

Recreating Market Conditions for Vote-Selling and Vote-Buying in the Lab: The Chilean Case

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Motivation: Vote-Buying Literature Forgets About Vote-Sellers

- The clientelism literature has focused primarily on *vote-buying* (parties buying votes in exchange of electoral support).
- Unfortunately, we are rather ignorants about *vote-sellers*: Who are they?
- Moreover, we do not know the micro-dynamics of the transaction itself.
- **Supply and demand story**: Do parties target likely voters? Why? At what price? Under what conditions sellers their votes?

Formal Model

Experimental Design

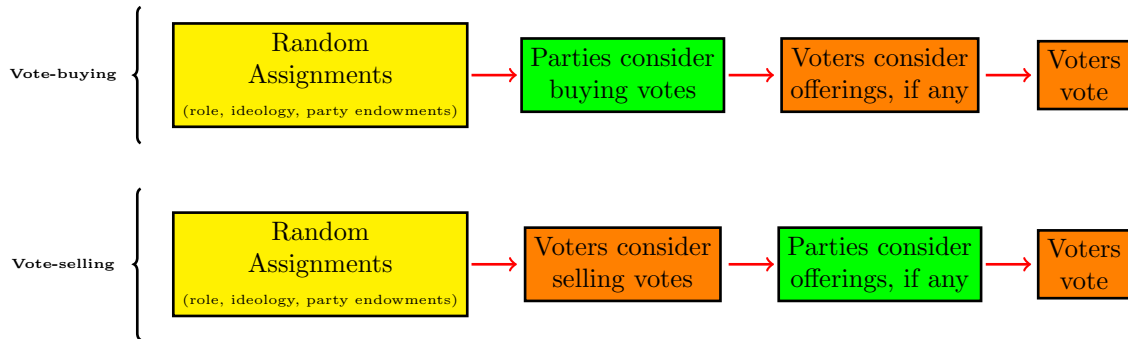
Parts:

1. Vote-buying: parties are first players (get out and buy votes, if needed).
2. Vote-selling: voters are first players (get out and sell votes, if needed).

For both parts (VB, VS), the following stages:

1. Random assignments: role (P, V), “ideology,” “party endowments.”
2. buying/selling **offers**.
3. buying/selling choice **choices**.
4. Election.

Experimental Flow



Caveats

- Ideology: voters “lean” towards a party based on the amount of points received if party wins the election.
Not really “ideology.”
- Party endowments: while both parties (A, B) receive the same amount, the relative purchasing power of them is randomized indirectly (by randomizing the spatial party-voter distance). **Parties face different vote-buying costs depending on party-voter distance.**
- **Relative importance of voter is randomized.** Voters are told they represent $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{5}$ of voters. It mimics “block voting.” This is public knowledge.

Comparative Statics: Ideology

- Downsian paradigm is unidimensional: left-right continuum (policy-oriented).
- We add some more complexity: non-policy factors (vote-selling is not policy-oriented).
- Research question: **What's the tipping point at which voters stop caring about ideology, and start selling their votes?**

Comparative Statics: Competitiveness

- Competitive authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010) survive not due to electoral fraud.
- They survive because of the incumbent's capacity to mobilize a large mass of supporters, discouraging likely opposers (Magaloni 2008).
- Research question:
 1. At which point do likely opposers feel encouraged and start buying votes?
 2. At which point do likely opposers feel discouraged and abandon the electoral race, not buying votes?

Comparative Statics: Endowments

- Literature won't give a definitive answer: Parties with more resources buy votes at higher prices (Bahamonde 2018) or not (Szwarcberg (2013).
- Research question: **Do parties with more resources engage in vote-buying?**
- *Remember caveat: not “really” randomized. Proxy.*

Comparative Statics: Targeting

- Literature won't give a definitive answer: since it's cheaper, parties target own supporters (Cox and McCubbins), or parties target unlikely voters, otherwise, it's a waste (Stokes).
- Research question: **Who do political parties target? Swing voters or core supporters?**

Comparative Statics: Sequence

- Does being the first one in making an offer (buying/selling votes) matter? When? How?