major parties is less pronounced than between left and right parties in Western Europe, spending priorities reflect the ideological differences between the parties and the contrasting interests of their constituencies.¹⁷ Contrasting priorities are forecast in campaign statements and party platforms and echoed in legislative debates. And campaign spending by political parties is severed from public spending and focused on persuasive communications rather than gifts or treats. Bickers and Stein show that changes in party control of the U.S. Congress induced changes in broad categories of spending—categories, what’s more, that corresponded to broad ideological differences between the parties.¹⁸ Their study supports the court’s claim that the “normal process of government” in the U.S. is public, predictable—in short, programmatic.

Along similar lines, Levitt and Snyder write about the pre-1994 U.S. congress that the

Democratic majority seems unable to target extraordinary amounts of money to specific districts, or to quickly alter the geographic distribution of expenditures. It appears that parties in the U.S. can, given enough time, target *types* of voters, but they cannot easily target individual districts.¹⁹

In other countries as well, distributive politics is often, even “normally,” programmatic.

¹⁶See, for instance, Boix (1998), Garret (2001), or Hibbs (1987).

¹⁷Though the Campaign Manifestos Project finds substantial ideological and programmatic differences between the platforms of the Democratic and Republican Parties in the U.S.; see Klingerman et al., 1994.

¹⁸Bickers and Stein.

¹⁹Levitt and Snyder 1995, p. 961.

1.1.2 Non-Programmatic Distribution

Non-programmatic distributive strategies—the right-hand side of the first branch of Figure 1.1—are ones that violate either of the two criteria outlined earlier. Either there are no public criteria of distribution or the public criteria are subverted by private, usually partisan ones.

We began with glimpses of non-programmatic distribution in Mexico and Argentina. But in advanced democracies as well, distributive schemes sometimes lack public criteria of distribution. To give some examples, in Australia, in the weeks leading up to the 1990 and 1993 elections, the ruling Labour party allocated constituency grants to build sports stadiums. The parliamentary opposition denounced partisan bias in the program, and eventually there was an investigation by the Auditor-General. The bias was later confirmed by Denmark, whose study suggests that this instance contrasted with normative expectations and normal distributive politics in Australia.²⁰ The Department of Environment, Sport, and Territories claimed that “community need” was a leading criterion of distribution. But “no departmental measures or estimations of community need were publicly released.”²¹

Sweden is a country that mainly practices programmatic politics. Papakostas notes the absence of a Swedish-language equivalent to the term *clientelism*; when Swedish journalists refer to clientelism “in other countries, they usually have to add that this is a practice where politicians exchange favors for political support.”²² Teorrell investigates electoral practices the 18th through 20th centuries and finds not a single incident of vote buying.²³ Still, distributive strategies in Sweden have occasionally strayed from

²⁰Denemark 2000.

²¹Denemark 2000, p. 901.

²²Papakostas 2001, p. 33.

²³Teorrell 2011.

the programmatic. In the run-up to a national election in 1998, swing municipalities - ones with large numbers of voters who were indifferent between the parties - received more, and more generous, environmental grants than did municipalities populated by more partisan voters.²⁴ The authors note that “the preparation” of proposals “as well as the final [funding] decisions” were “made by the incumbent government and there [was] no explicit formula describing how the grants should be distributed.”²⁵ They described this experience as unusual; the grants were not related to the “efficiency and equity goals otherwise typically attached to intergovernmental grants.”²⁶

Notwithstanding the evidence of much programmatic politics in the United States cited earlier, that country as well offers many instances of non-programmatic distribution. U.S. presidents can help channel public spending toward the districts of electorally vulnerable Members of Congress.²⁷ The American practice of “earmarks” is another example of hidden criteria of distribution.²⁸

The second criterion for programmatic distribution is also not infrequently violated, whether in advanced or developing democracies. Here political actors craft formal, public rules for distribution. But in practice these rules are abandoned in favor of more

²⁴Dahlberg and Johansson 2002.

²⁵Dahlberg and Johansson, p. 27

²⁶Dahlberg and Johansson 2002, p. 27.

²⁷Berry et al. 2010.

²⁸Earmarks are highly particular rules that members of Congress enter into legislation in a quiet, secretive manner. Technically they are public—they are a formalized part of the legislation—but legislators hope that they will remain opaque to the broader public. When they are made public, they are seen as ludicrous and, sometimes, scandalous. Consider the case of a majority leader of the U.S. Senate who wanted to channel particular benefits to three specific hospitals in his state without appearing to do so. In 2009 he inserted an amendment into health care reform legislation that would extend grants to “certain hospitals” that been designated as cancer centers “on July 27, 1978, February 17, 1998, June 13, 2000.” (New York *Times*, “Health Bill Could Hold Reward for 4 Cancer Centers,” September 22, 2009, p. 20.) Dixit and Londregan (1998, p. 163) cite similar examples from the U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1986, such as special “transitional rules” for “a convention center with respect to which a convention tax was upheld by a state supreme court on February 8, 1985” (the Miami Convention Center), and one for “a binding contract entered into on October 20, 1984, for the purchase of six semisubmersible drilling units (a drilling project for Alabamas Sonat Company).”

electorally convenient criteria. In such cases, there is no effort to work special treatment into the language of legislation. Instead political actors in control of distribution ignore what legislation or bureaucratic practice call for and channel benefits to groups, regions, or even individuals who would not receive them, or who would be given a lower priority, if official criteria were followed. To offer one example, formalized criteria governed spending on transportation infrastructure in Spain in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet the actual distribution of funds favored regions with electorally vulnerable incumbents.²⁹

Modes of Non-Programmatic Distribution

Unconditional partisan bias. The second branch of Figure 1.1 identifies a basic distinction among forms of non-programmatic politics. In some settings, politically discriminatory distributions generate goodwill among recipients who may, as a consequence, be more likely to support the benefactor candidate or party. But recipients who defect and vote for a different party suffer no individual punishment. Consider a poor person from a pivotal constituency who gains access to an anti-poverty program, in effect jumping

²⁹Castells and Solé Ollé 2005. Our programmatic/non-programmatic distinction cross-cuts distinctions drawn by other scholars. A common one is based on the kinds of goods given out: public, club, targeted, and the like. Not infrequently, the key distinction that others have made is between collective benefits or public goods, versus individual or targeted benefits. Hence Lizzeri and Persico equate “clientelism and patronage (pork-barrel politics)” with “redistribution (ad hominem benefits);” this they contrast with “a public good with diffuse benefits.” (Lizzeri and Persico 2004, p. 708, 713.) Alessandro Lizzeri and Nicola Persico. 2004. “Why did the Elites Extend the Suffrage? Democracy and the Scope of Government, with an Application to Britain’s ‘Age of Reform.’” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(2):707-765. Shefter distinguishes between “divisible benefits - patronage of various sorts” and “collective benefits or appeals to collective interests.” It is certainly helpful in many contexts to distinguish between collective and individual benefits. Yet programmatic and non-programmatic distribution, as we define them, cross-cut this distinction. Distributive programs aimed at individuals may follow public criteria that determine actual distribution. If so, targeting individuals still constitutes programmatic politics, in our usage. By the same token, local public goods may be channeled to responsive localities according to rules that are hidden from public view, or public rules may be ignored in how such resources are divided: then public goods are non-programmatic. Many would call this pork-barrel politics, as, below, will we. The term *pork* connotes a departure from fairness and good government that is not easily reconciled with Lizzeri and Persico’s view of public-goods distributions as antithetical to clientelism.

the queue ahead of more needy people in other districts. We define this as a situation of *unconditional partisan bias*. If the program targets collectivities, such as geographic constituencies, we call this *pork-barrel politics*. Unconditional partisan bias and pork can add votes for the benefactor to the extent that the largess boosts voter goodwill toward the candidate and party.

From the perspective of normative democratic theory, the main difficulty raised by partisan bias and pork is the departure from publicity. We return to this point in the final chapter.

Clientelism. In other settings, the party offers material benefits only on the condition that the recipient returns the favor with a vote.³⁰The voter suffers a punishment (or reasonably fears that she will suffer one) should she defect from the implicit bargain of a goody for a vote; not (just) goodwill, but fear of punishment, turns distributive largess into votes. We call non-programmatic distribution combined with conditionality *clientelism*.

The importance of conditionality and *quid-pro-quo* understandings to our conceptual scheme again conforms to legal theory. In the U.S. Supreme Court decision cited earlier, it was important to the Court that the candidate’s offer “was to extend beyond those voters who cast their ballots for [him], to all taxpayers and citizens.” His offer “scarcely contemplated a particularized acceptance or a *quid-pro-quo* arrangement.”³¹

Quid-pro-quo exchanges of cash, alcohol, or building materials (to name just a few items) in return for a vote raise normative red flags. These exchanges seem to violate the free action or autonomy of voters. Even if we accept that voters are never fully autonomous and always come under the influence of some other actor—parents, co-workers, “opinion

³⁰Our distinction at the first branch of Figure 1.1, between public and binding rules and non-public or non-binding ones. The distinction between conditional and unconditional exchanges—the second branch—is more common in the literature; see especially Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, p. 10.

³¹*Brown v. Hartlage* p. 465 of U.S. 58.

makers,” or party leaders—still the image of the voter being held to account for his or her choice is disquieting. Perhaps this is because an implicit threat to cut the voter off from future benefits as a direct consequence of her voting choices moves uncomfortably close to coercion. Political philosophers, and undoubtedly most lay citizens, would deem coercion of the vote antithetical to democracy.³² Or perhaps vote trafficking has nefarious social side-effects or negative externalities, whatever its effects on vote sellers. Consider that, in a narrow material sense, nothing is at stake in an individual’s vote: it is unlikely to change the outcome of the election, and if benefits come by way of programmatic distribution, a vote will not influence the probability that the person who yields it will receive benefits. Therefore offers of benefits in direct exchange for votes hold the power to trump other considerations in voters’ choices. In such a setting, individual benefits with conditionality—clientelism—would be especially toxic. They can blunt elections as instruments for holding governments to account and for communicating the distribution of voters’ preferences.³³ We return to these questions in the final chapter.

Patronage versus Vote- and Turnout-Buying. Figure 1.2 further develops some distinctions from the bottom-right-hand side of the previous figure. Political machines orient some of their non-programmatic largess toward their own party members. Typically, the benefit they offer is public employment, though other benefits may also flow to party operatives. The term *patronage* is colloquially used to refer to intra-party flow of benefits, and we adopt that usage here. On the right-hand side of Figure 1.2, the *voter* (not the party operative) is the object of party largess. Political machines may treat or bribe to persuade people to vote for them; we call this *vote buying*. Or they treat or bribe to get voters to the polls; following Nichter, we call this *turnout buying*.³⁴

³²See, e.g., Mansbridge 2011.

³³See Karlan 1994 on the socially desirable features of elections and how they can be undone by vote trafficking.

³⁴Nichter 2008. Parties may also treat or bribe to keep voters away from the polls, as discussed by Cox

Constituency Service. Machines don't just offer voters largess in the run-up to elections. They also help constituents to solve problems, interceding on their behalf to obtain resources from higher levels of the state, contacting officials to deal with emergencies, and the like. They are "personal problem-solving networks."³⁵ Machine operatives usually insist that they offer such assistance without regard for the electoral sympathies or identities of the supplicant; the only criterion for spending time and effort on behalf of constituents is their need. When this is true, their actions call to mind what in the U.S. is called *constituency service*. Fenno has shown that U.S. members of Congress generally do render constituency service indiscriminately to all comers. The criteria of distribution are district residence and need.³⁶ We will show that clientelist machine operatives do not merely perform constituency service in this sense; instead they typically use other criteria, such as a voter's electoral responsiveness and willingness to join local organizations, when deciding how to deploy their scarce resources.

We do not locate constituency service in Figure 1.1. It is like programmatic distribution in that it offers assistance to voters independent of their responsiveness, but it is not "programmatic" in the sense of constituting a particular initiative and signaled by campaign pronouncements or by party ideology. Yet it is clearly an electoral strategy. By generating goodwill among constituents who receive assistance, and by allowing the politician to build a reputation for fairness and competence, constituency service is probably an effective electoral strategy. Constituency service as it is practiced today in the United States contains echoes of machine politics of old. But many of the functions of the machine have been taken over by governmental bureaucracies, and rarely would an

and Kousser. We don't find this strategy, which we call *abstention buying*, to be a particularly prevalent strategy, and therefore don't discuss it extensively. But we will return to the normative implications of abstention buying in the final chapter.

³⁵Auyero 2001.

³⁶Fenno 1978.

individual constituent be denied access to a social program because she has proved herself to be electorally unresponsive—as is the case of clientelism.

We illustrate in Table 1.1 [MISLABELLED AS TABLE 2.1] the potential for our conceptual scheme to translate into codings of particular cases. It presents our coding of a large number of case studies of distributive politics, in all instances ones that are non-programmatic. We have excluded from the table cases in which we lack sufficient information to code them. For instance, was the politicized transfer of funding to Ghana’s District Assemblies a case of electoral diversion of public programs, or of clientelism? Banful’s study indicates non-programmatic distribution, but without more information about the structure of parties and their interactions with voters, we hesitate to push the coding further.³⁷ Still, it should be clear that many instances of distributive politics can be readily coded according to our scheme.

In sum, a first question our study poses is, “How can we distinguish among various forms of distributive politics?” Our answer is that the key distinctions are between ones that follow public, binding rules and those that do not; and between strategies that attempt to influence voters and others that attempt to hold them more sharply to account.

1.2 Basic Questions about Distributive Politics

Despite the very large number of excellent studies of clientelism and distributive politics, still some basic questions remain unanswered. Much progress has been made. But core aspects of the topic remain poorly understood, which is what motivates us to write this book. In particular, we are dissatisfied with answers—including those we have offered in our own earlier contributions—to three basic questions.

³⁷Banful 2010.

1. *How does non-programmatic politics, and especially clientelism, work?*
2. *What causes shifts between non-programmatic and programmatic distribution?*
3. *Which kinds of distributive politics are consistent with the norms of democracy, which are inconsistent, and why?*

1.3 How Does Clientelism Work?

Despite a spike in academic studies and a good deal of attention in the policy world, we still lack an understanding of some facts about clientelism. One basic question that any reasonable theory should be able to answer is, What types of voters tend to enter into vote-trafficking arrangements? As the next chapter makes clear, our theories fail on this basic task. The collective theoretical wisdom does a bad job explaining empirical regularities regarding the effect of *partisanship* on vote selling. It does a better job explaining the impact of *income* on vote selling: poor people are more likely to sell their votes. But we don't have consistent explanations for *why* this is true.

A major contribution we hope to make with this book is to build a theory of clientelism that does a better job explaining what until now have been empirical anomalies or incomplete explanations. The theory that we will build, in Chapter 3, begins with a series of observations about the informational requirements of clientelism. As a prelude to that more thoroughgoing discussion, we outline some of these observations now.

Under clientelism, parties distribute benefits to individuals and attempt to hold them accountable for their votes. The information required to carry off these rather remarkable tasks is substantial. Parties must know which voters and families need what kinds of help; a bag of rice for Juanita won't be helpful if what she really needs is medication for a sick child. They also need to know who is likely to turn out without

much additional prodding, who will vote for them come hell and high water, who will *not* vote for them come hell or high water, and who is on the fence. This information, what's more, may change over time: whether Juanita's child is still ill; whether Sanjay now has a job; whether Philip used to support the party but thinks its performed badly in the last term. Monitoring the vote also requires parties to gather substantial information on the decentralized actions of individual voters. Both the delivery and the holding-voters-to-account sides of machine politics are demanding on the party as an information-gathering and -processing mechanism. This is true under public voting, all the more so once the ballot becomes secret.

To deal with these information demands, machines hire armies of intermediaries or brokers. Of particular value are people who live in the same neighborhood as the set of voters for whose actions they are responsible. It's much easier for a neighborhood insider to know whose children are ill, who turned out in the last election and who stayed home, whether a voter turned against the party, or who seems to have defected and voted for an opponent, despite having benefitted from party largesse.

Brokers solve many information problems for machines, but they create problems as well. They are agents of the party whose actions cannot be exhaustively observed or perfectly monitored by the party. Did support collapse in a given neighborhood because the opponent did a good job poaching, or because the party's broker sold the rice and kept the cash for himself? Did the broker work hard for the primary candidate who secured access to a school scholarship program for neighborhood children, or was he secretly pushing for another candidate? Did he direct party resources toward responsive voters, or did he expend them on his cronies, who can help him boost his own career? Was the candidate a hard sell in that neighborhood, or was the broker inept?

These kinds of questions plague machine leaders. We find such doubts—the sense

that one’s operatives in the neighborhoods, towns and boroughs may be “parasites” and “traitors”³⁸— to be omnipresent, festering in the minds of party leaders from 19th century Britain, to Gilded Age America, to contemporary Argentina or India. Their omnipresence suggests that they are structural, growing out of the very needs of parties to build organizations that can maintain intimate contact with voters.

These observations about the informational and organizational settings of machine politics are at the center of our study. They help us to build a broker-mediated model of clientelism which solves persistent puzzles and explains enduring empirical anomalies.

In sum, our answer to the question, “How does vote buying work?” will turn on the role of the political broker. While many studies of machine politics have noted the centrality of brokers, most have not sufficiently internalized the logic of broker-mediated distribution. Our micro-theory aims to expose the agency issues that characterize this relationship and to theorize the ways in which clientelism thus brings both costs and benefits to party leaders.

1.3.1 The Macro-Logic of Transitions From—and To—Clientelism

In some countries, distributive politics has shifted over time from vote buying and other non-programmatic forms to programmatic politics. And sometimes programmatic forms of political competition have become more clientelistic or non-programmatic. Why do such changes occur, and are shifts from non-programmatic to programmatic politics possible among today’s developing democracies?

By posing these questions, we do not mean to suggest that a shift from non-programmatic to programmatic distribution is inevitable around the world, and we indeed

³⁸As explained in Chapter 8, party leaders in Britain and the United States saw their electoral agents and brokers in these and other unflattering ways.

have found clientelism to grow over time in some settings. Still, in the U.S. the George Washington Plunkitts have been displaced by less personalized, more bureaucratic organizations, and few victims of fires or natural disasters, even in the working-class neighborhoods of New York, Chicago, or other erstwhile machine cities expect to receive aid from party bosses or ward-healers. In the same way, the modern-day British Labour, Liberal Democrat, or Conservative parties would have little use for the vote-buying party agents whom they used to rely on. In other countries, clientelism and vote buying have declined but not disappeared. Gone are the days when Italy's Christian Democratic party sent "pasta trucks" through the popular quarters of Naples or Palermo, in search of votes.³⁹ But the Italian parliament in 2004 saw reason to pass legislation barring the introduction of cell phones into the voting booth. Voters were reported to be using the cameras in their phones to photograph their ballots, thus verifying that they had complied with implicit vote-buying contracts. What explains such transitions, complete or partial? Simple answers, such as economic growth and modernization, tell only part of the story.

Just as it helped explain the internal micro dynamics of clientelism, so the broker-mediated model helps make sense of the macro dynamics of machine demise. Since leaders both rely on but suffer under their electoral agents, we should not be surprised that these same leaders play a role in cutting out the group of brokers when conditions are ripe. Grasping the imperfect agency relations between party leaders and their brokers helps us understand the macro-logic of transitions between clientelism and programmatic politics. As our analysis of the micro-logic of vote buying suggests, clientelism brings both costs—in the form of rent-seeking and inefficient targeting by brokers—as well as benefits to party leaders. Understanding the sources of these costs and benefits is thus crucial for understanding the emergence and persistence of clientelism. As our investigation

³⁹See Chubb 1981.

of historical as well as contemporary cases suggests, party leaders often chafe at the inefficiency of their brokers. Transitions from clientelism have often taken the form of party leaders colluding against their own brokers.

Structural forces such as economic growth and modernization influence the relative returns to clientelism, compared to other distributive strategies, and thus affect the incentives of leaders to subvert their machines. Social changes in the electorate induced by industrialization or economic development shape the terms of exchange between party leaders and brokers, as well as between brokers and voters. Population growth and urbanization reduce the discernibility of vote choice and make manifest diseconomies of scale involved in clientelism: in light of the intensity and frequency of relations required between brokers and their clients, the political machine does not “scale” as well as more programmatic forms of political communication. The latter, in contrast, can involve heavy start-up costs but low fixed costs, leading to increasing returns to scale; when the costs to leaders of communicating directly with voters (i.e., without brokers) decline, the returns to programmatic strategies increase.

In sum, our answer to the question, What causes shifts between non-programmatic and programmatic distribution?, will emphasize macro or structural changes that enhance or erode the efficiency of brokers. When industrialization enlarges electorates, shifts the weight of electorates from poor to middle-class voters, and makes individual voters’ actions harder to discern, the inefficiencies of the electoral agent will weigh all the more heavily on party leaders, tempting them to do away with their own machines. When party leaders undertake policies that enlarge the number of poor voters while also spurning their traditional constituencies, brokers will appear less wasteful and inefficient to leaders. The broker-mediated theory, then, helps unravel puzzles of clientelism, both as a steady state and as a strategy that rises and falls in distinct settings.

1.3.2 Distributive Politics and Normative Democratic Theory

We hope to help solve some puzzles in normative considerations of distributive politics. Earlier we framed the question as, Where does one draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable forms of distributive politics? By now it should be clear that not one line alone but several will need to be drawn. Most normative theorists of democracy would probably agree with the U.S. Supreme Court's stance that a line should be drawn between public commitments and offers (which are legal and acceptable) and private, hidden side-deals (which are not). But even among practices that flout public, binding rules, some undercut democratic norms more than others. We have suggested, for instance, that democracy is less severely undermined when distributive strategies *influence* rather than *coerce* voters, and hence that clientelism is more toxic than is unconditional partisan bias.

Figure 1.2 opens additional questions, as well. One of them is whether the practice of turnout buying should be subjected to as much opprobrium as is vote buying. Legal standards suggest that the answer may be no; parties' transporting or hauling voters to the polls is often legal, where paying them for their votes is not. That payments to voters are selective incentives to vote, and that the elimination of payments is often followed by a drop in turnout, is one of the justifications that is offered for vote buying; or at least this is considered a countervailing good that can mitigate the bad. This defense of private payments to voters raises questions, however, about the meaning of participation when it is purchased, a question we return to in the final chapter.

Other justifications of clientelism include that it is redistributive and that it is efficient. We take these up, later, as well.

1.4 Why Study Clientelism?

The forgoing discussion will, we hope, help answer this question. Non-programmatic distributive politics in general, and clientelism in particular, are puzzling phenomena. In the next chapter we shall see that political machines fail to give out goods in the way that theorists have long predicted, giving too much to the wrong kinds of voters. Partisan bias, clientelism, and patronage sometimes disappear from places where they have long been endemic and reassert themselves in places where they have never been prevalent. And if political philosophers and lay observers think non-programmatic distributions tarnish democracy, why don't programmatic distributions do so as well? In short, there are puzzles to solve. Sheer curiosity, we hope, will carry the reader into the following chapters.

Another reason why we—and many other scholars of the developing world—have taken up the problem of clientelism and distributive politics is that it is widespread. The third wave of democratization initiated into the club of democratic nations a set of countries at considerably lower levels of economic development than the elite club of older democracies; hence, as a group, democracies became poorer. Figure 1.3 demonstrates this trend. The median gross domestic product per capita among all democracies peaked in the late 1970s, then declined sharply through the 1980s and mid-1990s, when most Latin American and European Communist countries democratized. The trend was reversed in the late 1990s, but by 2007 the median per capita GDP of democratic countries remained 50 percent lower than it had been at its peak. The downward movement in average per capita GDP among democracies is due to the growth in the number of democracies in the world (Figure 1.3).⁴⁰

A simple reason why clientelism, patronage, and other modes of non-programmatic

⁴⁰Figure 1.3 uses PWT 6.3 and the Cheibub et al (2009) extension of the Przeworski et al (2000) regime codings to code democracies and autocracies from 1950-2007.

politics have become important topics in the scholarly and policy communities is that there is an elective affinity between it and poverty, and the birth of many new, poor democracies make it more prevalent. And yet we also see signs of the decline of clientelism, or at least major challenges to it, challenges epitomized by the *Progresa/Oportunidades* program mentioned at the outset.

1.5 Structure of the Book

In addition to this introductory Part I, the book that follows is divided into three more parts, each corresponding to one of the questions raised above.

Part 2 addresses the crucial question of how distributive politics works. Chapter 2, “The Gap between Theory and Fact,” uses original micro-level evidence from four developing-world democracies—Argentina, India, Mexico, and Venezuela—to underscore the lack of fit between positive political-economy models and real-world patterns. Most positive theories treat clientelist parties as single unitary actors, and they predict that “swing” or indifferent voters will be the chief targets of distributive largess. But this prediction finds little support in the cases we study. We then attempt to explain this empirical anomaly in three ways: by assuming that voter partisan types (loyal voters, swing voters) is a bi-product of distributive largess (*endogenous loyalty*); by assuming that largess is aimed at mobilizing voters, rather than persuading them (*turnout buying*); and by positing that what appears in the data to be payments to loyal voters are actually payments to low-level brokers, whose task is to generate support among voters (*subcontracting*). Only this last alternative steps away from the assumption of clientelist machines as single unitary actors. None of the three effectively resolves the tension between theory and facts.

Chapter 3, “A Theory of Broker-Mediated Distribution,” attempts to close this gap. We analyze a formal model that builds on the basic idea that brokers—ground-level intermediaries between the party and voters—are imperfect agents of their parties. This model makes sense of empirical regularities that were anomalous from the perspective of earlier theories, such as the channeling of largess toward loyalists who were also committed non-abstainers. The broker-mediated theory rests on assumptions, and generates comparative-statics, which we then test empirically in the following two chapters.

Chapter 4, “Testing the Broker-Mediated Theory,” draws on evidence gathered directly from party brokers. We have carried out a unique survey of a probability sample of several hundred party brokers in Argentina, one that allows us to examine the incentives, beliefs, and practices of various actors. Our efforts to draw probability samples of brokers in four regions in Argentina—despite the non-existence of any obvious sampling frame—and our use of several survey experiments allow us to circumvent inferential difficulties that other kinds of studies frequently encounter. Chapter 5, “A Disjunction between Leaders’ and Brokers’ Strategies?,” begins with the observation that if our theory is right, distributive politics should favor swing *districts* but loyal *individuals*. To test this observable implication, we again draw on original data sources as well as on ecological studies from all major regions of the world, including the United States and Canada, Western European countries, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Chapter 6 hones in on the relationship between poverty and clientelism. A near-universal assumption, in scholarly, policy, and lay discussions is that vote buying is basically a strategy aimed at low-income voters. Cross-national survey data support this assumption. So do our individual-level evidence from four developing-world democracies. There is less consensus about *why* the poor are most likely to sell their votes. Our model in Chapter 3 assumes diminishing marginal utility of income, an assumption we share

with several other theories of machine politics. This assumption implies that the higher a voter's endowment or pre-political income, the more a party will have to pay her to overcome any disutility she endures from voting against her preferred type. With limited and fixed budgets, machines start with poor voters and are decreasingly likely to target voters, the wealthier the voters become. Another explanation focuses on the risk-aversion that is also implied by diminishing marginal utility of income. Here it is not the limited budget of the party but the unwillingness of the voter to accept an uncertain future reward, promised by a programmatic politician, instead of a steady flow of concrete benefits. We test the supply (limited budgets) versus demand (voter risk-aversion) explanations with original survey data.

The third part of the book shifts from contemporaneous to over-time dynamics of distributive politics. In Chapter 7, "Party Leaders Against the Machine," we develop formally some predictions about the conditions that might encourage, or discourage, clientelism and vote buying. Chapter 8, "What Killed Vote Buying in Britain and the United States?" fleshes out this theory by posing and offering answers to two historical questions. In 19th-century Britain and the United States, vote buying was a central feature of elections. Why did it subsequently basically disappear in both countries, displaced by more programmatic approaches to winning elections? And why, despite the similarities in this basic scenario of decline, did clientelism and machine politics persist longer in the U.S. than in Britain?

Chapter 9, "Explaining the Resurgence and Decline of Clientelism in Latin America," brings the focus back to a set of countries that remain poorer today. What explains varying over-time and cross-national levels of clientelism among several Latin American countries? We leverage a paired comparison of two countries which by the early 21st century have sharply divergent levels of vote buying—little in Uruguay, a lot in

Argentina—and evaluate these differences in light of our theoretical predictions. We also review evidence of shifts toward programmatic distributive politics—and an attendant strengthening of the welfare state—in several previously highly clientelistic Latin American democracies. If, as it appears, clientelism is being challenged in countries like Mexico, Brazil, and even perhaps Argentina, what explains these changes, and how do they relate to our theoretical predictions?

The final section and chapter consider non-programmatic politics through the lens of normative theories of distributive justice. Normative considerations are clarified by the sharper picture of distributive politics which, we hope, will emerge from these pages. Chapter 10 poses the question, “What’s Wrong with Buying Votes?” (and other forms of non-programmatic distribution). Can it be justified on efficiency grounds? On redistributive grounds? On participation grounds? How does it measure up to theories of distributive justice? The answer to the last question—not very well—is no surprise. Yet there are nuances, depending on what kind of non-programmatic strategies we have in mind. It matters, we contend, whether the practice in question is pork-barrel politics versus the targeting of individuals; whether the goal is to change people’s votes or to boost turnout; whether goodies are given out to get supporters to the polls or to keep opponents at home; and whether the recipients of largess are party loyalists, swing voters, or opposition supporters.

To probe the questions that animate this study, we use tools of theory, both positive and normative. Our empirical research makes use of a multi-layered mix of strategies.⁴¹ We have conducted sample surveys of voters in Argentina, Venezuela, and India, and use publicly available individual data from Mexico, to make inferences about the kinds of voters whom political machines target. Our Venezuelan survey was designed to fill the

⁴¹See the Appendixes, as well as discussions in the chapters, for more details about our data sources.

gaps in an enormous database of Venezuelan voters that the Chávez government created. Though other social scientists have studied the Venezuelan government's database, we are the first to be able to add crucial additional information, e.g., about voters' income levels, by matching voters sampled for our own survey to the records in the government's database. We draw on original experimental research reflecting party and voting behavior in India. We have conducted open-ended interviews with party leaders, brokers, and voters in Argentina, Venezuela, and India. We are also able to draw on a vast and generally rigorous secondary literature, and offer what we believe to be the broadest empirical review of ecological studies of distributive politics yet produced. And we have dug deeply into secondary historical materials to make arguments about the demise of at least some forms of non-distributive politics in several of today's advanced democracies.

One empirical strategy that we make only cursory use of large-N cross-national research. One reason has to do with the nature of our dependent variables. Like corruption, many forms of non-programmatic distribution are illegal, immoral (by local standards), or both, and no ready cross-national measures are available. That these practices are not socially desirable creates potential bias in the single-country measures and survey results that we do use. A promising approach, but one that is just getting off the ground as of this writing, is to gauge levels of vote buying through list experiments.⁴² Even so, these studies tend to produce one-off measures of the level of vote buying at a single point in time. And the very anonymity they offer respondents then reduces the amount of individual-level information that they provide.⁴³ Beyond the intentional obfuscation by the actors involved, another obstacle to gathering valid cross-national measures is that context matters for the coding of our dependent variable. For this reason, another promising recent

⁴²See, for example, Corstange 2010, Nickerson et al. forthcoming.

⁴³Some analysts have attempted to extend list-item techniques to allow inclusion of individual-level data (see Corstange 2008), though these rely rather heavily on the assumptions of regression models for individual-level responses.

approach to the cross-national study of clientelism and other modes of party-voter linkages is elite surveys, in particular those carried out by Kitschelt and his co-authors.⁴⁴As the next chapter makes clear, public spending may be programmatic or not, depending on the political context in which it is carried out and on how faithfully it reflects formalized rules. These are questions that scholars have addressed in particular national contexts, and a great deal can be learned by comparing the results of myriad country-level studies. But the importance of context makes simple large-N statistical comparisons treacherous. For these reasons, the few efforts scholarly efforts to gather cross-national measures of clientelism, pork, or vote buying have not been particularly successful.

⁴⁴See Herbert Kitschelt 2011, *Linkage Strategies. A Descriptive Exploration*, unpublished typescript, Duke University.

Figure 1.1: A Conceptual Scheme of Distributive Politics

Figure 1.1: A Conceptual Scheme of Distributive Politics

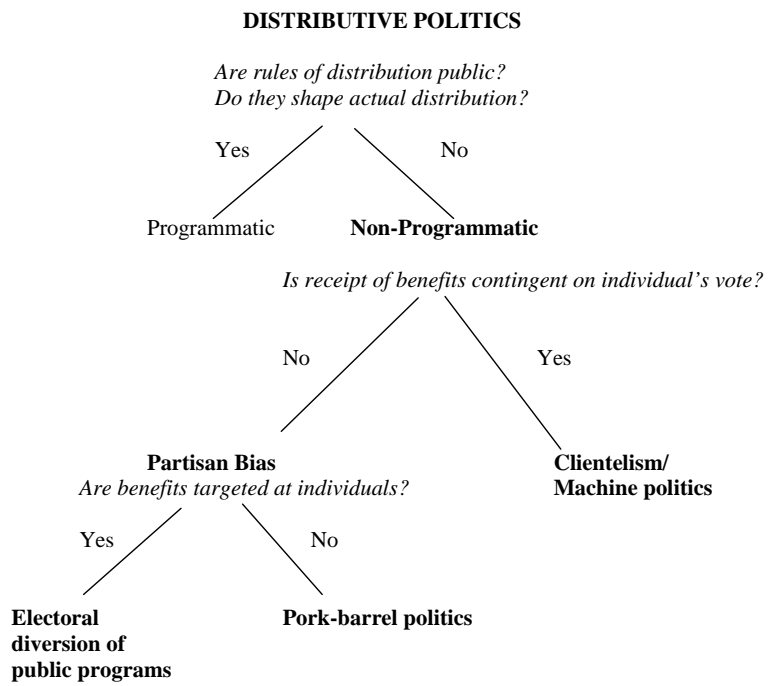


Figure 1.2: Varieties of Clientelism

Figure 1.2 Varieties of Clientelism

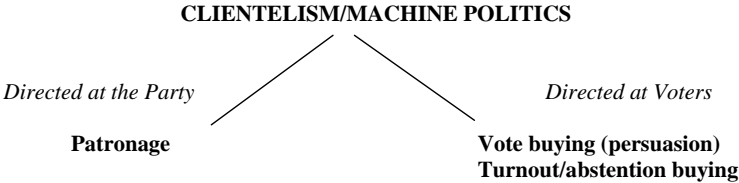
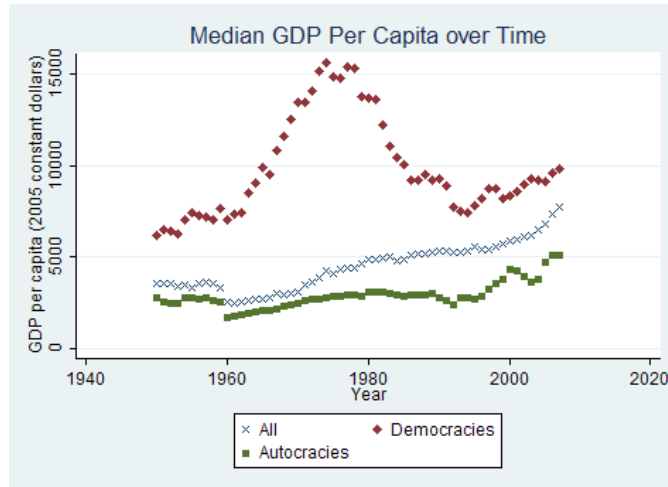


Figure 1.3: Median GDP Per Capita Over Time



Compiled from PWT 6.3 and the Cheibub et al (2009) extension of the Przeworski et al (2000) regime codings; 1950-2007.

**Table 1.1 Ecological Studies of Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics
Coded by Type**

Country	Author, publication year	Time period	Program	Type of Non- Programmatic Strategy
U.S	Wright, 1974	1933-1940	New Deal federal spending in states	Electoral diversion and machine
U.S.	Levitt and Snyder, 1995	1984-1990	Federal spending in Congressional districts	Electoral diversion and Pork
U.S.	Herron and Theodus, 2004	1999-2000	State assembly in districts (Illinois)	Electoral diversion and Pork
U.S.	Ansolabehere and Snyder, 2006	1957-1997	State governments to counties	Electoral diversion and pork
U.S.	Chen 2008	2004	Federal emergency aid in Florida	Electoral diversion
U.S.	Berry et al., 2010	1984-2007	Federal spending in Congressional districts	Electoral diversion and Pork
Canada	Crampton 2004	Mid-1990s	Job-creation fund	Electoral diversion
Canada	Miligan and Smart, 2005	1988-2001	Regional development grants	Electoral diversion and pork
Australia	Worthington and Dollery, 1998	1981-82, 1991-92	Commonwealth grants to states	Pork
Australia	Denemark, 2000	Early 1990s	Sports stadiums	Pork
Italy	Golden and Picci, 2006	1953-1994	Infrastructure	Pork
Italy	Chubb, 1978	1950s-1970s	Multiple types	Machine
Spain	Castells and Solé-Ollé, 2005	Late 1980s-early 1990s	National infrastructure spending in regions	Pork
Portugal	Veiga and Pinho, 2007	1979-2002	Municipal grants	Pork

**Table 2.1 Ecological Studies of Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics
Coded by Type (continued)**

Country	Author, publication year	Time period	Program	Type of Non-Programmatic Strategy
Sweden	Dahlberg and Johansson, 2002	1998	Environmental grants to municipalities	Pork
Sweden	Johansson, 2003	1981-1995	Central government spending in municipalities	Electoral diversion and pork
South Korea	Kwon, 2005	1988-1997	National/ministerial spending in regions	Pork and machine politics
India	Rodden and Wilkinson, 2004	1957-2003	National spending in states	Pork and machine politics
India	Cole, 2007	1992-1999	Agricultural credits to states	Pork and Machine politics
India	Khemani, 2007	1972-1995	Fiscal transfers to states	Pork and machine politics
India	Vaishnav and Sircar, 2010	1977-2007	School buildings in Tamil Nadu	Pork
Mexico	Molinar and Weldon, 1994	Early 1990s	PRONASOL funds center to states	Pork and machine politics
Mexico	Bruhn, 1996	Early 1990s	PRONASOL funds center to states	Pork and machine politics
Mexico	Hiskey, 1999	Early 1990s	PRONASOL funds to municipalities	Pork and machine politics
Mexico	Magaloni, 2006	1990s	PRONASOL funds to municipalities	Pork and machine politics
Mexico	Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros, and Estevez, 2007	1990s	PRONASOL funds to municipalities	Pork and machine politics
Brazil	Ames, 2001	Early post-transition	Central government to municipalities	Pork and machine politics
Brazil	Rodden and Arretche, 2003	1991-2000	Center's transfers to states	Pork and machine politics
Peru	Schady, 2000	1991-1995	Anti-poverty, development funds from center to counties	Electoral diversion and Pork

**Table 1.1 Ecological Studies of Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics
Coded by Type (continued)**

Venezuela	Hawkins, 2010	2005	Targeted "Mission" benefits to municipalities	Pork and Electoral diversion
Argentina	Calvo and Murillo, 2004	1987-2000	Fiscal transfers from center to provinces	Machine politics
Argentina	Lodola, 2005	1995-1999	Workfare transfers to municipalities	Machine politics
Argentina	Gordin, 2006	1983-2003	Fiscal and housing transfers to provinces	Pork and Machine politics
Argentina	Weitz-Shapiro, 2006	1995-2001	Workfare transfers to municipalities	Machine politics
Argentina	Nazareno, Stokes, and Brusco 2006	1995-1999	Workfare transfers to municipalities	Machine politics

Chapter 5

A Disjunction Between the Strategies of Leaders and Brokers?

The broker-mediated model of clientelist distribution implies a disjunction between the distributive priorities of party leaders and of brokers. Party leaders favor distributing scarce resources to responsive voters; other things (than voter partisanship) being equal, they prefer that party resources end up in the pockets of ideologically indifferent voters. Brokers have greater incentives to target loyal partisans, though - as we have seen, both theoretically and empirically - they also expend some resources on swing voters. In the real world of distributive politics, do we find a disjunction between the strategies of leaders and brokers? This is the question which we take up in this chapter.

With a few important exceptions, models of distributive politics treat parties - whether bureaucratic or machines - as unitary actors, ignoring the distinction between leaders and brokers; or they describe differences in the functions of the two but assume their underlying objectives are aligned.¹ All party members, on this view, share the same

¹Camp (2010) is a leading exception. Also, as discussed by Camp, some theories of party competition suspend the Downsian assumption of parties as unified teams, and treat activists as having more extreme

exclusive objective of having their party win elections. Even if brokers and leaders have distinct incentives, it might be the case that leaders manage to discipline brokers. If unitary-party models of distributive politics capture best the true nature of parties, then we would need some other explanation for brokers' favoring of loyal supporters. One, which we have discussed, is that the distributive game is about buying turnout. But our evidence, reviewed in Chapter 3, showed that this was not the whole story. Below we outline additional explanations for why leaders and brokers might share an interest in targeting loyalists.

What are the observable implications of our model, and what empirical patterns would be inconsistent with it? Our broker-mediated theory would be supported if we were to find that aggregate distributions, across states, provinces, and districts, favors swing voters, in particular when this is true in places where we know that distribution through brokers to individuals favors loyal supporters and non-abstainers. By contrast, the unified-party models would be supported if central authorities and party leaders demonstrated the same propensity to target loyalists as do brokers. Unitary models would also find support - and our broker-mediated model would be undermined - if the patterns of distribution at the aggregate level (controlled by leaders) are different from those at the individual level (controlled by brokers), but both actors are following the same electoral strategies - for instance, if leaders send resources to marginal or pivotal districts in order that brokers use them to turn out loyal supporters.

Evaluating the implications of the theory with real-world evidence is not a simple task. Many forces are at work in the distributive strategies of party leaders. Even in our theory, party leaders under some circumstances share with brokers an incentive to distribute to loyal supporters - for instance, when they are incumbents trying to buy back support after

policy preferences than do party leaders. See Roemer 2001, Hirschman 1970, chapter 6, and May 1973.

bad outcomes (large negative deltas, in our model). Even if our model accurately captures the incentives brokers have to work against the interests of party leaders, the leaders are also likely to be subject to countervailing pressures. They may find themselves tacking back and forth between pleasing core supporters - to encourage high turnout or discourage potential competitors who might poach their constituents - and courting independents. We discuss below the array of institutional factors that influence party leaders' distributive preferences.

Yet another difficulty is that most studies of distributive politics tell us about what kinds of regions, provinces, or localities ruling parties favor when they divvy up the pie. But few tell us which kinds of individuals end up benefiting. When governments allocate public goods - when we are in the domain of pork-barrel politics - the problem is mitigated; it is safe to assume that leaders who send local public goods to marginal districts are hoping to win over swing voters.² But the problem is greater when the goods involved are targeted - when, in the terms of our conceptual scheme, we are in the realm of the electoral diversion of programs or of clientelism. Even in these settings, the probability that a randomly selected individual is a swing voter is greater in marginal districts than in ones that are "safe" for one party or another.³ Nevertheless, the possibility exists that - in an example that Johnansson offers - "half of the population" in a district "is extreme conservative and the rest communists" and "none would even consider to switch" their vote, however generous the payoffs they receive.⁴ A few studies circumvent this difficulty by studying the impact of district-level public opinion on distributive strategies. Others, like our own, study distribution directly at the level of individuals. If individual-level data show that loyal voters, and non-abstainers, are the primary beneficiaries of brokers'

²Though, as discussed below, they may also be attempting to increase turnout among loyalists in marginal districts.

³Deacon and Shapiro 1975, and Schady 2000.

⁴Johansson 2003, p. 888.

largess, yet in the same settings leaders direct resources to swing districts, the presumption is strong that leaders and brokers are working at cross-purposes. This is the research strategy we pursue later in this chapter.

5.1 Theories of Distribution by Party Leaders

Though some scholars present evidence regarding the distributive strategies of governments⁵ in a given setting as though it were dispositive about the general logic of such distributions, Rodden and Wilkinson argue persuasively that one should not expect a uniform logic across varying institutional settings.⁶ A crucial institutional variable is whether the body that decides which districts get what is a single unitary actor or a collection of actors with diverse interests. Presidential systems in which the executive controls distribution unilaterally are an instance of the first kind of setting, as are parliamentary systems at moments of single-party government. The single-unitary-actor assumption must be suspended in the following settings: presidential systems in which legislatures play a large role in determining distribution or in which parties are weak and the president needs to hold together legislative coalitions in favor of his policies; and minority and coalition governments.

With multiple decision-makers, the theoretical literature underscores parties' extracting benefits for their constituents in proportion to their number of cabinet positions or seats in the legislature (Gamson), or to their status as formateur party among coalition members (Baron and Ferejohn), or to their bargaining weights.⁷ Even small parties that are pivotal for a coalition, making the difference between a government standing or falling,

⁵We use phrases such as "government transfers" or "ruling-party transfers" as a short-hand; opposition party leaders also make decisions about how to expend their party's scarce resources.

⁶Rodden and Wilkinson, 2004.

⁷Gamson 1961, Baron and Ferejohn 1989, Ansolabehere et al. 2005.

can extract out-of-proportion resources for their constituents; Israeli politics often provides the intuition behind this proposition, though there policy concessions in addition to material benefits are presumably what small parties extract.

When a single unitary actor - a president with control over budgets and strong parties, a prime minister whose party rules alone - is responsible for deciding inter-governmental transfers, the theory of such transfers overlaps with the theories of distributive politics we reviewed in Chapter 2. These governments are expected to deploy discretionary resources with electoral objectives in mind. And the electoral logic is - in many theoretical treatments - that benefits go to “swing” districts, which are uniquely responsive to largesse. They are uniquely responsive in that (in the now-familiar Dixit-and-Londregan refrain), opposition strongholds are written off, while “safe” districts are taken for granted.

Another key dimension of institutional variation is whether elections are in single or multiple districts. Examples of single-district elections are national legislative elections in which voters choose among alternative party lists in a single national district, or direct presidential elections. In single-district elections, every individual vote is potentially pivotal and the theory generally predicts that resources go to regions or types of voters who are most responsive.

Multi-district elections include legislative elections with more than one district and indirect presidential elections (e.g., through an electoral college). In multi-district elections, the most obvious strategy is to expend resources preferentially on districts where a victory will produce the last assembly seat required to bring the party into government or the last needed electoral-college vote. In this connection, Cox alerts us to some ambiguity in the notion of a “swing” district.⁸ Are they places heavily populated by swing - ideologically indifferent - voters? Or are they districts that make the difference between a party’s

⁸Cox 2009.

winning or losing an election? To avoid confusion we use the term *swing district* to refer to sub-national jurisdictions in which many indifferent voters reside, *pivotal district* for ones that can make or break a party's effort to win control of government, whatever the distribution of voter preferences within it. *Marginal districts* are ones in which the gap between winners and first losers is small. Party leaders in multi-district contests are expected to direct resources toward pivotal districts. And among pivotal districts, resources are predicted to go to marginal ones, where the party's vote share is expected to be very close to the margin between winning and losing.

The degree of centralization of government is also a crucial institutional variable influencing distributive strategies. In highly centralized systems, regional and local administrators are appointed by central authorities and policy is determined by the national government. In such settings, questions of opposition-party control over resources transferred from the center, and problems of credit claiming, are absent. By contrast, the single-unitary actor assumption is inappropriate in federal systems. Here the partisan identity of subnational governments is crucial. Consider the following situation. Party A controls the national government. Region R will be pivotal in the next parliamentary elections: if A wins in R, it continues to control the national government; if it loses, Party B will replace it in power. The leaders of Party A know that the outcome in R is likely to be close and there are many swing voters in R. R is swing, marginal, and pivotal; Party A should spend lavishly there.

Now assume that Party B controls the regional government of R. Party A may be dissuaded from expending resources there, for two reasons. The first has to do with credit claiming. If voters view Party B (the regional government) as its benefactors, then distributive largess by Party A will yield additional votes for Party B. The second disincentive for spending has to do with control. If Party B anticipates that a central-

government-sponsored program will help Party A defeat it in the next election, it may use its regional control to slow down the implementation of the program, or waste resources in such a way that the yield in votes for Party A is reduced. Given a choice between spending resources in two regions, both of which are simultaneously marginal and pivotal, Party A will prefer the region in which it controls the regional government over one in which regional government is under Party B's control.⁹

For clarity, we introduce some additional terminology, displayed in Table 6.1. Districts heavily populated by swing voters are (as noted) swing districts, those heavily populated by loyal supporters are *loyal districts*, and those heavily populated by opposition voters are *opposition districts*. We call districts governed by the ruling party at the center *aligned districts*, those controlled by ideologically rival parties *rival districts*, and those controlled by coalition partners or supporters of a president's legislative agenda are *friendly districts*.

⁹For theoretical development of some of these ideas, see Arulampala et al. 2009, and Dixit and Londregan 1998. The nature of programs is also a crucial consideration, since central governments even in highly federalized settings may be able to design programs so that distributive decisions circumvent subnational authorities.

Table 5.1: **Terminology for Types of Subnational Districts, by Partisanship of Voters and of District Governments**

	Oppose	Indifferent	Loyal
Voters	Opposition	Swing	Loyal
Subnational Governments	Rival	Friendly	Aligned

Just as theorists developed models to explain loyal individual supporters' sometimes receiving discretionary rewards, so they have developed models to explain intergovernmental transfers sometimes going to loyal districts. One reason why a district that already produces many votes for a party may still receive its largess is that it is pivotal. The risk that the district could go the wrong way, though small, is more catastrophic if losing the district means losing control over the government. Another reason why risk-averse politicians might extend largess to loyal districts is that powerful incumbents wish to avoid even the remote possibility of losing their own seats, and are willing to trade off maximizing their party's vote share, or its share of seats in the legislature, in favor of their own job security. Yet a third reason for party leaders to spend on loyal districts, underscored by Cox, is to discourage ideologically proximate rival parties from entering the race.¹⁰ Hence the need for coordination, as well as for risk-reduction, can induce party leaders to prefer spending on loyal districts.

Another factor that we expect to impinge on distributive allocations is the degree to which - in decentralized systems with multi-district elections - the jurisdictions of subnational governments and electoral districts overlap. At one extreme, consider a country in which the overlap is perfect - where (say) provinces are both electoral districts and subnational governmental jurisdictions. An example is presidential elections in the United

¹⁰Cox 2009.

States, where electoral-college districts perfectly overlap with state government jurisdictions. In such settings, the partisanship of the regional or local leadership will make a difference in the strategies of central authorities. These considerations help explain the FEMA violation of programmatic distribution, mentioned in Chapter 2. The state of Florida overlapped perfectly with the electoral-college district of Florida; the “district” was expected in the 2004 presidential elections to be both marginal (it had been excruciatingly so in 2000) and pivotal (as it had certainly been, again, in 2000). That it was also an aligned state - the party of the governor matched that of the national executive - was perhaps less important in its attracting funds, though this is difficult to know this without information about whether federal FEMA authorities needed to collaborate with state party authorities to carry out the discriminatory distribution. Certainly, distributive benefits to an aligned state would have avoided problems of credit-claiming by a rival sub-national authority.

At the other extreme, in settings in which election districts and regional or local governmental jurisdictions overlap not at all, we expect party leaders at the center to take the partisanship of subnational governments much less into account. Bureaucrats who want to keep programs from being “politicized” have been known to purposely draw program boundaries which cross-cut jurisdictional and electoral boundaries; this was the case of some New Deal programs, though the effectiveness of these depoliticizing efforts was not complete.¹¹

In addition to loyal districts’ potentially being pivotal, what other explanations do theorists offer for discretionary benefits going to them? Cox discusses three.¹² One involves coordination, as mentioned earlier: the national party may shower benefits on loyal districts to drive up vote shares and discourage ideologically proximate competitors

¹¹We discuss this instance more fully in chapter 8.

¹²Cox 2005, 2007.

from entering into competition. Another involves polarization. Highly polarized distributions of voters may encourage the channeling of benefits to loyal districts: given a choice between loyal and opposition districts, a party may anticipate winning more votes by turning out loyalists who might otherwise abstain than by persuading opposition voters. Low and variable turnout, furthermore, encourages a strategy of mobilization of loyalists, and parties may channel benefits preferentially to loyal districts to encourage ideologically like-minded voters to go to the polls. There are even instances of payment to keep opposition voters away from the polls. Abstention-buying, or what Cox and Kousser call “deflationary fraud,” implies heightened spending in rival districts. Cox and Kousser found newspaper references to 44 cases of abstention-buying in rural New York State in the 1880s and 1890s.¹³ And Chen, who studied the impact of FEMA spending in Florida in 2004, demonstrates that receipt of FEMA funds increased turnout among loyalists but also suppressed turnout among opposition voters.¹⁴

Polarization and mobilization do not imply agency problems between brokers and party leaders: the need to increase turnout in a polarized electorate will create incentives for party leaders and disciplined brokers alike to target loyalists. Similarly, if leaders and brokers are single-mindedly focused on winning elections by dissuading ideologically proximate parties from entering the race, coordination will require spending on loyalists, with no agency problems implied. But if the coordination is geared toward keeping powerful brokers from switching parties or switching among factions in parties, then coordination-inspired spending on loyalist districts does arise from brokers’ being imperfect agents of

¹³See Cox and Kousser 1981. In another recent, though less well-documented case, Ed Rollins, Christie Todd Whitman’s 1993 gubernatorial campaign manager, told reporters that his campaign had paid black ministers not to preach get-out-the-vote messages to their congregations, and had offered to match democratic-party “walking around money.” Rollins later retracted the claims and no evidence of payments were uncovered. See the discussion in Karlan 1994.

¹⁴Chen 2010.

their party leaders.¹⁵ This situation is closer to the one that we find to be widespread among machines in contemporary developing democracies. Yet another factor that makes voters responsive in our model is valence shocks. If a negative shock makes loyal supporters disinclined to cast a vote for the party, even if their underlying partisanship has not been affected, then leaders will, along with brokers, favor loyal supporters.

The broader point is that evidence about the distributive actions of leaders and brokers must be interpreted carefully if one is to use this information to adjudicate between unitary and broker-mediated models of distributive politics.

5.2 Do Swing Districts Receive Party Largess?

Is there any evidence that political parties engage in swing-district strategies? If the answer were no, or if this were an infrequent strategy, this would constitute *a priori* evidence against there being a disjunction between leaders' and brokers' distributive strategies. But the evidence points in the opposite direction. Research around the world uncovers frequent political discrimination in favor of marginal, and in many cases plausibly swing, districts, and, in some cases, against loyal districts. In fact, if the preponderance of evidence is that brokers favor loyal individuals, the preponderance of evidence is that party leaders favor marginal districts.

Not all of the cases discussed here are ones of machine politics; many are cases of pork-barrel or the electoral diversion of programs—that is, non-programmatic policies but in the absence of parties that feature leaders and brokers. Such instances, however, are still germane to our theory; we expect to find political parties free of intermediaries pursuing a swing-district logic.

¹⁵See Camp 2010 and Szwarcberg 2009.

Consider the following examples:

- In Spain, expenditures on roads, railways, and other infrastructure in the late 1980s and early 1990s were greater in regions with smaller margins of victory in the previous election. “The safer the incumbents feel, the less they try to buy votes with infrastructure.”¹⁶
- In Australia in the early 1990s, the allocation of pork in the form of sports stadiums was deployed “to influence electoral outcomes in those electoral districts of primary strategic concern: marginal seats and seats held by cabinet ministers especially those with small electoral margins.”¹⁷
- In Canada between 1988 and 2001, regional development grants for small businesses, non-governmental organizations, and local authorities went disproportionately to marginal ridings, as well as to ones in which the MP was a cabinet minister - especially the cabinet minister in charge of regional development!¹⁸
- In Sweden, swing municipalities - ones with large numbers of voters who were indifferent between the parties - received more, and more generous, environmental grants in the run-up to national elections in 1998.¹⁹ They also received larger fiscal transfers from the central government in the 15 year period after 1981, controlling

¹⁶Castells and Sol-Oll 2005, p. 1200. They study infrastructure investment from 1987 and 1996, a period in which the leftist PSOE was in power nationally. They also find that leftist regional governments received larger disbursements.

¹⁷Denemark 2000, p. 909. The study—as mentioned in Chapter 2—focuses on the early 1990s, a period in which the Labour Party was in power nationally, and also finds that constituencies represented by Labour MPs received larger allocations. Non-programmatic distributive politics is also studied by Worthington and Dollery, 1998.

¹⁸Milligan and Smart 2005. The period they study was 1988 to 2001. Crampton (2004) also finds evidence of non-programmatic distributive politics in Canada favoring swing ridings in the West, though not throughout the country.

¹⁹Dahlberg and Johansson 2002.

for the efficiency and equality criteria that formally influenced these transfers.²⁰

- In Portugal, patterns of central authorities' delivering grants to municipalities over a thirty-year period beginning in 1972 reveals "strong evidence in favor" of the hypothesis that "politicians target swing voters," those residing in places where the margin of victory in previous elections was small. The authors find "no support" for the idea that "politicians favor their supporters," meaning loyal districts.²¹
- In Albania in the 1990s, soon after the transition to democracy, the central government initiated a program of block grants for rural communes, which in turn was spent on families for income support. "[T]he extent to which a commune is pivotal has a positive effect on the size of the block grant received, while distance from being a swing commune has a negative effect on the size of grant received."²²
- In Peru, the Fujimori government in the early 1990s spent disproportionate "social fund" (FONCODES) monies (for, e.g., nutrition and family planning, credit, the rehabilitation of schools, water, and sanitation programs) in localities that had supported the president in his first election bid, and in ones in which the margin of victory was close. It also spent disproportionately on districts where support for the government eroded sharply between the president's first election in 1990 and in a vote in 1993.²³
- In South Korea between 1988 and 1997, "regional distributive patterns of national subsidies were affected by electoral margins between the two leading candidates in a

²⁰Johansson 2003.

²¹Veiga and Pinho 2007, pp. 469-470.

²²Case 2001, p. 415.

²³Schady 2000. The 1993 vote was in a referendum to approve a new constitution, but the 'yes' position on the constitution was closely associated with the president. Fujimori had suspended the previous constitution during a 1992 coup d'etat, and his party had basically drafted the new one single-handedly.

province . . . the governments tended to distribute national subsidies to electorally competitive ‘swing’ regions.”²⁴

- In Ghana, political manipulation endured despite the use of formulas in the allocation of intergovernmental grants. Districts “with lower difference between the vote shares of the two parties in the previous presidential election receive higher DACF [District Assembly Common Fund] allocations and disbursements.” There is no evidence “that DACF transfers are targeted to the incumbent’s core supporters.”²⁵ The political neutrality of formulas was circumvented by over-disbursing funds to marginal districts and by multiplying districts in marginal areas.

Certainly not all party leaders everywhere pursue marginal-district or swing-voter strategies. In several of the countries mentioned, governments spent disproportionate resources both on swing and on loyal districts. Nor were all instances of swing strategies ones that involved machine-style parties; many, instead, involve bureaucratic parties. Still, the pervasiveness of party leaders favoring marginal and swing districts, whether or not they sit atop an organization of brokers, speaks to the power of the swing-as-responsive-voter logic and reinforces the sense of brokers who favor loyal constituents working against their leaders’ interests.

Table 5.2 [MISLABELLED AS TABLE 6.2] summarizes the results of a number of studies. It shows that, while the marginal district result was common, it was not universal.

Among the countries with the least consistent empirical findings is the United States.

Its prominence in the academic literature, the persistence of non-programmatic politics

²⁴Kwon 2005, p. 324. But note that Horiuchi and Lee (2008) have divergent findings for Korea. Over a later time period, but a broader range of expenditures, they find incumbent presidents favoring districts that offered them strong support and weak support, while spending less in districts where their level of support was intermediate.

²⁵Banful 2010, p. [2]. She notes Miguel and Zaidi’s (2003) finding that educational expenditures in Ghana in 1998 were higher in districts that voted overwhelmingly for the president’s party, but does not explain the divergence in the findings.

Table 5.2: Ecological Studies of Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics Coded by Leaders' Distributive Strategy

Table 6.2: Ecological Studies of Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics Coded by Leaders' Distributive Strategy

Country	Author, pub. year	Time period	Program	Strategy discerned
U.S	Wright, 1974	1933-1940	New Deal federal spending in states	Swing
U.S.	Levitt and Snyder, 1995	1984-1990	Federal spending in Congressional districts	Loyal
U.S.	Herron and Theodus, 2004	1999-2000	State assembly in districts (Illinois)	Swing
U.S.	Bikers and Stein, 2000			Programmatic
U.S.	Ansolabehere and Snyder, 2006	1957-1997	State governments to counties	Loyal
U.S.	Chen 2008	2004	Federal emergency aid in Florida	Loyal more, swing less
U.S.	Berry et al., 2010	1984-2007	Federal spending in Congressional districts	Swing
Canada	Crampton 2004	Mid-1990s	Job-creation fund	Swing
Canada	Miligan and Smart, 2005	1988-2001	Regional development grants	Swing, rival
Australia	Worthington and Dollery, 1998	1981-82, 1991-92	Commonwealth grants to states	Mixed
Australia	Denemark, 2000	Early 1990s	Sports stadiums	Swing, aligned
Spain	Castells and Solé-Ollé, 2005	Late 1980s-early 1990s	National infrastructure spending in regions	Swing
Portugal	Veiga and Pinho, 2007	1979-2002	Municipal grants	Swing, rival
Sweden	Dahlberg and Johansson, 2002	1998	Environmental grants to municipalities	Swing
Sweden	Johansson, 2003	1981-1995	Central government spending in municipalities	Swing
South Korea	Horiuchi and Lee, 2008	1993-2002	National spending in municipalities	Loyal and Opposition
South Korea	Kwon, 2005	1988-1997	National/ministerial spending in regions	Swing

Table 6.2: Ecological Studies of Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics Coded by Leaders' Distributive Strategy (continued)

Country	Author, pub. year	Time period	Program	Strategy discerned
India	Rodden and Wilkinson, 2004	1957-2003	National spending in states	Swing; rival
India	Cole, 2007	1992-1999	Agricultural credits to states	Swing
India	Khemani, 2007	1972-1995	Fiscal transfers to states	Swing, aligned
India	Vaishnav and Sircar, 2010	1977-2007	School buildings in Tamil Nadu	Swing
Albania	Case, 2000	1990s	Block grants for income support to rural communes	Swing, pivotal
Mexico	Molinar and Weldon, 1994	Early 1990s	PRONASOL funds center to states	Swing (win back defecting supporters)
Mexico	Bruhn, 1996	Early 1990s	PRONASOL funds center to states	Opposition (win back supporters)
Mexico	Hiskey, 1999	Early 1990s	PRONASOL funds to municipalities	Loyal
Mexico	Magaloni, 2006	1990s	PRONASOL funds to municipalities	Swing (win back defecting supporters)
Mexico	Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros, and Estevez, 2007	1990s	PRONASOL funds to municipalities	Mixed
Brazil	Ames, 2001	Early post-transition	Central government to municipalities	Loyal
Brazil	Rodden and Arretche, 2003	1991-2000	Center's transfers to states	Loyal
Peru	Schady, 2000	1991-1995	Anti-poverty, development funds from center to counties	Swing (win back defecting supporters)

Table 6.2: Ecological Studies of Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics Coded by Leaders' Distributive Strategy (continued)

Country	Author, pub. year	Time period	Program	Strategy discerned
Venezuela	Hawkins, 2010	2005	Targeted "Mission" benefits to municipalities	Swing
Argentina	Calvo and Murillo, 2004	1987-2000	Fiscal transfers from center to provinces	Loyal
Argentina	Lodola, 2005	1995-1999		Loyal, and protesting municipalities
Argentina	Gordin, 2006	1983-2003	Fiscal and housing transfers to provinces	Rival
Argentina	Weitz-Shapiro, 2006	1995-2001	Workfare transfers to municipalities	Swing, and protesting municipalities
Argentina	Nazareno, Stokes, and Brusco 2006	1995-1999	Workfare transfers to municipalities	Swing
Ghana	Banful, 2010	1994-2005	Formula-based intergovernmental transfers	Swing

(usually described, in a kind of short-hand, as “pork-barrel politics”) despite its wealth, and the inconsistency of the findings, warrant an expanded discussion of this case.

5.2.1 The United States: Loyal District Results

A series of careful studies by Ansolabehere, Levitt, and Snyder find that partisan control of government makes a difference to the distribution of spending among states and among counties, and that partisan distribution favors places that provide larger numbers of votes for the governing party. Hence these authors consistently uncover a loyal-district result. They also offer some evidence that the logic behind this strategy is mobilization or turnout-buying.

Levitt and Snyder study federal spending in Congressional districts during a period of uninterrupted Democratic control of Congress, from 1984 to 1990. They find that spending was a positive function of the number of Democratic votes in a district, though they find no electoral effect on targeted transfers to individuals.²⁶ Ansolabehere and Snyder, in turn, study the flow of resources from state governments to counties. They summarize their findings thus: “(i) Counties that traditionally give the highest vote share to the governing party receive larger shares of state transfers to local governments. (ii) When control of state government changes, the distribution of funds shifts in the direction of the new governing party . . . Finally, we find that increased spending in a county increases voter turnout in subsequent elections.”²⁷

²⁶Levitt and Snyder 1995. Yet, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the “bias” they uncover appears fairly programmatic: partisan influence reflects distinctive programs and ideologies. Bicker and Stein’s research supports this interpretation: they find that changes in partisan control of Congress cause changes in the type of federal spending, with Democrats spending more on transfers and entitlements and Republicans on conditional liability programs. See Bickers and Stein 2000.

²⁷Ansolabehere and Snyder 2006, p. 547.

5.2.2 The United States: Marginal District Results

But several studies of the U.S. uncover marginal- or swing-district distributive strategies. To explain why New Deal spending was heavier in Western states than in the more unemployment-ravaged South, Wright studied the impact of the “political productivity” of spending on the amounts disbursed. Political productivity included the past variability in outcomes of presidential votes in the state, the predicted closeness of the vote in the 1936 presidential election, and each state’s weight in the electoral college. Predicted closeness - marginality - indeed played an important role, driving up spending on WPA and other depression-era programs.²⁸

Whereas the FDR administration appears to have been concerned with future presidential contests, presidents who care about their legislative agenda can be expected to deploy resources to try to increase their party’s share of seats in Congress. Hence, Berry et al. reason, “presidents ought to direct a disproportionate share of federal outlays to electorally vulnerable members of their own party, and a disproportionate share of cuts to electorally vulnerable members of the opposition party.”²⁹ They indeed find that representatives of the president’s party attracted more federal spending across the period 1984-2007, especially those from his party who were in marginal districts and hence vulnerable. “[R]epresentatives who were elected in close races receive about 7-9% more federal spending,” which was nearly double the advantage of coming from the president’s party alone.³⁰ Yet they also find that marginal representatives from rival parties receive more benefits, suggesting that not just electoral diversion of programs but effort by representatives who are in trouble inflates spending in congressional districts.

An especially brazen instance of non-programmatic distributive politics favoring swing

²⁸Wright 1974.

²⁹Berry et al. 2010, p. 789.

³⁰Berry et al., p. 792.

districts is the one mentioned earlier from the state of Illinois.³¹ In the run-up to state-assembly elections in 2000, the legislature distributed one and one-half billion dollars from a “Member Initiative Spending” program. The spending went to an array of projects, including road improvement, emergency vehicles, and playgrounds. Decisions about the allocation of funds was in the hands of four individuals: the Democratic and Republican leaders of the lower and upper chambers. Herron and Theodus describe the application procedure thus: if a legislator decided that his district had a particular need, he would go to his respective party leader and request funds. There were no formal rules for what constituted need, no limits on how much a given district could receive, and no requirement that the four caucus leaders act collectively or deliberate.

Herron and Theodus are unable to detect any need-related criteria for distributing funds: low district income, low housing values, and high population growth rates played no role. Political factors drove the program. Districts that had been won by large margins, or in which the legislator ran unopposed, received significantly fewer dollars. So did seats with ideologically extreme representatives, suggesting that the bias toward marginal districts was also a bias toward swing districts. The exceptions were the districts of the four caucus leaders, which, though safe, benefitted handsomely from the program. Against the interpretation that vulnerable members were simply more energetic in seeking out funds, the authors cite an interview with an official from the House Speakers Research Staff, who explained the funding priorities thus: “the highest amount of member initiative funding, from \$1.5 to \$2.5 million annually, went to politically vulnerable members of the House Democratic caucus. The next largest amount, \$1.2 million, went to majority leaders and appropriation chairs, followed by appropriation committee members with \$650,000, and simple members with \$375,000.”³²

³¹This is the case mentioned in Chapter 2, studied by Herron and Theodus 2004.

³²Herron and Theodus 2004, p. 305.

The picture in the U.S. is thus mixed, with some careful studies showing that swing- or marginal-districts are favored, others revealing loyal-voter or safe-district bias. To the extent that party leaders in the U.S. target loyal districts, this strategy is at least in part aimed at driving up turnout. Levitt and Snyder show a substantial positive boost of federal spending on incumbents' vote shares - an additional \$100 per capita translates into a two percent increase in the popular vote for incumbent members of congress - but the authors do not parse this increase between turnout-buying and vote-buying.³³ FEMA spending drove up support for George W. Bush in Florida in 2004. Chen finds poor Florida voters, and Republicans, especially responsive. “[S]ome of the new Bush voters induced by FEMA aid were Democratic converts who would otherwise have voted for John Kerry. In poor precincts, an increase in FEMA aid actually causes a statistically significant decrease in the absolute number of votes for John Kerry.”³⁴

In sum, a swing-voter strategy comes through most clearly in the U.S. in multi-district elections, when members of Congress or state assemblies have an interest in driving up the vote share of marginal members and hence controlling more seats, or when presidents are concerned about their own prospects in the electoral college or their party's control over congress. A loyal-voter or aligned-district strategy comes through most clearly in single-district elections, such as those of governors. The explanation for why the U.S. congress seems often to favor loyal districts may have to do with turnout, but also perhaps with programmatic priorities; recall Bickers and Stein's conclusion, that distinct spending priorities by the parties reflected their ideological commitments to transfers (the Democrats) and contingent liability (the Republicans).³⁵

³³Levitt and Snyder 1997, p. 33.

³⁴Chen 2008, p. 14.

³⁵Bickers and Stein 2000.

5.3 Leaders and Brokers in Four Developing Democracies

The previous discussion indicates that when party leaders control non-programmatic distribution, the beneficiaries are often - though not always - marginal districts. Yet the inferential step from a marginal-district strategy to a swing-voter strategy can be problematic. Unless we know from public opinion polls that many swing voters inhabit the districts that benefit from largess (as in Dahlberg and Johansson's studies of Sweden), or that monies going to marginal districts shift vote choices in favor of the benefactor party (as in Chen's study of Florida), ecological evidence is less than decisive. In this section, we take a different tack: we study aggregate distributive patterns in places where we also have individual evidence that brokers favor loyal (and non-abstaining) voters. We therefore take a closer look at four developing democracies, all of which are home to political machines engaged in clientelism: Mexico, India, Venezuela, and Argentina. In Venezuela, not only do we have evidence regarding individual and aggregate distributions, we also have evidence at both levels regarding the same programs. In Mexico, India, and Argentina the program fit is less tight. Still, from rich primary information and secondary sources a clear picture emerges of strategic disjunctions between leaders and brokers in these four important clientelistic democracies.

5.3.1 Distribution to Swing States and Municipalities in Mexico

We saw in Chapter 2 that largess distributed by operatives of Mexico's then-ruling party, the PRI, went preferentially to voters who had previously declared themselves to be supporters of the party and who expected to vote in the upcoming 2000 elections. Consistent with the patterns we uncovered in Argentina, Venezuela, and India, brokers from Mexico's

PRI favored loyal supporters when doling out campaign gifts.

Not so when rewards are in the hands of party leaders. In this case, rather than favoring bastions of loyal supporters, Mexican national authorities and PRI leaders deployed public resources in constituencies where voters were switching their allegiance away from the party.

In the final decades of PRI rule, when its hegemony was challenged and it began to lose provincial and local elections, distributive politics intensified. President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994), who defeated a leftist contender only with the help of an eleventh-hour manipulation of the vote count, created a huge program, the National Solidarity Program or PRONASOL, “an innovative social spending program designed to win back popular support for the government in a context of neoliberal policies.”³⁶ This was a large, umbrella program - it accounted in 1992 for nearly eight percent of all social spending in Mexico - that provided support for everything from community development schemes to credit for small manufacturing firms to scholarships for poor children. PRONASOL funds were also used for major infrastructure projects, such as road- hospital-, and school-building programs. President Salinas was ideologically and politically at odds with much of the PRI party organization, and PRONASOL was designed to bypass party control. Decisions about where to allocate funds were centralized in the office of the president, and an independent bureaucracy channeled funds to local organizations.

PRONASOL was the Mexican public spending program most heavily and systematically studied by social scientists. Their studies are basically unanimous in the view that the government used PRONASOL to pursue electoral, as well as developmental, goals. And most of these studies agree that the driving electoral strategy behind PRONASOL was not to reward loyal supporters but to win back constituencies that had, or were in

³⁶Bruhn 1996, p. 152.

danger of, defecting to the left.³⁷ Regarding the allocation of funds among Mexico's 31 states, Molinar and Weldon conclude that they went preferentially to states in which the opposition PRD had made significant gains, rather than in secure PRI strongholds.³⁸ Likewise, Bruhn finds that states that voted heavily in 1988 for Salinas's leftist challenger, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, received disproportionate PRONASOL funding, and benefited from a reorientation of funding, even when poverty levels, economic growth rates, and other socioeconomic factors are taken into account.³⁹ Focusing on distribution at a lower level of aggregation, across municipalities, Magaloni reports some findings consistent with those of Molinar and Weldon: "PRONASOL was, to a large extent, designed to convince voters in vulnerable municipalities not to invest their partisan loyalties in the PRD."⁴⁰ Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros, and Estévez find similar trends.⁴¹ Public and club goods tended to go to swing districts, though inflated levels of individualized benefits went to loyal districts.

5.3.2 Distributive Disjunction in India

In Chapter 2 we offered evidence that loyal voters and non-abstainers received targeted benefits in India. Citizens in the state of Karnataka who shared the party identity of a candidate were ten to 13 percentage points more likely to receive a gift from that candidate's party than were non-co-partisans. And Indian citizens who identified with the party of their village council president were 13 percentage points more likely than non-co-partisans to report having turned out to vote in exchange for a campaign gift. Indian brokers, like their counterparts in Argentina and Mexico, favor their loyal supporters, and

³⁷A partially discordant view is that of Hiskey's (1999).

³⁸Molinar and Weldon 1994.

³⁹Bruhn 1996.

⁴⁰Magaloni 2006, p. 136.

⁴¹Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros, and Estévez 2007.

among them supporters who are at little risk of abstaining.

But when party leaders in Delhi or state capitals control the allocation of expenditures, they are less prone to shower largess on loyalists. Arulampala et al. show that discretionary spending by the central Indian government in the period extending from 1974 to 1997 went to marginal districts in aligned states.⁴² Both the partisanship of state governments and marginality mattered: among aligned states, the national ruling party favored ones with many marginal constituencies, and among states with many marginal constituencies, aligned ones were favored. Arulampala and co-authors' explanation for the favoring of marginal constituencies is that party officials hoped to sway swing voters; their explanation for the favoring of aligned states is that officials at the center wanted their party to claim credit for the benefits delivered.

Cole, who studied the Indian government's distribution of agricultural credits, finds that credit to banks jumps in election years and - in those years - "more loans are made in districts in which the ruling state party had a narrow margin of victory (or a narrow loss), than in less competitive districts."⁴³ Khemani, who studied fiscal transfers, and Vaishnav and Sircar, who studied the distribution of school building funds across constituencies in Tamil Nadu, both uncovered marginal/aligned-state strategies.⁴⁴ Khemani writes that politically motivated "transfers . . . are greater to those co-partisan states where the party controls a smaller proportion of districts or seats allotted to the state in the national legislature." Hence "affiliated states that are 'swing' receive more transfers."⁴⁵ In Tamil Nadu over a three-decade period, party leaders might prefer to reward loyal constituencies but "when more than half of the ruling coalition's victories come in closely-fought ('swing') constituencies the ruling party alters its post-election targeting strategy to reward pivotal

⁴²Arulampala et al. 2009.

⁴³Cole 2009, p. 220.

⁴⁴Khemani 2007, Vaishnav and Sircar 2010.

⁴⁵Khemani 2007, p. 466.

areas . . . In swing constituencies where the margin of victory is slim, politicians must make desperate promises to sweeten the pot.”⁴⁶

Rodden and Wilkinson, in turn, find that during a period of Congress Party hegemony (1972-1989), discretionary resources went to both safe Congress states and to marginal states; they find that swing (marginal) states always attract disproportionate resources, regardless of the state’s partisan alignment.⁴⁷

Our theoretically predicted pattern of a disjunction between the distributive strategies of party leaders and brokers finds support, then then, in India.

5.3.3 Distribution to Swing Municipalities in Venezuela

The literature on geographic distribution of targeted spending in Venezuela is sparse. But Hawkins offers evidence quite in line with that of the Mexican and Indian patterns.⁴⁸ He considers distributions of targeted educational slots in two Missions (*Ribas* and *Sucre*) in 2005, as a function of local development levels, poverty rates, and levels of support for Chávez in the 2000 election. He concludes that “Mission benefits are generally targeted to marginal districts . . .”⁴⁹ In light of his analysis, he expects “the distribution of scholarships and students to be at a maximum in marginal municipalities...”⁵⁰ By contrast, as we reported earlier, Hawkins finds that individual recipients of these program were more pro-Chávez than were others living in the same neighborhoods and communities at the same point in time. Hence the central government sent targeted program to swing municipalities which local operatives then sent to loyal supporters.

⁴⁶Vaishnav and Sircar 2010, p. 20.

⁴⁷Rodden and Wilkinson 2004.

⁴⁸Hawkins 2010.

⁴⁹Hawkins 2010, p. 217.

⁵⁰Hawkins 2010, p. 200.

5.3.4 Distribution to Swing Municipalities and Provinces in Argentina

We have seen that distributive politics at the micro level in Argentina, from party brokers to individuals, is dominated by a strategy of targeting loyal voters - loyalists who are also non-abstainers - though indifferent or swing voters were not completely left out of the distributive game. We turn now to evidence regarding aggregate distributions. A substantial literature examines distributive politics in Argentina, illuminating the nature of intergovernmental transfers from the center to the provinces and from the center or provincial governments to municipalities.⁵¹ A common finding is that politics does indeed intervene in decisions about where to send public resources. And all of the studies reviewed evaluate the impact of electoral politics in single-district elections, in which parties try to maximize their votes overall, without concern for the district in which they are cast. What's more, compulsory voting laws mean that turnout is high and stable. Hence, to the extent that higher levels of spending go to places in which elections had been close, the party controlling the distribution is likely to be aiming at swing or undecided voters. These are swing-voter, rather than pivotal- or marginal-district, results.

Concerning the exact nature of the political manipulation, Calvo and Murillo find a bias in the distribution of federal resources (and higher levels of spending in general) in provinces with higher Peronist vote shares, though this finding holds across Peronist and non-Peronist presidential administrations. The authors see this bias as an artifact of electoral institutions and heavy representation of Peronist supporters in over-represented provinces.⁵² In turn, Gibson and Calvo, and Gordin, study the distribution of *Aportes del Tesoro Nacional* (National Treasury Contributions, or ATN) funds from the central

⁵¹Remmer, 2007, studied levels of patronage spending on personnel by provincial governments.

⁵²Calvo and Murillo 2004.

government to the provinces.⁵³ Provincial governments transfer ATN funds to municipalities, where they can be invested in local public goods such as roads and bridges, or simply to cover gaps in municipal budgets. Studying a single year (1994) during the Peronist Menem administration, Gibson and Calvo show bivariate correlations between ATN transfers and “peripheral” provinces, ones that also tend to be more heavily Peronist.

Gordin studies a longer time span and includes a broader set of econometric controls. He finds relatively little impact of economic and developmental factors in the central authorities’ decisions about how to allocate funds across the provinces. But he does uncover electoral factors that shape distributive choices. Rival provinces - those ruled by opposition governors - attracted significantly more ATN funding than did aligned ones - those controlled by the party that ruled at the center. The same is true of distributions of FONAVI funds, a federal housing program. In explaining these results, Gordin underlines Argentina’s substantial de facto centralism, constitutional arrangements notwithstanding; this centralism means that central governments have to worry little about provincial administrations’ exerting control, or claiming credit, for nationally sponsored programs. Hence they may be more willing than are Indian governments, for example, to use federal largess to try to win over swing or mildly opposed voters.

Our own fine-grained analysis of intra-provincial distributions of ATN funds yields results in line with Gordin’s. Rather than rewarding local governments in places that had offered strong electoral support, a provincial administration appears to have used ATN funds to win over swing districts and even poach in rival constituencies. That the period we study, the early 2000s, was one during which the Peronists’ major opponents found themselves in disarray may have emboldened the provincial Peronist administration to attempt to win over swing and even opposition constituencies. The strategy stands in

⁵³Gibson and Calvo 2001; Gordin 2006.

contrast to Argentine brokers' heavy targeting of loyalists among individual supporters.

We scrutinize the intra-provincial politics of distribution in one province, Córdoba, in the early 2000s. We focus on the impact of election returns in the prior (1998) gubernatorial election, specifically the impact of local levels of support for the governing party on the amount of ATN funds channeled to a given municipality. Figure 5.1 [MISLABELED AS FIGURE 6.1] compares the average ATN funding paid out to municipal administrations controlled by the Peronists (the governor's party, 200 mayors) and by opposition mayors (226), in most cases from the Radical party. It shows that average ATN funding going to opposition municipalities was more than double that going to Peronist ones.

To further study the impact of opposition control and of vote shares in the prior election on the distribution of ATN funds, we regressed ATN funding on prior electoral outcomes in each municipality in the 1998 gubernatorial election. We examined political effects on two dependent variables: the average funding across three years (2000, 2001, and 2002, *Average ATN*), and the level of ATN funding among municipalities that received any funds (*Some ATN*). Our key independent variables were the absolute difference in vote shares between the winning party and the first loser (*Margin*); in almost all cases this was the margin of Peronist over Radical votes shares, or vice versa. We also study the impact of partisan identities of mayors. (The Peronists were control of both the national and provincial governments at this time.) The indicator *Rival* takes the value of 1 when a non-Peronist party was in control of the municipality, zero when the mayor was a Peronist. We include controls for population size and for the proportion of households falling below an official poverty line. The effect of poverty rates was never statistically different from zero; therefore we omit it in the reported estimations.

The Peronist leadership in Buenos Aires and in the capital of Córdoba did not appear mainly interested in rewarding high levels of support for the Peronist party in earlier elec-

Figure 5.1: Average ATN Funding, Córdoba Municipalities, 2000-2002

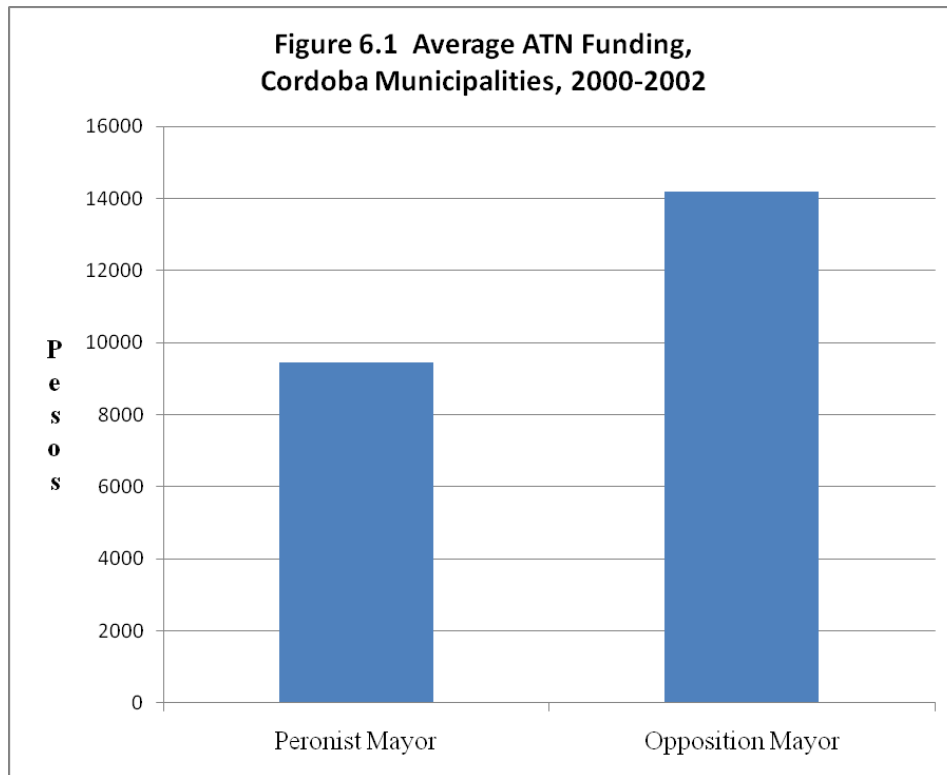


Table 5.3: **ATN Funds to Municipalities**

	(1)	(2)
	Average ATN	Some ATN
Margin	-229.8* (-2.16)	-334.7* (-2.44)
Rival	9314.1*** (3.44)	5241.2 (1.39)
Population	1.545*** (11.99)	1.606*** (10.58)
Constant	4354.0 (1.80)	11273.4** (3.20)
<i>N</i>	407	298
<i>R</i> ²	0.297	0.314

Municipalities in Córdoba, Argentina, 2000-2002

OLS regressions, *t* statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

tions. Rival municipalities had higher average levels of ATN spending than did Peronist ones, though they were not more likely to receive some, rather than no, ATN funds. In both models, the smaller the difference in vote shares between the 1998 Peronist gubernatorial candidate and his rivals, the higher the average level of spending over the following years. The tendency of the central Peronist authorities to pour resources into rival and marginal municipalities suggests a swing-voter strategy, not a loyal-voter one. This stands in sharp contrast to the patterns we observe in Argentina when distribution is under the control of brokers and the recipients are individuals.

Partisan bias toward swing municipalities is also in evidence in a workfare program, *Plan Trabajar* (Program Work), though here the scholarship is not uniform in its findings. *Trabajar* was initiated by the second Menem administration in the mid-1990s, and was carried over into the Radical-*Alianza* administration of Fernando de la Rúa, in 1999-2001.

It was ostensibly a program to benefit unemployed workers, paying them a small wage in return for their labor in infrastructure projects. The projects were proposed by local governments and by non-governmental organizations. At its height, *Trabajar* targeted 300,000 individuals. Focusing on the second national Peronist administration of Carlos Menem, Lodola finds that the provincial vote share of the Peronist party had a positive impact on the provinces' shares of *Trabajar* funds.⁵⁴

By contrast, Weitz-Shapiro demonstrates a swing-district logic to *Trabajar* distributions under the de la Rúa administration. The smaller the difference in vote shares between the winner and first loser at the provincial level, the greater the positive deviation of *Trabajar* spending over its ideal level.⁵⁵ She also finds that *Trabajar* funds went disproportionately to provinces that had many protests, in the form of road blockages.

More in line with Weitz-Shapiro than with Lodola's results, Nazareno and co-authors uncover political bias in *Plan Trabajar* in favor of municipalities in which the prior elections had been close. While they uncover no clear political manipulation in a non-election year, in the election year of 1999 they find *Trabajar* funds going disproportionately in Peronist municipalities which had been won by a small margin. Hence, in this instance, both partisan alignment and swing status drove up the allocation of targeted workfare benefits. Summarizing their findings regarding mayoral budgets, in turn, Nazareno and his co-authors write that "neither of the two traditional parties [Peronists or Radicals] rewarded loyal voters; they did not intensify patronage spending in places in which they had received broad support of the population." Peronist mayors in particular pursued a strategy of "channeling patronage toward marginal [swing] voters . . ." ⁵⁶

Conclusion

⁵⁴Lodola 2005.

⁵⁵She detects no partisan manipulation under Menem administration. Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro 2006.

⁵⁶Nazareno et al. 2006, p. 69.

Leaders of political parties who deploy public resources for electoral ends will consider a number of questions. Will spending programs help our party or will control over them, and credit for them, be hijacked by the opposition? Do we need to drive up vote shares across the board, or is what matters most winning over voters in certain marginal or pivotal constituencies? Should we spend extra funds in districts that are traditionally friendly toward the party, in the hope of high participation, or should we deploy scarce resources in places where there are more fence-sitters? Evidence of non-programmatic use of public resources reviewed in this chapter suggest a range of answers to this question. But we are struck with the frequency with which strategists seemed to lean toward using public monies to try to influence swing voters. This was not always the choice they made; nor can we always infer from their spending in marginal districts that their ultimate target was swing voters. But given the prevalence of a loyal-voter strategy among the brokers who worked for these leaders, the degree of disjunction between leaders' and brokers' strategies is striking. This key prediction of the broker-mediated model is, then, largely sustained.

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