

# POLI 437: International Relations of Latin America

<sup>T</sup> Note. These Rivers are  
both of them Navigable, and all  
the Cannon and Stores for Acapulco  
are Carried from the North to the  
South Sea by them.



# This week

**Varieties and limits of  
clientelism**

**The mechanics of vote-  
buying**

“Free and fair” elections are cornerstone of democracy

But what does that mean exactly?  
How would you define “free” and  
“fair”?

These definitions are complicated in LA  
because **vote-buying** is not uncommon

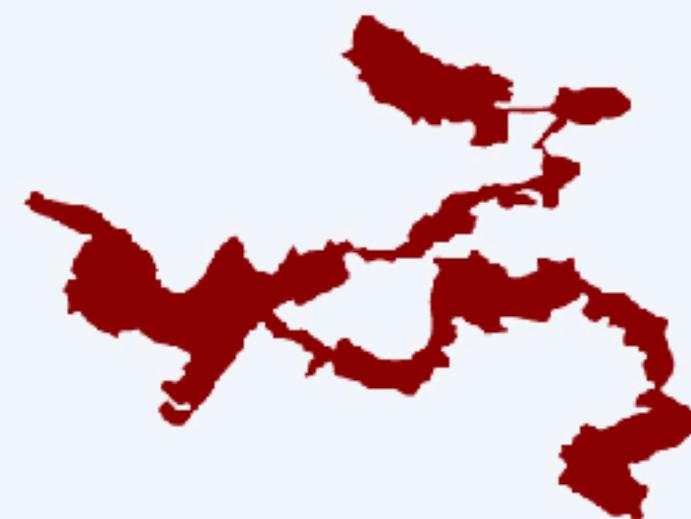
If your standard for “free and fair” in LA was  
no cheating of any kind, you’d probably be left  
with no/few legitimate elections

# US has own problems

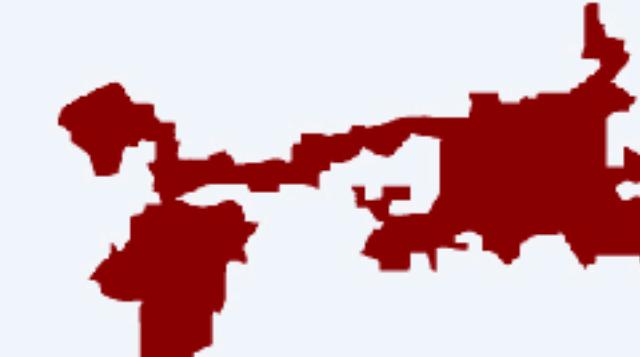
## America's Most Gerrymandered Districts

Most gerrymandered Congressional districts in the U.S.  
according to compactness index\*

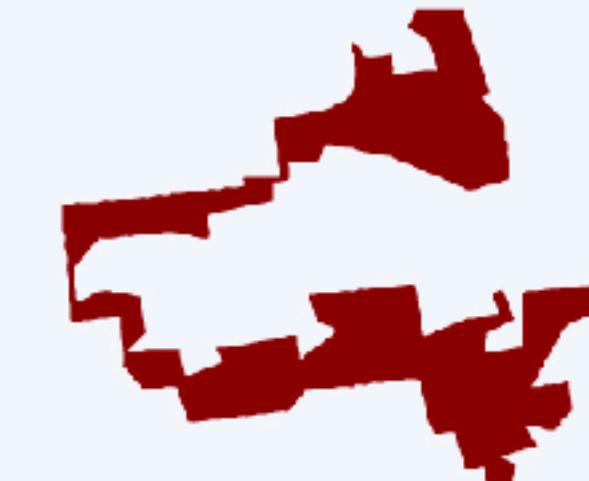
1. Maryland's  
3rd district



2. Texas's  
33rd district



3. Illinois's  
4th district



4. Texas's  
35th district



5. Louisiana's  
2nd district



\* ratio of the area of the district to the area of a circle with the same perimeter

Source: Washington Post

# Selling vote not terribly controversial

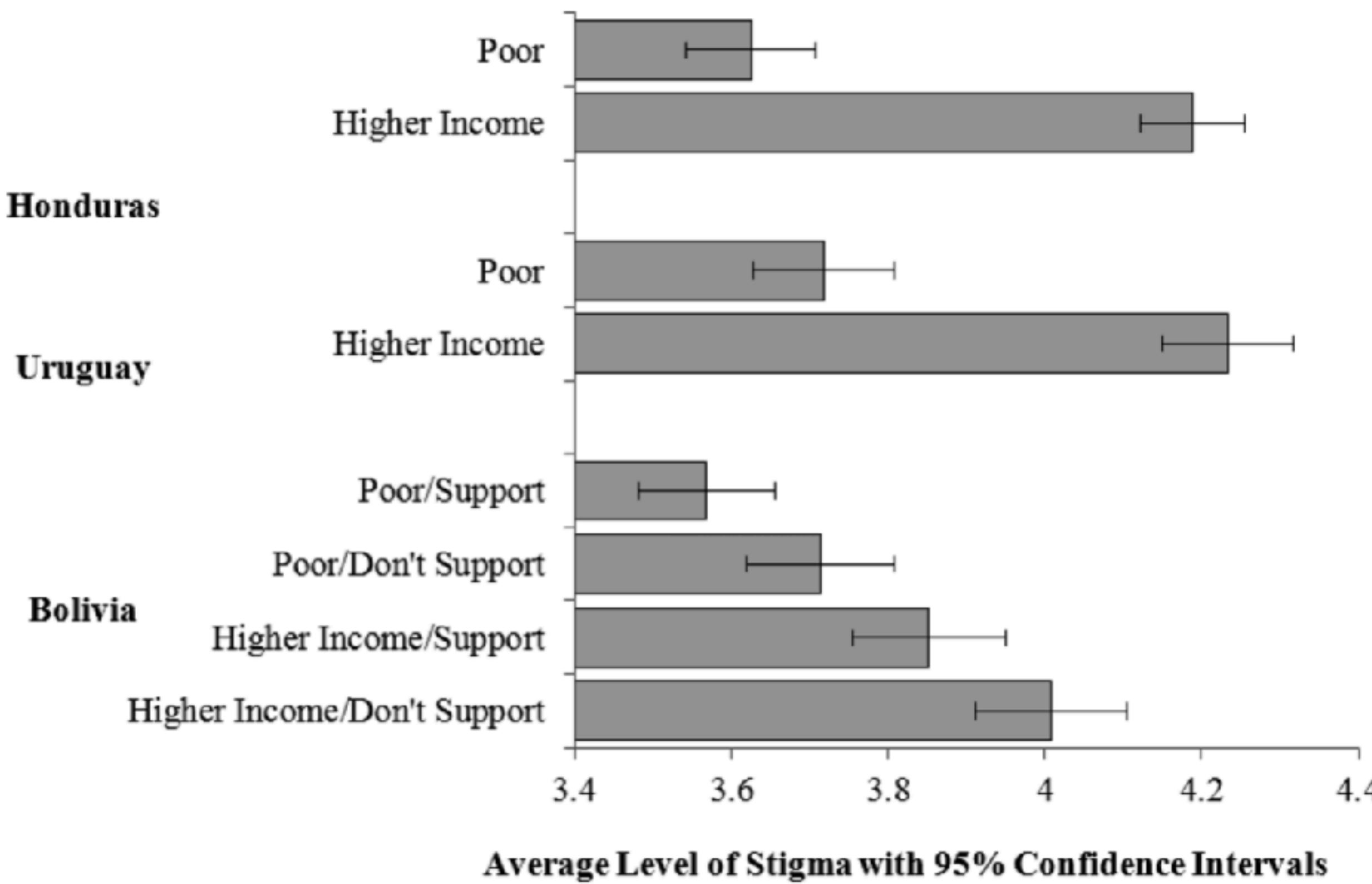
**TABLE 1 Stigma Associated with Hypothetical Exchange Across Countries**

	Nicaragua	Peru	Honduras	Uruguay	Bolivia
Totally Acceptable	1.85% (0.43)	0.74% (0.08)	1.62% (0.4)	1.27% (0.37)	0.74% (0.21)
Acceptable	6.47% (0.79)	5.26% (0.5)	6.87% (0.8)	5.28% (0.78)	8.03% (0.73)
Understandable But Not Acceptable	12.13% (1.05)	23.88% (1.15)	14.95% (1.13)	24.14% (1.44)	21.98% (1.24)
Unacceptable	41.73% (1.58)	47.16% (1.42)	52.12% (1.59)	33.52% (1.61)	50.60% (1.5)
Totally Unacceptable	37.82% (1.56)	22.96% (1.22)	24.44% (1.37)	35.79% (1.61)	18.65% (1.13)
Country Average (1–5)	4.07 (0.03)	3.86 (0.02)	3.91 (0.03)	3.97 (0.03)	3.78 (0.02)
N	973	9706	990	969	2035

*Note:* Standard errors are in parentheses.

# Vote-selling seen as way for poor to access resources

**FIGURE 2 Average Levels of Stigma Associated with Vote Buying by Country and Experimental Condition**



# An example from Colombia's 2019 regional elections



2,600 reports of voting anomalies

Voters exchange vote for:

Cash (**huge** variability,  
range = \$6 – \$100)

Education (school kits,  
scholarships)

Agricultural equipment

Drugs/alcohol

Citizens in competitive races  
will let sides **bid up price**

10/15 seats in UN Security Council are on **rotating, 2-year terms**

UN SC has strong, policy-setting power over UN

## How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations

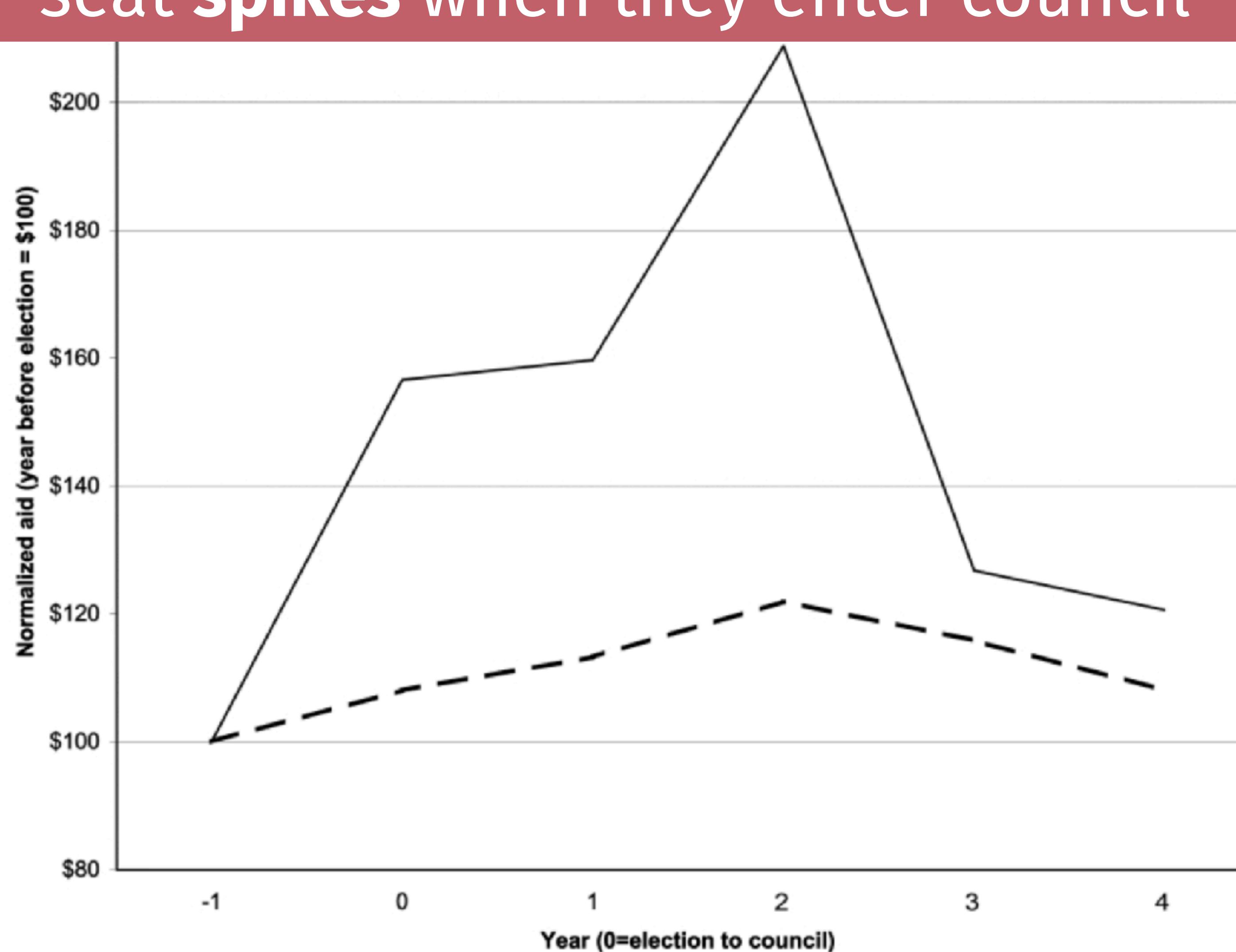
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Ilyana Kuziemko and Eric Werker

*Harvard University*

Ten of the 15 seats on the U.N. Security Council are held by rotating members serving two-year terms. We find that a country's U.S. aid increases by 59 percent and its U.N. aid by 8 percent when it rotates onto the council. This effect increases during years in which key diplomatic events take place (when members' votes should be especially valuable), and the timing of the effect closely tracks a country's election to, and exit from, the council. Finally, the U.N. results appear to be driven by UNICEF, an organization over which the United States has historically exerted great control.

# US aid to countries that get rotating seat **spikes** when they enter council



Can rise to tune of \$45 million

# Saying the quiet part loud?

***Trump Threatens to End  
American Aid: ‘We’re Watching  
Those Votes’ at the U.N.***



President Trump met on Wednesday with his cabinet at the White House. Doug Mills/The New York Times

By Mark Landler

Dec. 20, 2017



WASHINGTON — President Trump issued a threat on Wednesday to cut off American aid to any country that votes for a resolution at the United Nations condemning his recent decision to [recognize Jerusalem as the capital](#) of Israel.

**Vote-buying? And is it illegitimate?**

**Clientelism** is when politicians give voters  
**individual** incentives to vote in a particular way

**Positive** incentives

Money, favors, goods

**Negative** incentives

Cutting off benefits, violence

Vote-buying is very hard to observe

Positive inducements = both sides  
have incentive to **conceal**

Negative inducements = if threat  
credible **voters stay home**

Hard to distinguish:  
if person doesn't (does) expect receipt = positive (negative)

## How to measure this in a survey?

Simply ask, but person faces  
personal risk and/or **social  
desirability bias**

**List experiments** are popular way to  
learn about sensitive behaviors

# List experiments

Election campaigns are a busy time in our country. I am going to read you a list of some of things that people have told us happened to them during the 2007 campaign. I am going to read you the whole list, and then I want you to tell me how many of the different things happened to you. *Please do not tell me which of the things happened to you, just how many.* If you would like me to repeat the list, I will do so.

# Control group

1. Politicians put up posters or signs in the area where you live.
2. You read the newspaper almost every day to learn about the campaign.
3. You met a politician personally to discuss his or her candidacy.
4. You discussed the campaign with a chief or another traditional leader.

**How many did you observe/  
experience?**

# Treatment group

1. Politicians put up posters or signs in the area where you live.
2. You read the newspaper almost every day to learn about the campaign.
3. You met a politician personally to discuss his or her candidacy.
4. You discussed the campaign with a chief or another traditional leader.
- 5. You voted for a party or politician because they gave you money during the campaign.**

Treatment group has extra, **sensitive** behavior

How does this experiment work? What can you do with this information?

In a town with no vote-selling,  
average number of items in control == the average  
number of items in treatment

In a town with vote-selling,  
average number of items in control will < the average  
number of items in treatment

# The vote-selling process

How do politicians actually buy votes?

Too costly/risky to do it directly

Rely on **brokers** to exchange incentives for  
votes

Partisans

State employees

Civil society/  
religion

Employers

Armed actors

# Mayoral clientelism in Argentina

Big **non-contributory** social insurance program provides food to the poor

National Food Security Program = flour, tea, sugar, rice, corn flour, tomato paste, milk, pasta

Universal program but provision is highly **decentralized**: mayors have tons of discretion in disbursement

In Salta, Argentina, one mayor would hold open “office hours” for constituents

Goal is to **credit-claim**, signal to voters that they are personally responsible for disbursement

Decentralization likely provides opportunities for **clientelistic exchange**



Note how different this is from cash-for-vote!

Slumdwellers often **vote bank** in exchange for services/being left alone



Density → high capacity for collective action, can make slum dwellers influential in local politics

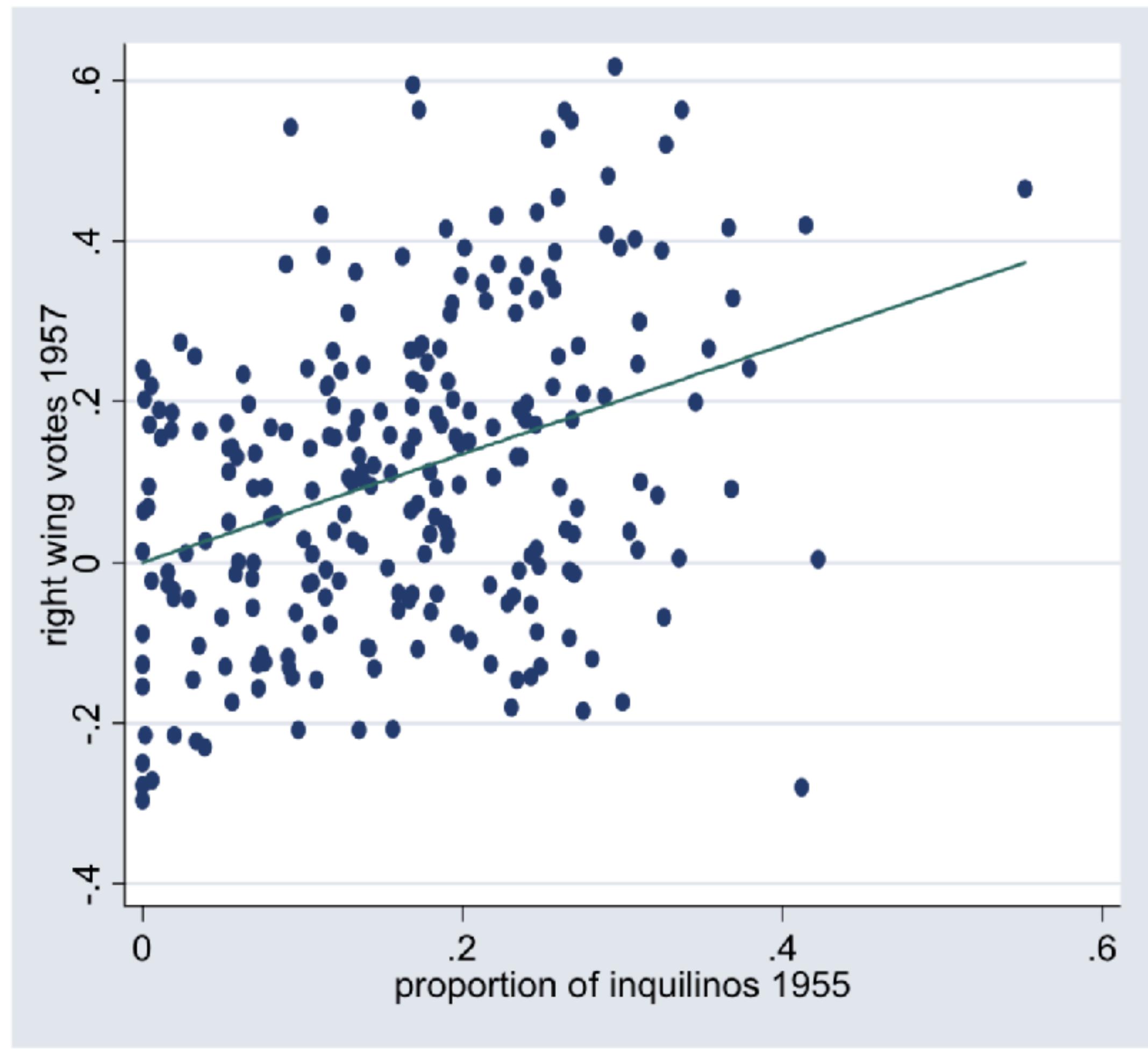
# Employers

Bring employees to polls, incentivize particular vote outcome, prevent voting

Most salient in rural areas, and in the past, where large landholders had **feudal**-like control over workers' lives

“It is the most cruel mockery to tell a man he may vote for A or B, when you know that he is so much under the influence of A, or the friends of A, that his voting for B would be attended with the destruction of him. It is not he who has the vote, really and substantially, but his landlord, for it is for his benefit and interest that it is exercised in the present system.” David Ricardo ([1824], 1951-1973, p. 506)

# Voting of “inquilinos” (tenants) against self-interest explained by landowner influence



# Papa Johns Boycott: Outrage Over Obama Reelection Job Threats

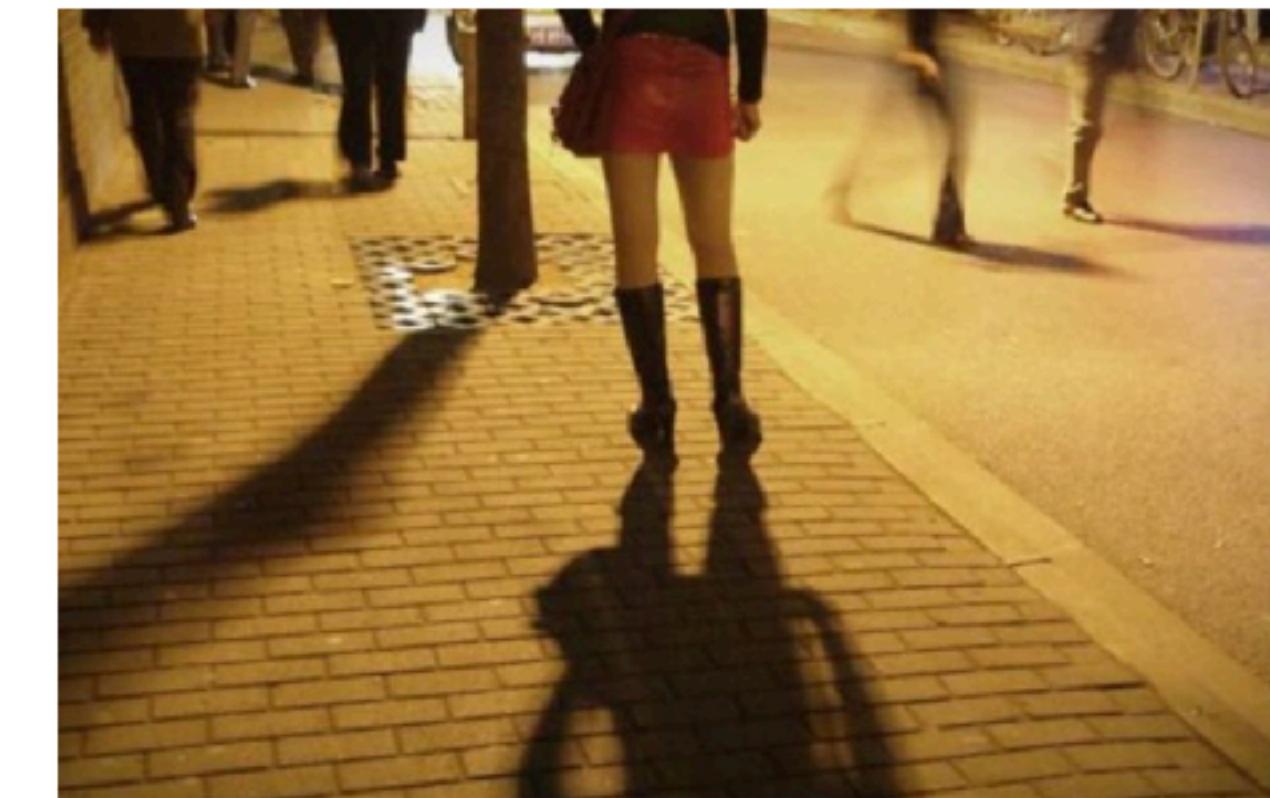
By [Benge Nsenduluka](#), CP Reporter



Papa John's CEO John Schnatter has sparked new threats of a boycott after threatening to reduce his employees' working hours in response to Obama's reelection. He also threatened to hike the cost of his pizzas just three months prior for the same politically motivated reason.

Schnatter, whose company was first founded in 1984 and employs nearly 17,000 workers, insists that he is neither for nor against the Affordable Care Act (commonly referred to as Obamacare). However, he openly admitted that his employees would "pay for" newly reelected President Obama's proposed health care plan, according to reports.

## MOST POPULAR



Is this technically pressure to vote a particular way?

# Evidence from Colombia of politicians hiring paramilitary groups to intimidate voters

TABLE 1. Top 20 senators by vote share in paramilitary areas.

Senator		Third Parties (1)	Re-election (2)	Justice and Peace Law (3)	Status (4)	% Votes In Paramilitary Zones (5)
MAURICIO	PIMIENTO BARRERA	yes	yes	yes	Arrested (Guilty)	61.59
DIEB NICOLAS	MALOOF CUSE	yes	yes	yes	Arrested (Guilty)	57.73
ALVARO	ARAUJO CASTRO	yes		yes	Arrested	53.75
SALOMON DE JESUS	SAADE ABDALA	no	yes		Investigated	43.27
CARLOS ARTURO	CLAVIJO VARGAS	yes			Arrested	43.03
ISABEL	CELIS YAÑEZ	no				34.90
JUAN	GOMEZ MARTINEZ	yes	yes			33.60
PIEDAD	CORDOBA	no	no	no		31.77
GERMAN	HERNANDEZ AGUILERA	no	yes	yes		31.19
WILLIAM ALFONSO	MONTES MEDINA	yes	yes	yes	Arrested (Not Guilty)	30.94
FLOR MODESTA	GNECCO ARREGOCES	yes	yes	yes		29.46
RUBEN DARIO	QUINTERO VILLADA	yes			Arrested	29.45
BERNARDO ALEJANDRO	GUERRA HOYOS	no		no		29.19
LUIS GUILLERMO	VELEZ TRUJILLO	no	yes	yes		28.06
PIEDAD DEL SOCORRO	ZUCCARDI DE GARCIA	no	yes	yes	Arrested (Not Guilty)	26.54
VICTOR RENAN	BARCO LOPEZ	no	yes	yes	Investigated	26.37
JESUS LEON	PUELLO CHAMIE	no	yes			26.16
VICENTE	BLEL SAAD	yes	yes	yes		24.33
CONSUELO	DE MUSTAFA	no	yes			24.06
JUAN MANUEL	CORZO ROMAN	yes			Investigated	23.78

Notes: Senators that obtained the twenty highest shares of votes in municipalities with high paramilitary presence. High paramilitary presence is measured by a dummy that takes the value of one if the municipality had a total number of attacks by the paramilitaries per 1,000 inhabitants above the 75th percentile in the 1997–2001 period. A Yes indicates that the senator belongs to a third party in the election of 2002 (column (1)), voted yes to approve reelection (column (2)) or yes to reintroduce Sedition and Reduction of Sentences articles in the Justice and Peace Law (column (3)). The status of the senator (column (4)) is that on May 21 of 2009 and is taken from Indepaz <http://www.indepaz.org.co> (for re-elected senators) and from the news. A blank space in columns (2) or (3) means that the senator did not vote on the measure.

The ELN also influences elections in Arauca,  
where it is powerful

Threaten/kill candidates  
Collude with officials

**Por amenazas, candidatos en Arauca hacen  
campaña solo por internet**

EL TIEMPO



## **In the South Carolina primary, Clyburn endorsements carry political weight**

“In South Carolina Democratic politics, there is one endorsement and perhaps one name that matters more than most,” said one politics expert.



Civil society actors can also help deliver votes (clientelism?)

## Is clientelism necessarily bad?

Welfare effects are ambiguous

Clientelism biased in favor of  
**poorest citizens**

One way for most vulnerable to get  
badly needed resources (e.g., tenure  
security in slums)

But no incentive for **public goods**  
—> inhibits growth

How different is clientelism  
from “normal” electoral  
politics?

**Programmatic politics:** vote for  
me and I will provide XYZ policy  
(e.g., Medicare-for-all)

**Pork-barrel spending:**  
legislators using federal money  
for localized projects, reward  
district/supporters

# The mechanics of vote-buying

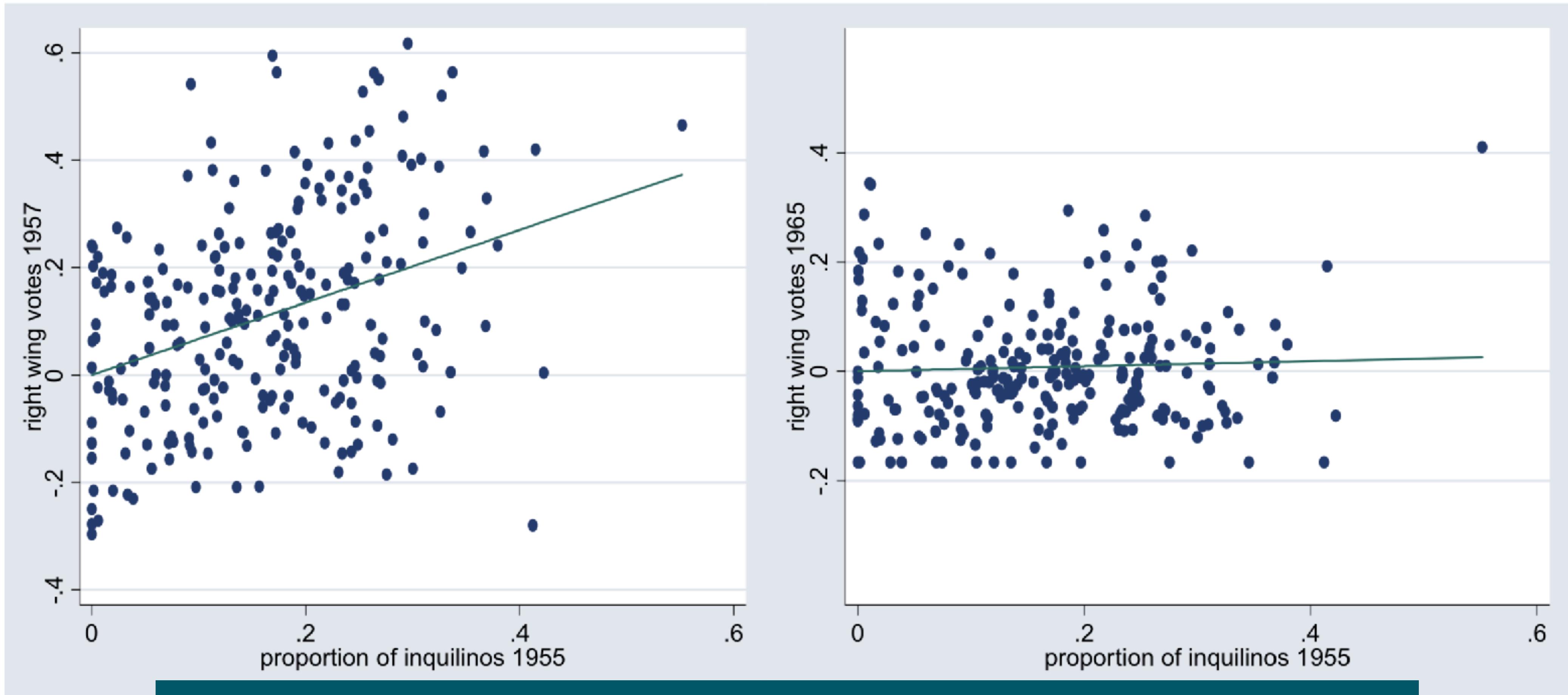
## How is vote-buying even possible?

Bribe *before* vote → voter best off reneging  
and voting for party they actually support

Bribe *after* vote → party best off not  
paying out the bribe

Both sides have difficulty **credibly**  
**committing** to honoring contract

# These commitment problems worse when **vote is secret**



Immediately after **Australian ballot**, employer  
influence on employees (temporarily) erodes

Politician → broker → voter  
**Principal-agent problems** all the way down

How does party *know* voter will cooperate?

And then how does party *know* that broker will do her job?

How to **monitor** and **enforce** agreements?

Parties have an information problem with respect to voters

Citizen sells vote, doesn't even go to voting booth

Citizen sells vote, goes to voting booth,  
votes for **true** preference

Which is a trickier problem for the vote-buyer?

Citizen sells vote, doesn't even go to voting booth

In theory, broker can literally observe turnout but maybe difficult at scale

Citizen sells vote, goes to voting booth,  
votes for **true** preference

In theory unobservable, but if voter indifferent about politics maybe not a huge problem

The answer seems to be **brokers, norms, networks, and voting technology**

**Brokers** are often people who are well-embedded within specific communities (i.e., not outsiders)

Rarely outsiders; in some cases, locally connected people approach parties

## Brokers can leverage reciprocity norms to enforce vote-buying contract

also hard for voters to disseminate certain people they've known all their lives: as one grassroots party organizer in Argentina explained, you know if a neighbor voted against your party if he can't look you in the eye on election day.

Khan: I work for myself and for my people here; Kamble supports us.

Lisa: But how do you convince people to vote for him?

K: I just tell them how to vote and they do.

L: Why don't they just nod and then vote for who they want?

K: They don't know who they want, so they ask me. They trust me to tell them who will protect us—who will do their work.

Brokers are genuinely **trusted** in their communities

**Table 1** Degree of Felt Obligation for Benefit

<b>Benefit offered</b>	<b>Percent who felt “a lot” or “some” obligation to support politician providing gift</b>
50 pesos	24.6
500 pesos	28.2
Bicycle	33.8
Cement	39.7
Doctor visit	49.9

Source: Mexico 2009 Clientelism Survey.

Note: The mean value is calculated on a scale of 0 to 3 (0 = no obligation, 3 = obligation). The differences between the first two benefits in the table are not statistically significant except compared to the last benefit. All other differences are significant at the .01 level.

People simply seem to *feel bad* ripping off  
the person bribing them

## Finan and Schechter, 2012

TABLE II  
MIDDLEMEN'S KNOWLEDGE OF VILLAGERS

	Obs.	Mean
<b>A. Share of villagers for whom the middleman correctly predicted</b>		
Spouse's name	38	0.838
Still alive	38	0.996
Has moved from the village	38	0.988
Voted in 2006 municipal elections	38	0.711
Identified with the Colorado party	38	0.771
Identified with the Liberal party	38	0.830
Identified strongly with the Colorado party	38	0.736
Identified strongly with the Liberal party	38	0.826
Sent half or more in the dictator game	38	0.666
Would always punish a person if they put them in a difficult situation	38	0.737
Trusted less than half the people in their village	37	0.740
<b>B. Average correlation between middleman's reported and villagers' actual</b>		
Years of schooling	38	0.734
Amount of land owned (ha)	38	0.633
Amount sent in a dictator game	35	0.084

<sup>a</sup>Panel A reports the average across middlemen of the share of villagers for whom their responses were correct. The last column reports the *p*-value associated with a one-sided test comparing the share of correct responses from the middlemen to the binomial distribution with a mean equal to the sample average. Panel B reports the average correlation coefficient between the responses of the middleman and the responses of the villagers. The last column reports the *p*-value associated with a two-sided test that the average correlation coefficient is zero.

Brokers can identify reciprocally-minded people and will target them

Being embedded in **local networks** gives brokers access to lots of **information**

Characteristics about people who are likely to vote, how they will vote, etc.

But also **how** and **whether** they voted

**Neighbors essentially inform on one another, though unlikely they think of it that way**

**Voters might be better off withholding information but very hard to coordinate**

**Plus if vote-buying at community level they have incentives to police neighbors**

*Husband:* Here it's different than in Córdoba [the nearest big city]. Here they know everyone. And they know whom everyone is going to vote for.

*Author:* When people come and give things out during the campaign, are they people whom you know?

*Husband:* Yes, they're people from here, they're neighbors. Here everyone knows each other. "Small town, big hell." (*Pueblo chico, infierno grande.*)

*Author:* Do they know how you voted?

*Husband:* For many years we've seen, people will say, "So-and-so voted for so-and-so." And he wins, and they come and say, "You voted for so-and-so." I don't know how they do it, but they know.

*Wife:* We were at the *unidad básica* [a neighborhood Peronist locale] and they say to me, "[Your cousin] voted for Eloy" [the given name of a Radical-party candidate]. And I asked my cousin, "did you vote for Eloy?" And she said "yes"! They knew that my cousin had voted for Eloy!<sup>10</sup>

From Philippines: people  
more central to networks  
**more likely to receive gifts  
and more likely to fear  
reprisal if defect from vote**

**Table 5.** Social Ties and Reported Determinants of Vote Choice.

	Gifts or money	Fear of reprisal
Social ties	0.016*	0.021***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Years residence	0.00014	0.000091
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Experienced hunger	-0.035	0.0036
	(0.06)	(0.04)
Education	-0.021*	-0.0072
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Travel time to urban center	-0.061*	-0.056**
	(0.03)	(0.02)
Constant	0.48***	0.26**
	(0.13)	(0.07)
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes
Village FE	No	No
Observations	864	864
R <sup>2</sup>	.03	.03

Dependent variables are whether the following factors were reported determinants of vote choice: (a) gifts or money (column 1) and (b) fear of reprisal from politicians (column 2). Municipality fixed effects included and standard errors are clustered by village (in parentheses). FE = fixed effects.

† $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

In some countries voting technology is less than fully anonymous

For a long time in Argentina, Uruguay, Panama, you vote in secret but with a ballot that **only has one party's candidates on it**

In theory, broker can give party list to candidate, drive them to voting booth, and observe them so there's no time to change ballot

how the party used the ballots. “The most important thing is to go look for people and give them the ballot. You give them the ballot in the taxi [which the party has hired to transport them to the polls]. Then no one has time to change their ballots for them [i.e., give them a different ballot. After taking voters into the polling place] you put them on line to vote... Then they don’t have a chance to change the ballot. Only if they’re really sneaky and they change it inside the voting booth.”<sup>12</sup>

Another tool is leveraging **size of polling stations**  
(Rueda, 2017)

Problem: only way to know if voters cheated is if broker's candidate wins less votes than # bribed

But non-bribed voters also vote for broker's candidate, making enforcement impossible

Target **small voting locations** where enforcement is easier

Set minimum threshold of votes for continuation of payment

Punish communities that don't deliver

With their *cédula* number [identification number needed to vote], I know in what *mesa* [polling station] they voted. If 10 have to be voting in there and I see only five votes, that means that five of them are failing me. I have a precision [rate] of 80%. Things can become difficult as there are other voters who one does not know who might vote for the candidate because they have seen him in TV or because they like his ideas.<sup>9</sup>

ID # used to verify **where** voter votes

Brokers use information to **reward**  
cooperative voters and **punish** defectors

As a repeated game, these relationships  
are ongoing and vote-buying is stable

Some goods are linked directly to party victory,  
making clientelism self-reinforcing

Public sector jobs, agricultural subsidies, etc.,  
hinge on party winning

Voters have an incentive to follow-through with  
clientelistic exchange

Result is “perverse accountability”, where *parties* hold *voters* accountable for how they vote

The other big question: who to target?

Broad agreement that **poor** are most often targeted

Poor are **cheapest** vote

Poor may be **risk-averse** and strongly prefer bribe now over policy tomorrow

And who to spend most on: core voters, or  
swing voters?

Core voters

People who reliably vote for a party  
but maybe don't turn out

Swing voters

People who tend to switch party they  
support between elections

Theory predicts that you should target “swing” voters, or voters who are indifferent

Cheaper/less risky to buy a Democratic vote from an independent than from a Republican

Core supporter will likely turn out anyway

But most evidence points to parties **buying core votes**

## Why this discrepancy between theory and empirics?

Maybe swing voters too costly to monitor

Maybe races are mostly about turnout, and  
core voters are easier to mobilize

Or maybe it's that brokers are **shirking**, and  
mobilizing core instead of swing!