2

Gaps Between Theory and Fact

> "The groups that are densely represented at the center [of the ideological spectrum] will be the beneficiaries of redistributive politics. [Groups at the extremes] will not partake in this benefit: they will be written off by one party and taken for granted by the other."[1]
>
> "A broker will give goods to swing voters to attract more people; voters who prefer the party are already on his side."[2]

The first quote expresses a theoretical finding about partisan attachments and distributive politics. The second one expresses the same idea, this time voiced by a low-level operative in an Argentine political party. What has become the dominant view among theorists is the same as this practitioner's rule of thumb: a party will not waste its resources on loyal supporters (or on die-hard enemies), but instead spend on swing voters. The reason is that parties will use largesse to *change* people's votes; swing voters, with no prior commitment to one party or another, will be uniquely responsive.[3]

The intuition behind the theory and rule of thumb is straightforward. However, as we show in this chapter, it is not supported by the facts. Reality stubbornly resists conforming to our theories. In a range of developing-world democracies, swing voters receive too few benefits, whereas loyal voters – those

[1] Dixit and Londregan 1996, p. 1143.

[2] 2009 interview with broker in Buenos Aires. This interview was part of a survey of Argentine political brokers (see Appendix A) that we carried out in conjunction with Edwin Camp and Mariela Szwarcberg.

[3] So powerful is the intuition behind this rule that Kitschelt and Wilkinson build it into their definition of clientelism. Giving a benefit to a voter is an instance of clientelism if, *inter alia*, "it is all but certain that the local voters would switch sides to other parties" in the absence of the benefit (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, p. 14).

whose strong preference for the party should make them unresponsive – receive too many.

Whereas in the previous chapter we distinguished conceptually between forms of distributive politics, here we begin by briefly reviewing positive theories of how distributive politics work – in particular, the types of voters that parties and candidates tend to favor when they hand out benefits. We then use evidence from public opinion surveys, government databases, and survey experiments to show that clientelist distribution does not give priority to swing voters. This is true in four distinct developing democracies for which we have individual-level data: Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, and India. We then try to explain this anomaly by testing the *endogenous loyalty*, *turnout buying*, and *subcontracting* explanations mentioned in Chapter 1. Yet, none of these explanations fully accounts for the anomaly. To be clear, some swing or marginal voters do receive benefits. But from the perspective of received theory, the overriding conclusion is that too many loyal voters receiving party largess.

The failure of received theories to account for who gets what in the distributive game in developing democracies forces us to re-think the theory, a task we take up in Chapter 3.

2.1 THEORIES OF DISTRIBUTIVE POLITICS

2.1.1 The Swing-Voter Logic

Parties with limited budgets will distribute rewards to some voters but exclude others. What types of voters do they target? To answer this question, the scholarly literature has focused on one dimension along which voters vary: their ideological or partisan proximity to the machine and to its opponents. The groundwork for what has become the dominant view was laid out in a probabilistic voting model by Lindbeck and Weibull.[4] When two parties compete by offering distributive rewards to voters, both will focus their efforts on swing, or ideologically indifferent, voters.[5] To reward voters who are ideologically proximate to the party or ideologically distant from it is to waste resources.

A simple formalism helps communicate the conventional wisdom. We can think of a voter as deriving utility from casting a vote for a party and from receiving a material payment from a party. We use σ to denote a dimension of partisanship on which each voter can be located, with mean of zero (see Figure 2.1). Parties also have locations on this dimension. The partisan or ideological location of a given voter i is denoted by σ^i, and the location of party P is σ^P. We think of these positions of parties and voters as fixed and independent of targeted material payments, at least in the short run. Their positions may reflect preferences about policies – for example, how large should the

[4] Lindbeck and Weibull 1987.

[5] Lindbeck and Weibull used the term "marginal" voters.

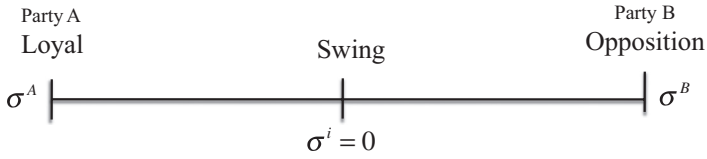


FIGURE 2.1. A Dimension of Partisanship.

government be? – or they may reflect ethnic or religious attachments between parties and leaders. Although it may be the case that partisan or ideological location is related in the long run to material payments (a question we take up below), in the "spot market" of vote buying, it makes sense to distinguish between the partisan or ideological utility of voting for a party or candidate and the benefit from receiving a material payment from a party.

Assume a system in which two parties compete, Party A and Party B. Their positions can be depicted as σ^A and σ^B. A negative value of σ^i indicates a voter's preference for party A, a positive one a preference for party B. Hence a loyal supporter of Party A – a person with a negative σ value – maximizes his or her partisan or ideological utility from voting by casting a ballot for Party A and will experience disutility from voting for Party B. Indifferent voters, those with $\sigma^i = 0$, receive equal utility for voting for A and B. We call them *swing voters*.[6]

We use b^i to denote the utility a voter derives from receiving a discrete benefit from a party. Assume for simplicity that a voter can receive either nothing or a benefit of standardized value, so $b^i \in \{0, b\}$.

The voter's utility takes the following functional form:

$$U^i(b^i, \sigma^i, \sigma^P) = -(\sigma^i - \sigma^P)^2 + b^i$$

The quadratic-loss term implies that a voter's utility rises as the distance between his or her position on σ and that of the party he or she votes for decreases; independently, the voter enjoys receiving a distributive reward.

Theorists have shown that under certain assumptions, parties will focus their distributive largess – b – on swing voters. Groups of voters known to be heavily populated with swing voters will receive more rewards.[7]

The swing-voter theoretical result holds when no party can deliver benefits with particular efficiency to any group of voters. It also holds when this assumption is relaxed and one party can deliver benefits to a group of "core constituents" with relatively little "leakage"[8] or lower administrative costs.[9]

[6] Technically, because σ is continuous, the set of voters with $\sigma^i = 0$ has measure zero; to be more precise, we might define swing voters as those in an open interval around $\sigma^i = 0$, or use limits.
[7] Lindbeck and Weibull 1987, Dixit and Londregan 1996.
[8] Dixit and Londregan.
[9] Lindbeck and Weibull.

Efficiency of delivery alters which groups get how much, but it does not basically undermine the logic of swing voters' receiving more benefits.

The reason is that theorists such as Lindbeck and Weibull, and Dixit and Londregan, envision efficiency of delivery as separate from partisanship. For Dixit and Londregan, parties that can deliver benefits efficiently to a given group of voters are ones that are closely intertwined with the group's social networks: "A party's core constituencies need not prefer its issue positions. It is the party's advantage over its competitors at swaying voters in a group with offers of particularistic benefits that makes the group core."[10] The degree of efficiency of distribution – the "leakiness of the bucket" – in Dixit and Londregan's machine/core-voter case is a dimension that is independent of a group's ideology.

We can formalize the idea of efficiency of delivery as a distinct dimension from partisanship or ideology. Following Dixit and Londregan, think of $\theta^{i,P}$ as the leakiness or dead-weight loss associated with the delivery of benefits from party P to voter i; $\theta^{i,P} \in (0, 1)$. Consider a voter i who belongs to a group with close ties to Party P. In this case, $\theta^{i,P}$ may be close to zero, a fact that increases the voter's chances of receiving a benefit, whatever his or her ideological orientation or partisanship. Hence we might posit that the probability that voter i receives a benefit b from party P is

$$P^i(b^{i,P} = b|\sigma^i, \theta^{i,P}) = \Phi[-\theta^{i,P}(\sigma^i)^2],$$

where Φ is some probability density function that is symmetric around zero. The probability of a voter receiving a benefit from a given party increases as σ^i approaches zero and, separately, as $\theta^{i,P}$ approaches zero.

To underscore the distinction Dixit and Londregan make between the dimensions of ideology and of efficiency of distribution, we introduce the following terminology. Voters who are proximate to a party in ideological or partisan terms we call *loyalists*.[11] Voters who are network-proximate to a party we call *core constituents*.[12]

An important early paper by Cox and McCubbins apparently represents a sharp departure from the swing-voter logic.[13] Their model leads to parties' preferentially favoring core supporters over swing groups. Cox and McCubbins conceived of groups of voters as falling into three types: core, swing, and opposition. The authors left ascriptive traits of candidates (and voters) and ideological inclinations outside of the model, so these types are not identical to loyal, swing, and opposition voters as they line up on the σ dimension in Figure 2.1. Instead, Cox and McCubbins's conception of core and swing groups

[10] Dixit and Londregan 1996, p. 1134.

[11] These are voters for whom $-(\sigma^i - \sigma^P)^2$ approaches zero.

[12] These are voters for whom θ^{iP} approaches zero. Note that $-(\sigma^i - \sigma^P)^2$ may then be large or small; the probability of receiving a benefit is maximized at either $\sigma^i = 0$ or at $\theta^{iP} = 0$.

[13] Cox and McCubbins 1986.

is behavioral: "support groups are those who have consistently supported" a candidate "in the past and to whom he looks for support in the future . . ." whereas "swing groups are those who have been neither consistently supportive nor consistently hostile."[14]

In deciding which groups it should target, a party takes into account not just their relative responsiveness but the degree of variability of their responsiveness. Cox and McCubbins make assumptions about the responsiveness of distinct groups to distributive largess. Opposition groups are unresponsive and hence will be written off. Turning to core and swing groups, Cox and McCubbins posited that although swing voters may be the most responsive, core supporters are the most predictable: "candidates are generally less uncertain about the electoral responses of support groups than they are about the electoral responses of swing groups," and hence "risk-averse candidates should invest relatively more in their support groups (thus increasing stability) . . ."[15] With echoes of other theorists' ideas about administrative proximity and efficiency of delivery to core groups, here core voters are better known to their party, their responsiveness to rewards more predictable.

To accept this version of why distributive parties focus on core (but note, not necessarily ideologically like-minded) voters, one must be prepared to accept that core supporters' *responsiveness to rewards* is less variable than that of swing votes. This is quite different from core voters being predictable in their *vote choices*.[16] One must also accept that candidates would be willing to sacrifice *vote share* in favor of greater *stability* of electoral coalitions.

Common to the models of distributive politics that we have been discussing is that they resolve commitment problems by fiat. Parties that offer people rewards before the election do not renege afterwards, and voters are implicitly assumed not to turn their backs on machines in the privacy of the voting booth. This shortcoming is addressed in a paper by Stokes.[17] She models distributive politics as an iterated game of prisoner's dilemma. A machine offers a voter a reward in return for his vote. The voter cares about the ideological position of the party and about the reward. The embeddedness of machines in the networks of voters allows them to draw inferences about how voters voted and hence to circumvent, at least in part, the secrecy of the ballot. Even without perfect information about voters' electoral choices, machines can use this embeddedness to credibly threaten to retaliate against defectors by withdrawing rewards in the future.

Hence, whereas embeddedness increases distributive efficiency in Dixit and Londregan's model and reduces uncertainty in Cox and McCubbins's, in Stokes's model, embeddedness allows machines to monitor voters' choices and to credibly threaten to punish defectors.

[14] Cox and McCubbins 1986, p. 376.
[15] Cox and McCubbins 1986, pp. 377–378.
[16] Uncertainty about responsiveness is not directly modeled by Cox and McCubbins.
[17] Stokes 2005.

Stokes's theoretical conclusions are in some ways similar to Lindbeck and Weibull's and Dixit and Londregan's. From the viewpoint of Party A in Figure 2.1, all voters to the left of the swing voter – all for whom $\sigma^i < 0$ – can be "taken for granted."[18] But rather than "writing off" all voters to the right of the swing voter, there is a set of voters – Stokes calls them the "weakly opposed" – whose disutility for voting for Party A can be compensated with the reward b^i. They, along with swing voters, are the predicted targets of machine largess.

To summarize, the main thrust of theories of distributive politics is that swing voters, or ones who are weakly opposed to the party machine, are its main targets. Voters who make up a party's core constituents also benefit; not their partisanship but their network proximity or reliability brings them to the party's attention. Even among core constituents, the implicit prediction is that strong partisans can be taken for granted, whereas indifferent or mildly opposed voters will get special attention from party machines.

2.1.2 Testing Swing-Voter Theories

To test the swing-voter prediction, we turn to individual-level evidence from several sources, including our original survey data from contemporary Argentina, Venezuela, and India, and from publicly available surveys of individual voters from Mexico.[19] These countries vary in many important ways, such as in their levels of economic development, presidential versus parliamentary systems of government, colonial heritage, age of democracy, and degrees of federalism. But they are all settings in which parties exchange targeted material benefits for votes and political support. The consistency of the effect of voters' ideological or partisan type on their probability of receiving machine largesse across these settings – and the inconsistency of these effects with theoretical predictions – underscore the need for rethinking the theory.

Argentina

Argentina's 1983 return to democracy revived a party system dominated by the Peronist (PJ) and Radical (UCR) parties, the two leading parties during Argentina's democratic interludes since the 1940s.[20] Our first survey, conducted in December 2001–January 2002, captured this highly competitive two-party system. Two Radical-led presidential administrations ended in disasters;

[18] Here we consider a "machine party" with resources to distribute; this machine need not fear that voters with $\sigma^i < 0$ will be poached by party B.

[19] We have reason in subsequent chapters to revisit the actions of distributive parties as they make more aggregate-level choices – whether to favor one or another district, province, or city. However, we follow the observation of Cox (2007) that distribution among districts or other aggregate units is not necessarily pertinent to the question of what kind of voters are being targeted. Benefits sent to swing districts might be meted out within these districts to the parties' most ardent supporters, or largesse spent on districts that are "loyal" at the aggregate level might go to undecided or swing voters within those districts.

[20] PJ stands for Partido Justicialista, UCR for Unión Cívica Radical.

TABLE 2.1. *Primary Survey Data: Sample and Sources*

Country and Year of Survey	Sample	Source for Details
Argentina 2001–2002	480 adults in each of 4 provinces	Appendix B and Brusco et al. 2004
Argentina 2003	500 adults in each of 4 provinces	Appendix B
Argentina 2009	600 adults in each of 2 provinces	Appendix B and Lupu 2011
Argentina 2009–2010	200 brokers in each of 4 provinces	Appendix A and Camp 2012
Venezuela 2009–2010	2,000 adults in 8 largest cities partially merged with Maisanta database	Appendix C
Mexico 2000	National sample of approximately 2,400 adults across 4 waves	http://web.mit.edu/polisci/facutly/C.Lawson.html
India 2009–2012	6,977 adults in the states of Karnataka, Bihar, and Rajasthan	Appendix E Dunning and Nilekani 2013

the first disaster, under Raúl Alfonsin (1983–1989), was economic, the second, under Fernando de la Rúa (1999–2002), economic and political. Our post–De la Rúa surveys, carried out in 2003 and 2009, coincided with a changed party system. The Radical Party struggled nationally and in many provinces and localities. The Peronist Party was dominant over other parties but was also riven by factions; the party competed against a debilitated Radical Party and against other parties, some to its left and some to its right. Across the full period, our surveys detected vote buying and reliance on political parties for access to state resources, jobs, and other valued goods. Beginning in 2009, we also conducted a survey of low-level party operatives or brokers, which we discuss later.[21]

Table 2.1 provides information about our Argentine voter surveys as well as other surveys that we analyze from Venezuela, Mexico, and India (see also Appendixes A through D for more detailed information). The 2001–2002, 2003, and 2009 Argentina voter surveys were each probability samples of distinct voters from several Argentine provinces; they were not a panel. The 2003 survey filtered out higher-income people from the sampling frame. In all three Argentine voter surveys, we asked similar questions designed to detect exchanges of benefits for votes.

[21] Our research here is informed by excellent studies of clientelism and distributive politics in Argentina, including Auyero 2001, Calvo and Murillo 2004, Camp 2012, Levitsky 2003, Lodola 2005, Szwarcberg 2009, Weitz-Shapiro 2011, and others.

The 2001 survey asked questions that referred to national legislative and provincial elections that had taken place two months earlier. We asked respondents whether, during the campaign, political operatives or candidates had given out goods in their neighborhood. Eight hundred thirty-nine people – 44 percent of the sample of 1,920 – said they had. We asked what had been given out. The most common item mentioned was food, but also mentioned were clothing, mattresses, medicine, milk, corrugated metal, construction materials, blankets, hangers, utility bill payments, money, eyeglasses, chickens, trees, and magnets. One hundred forty-one people – 7 percent of the sample – acknowledged receiving goods themselves.

When asked which party distributed goods, the most frequent answer was the Peronists (418 respondents); 48 individuals reported that the Radical party was the one giving out goods; and another 7 percent of the sample – 138 people – responded "Peronists and Radicals" to this open-ended question. Of those who reported having received something, close to 70 percent reported that it was the Peronist Party that was doing the distributing, as against 10 percent for the Radicals. The remaining 20 percent mentioned minor parties or groupings.

Given the preponderance of the Peronist Party in vote buying – a survey result utterly in line with the considerable recent literature on Peronism and distributive politics in Argentina – it is instructive to explore the opinions that those who received goods held of that party. These views, in a nutshell, are positive. Recipients of campaign distributions are more closely aligned with Peronism than the swing-voter prediction leads us to expect.

People who received goods generally held more favorable opinions of the Peronist Party than did those who did not. Figure 2.2 captures differences in opinions of the Peronist Party among people who did, and did not, receive campaign benefits. Each bar shows the proportional difference between the percentage holding a given opinion – from "very good" to "very bad" – depending on whether or not the respondent received a gift. For instance, about 8.2 percent of people who received rewards thought the party was very good, but only about 2.6 percent of those who did not receive them held this opinion – a proportional difference of (8.2–2.6)/2.6 or around 2.15 (or 215 percent). At the other extreme, a considerably lower proportion of those who received a gift than those who did not considered the party "very bad" – 11 percent versus 32 percent, a proportional difference of −0.66 or −66 percent. Later in this chapter, we consider the possibility that gift recipients might view the machine more positively simply because they have received gifts – that gifts cause loyalty rather than loyalty attracting gifts. However, we conclude that this alternative explanation cannot readily account for our evidence. Here, we simply document the fact that voters with good opinions of the party are more likely to have received gifts.

In our 2003 survey as well, we asked whether goods were given out in the respondent's neighborhood and whether the respondent received anything. The reference in this question was to the April 2003 national election. Thirty percent

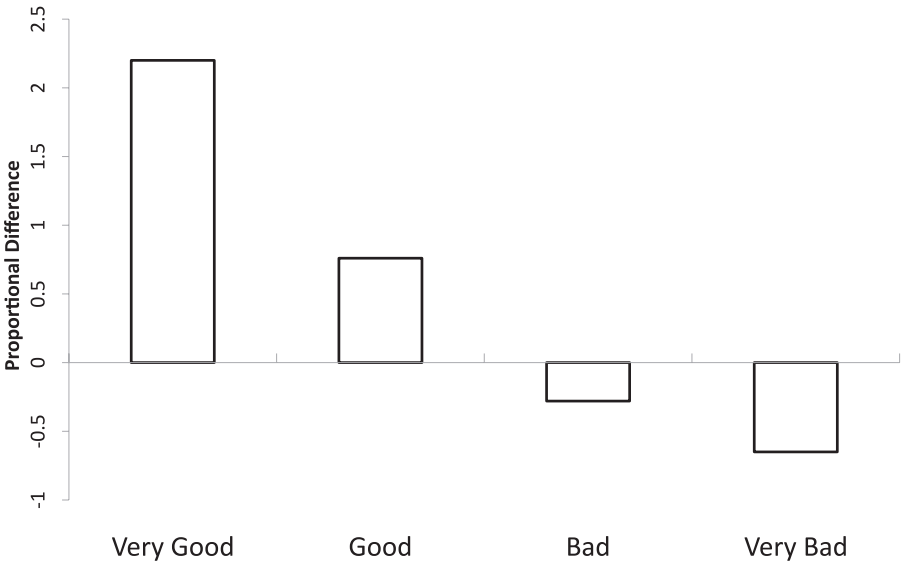


FIGURE 2.2. Argentina: Proportional Difference Between Reward Recipients and Non-recipients in Percentages Holding "Very Good," "Good," "Bad," and "Very Bad" Opinions of the Peronists. *Source:* 2001–2002 Argentina survey, N = 1,776.

of the sample reported that a party gave things out in their neighborhood (589 people out of a sample of 2,000); just under 7 percent (135 individuals) reported personally having received something. Among those who could name the party distributing goods in their neighborhood, by far the most frequently mentioned party was, again, the Peronists: 74 percent (166/224) said the Peronists gave things out, as against 15 percent who said the Radical party did.[22]

It therefore again makes sense to compare opinions of the Peronists among those who did and who did not receive campaign handouts. Recall that, if the swing voter proposition is right, we expect machines not to target their loyal supporters with campaign handouts. In the Argentine setting, Peronist supporters should receive goods at lower rates than non-Peronists, if at all.

But the data go against this expectation. For example, we asked whether the person identified with any political party (and then followed up with those who answer yes with the question, "which party?"). Whereas about 5.5 percent of the non-Peronists received goods, about 8.5 percent of Peronists did. Some

[22] As in the 2001 survey, this was an open-ended question, and some people mentioned more than one party. Including all mentions of the Peronists raises the percentage to 79 percent (176 people); including all mentions of the Radicals raises the percentage to 19 percent (43 people).

swing or weakly opposed voters did receive some benefits, but the mix of recipients is heterogeneous; and, contra the theory, a larger proportion of loyalists received benefits than swing voters.

Like the 2001–2002 and 2003 surveys, our 2009 survey offers evidence that, contra Lindbeck and Weibull, Dixit and Londregan, and Stokes, loyal, not swing, voters received most campaign gifts. Here we solicited more fine-grained opinions of parties, from zero (dislikes the party greatly) to 10 (likes the party greatly). The results were roughly the same as in 2001–2002: more than twice the percentage of those who had highly favorable views of the Peronists than those who were indifferent toward it received campaign gifts.

The 2009 survey also asked respondents a more abstract question about whether a hypothetical broker would distribute benefits "like bags of food, mattresses, or subsidies" to a voter who "preferred the broker's party" or to one who was indifferent between competing parties. Here again, 60 percent of respondents said goods would go to the voter who preferred the party, 40 percent to other sorts of voters. Hence a majority anticipated goods going to the party loyalists; a minority (though not a small one) appeared to agree with distributive theorists in expecting goods to go to indifferent people.

Yet perhaps these results are misleading. Partisanship aside, we expect machines to target poor people, a point we develop in detail later in this book. Peronist affinities are more common among the ranks of the Argentine poor. Hence it is possible that the higher than expected representation of Peronists among the recipients of campaign gifts is an artifact of Peronists on average having lower incomes. To explore this possibility, we inspect the relative frequencies of campaign gift recipients among Peronists and non-Peronists, this time restricting ourselves to low-income respondents.

The results are not very different. About 7 percent of poor non-Peronists received goods, as compared with nearly 11 percent of poor Peronist supporters (i.e., those who responded "Peronist" when we asked the party with which they identify).

The discussion thus far has focused on vote buying before elections. Much the same story emerges when we turn our attention to the distribution of government benefits through social programs, of which there were several in Argentina during this period. Our 2003 survey asked whether the respondent received a "subsidy" (as benefits from social programs are known colloquially). Restricting ourselves again to low-income respondents, 36 percent of the non-Peronist poor received support, compared with 46 percent of the Peronist poor, implying that being a Peronist is associated with an increased likelihood of receiving a benefit of 10 percentage points. Not all government programs use income as an official criterion of distribution, and it is certainly not the only criterion. Still, that the spigots were opened wider for the Peronist poor than for the non-Peronist poor suggests a manipulation of public programs. However, the key point is that the political manipulation here – the departure from programmatic distribution – favors not swing voters but loyalists.

The reader might worry that social norms would make many people reluctant to acknowledge receiving "gifts" during political campaigns. Our questions about social programs go some distance toward avoiding this problem – receiving them is a priori more acceptable than receiving campaign gifts such as food, building materials, or chickens. Still, social desirability problems are worrisome. In a different Latin American setting, González-Ocantos, Kiewiet de Jonge, Meléndez, Osorio, and Nickerson used an innovative list experiment to study the problem of social acceptability and clientelism.[23] Their study found that 24 percent of Nicaraguans surveyed had in fact received a campaign gift, whereas, when asked directly, taking a gift was acknowledged by a mere 2.5 percent.

To counter social desirability bias, in 2009 we devised a survey experiment. In this survey, as in the earlier two, we asked respondents whether they had received goods from candidates or party operatives in the prior campaign, this time referring to recent national mid-term elections. However, here we randomly assigned respondents to one of four versions of the question. Each subsequent treatment provides what were designed to be increasingly acceptable justifications for accepting a campaign gift. The wordings are reproduced here:

Treatment 1 During the recent electoral campaign, did you receive a handout (*ayuda*) or benefit from a candidate or political operative?

Treatment 2 In Argentina it is perfectly legal for a voter to receive benefits from candidates or party operatives during electoral campaigns.[24] During the recent electoral campaign, did a candidate or political operative give you a handout or benefit?

Treatment 3 In a democracy, voters expect to receive benefits from candidates and political operatives during campaigns. During the recent electoral campaign, did a candidate or political operative give you a handout or benefit?

Treatment 4 In a democracy, voters expect to receive benefits from candidates and political operatives during campaigns, and in Argentina it is perfectly legal for a voter to receive benefits from candidates or party operatives during electoral campaigns. During the recent electoral campaign, did a candidate or political operative give you a handout or benefit?

Five percent of our sample overall answered yes to these questions. The percentage answering yes rose monotonically across the experimental conditions. At the extremes, just under 4 percent answered yes to the question as posed in the first treatment, in which there was no priming to increase the social acceptability of taking a campaign gift; just over 6 percent answered yes to the question in the fourth treatment, which doubly primed respondents to see receiving a gift as socially acceptable. The differences in responses were not

[23] González-Ocantos, Kiewiet de Jonge, Meléndez, Osorio, and Nickerson, 2011.

[24] Indeed, by Argentine law, it is illegal for parties to treat voters but not for voters to receive treats.

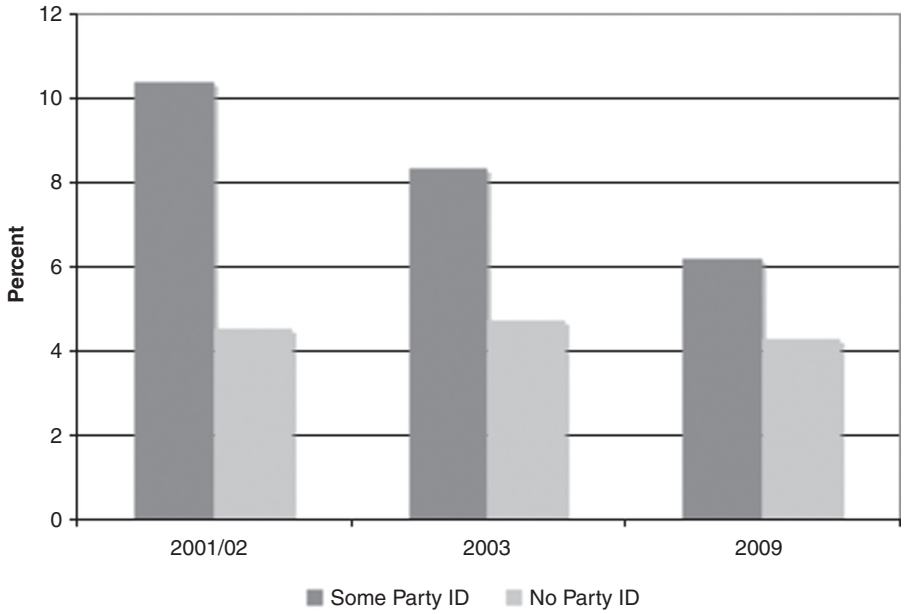


FIGURE 2.3. Argentina: Percentage of Respondents Receiving Campaign Gifts by Some or No Party Affiliation. *Source:* Voter Surveys, N = 5,014.

statistically significant, however, so our experimental conditions do not appear to increase the social acceptability of reporting vote buying.

Again, the swing voter prediction was contradicted. The probability of a positive answer rose slightly among Peronist supporters. Probit analysis shows a small positive effect of holding a Peronist identity on the probability of reporting that one received a campaign gift, though the coefficient estimate loses significance when controls for income are introduced. However, recall that the theoretical prediction that we are testing is that Peronists would be *less* likely to receive goodies than would swing voters; the prediction, again, is in tension with real-world practice.

Up until now we have been treating non-Peronists as though they were swing voters and treating Peronists as loyalists to Argentina's machine party. But another way to think about swing voters is that rather than being people who are indifferent toward the machine, they are people with no party affiliation at all. By this interpretation, did swing voters attract more gifts?

The answer is no. Recall that in all three Argentine voter surveys, we asked whether the person identified with any political party and which one. As Figure 2.3 shows, fewer non-identifiers received gifts consistently across the three surveys: in 2001, less than half the percentage, in 2003 half the percentage, and in 2009 50 percent fewer. The same holds true of beneficiaries of social

programs. Seventy-three percent of party identifiers reported having received a state subsidy, compared with 62 percent among people with no party identification. The gap of more than 10 percentage points again goes against the swing-voter prediction.

In sum, our survey research in Argentina, conducted over nearly a decade, offers little support for the theoretical conclusion that swing voters are the primary recipients of distributive largess – either social programs or campaign gifts. Loyal supporters receive too much of the machine's resources, swing voters too little.

Venezuela

Our original research in Venezuela also affords opportunities to test swing-voter predictions. Two political parties dominated Venezuelan politics between 1958 and the start of the 1990s: Democratic Action (Acción Democrática, AD), and COPEI. AD favored more redistributive policies and had strong links with organized labor; COPEI was Christian Democratic in origin and more conservative in policy orientation. Both parties were factionalized, and both competed with a mix of programmatic appeals, patronage, and clientelism.[25] In 1998, Hugo Chávez, a left-leaning former military officer, was elected president. Electoral support for AD and COPEI collapsed; never again has either attracted large numbers of votes.

By several measures, clientelism remained an important feature of electoral politics in Venezuela under Chávez.[26] Surveys from 2004 onward register about 10–12 percent of voters reporting that they received benefits in exchange for their votes.[27]

These surveys are an indication that vote buying did not come to a halt under Chávez, who also deployed programmatic distributive benefits and ample rhetorical efforts to stay ahead of the opposition. Electoral support for Chávez in 1998 came from a diffuse group of voters, in class terms, and the new president was elected with a substantial mandate and very high initial approval ratings. But in the early 2000s, with low world oil prices and mixed success in helping poor Venezuelans, Chávez's popularity sank. The Venezuelan polity became polarized between pro-Chávez supporters and the opposition, a polarization that strongly crystallized in 2002 and 2003. A failed coup attempt in April 2002 was accompanied by violent confrontations in the streets of Caracas between pro- and anti-Chávez groups. At the end of 2002 and beginning of 2003, Chávez also faced a nearly three-month general strike that was

[25] See Coppedge 1994.

[26] See, e.g., Hawkins 2010, Ortega and Penfold 2008.

[27] In LAPOP's 2010 survey, 11.6 percent of Venezuelan respondents answered yes to the question, Did a political party offer you a material benefit in exchange for your vote? Latinobarometer surveys in 2005 found 12 percent of Venezuelans reporting having received a gift in exchange for their votes. However, our own survey in 2007 found less than 3 percent of respondents saying they had received such a benefit. We describe our survey in detail in Appendix C.

concentrated in the oil sector. In the wake of the strike, the president's popularity was at an all-time low (see Appendix C).

In response, in 2004 the Venezuelan government ratcheted up its distribution of targeted material rewards. The political pressure for spending came from the opposition's drive to remove Chávez from office through a recall referendum, whereas the economic opportunity came from the spike in oil prices after the United States' invasion of Iraq. The dramatic rise in social spending in the run-up to the recall elections of 2004 allows us to evaluate the impact of partisanship, as perceived by the government, on its distribution of benefits. As we explain later in more depth, this case also helps to some extent to avoid problems of reverse causation, with prior giving inducing "loyalty" rather than partisan loyalty inducing giving, because both *chavismo* – partisan loyalty to the President – and the social programs were quite new.

Drawing on a government database and a follow-up survey, we were able to study the distribution of targeted social programs conditional on the partisan orientations of voters. During the campaign against the recall election in 2004, the government compiled information from two separate recall petitions signed against Chávez and against certain opposition deputies. This "Maisanta" database, which we describe in detail in Appendix C, contained data on the ideological orientation and turnout histories of more than 12 million individuals, the universe of registered voters who as of July 10, 2004, were eligible to vote in the August 15th referendum.[28] The data were then distributed to local party activists in the form of a software program with a user-friendly interface. Individual records were searchable either by name or address or by "*cédula*," a unique national identification number comparable in power to a Social Security Number in the United States but used much more widely by Venezuelans in daily life (e.g., to sign credit card bills in restaurants).[29]

As the screenshot of the software depicted in Figure 2.4 shows, a successful hit in the database returns an individual's address, location of his or her voting center, and his or her access to government-sponsored social programs at the time of Maisanta's construction.[30] Each record also reports whether the voter signed a recall petition against Chávez (people who did are coded in the government's dataset as "opposition" voters), signed a recall petition against opposition deputies (coded as "patriots"), or did not sign any recall petition.[31] For instance, the individual shown in the screenshot in Figure 2.4 did not sign any recall petition (as indicated by the phrase "did not sign against the President" in the shaded box; in Spanish, "*No firmó contra el Presidente*"). The

[28] To be exact, the Maisanta database contains 12,394,109 entries, corresponding to individual Venezuelan voters.

[29] In Appendix C, we discuss further details about the construction, dissemination, and use of the Maisanta dataset. For other studies that use the Maisanta database, see Dunning and Stokes 2007, Hsieh et al. 2011, and Albertus 2010.

[30] We have blacked out the individual's name in the "Apellidos y Nombre" box in Figure 2.4.

[31] We only found a few instances of individuals who signed recall petitions both against Chávez and against opposition deputies, so these can be considered mutually exclusive categories.

FIGURE 2.4. Venezuela: Screenshot of Maisanta Software Interface.

bottom left of the user interface also recorded whether this voter was viewed as an "abstainer" – *absencionista* – a measure we discuss further later. Thus, using this software, local militants could learn voters' partisan or ideological tendency, past turnout/abstention history, and the extent of participation in social programs at the time of the recall campaign (as measured by the Misión Ribas and Vuelvan Caras boxes at the bottom left of Figure 2.4). At the time Maisanta was developed, however, the Mission social programs were in their infancy (see Appendix C).[32]

One piece of information that the database did not include was individuals' incomes. Because low incomes are expected to correlate both with support for Chávez and with eligibility for social assistance, a failure to take income into account could bias results. Nor does the database record participation in a variety of new social programs, *Misiones*, that were rolled out starting in 2003 and 2004.[33] We therefore supplemented the Maisanta database with additional original research. In 2007, we administered a survey to a probability sample of 2,000 adults in the eight largest Venezuelan cities, gathering information about individuals' receipt of benefits during and after the recall

[32] Readers may note this particular individual was born in 1905 – as indicated by the box labeled "Fecha Nac," which stands for "*fecha de nacimiento*" or "date of birth."

[33] Note that participation in two social programs as of 2004 – the "Misión Ribas" and "Vuelvan Caras" – is noted in boxes at the bottom left of Figure 2.4. However, participation in many other programs, such as the Misión Robinson discussed later, as well as a panoply of other social Missions, is not recorded in Maisanta; moreover, even for Misión Ribas and Vuelvan Caras, participation greatly expanded after the construction of Maisanta.

campaign, social program participation, and other variables.[34] To be able to link respondents to the information about them in the Maisanta database, we also solicited their unique personal identifiers.[35] Our analysis here focuses on people's participation, during and after the recall election, in two targeted social programs: an adult literacy program called *Misión Robinson* and a high-school equivalency program called *Misión Ribas*. Both provide scholarships to participants. Payments under the Ribas Mission come in the form of "grants" (of 180,000 Venezuelan *bolivares* a month as of 2004, or about US$85 at official exchange rates) and "incentives" (of 200,000 *bolivares*, or about US$94). Our field research suggests that scholarships were not closely tied to attendance in the program or to scholastic achievement; instead they served mainly as cash transfers to recipients.

Whether we focus on people's attitudes toward the government as they reported them in our survey or on their posture vis-a-vis the government as registered in the Maisanta database, the results offer little support for swing-voter theories. Figure 2.5 displays the distribution of beneficiaries of targeted programs by the respondent's self-reported party preference. Those who prefer parties from the ruling coalition received benefits at a higher rate than those who said they preferred no party (the "swing" voters); swing voters in turn received more benefits than did opposition supporters. The same trend is visible in Figure 2.6, which uses the Maisanta databases's coding of individuals by political orientation. Here again, pro-Chávez petitioners (those who signed petitions against opposition deputies) received most benefits, swing voters received less, and those who signed petitions against the president received least of all.[36]

[34] See Appendix C. In this analysis, we do not use the information on benefit receipt contained in the Maisanta database itself, which was current as of the end of 2003 and therefore does not likely reflect targeting based on the information on political affiliation contained in Maisanta; moreover, participation in these programs was just beginning at this time as the programs were new. Rather, information on the dependent variable is drawn from our ex-post surveys of a probability sample of citizens.

[35] We were able to obtain valid *cédula* numbers and merge them with the Maisanta database for about one-quarter of respondents. The data are probably not missing at random: respondents whom we were able to merge with Maisanta are, on average, slightly older, poorer, and less educated, and they are somewhat more likely to work in the public sector and identify with a party in the governing coalition. However, although statistically significant, the differences are relatively small: for instance, those who gave us valid IDs are only about 6 percentage points more likely to identify with a party in the governing coalition. See Appendix C for fuller discussion of the data and possible threats to valid causal inference.

[36] However, the sample size drops considerably, from N = 1,849 in Figure 2.5 based on self-reports of partisan affiliation to N = 492 based on recorded preference in Maisanta; this drop is due to failure to merge about three quarters of our sample with the Maisanta database (see previous note). Although the missingness is not strongly related to observable variables such as age, gender, and self-reported income, it could clearly introduce some bias, e.g., if tendency to report a valid *cédula* to survey interviewers is related to political affiliation or benefit receipt. The fact that results are very similar in Figures 2.5 and 2.6 may give some confidence that missing data do not excessively distort our results.

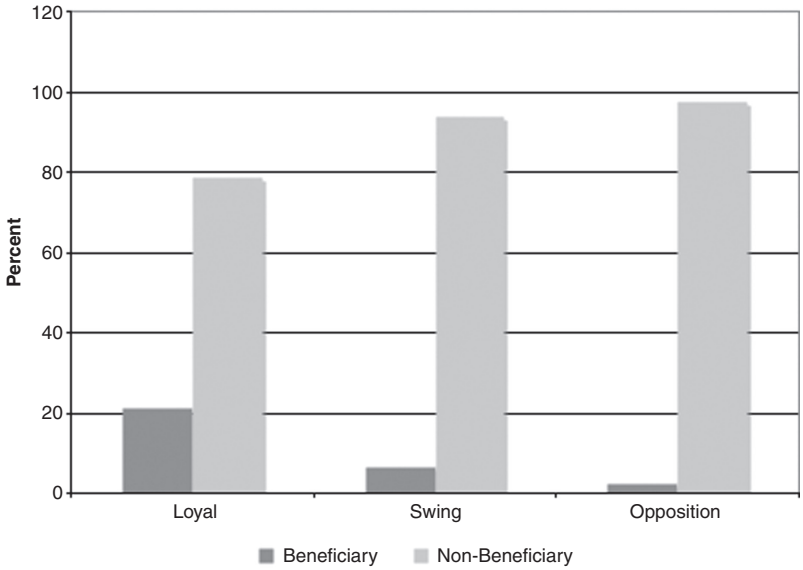


FIGURE 2.5. Venezuela: *Misiones* Beneficiaries by Self-Reported Party Preference. *Source:* Survey Data, N = 1,849.

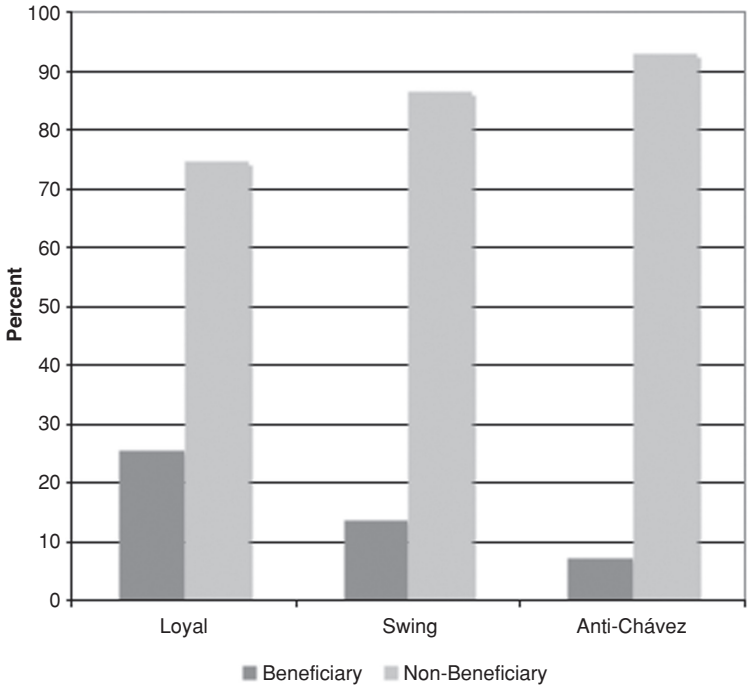


FIGURE 2.6. Venezuela: *Misiones* Beneficiaries by Preference Recorded in *Maisanta*. *Source:* Maisanta Database and Survey Data, N = 492.

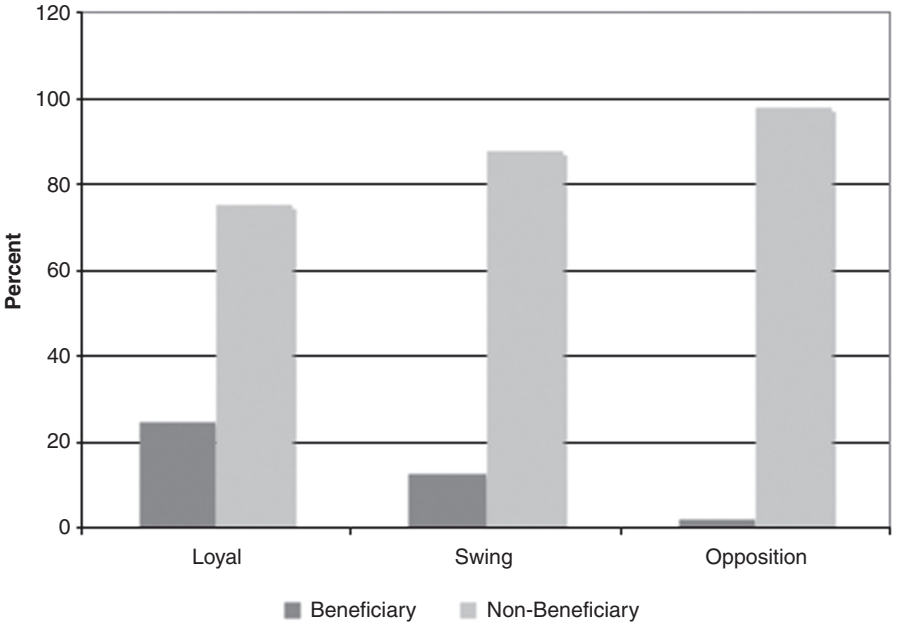


FIGURE 2.7. Venezuela: *Misiones* Beneficiaries by Self-Reported Party Preference, Poorest 20 Percent of Respondents. *Source:* Survey Data, N = 377.

Yet, as in Argentina, we must ask, Is the ruling party's apparent preference for its own partisans actually a spurious effect of these people having low incomes and hence being more eligible for targeted benefits?

The answer seems to be no. The distribution of support conditional on party preference among the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution reveals a strong bias toward loyalists, a weaker trend toward swing voters, and very few rewards going to opposition voters (see Figure 2.7).

Multivariate analysis yields similar results.[37] In Table 2.2, we present results from nearest-neighbor matching, using the matching algorithm of Abadie et al.[38] In the first row, each loyal voter – that is, each voter who signed a recall petition against an opposition deputy – is compared with a control voter who did not sign a recall petition (a swing voter) or a voter who signed a recall petition against Chávez (an opposition voter); the comparison voter in the control group is matched as closely as possible with the "treated" voter with respect to gender, age, education level, whether the respondent is a public-sector

[37] In Appendix C, we present a more complete description of the threats to inference in this case.
[38] Abadie et al. 2004. Here, the weighting matrix for the distance metric is the inverse variance. Individual matches in the control group may be used more than once (matching with replacement).

TABLE 2.2. *Targeting of Loyal Voters in Venezuela (Nearest-Neighbor Matching)*

	Sample Average Treatment Effect
Loyal voters	14.3%
(vs. swing and opposition voters)	(4.6%)
Swing voters	7.3%
(vs. opposition voters)	4.1%

The first row of the table shows the estimated effect of having signed against Chávez on the probability of receiving a targeted benefit through participation in Misión Ribas or Robinson (expressed as a percentage). The second row shows the estimated effect of not having signed any recall petition, relative to signing a petition against Chávez, on the same probabililty. Nearest-neighbor matching on gender, age, education, whether the respondent is a public-worker, and a full set of dummy variables for the voting center at which the respondent votes. For the first row, N = 483; for the second row, N = 354.

worker, and geographic place of residence.[39] The matching variables are all discrete, so in principle exact matching is possible; in practice, however, it is usually impossible to find an untreated observation that exactly matches each treated observation on all of these measured covariates.

As the first row of Table 2.2 shows, loyal voters have a markedly larger probability of participating in a targeted social program than do swing or opposition voters. Indeed, the estimated average treatment effect (the difference between average participation by treated and control respondents) is 0.143, or 14.3 percentage points. Because the probability of participating in one of the targeted social programs is 11.3 percent among matched swing and opposition voters, the estimated effect implies an increase of nearly 127 percent in the probability of participation in the targeted program.[40] Results are qualitatively similar (but the sample size is smaller) if respondents are also matched on self-reported income, rather than on level of education.

The second row of Table 2.2 compares swing voters (those who neither signed recall petitions against the government or against the opposition) to opposition voters (those who signed against Chávez); loyal voters, those who signed against opposition deputies, are dropped. Again, we matched swing voters to opposition voters of the same gender, age, education level, public-sector occupation, and geographic location of their polling place. The evidence also shows an effect of political variables, though not as large as for the loyal voters: the probability that swing voters participate in a targeted program is

[39] We use the voting center at which the respondent votes as our measure of geography.

[40] Note that the unconditional (unadjusted) probability of participating in a targeted program, among loyal voters, is 0.254; the unconditional probability among all swing and opposition voters is 0.113. Thus the difference of 0.141 between these groups is only negligibly different from the estimate obtained after matching. With an estimated standard error of 0.046, the estimated average treatment effect is also highly statistically significant.

0.073 points greater than the probability that an opposition voter does so. (With an estimated standard error of 0.041, the estimate is significant at the 0.1 level.) Being a swing voter increases the estimated probability of receiving government support by around 74 percent, relative to opposition voters.[41]

There are some nontrivial possible limitations on the validity of causal inferences in this setting, which we discuss more fully in Appendix C: for instance, problems related to missing national ID data or the possibility of confounding from unobserved variables – which is why we turn later to research designs in other contexts that help us to surmount some of these difficulties. Yet, the evidence from Venezuela, as from Argentina, is strongly suggestive: it points toward loyal voters being favored in the distributive game more than swing voters and swing voters being targeted more than opposition voters.

Mexico

During more than 70 years of uninterrupted rule, Mexico's Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, PRI) traded public resources for political compliance and support. We begin with evidence that loyal supporters of the PRI benefited from PRI largess at higher rates than did the indifferent or the undecided. Our evidence comes from just one election period and one form of clientelism; later in the book we turn to more variegated evidence about clientelist strategies in Mexico.[42] With the individual evidence at hand, we shall see that, in Mexico as in Argentina and Venezuela, substantial resources flowed to voters who already appeared to be strong PRI supporters. To be sure, some indifferent and even strongly opposed voters were targeted during the electoral campaign, a fact consistent with brokers' sending benefits to an ideologically heterogeneous group. Still, the evidence points toward the ruling party heavily targeting loyal supporters.

To study the impact of a person's partisan orientation on her likelihood of attracting benefits from the PRI, we draw on the Mexico 2000 Panel Study. Investigators interviewed around 2,400 people across four waves, before and just after the watershed national elections of 2000.[43] Later in this chapter we

[41] As discussed in connection with Table 2.7 later, we reach a similar conclusion from estimation of logistic regression models: the predicted probability of benefit receipt among loyal certain voters is at least twice the predicted probability of benefit for receipt of any other combination of partisan orientation and turnout propensity, setting other variables at their empirical means (or medians).

[42] There is a rich literature on clientelism and distributive politics in Mexico, from which we draw. See, e.g., Magaloni 2006, Magaloni et al. 2007, Greene 2007, Molinar and Weldon 1994, Hiskey 1999, Bruhn 1996.

[43] Respondents were sampled and interviewed in a first wave; a subset was selected randomly and reinterviewed in a second wave; the respondents left out of the second wave were interviewed in a third wave; and all respondents were sought for interviews for a fourth wave. This four-wave panel study took place before the 2000 election; another survey took place after the election with a different randomly drawn cross-section of respondents. See Mexico 2000 Panel Study, "Explanation of the Data", at http://web.mit.edu/polisci/faculty/C.Lawson.html.

exploit the panel structure of the data to test the hypothesis that PRI benefits turned recipients into "loyalists."

We study the relationship between a voter's partisan orientation and his or her receipt of a campaign gift from the PRI. As Cornelius has noted, the level of campaign vote buying detected in the survey was modest by Mexican standards.[44] Not surprisingly, the then-incumbent and long-ruling PRI was consistently reported to be the party doing most of the vote buying. Survey respondents were asked whether they were PRI, National Action Party (*Partido de Acción Nacional*, PAN), or Revolutionary Democratic Party (*Partido Revolucionario Democrático*, PRD) supporters, or whether they supported no party. In the Mexican context at the time, it makes sense to consider PAN and PRD supporters to be "opposition voters," those located toward the one end of the σ dimension in Figure 2.1.[45] The PAN was the most serious competitor to the PRI and indeed defeated the ruling party in the 2000 election. PRD supporters were also strongly in opposition; although the party was headed by a former PRI leader, it was opposed to the PRI on the dimensions both of democratization and of economic policy.[46] Those claiming no party affiliation can be conceived of as swing voters.

Three waves of the survey included the question, "In the last few weeks, have you received gifts or assistance from a party?" A yes response was followed by the question, "Which party?" The PRI was far and away the party most frequently cited as giving out benefits in campaigns, and PRI supporters were consistently the largest group receiving them. Those claiming no party support consistently were the second-most feted group, followed by supporters of the PAN and the PRD. Figure 2.8 illustrates this pattern. It cross-tabulates those who said they received a gift in one of the three waves when this question was asked with voter's self-declared partisan affinity. Fifty percent of those receiving campaign benefits reported that they were PRI supporters. Twenty-eight percent were undecided. Opposition voters, those supporting the PAN or PRD, represented 12 and 6 percent of beneficiaries, respectively.

Hence in Mexico, as in the other two Latin American countries, greater proportions of loyal than swing voters were favored in machine politics, defying most theoretical predictions.

India

We can also appeal to evidence from another context in which vote buying is rife: contemporary India. India is a developing-country democracy with much

[44] See Cornelius in Domínguez and Lawson 2004. The question read, "In recent weeks, have you received gifts or assistance from some political party?" We focus on the PRI because it is the party most often mentioned as having given a gift. One hundred sixty-four people, less than 7 percent of the sample, reported receiving a campaign gift at some point over the waves of surveys.

[45] Obviously, the PAN and PRD differ historically on a number of ideological dimensions; here we are emphasizing partisan affinities, relative to the PRI.

[46] See Collier 1992.

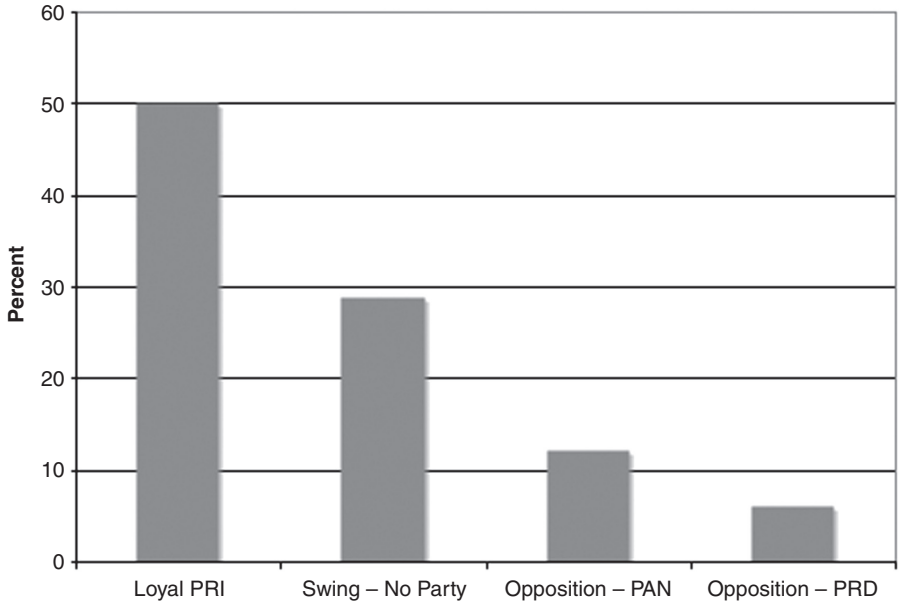


FIGURE 2.8. Mexico: Campaign Distribution by Partisanship. *Source:* Mexico 2000 Survey Data, N = 114.

nonprogrammatic distributive politics – a "patronage democracy," in Chandra's phrase – and one in which inter-party competition is intense.[47] Much distributive politics in India is clientelistic: parties make quid-pro-quo exchanges with voters, demanding the latters' participation and their votes. The importance of "vote banks" to Indian parties, and the use of targeted inducements around elections to motivate particular kinds of voters to turn out and vote for parties, has been noted at least since Independence.[48]

Dunning and Nilekani gathered survey data from villagers and from the members and presidents of village councils (called *gram panchayats)*, as well as from local bureaucrats in the Indian states of Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Bihar.[49] They asked questions about the receipt of jobs and other benefits by villagers, the functioning and priorities of councils, and fiscal data on spending allocations. Village councils are significant conduits for central and state government funds, and many of the benefits that are allocated by village councils, such as housing, employment, and receipt of individual welfare schemes, are individually targeted goods. Dunning and Nilekani's fieldwork, along with evidence from previous studies, suggests that council members, and especially the

[47] Chandra 2004. See also Wilkinson 2007, Krishna 2003, Ziegfeld 2012, Cole 2009, Khemani 2007, and Rodden and Wilkinson 2004.
[48] Srinivas 1955.
[49] Dunning 2010, Dunning and Nilekani 2013. See Appendix D.

council president, can exercise substantial discretion and influence in selecting the beneficiaries of such schemes.[50]

Although Dunning and Nilekani found very weak distributive effects of other factors that might explain targeting – in particular, the presence of electoral quotas for marginalized castes and tribes – they show that party affiliation is strongly and significantly related to the allocation of benefits.[51] Their surveys asked citizens and council presidents to state to which political party they belonged; a follow-up question asked citizens (including those who professed no party membership) to which party they felt closest.[52] We used responses to these questions to code two indicator variables. The first is equal to one if the respondent shares the political party of the village council president and zero otherwise; the second is equal to one if the respondent feels closest to the party of the council president and zero otherwise.[53]

Citizens in Karnataka who share the political party of the council president are nearly 13 percentage points more likely than others in the state to have received a job or benefit from the council in the previous year, a difference that is highly statistically significant (Table 2.3, first row). Among citizens from marginalized groups (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes), the difference is also nearly 10 percentage points (Table 2.3, second row). In separate analyses, we also found that citizens who share the party of the council president are 13 percentage points more likely than others to say they had received a gift from a political party or candidate before an election, in return for turning out to vote (significant at the 0.001 level).[54] Our findings are similar in other Indian states, including Rajasthan and Bihar (see Appendix D and Dunning and Nilekani 2013).

[50] See also Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004 or Besley et al. 2008 for evidence that the identity of the council president affects policy and distributive targeting.

[51] Dunning 2010 and Dunning and Nilekani 2013 used a regression-discontinuity design to study the effects of caste-based quotas for council presidencies. The null effect of caste-based quotas in part appears to be a function of the patterns of party competition these authors uncovered; see Dunning and Nilekani 2013 and also Chapter 5 for details.

[52] Parties play an important role in village councils, even though council elections are supposed to be party-free in Karnataka, and candidates are banned from running on party symbols. Our surveys, which were based on probability samples within villages, show that citizens and members themselves have substantial knowledge of the party affiliation of council members. An estimated 81.8 percent of citizens can identify the political party of the council president, whereas 87.7 percent know the party of the candidate for whom they voted in the most recent elections. Party membership is also widespread among voters: 73.3 percent of citizens report membership in a political party, whereas 78.8 percent of party members reported voting for their party's candidate in the most recent elections. When council members were asked to list the party affiliations of all other members of their councils, the great majority were able to do so without difficulty. See Chapter 5 for further discussion.

[53] Citizens who did not report a party affiliation or a party to which they feel closest were dropped. However, results are similar if we include these respondents among those who do not share the party affiliation of (or who do not feel closest to) the party of the council president.

[54] The relevant survey question read: "Have you ever received a gift from a political party or political candidate before an election to induce you to turn out to vote on election day?"

TABLE 2.3. *Party Membership and Receipt of Benefits in India (Percentage of Citizens Who Received a Job or Benefit from Village Council)*

	Group 1: Yes (A)	Group 2: No (B)	Difference of Percentages (A-B)	*p* Value
Respondent is member of council president's party (all respondents)	54.9 (3.1)	42.7 (1.9)	12.2 (3.6)	0.001**
Respondent is member of council president's party (SC/ST respondents)	57.5 (4.4)	47.7 (2.7)	9.8 (5.2)	0.06*
Respondent feels closest to president's party (all respondents)	47.9 (2.5)	44.5 (2.1)	3.3 (3.3)	0.31

This table reports evidence from the Indian state of Karnataka (Appendix D). The first and second columns report the percentage of citizens who reported receiving a job or benefit from the village council in the previous year. The third column gives the difference of these percentages, and the fourth column gives the two-sided p value for the difference. Standard errors are in parentheses. In the first and third rows, which report parameter estimates for the whole survey universe, sampling weights are used to correct for the oversampling of SC and ST respondents (see Appendix D for description of the sampling design). $^{*}p < 0.1$, $^{**}p < 0.001$.

We return later to a discussion of possible reciprocal effects behind this finding. But the evidence thus far is at odds with swing-voter theory and in line with our evidence from Argentina, Venezuela, and Mexico. The patterns uncovered also suggest that our theoretically anomalous findings are not confined to clientelism in Latin America, or to presidential systems, or to new or frequently interrupted democracies. In India's relatively stable, old, and parliamentary patronage democracy, voters who are already the most sympathetic with the party – the party's members or affiliates – are disproportionately likely to receive benefits when their co-partisan is the executive of the highest local office.

2.2 EXPLAINING THE ANOMALY: IS "LOYALTY" ENDOGENOUS?

Perhaps the apparent priority that machines give loyal supporters is a case of reverse causation. Rather than their ideological support of the machine causing voters to receive gifts and subsidies, gifts and subsidies may cause people to support the machine.

It is worth noting from the outset that there are two versions of this problem. One is a matter of measurement error. When we ask survey respondents whether they have received a gift or social benefits from a party and elicit their feelings about that party, we want to know their opinions of the party independent of – prior to – their receipt of a personalized benefit. However, it

is certainly possible that in answering this question, respondents take the benefits they receive into account. Their answers may be telling us, "taking into consideration the individual rewards the Peronist party (e.g.,) provides me, I support it," and not "independent of rewards I receive from it, I support the Peronist party." The problem would be one of measurement error to the degree that people have predistribution party affinities that are independent of their experience of receiving gifts, but our questions are eliciting responses that take into account distributions.

Evidence that simple measurement error is not the whole story comes from our 2009 Argentine voter survey. Recall that in this survey we described a hypothetical scenario of a broker choosing to bestow a benefit on one of two neighbors. In fact, we posed four different types of neighbors to our respondents (to be elaborated later), but all involved one hypothetical neighbor who "preferred the party of the broker," with no reference to past distributions. The respondent would have to read a good deal into the question were he or she to interpret it as describing a voter who is "loyal" because he has received a stream of benefits in the past. As mentioned, 60 percent of respondents reported that campaign goodies or subsidies would go to the voter who "preferred the party" of the broker, and 40 percent to a voter who is "indifferent among the parties" competing.

A deeper endogeneity problem would arise if voters' type – whether they are loyalists, swing voters, or opposition voters – is merely a function of whether they receive particularistic gifts. That is, it might be that people's party "affinities" are entirely a function of their distributive relationship with the party.

Returning to the formalization offered earlier, recall that we specified voters' utility from supporting a party as a function of their proximity to the party they vote for and from any targeted benefit they receive:

$$U^i(b^i, \sigma^i, \sigma^P) = -(\sigma^i - \sigma^P)^2 + b^i. \tag{2.1}$$

Now consider that a voters' partisanship, his or her σ location at any given time, is a function of party largesse in the past. Partisanship means feeling good about a party, but good feelings have to be reinforced periodically by gifts or access to social programs. In this case, we might depict the voter's utility as in the following two equations:

$$U^{i,t}(b^{i,t}, \sigma^{i,t}, \sigma^P) = -(\sigma^{i,t} - \sigma^P)^2 + b^{i,t} \tag{2.2}$$

and

$$-(\sigma^{i,t} - \sigma^P)^2 = f(b^{i,t-1}). \tag{2.3}$$

Now a benefit in the last election reduces a voter's σ distance from the benefactor party; his or her resulting greater proximity to the party in the current election increases his or her likelihood of voting for it. The benefit that the voter receives in this election isn't so much an inducement to vote for the

party now as an investment in his or her remaining close to the party and hence voting for it at the next election.

An even more radical departure from conventional theories would do away with the σ dimension entirely, so that electoral choices are a function of bribes, nothing more and nothing less:

$$U^i(b^i) = b^i. \tag{2.4}$$

Whether equations (2.1), (2.4), or the system of equations (2.2) and (2.3) come closest to reality is an empirical question. Yet it seems to us unlikely that parties in most settings draw on no enduring links to voters that go beyond mere bribes. Materials presented later in this book, such as the attitude of some British voters in the nineteenth century, may approximate this situation; these voters would offer their vote to "Mr Most:" whoever offered them the most money, access to poor relief, or ale. Certainly among today's new democracies, there are some systems that feature little-institutionalized parties and much volatility in electoral outcomes. Yet we also know that campaigns draw on enduring traits of the electorate, ones that vary little from one election to the next, in building electoral coalitions. These include ethnic bonds, religious communalism, ideological like-mindedness, and regional pride. These collective identities are themselves shaped by the strategic actions of political parties and other actors. Yet one need not fall back on a naive primordialism to view such electorally relevant identities as, in many settings, fixed aspects of voters in the lead-up to any particular electoral contest.

In the remainder of this section, we draw on evidence from the developing democracies discussed earlier to test the proposition that the people whom we are calling *loyal* voters and who receive – from the standpoint of most theories – too many benefits from their parties are actually merely people whose ongoing loyalty is reliant on past benefits.

2.2.1 Probing for Endogenous Loyalty in Argentina

A question we address in the Argentine context is whether the die-hard loyalist, a person who keeps voting for the party in the absence of rewards, is a conceptual category without actual voters to populate it. Some of our Argentine research contradicts this possibility. To test the loyal-voters-as-an-empty-set hypothesis in the Argentine context, we queried party brokers about their strategies and about voters' likely responses. Beginning in 2009, we conducted a survey of a probability sample of brokers in four provinces: Buenos Aires, Córdoba, San Luis, and Misiones.[55] The brokers survey included the following questions:

Imagine a person who always turns out to vote and prefers the candidate whom you support. Of every 10 people in your neighborhood, how many are like this? (Figure 2.9, Panel 1)

[55] See Appendix A for a description of the sampling design.

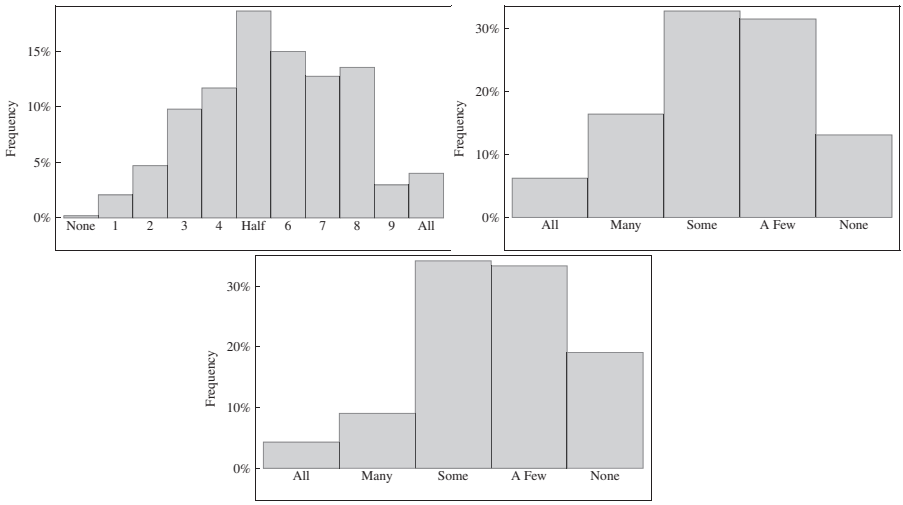


FIGURE 2.9. Argentine Brokers' Perceptions of the Frequency of Certain Loyal Voters, N = 773, 779, 753.

And thinking about voters of this type – ones who always turn out to vote and who prefer the candidate whom you support – how many have received benefits from the party in the past? (Figure 2.9, Panel 2)

And thinking about voters of this type – ones who always turn out to vote and who prefer the candidate whom you support – how many do you think would change their preferences if they never again received benefits? (Figure 2.9 Panel 3)

As the top-left panel of Figure 2.9 shows, the modal answer to the first question about the percentage of certain/loyal voters is "half."[56] Almost no brokers said "none," whereas about 67 percent of brokers estimated the frequency of certain/loyal voters in their neighborhoods at "half" or more. Only about 23 percent of respondents said that "all" or "many" of such voters – who always turn out to vote and prefer the candidate of the broker – had received benefits from the party in the past (top-right panel of Figure 2.9). Moreover, only about 13 percent of brokers said that "all" or "many" of these voters would change their party preferences if they never again received benefits, whereas fully 52 percent said "few" or "none" (bottom panel of Figure 2.9). Even considering that brokers will plausibly exaggerate (in their own minds, and to interviewers) the breadth of their support and its being rooted in something other than material rewards, still the category of the loyalist who would remain supportive of the party even absent rewards was, in their eyes, far from empty.

[56] Many of the areas we surveyed, such as those in the Conurbano in Buenos Aires, or in Misiones province in San Luis, are indeed strongholds of the parties whose brokers we interviewed, so such answers are not on their face self-delusional.

Another strategy we deploy in the Argentine context to test the endogenous-loyalty hypothesis is to develop instruments for party loyalty that are not themselves plausibly caused by a person's receiving targeted benefits. Several of our Argentine surveys discerned positive correlations between the respondent's partisanship and that of his or her parents. In the 2003 and 2009 surveys, we asked whether respondents remembered from their youth what their fathers' and mothers' party identities had been. The correlations between a father's identifying as a Peronist and the respondent's identifying as a Peronist were 0.3 in 2003 and 0.25 in 2009. (Peronist identity was also correlated between the mother and the respondent, but more weakly.) We are able to take advantage of the fact that party identities are in part a product of family socialization, with children picking up their Peronist party identity from their parents, to estimate the effect of the "exogenous" portion of party loyalty on benefit receipt.[57]

It is important to emphasize that our strategy implies that parents' partisan affiliation is not correlated with unobserved determinants of children's benefit receipt. We do condition on some potential confounders, such as children's poverty, yet there might still be correlations with unobservables that would invalidate our instrumental-variables strategy.

We estimate linear probability models, in which the dependent variable is benefit receipt (*Gift*) and the main independent variable of interest is the respondent's partisanship (a dummy variable called *Peronist*); the independent variable is instrumented with a dummy variable for whether the respondent's father was a Peronist (*Father Peronist*). The first two columns of Table 2.4 report results of the instrumental-variables analysis, both for bivariate and multivariate models.[58] The instrumental-variables estimator yielded positive estimated coefficients in both years, though in both cases the standard errors were large; as the table shows, the estimated coefficient on *Peronist* is positive, though small. (Using data from 2009, the coefficient was positive but not

[57] Hence we must make an exclusion restriction: we assume that father's party identity does not affect benefit receipt by the respondent through any channel save the respondent's political ideology. An exception to this statement would be in the case of younger respondents, some of whom would still occupy a household with their parents. In these cases, the exogeneity of the respondent's father's partisanship might be called into question. We estimated the same instrumental variable regressions reported previously, excluding respondents who were 25 and younger and 30 and younger. In the 2003 surveys, for both subsamples excluding younger respondents, the coefficient relating a person's instrumented partisanship to their probability of receiving a gift was larger and associated standard errors were smaller than with samples including the full range of ages. In the 2009 survey, the magnitudes of the coefficients were basically insensitive to the age of the samples. Therefore, the conclusion still holds that the association of receipt of benefits with support of the party is unlikely to be an artifact of reverse causation.

[58] We include controls such as income and education in the multivariate models because these variables might be correlated with father's partisan identity as well as gift receipt, which would make the instrument endogenous. Once such variables are added to the model specification, the assumption that father's partisan identity is independent of the error term in our linear probability model is more plausible.

TABLE 2.4. *The Effect of Ideology on Benefit Receipt in Argentina (Instrumental-Variables Regression)*

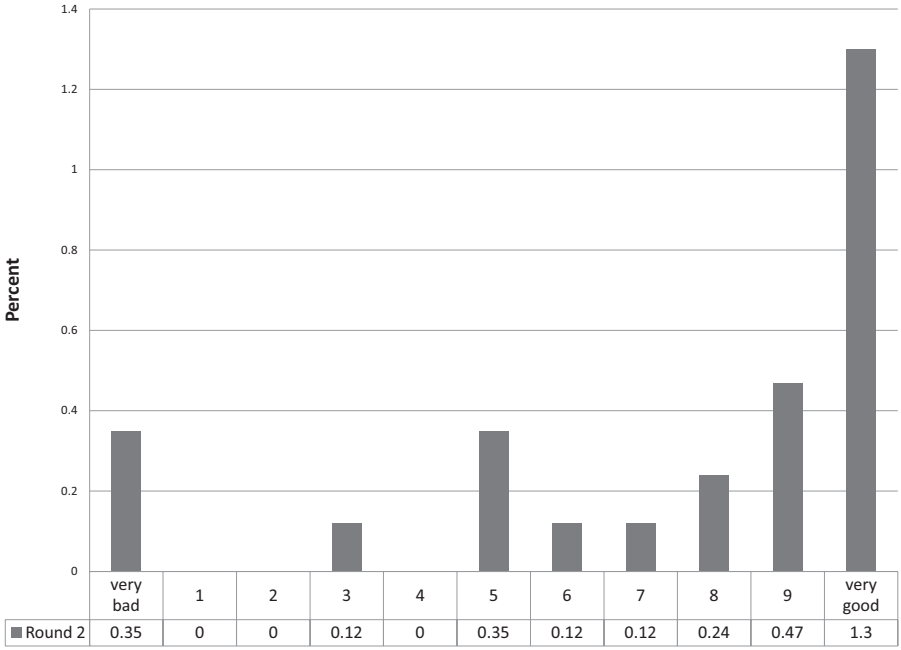
	(1) gift	(2) gift	(3) gift	(4) gift
Peronist	0.0631	0.0460		
	(1.67)	(1.17)		
Father Peronist			0.0188	0.0140
			(1.67)	(1.17)
Income		−0.0225*		−0.0230*
		(−1.99)		(−2.02)
Age		−0.00112**		−0.00104*
		(−2.77)		(−2.56)
Gender		−0.00199		−0.00243
		(−0.17)		(−0.20)
Education		−0.0131**		−0.0148***
		(−3.10)		(−3.84)
Buenos Aires		−0.0203		−0.0281
		(−1.13)		(−1.65)
Córdoba		0.0765***		0.0733***
		(4.54)		(4.39)
Misiones		−0.0381*		−0.0376*
		(−2.29)		(−2.26)
Constant	0.0419*	0.201***	0.0584***	0.220***
	(2.57)	(4.38)	(7.46)	(5.61)
N	2000	1777	2000	1777

Columns 1 and 2 report bivariate and multivariate linear probability models estimated by instrumental-variables least squares instrumenting *Peronist* with *Father Peronist*. Columns 3 and 4 report reduced-form regressions: linear probability models in which *Gift* is regressed directly on the instrument *Father Peronist*.
t statistics in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

significant.) The third and fourth columns of Table 2.4 report reduced-form regressions, in which the dependent variable (*Gift*) is regressed directly on the instruments. Here again, the coefficient is imprecisely estimated, but the basic message is the same: there is some evidence for a positive relationship between father's Peronist ideology and receiving a benefit from the Peronists. Because the theoretical expectation is of a *negative* coefficient relating (instrumented) party identity and the probability of a gift, these results weigh against the loyal-voter result being an artifact of past receipt of rewards.

2.2.2 Overtime Shifts in Gift Receipt and Partisanship? Mexico

The panel structure of the Mexico 2000 study affords another opportunity to test the endogenous-loyalty explanation for our anomalous findings. That the same voters' opinions of the PRI and experience of receiving campaign largess



	very bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	very good
Round 2	0.35	0	0	0.12	0	0.35	0.12	0.12	0.24	0.47	1.3

FIGURE 2.10. Mexico 2000: Rates of PRI Gift Receipt in Second Wave of Survey by Opinion of PRI in First Wave. *Source:* Mexico 2000 Surveys, N = 849.

were tracked over time allows us to study possible reciprocal effects of receiving benefits on recipients' "loyalty" to the party.

Campaign gift-giving started at a low level in 2000 but accelerated over the course of the campaign. Total rates of gift receipt rose from 3 percent in the second wave to 6.9 percent in the third wave and to 7.4 percent in the fourth wave.

Recall that swing-voter theory would predict that parties target indifferent voters who, as a result, vote for the benefactor party. We saw earlier that this proposition was cross-sectionally false in Mexico, at least in 2000: the ruling party distributed campaign benefits preferentially to people whose contemporaneous opinions of the party were positive.

Adding the temporal dimension reinforces this finding. The first wave of the survey, conducted in February 2000, asked people to rate the parties, including the PRI, from 0 (very bad) to 10 (very good). We classify people who rated the PRI from 0 (very bad) to 3 as opponents (of the PRI), people who rated it from 4 to 6 as indifferent, and those who rated it 7 or above as loyalists. The second wave, conducted two months later, asked whether they had received a gift or assistance from a party or candidate in the previous few weeks.

Figure 2.10 shows the rates of self-reported receipt of a PRI gift in the second-wave survey by the opinions of the PRI that respondents offered in the

first wave. The majority of those who reported in the second wave that they received a gift from the PRI had in the first wave held favorable opinions of the party, scoring it 5 or higher.[59] About 40 percent of people who reported having received a gift from the PRI (3 percent of the second wave) had earlier said they thought the PRI was "very good." An ideal data structure would reach further back in time, tracking voters' opinions and receipt of benefits before the year of the election. And keeping in mind the broad range of social programs that scholars have shown to be the currency of nonprogrammatic distribution in Mexico, one would want to track distribution of social programs and over even longer periods. Still, the fact that campaign "gift" receipt started at a low level, according to the Mexico 2000 survey results, and accelerated in subsequent waves reassures us that we are capturing a good deal at least of campaign-season handouts.

Respondents were also asked to identify their partisanship (in addition to asking their opinions of parties). Here too, PRI loyalists – people who identified themselves as PRI supporters in the first round – consistently received the largest number of gifts. This was the case when partisanship and gift receipt were measured simultaneously, as we saw earlier, in the same waves of the survey. The result is not fundamentally different when one studies the correlation of partisanship in an earlier wave with gift receipt in a later one. For instance, Figure 2.11 shows that just under 50 percent of those who received PRI gifts in the third wave had declared themselves as *priistas* in the first wave of the survey. Twenty-eight percent of those receiving gifts were swing voters, 15 percent were PAN opposition supporters, and 3 percent were PRD supporters.

Thus far the evidence for endogenous loyalty in Mexico is not terribly strong. Consider, in addition, that if the endogenous-loyalty hypothesis were a good description of dynamics in Mexico, we might expect the following:

- The PRI targets loyal voters at the outset; the loyalty of these voters is strengthened.
- The loyal voters whom the PRI targets are more likely to vote for the party than they would have been without a campaign gift.

Is this pattern consistent with the Mexican evidence?

As a preliminary point, note that any discussion of the effects of electoral bribery on identities and voting that draws on self-reporting in surveys should be prefaced with several caveats. There are good reasons to believe that some respondents will not answer questions about receiving campaign gifts honestly, potentially biasing our results. Although the Mexico 2000 survey was well-designed and administered, not all respondents were reinterviewed in each successive wave, and one cannot be sure that selection effects were not at work in attrition. We present very simple statistics with little attempt to control for

[59] Round 2 selected a random sample of the initial cross-sectional study.

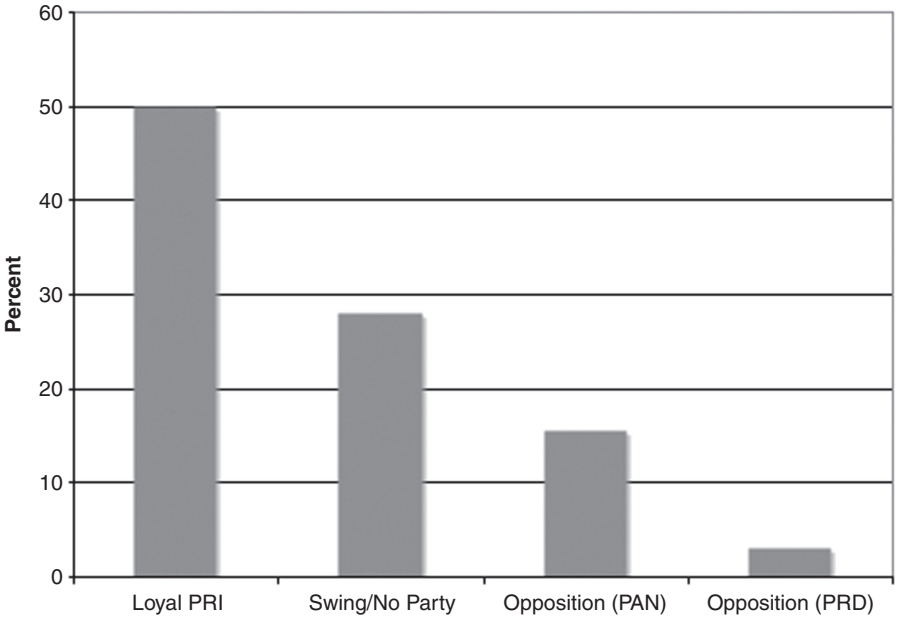


FIGURE 2.11. Mexico: Gift Receipt by Partisan Affect. *Source:* Mexico 2000 Survey Data, N = 64.

confounders; the possibility of unobserved covariates further counsels caution in the interpretation of results.

With these considerations in mind, we first inspect the stability of loyalties for the PRI over the course of the campaign. Out of 2,363 people interviewed in the first wave, 863, or about 37 percent, declared themselves to be PRI supporters. Similar percentages of respondents declared their affinity for the PRI in the second (367/959, or 38 percent) and third (343/976, or 35 percent) waves.[60] Three hundred seventy-seven of the original PRI supporters were reinterviewed in the second wave; 76 percent of them remained PRI supporters. The percentage dropped to 71 percent who remained in support when reinterviewed in the third wave.[61] The picture is one of substantial, though not absolute, stability in party identification over the course of the campaign.

[60] We set aside the fourth-wave data, collected after the election. Responses in that wave appear to deflate support for the PRI and votes for its presidential candidate, perhaps a result of a post-election bandwagon effect in favor of the winner, Vicente Fox, and his party, the PAN. For instance, whereas the PRI's presidential candidate, Francisco Labastida, drew 36 percent of the national vote, only 32 percent of those surveyed acknowledged having voted for him. Self-declared support for the PRI also dipped in the fourth survey, in comparison with the first three waves.

[61] The number of PRI supporters in the first wave reinterviewed in the third was 366.

What impact did the receipt of campaign gifts have on the stability of party identities? The answer seems to be a little, but not much. We calculated correlations between affinities with the PRI in earlier waves and in later waves, among those PRI supporters who did or did not receive gifts. The correlations were consistently a bit higher among those who did report receiving a gift. To give a feel for these results, the correlation between PRI identity in waves two and three was 0.71 among those who did not report receiving a gift in the second-wave survey and 0.84 among those who did receive a gift. This was the largest difference we found. At the low end, the correlation between PRI support in waves one and three was 0.59 among those who did not report a gift in either the second or third round and 0.60 among those who did.

One should not overestimate the significance of these correlations. We estimated a probit model of the strongest effect, PRI support in the third wave as a function of declared PRI support and gift receipt in the second wave. The marginal effect of earlier PRI support was large and highly significant, reflecting stability over time in party identities. The marginal effect of gift receipt, by contrast, was small and imprecisely measured, not significantly different from zero.

What about the impact of campaign largess on loyalists' propensity to vote for their party's candidate? Later we look at this question from the standpoint of turnout buying; here we must assume that even those who see themselves as *priistas* might vote for another party, perhaps for retrospective-performance reasons, or reasons connected to candidate quality, or because they valued party rotation and democratization. Certainly, at the outset and across the waves of surveys, some self-described PRI supporters declared intentions to vote for a presidential candidate other than the PRI's Francisco Labastida. Between about 15 and 20 percent of *priistas* consistently said they planned to vote for another candidate. Implicitly, these voters' stances demonstrate a distinction between party identities, which are enduring and may have to do with social images and family socialization, and vote intentions in any given election.[62] But the independent effect of campaign largess in solidifying loyalists as a PRI electoral bloc was small. In probit models, again, coefficients relating prior declarations of PRI identities with late-campaign intentions to vote for Labastida were large and highly statistically significant, whereas coefficients on self-stated receipt of gifts typically had positive signs but were not statistically significant.

That "too many" loyal PRI supporters were the recipients of campaign discretionary spending does not, then, appear to be entirely explained by the party's need to continually invest in the "loyalty" of its core constituents. We saw some small impact of campaign gifts on the stability of PRI identities and on the willingness of PRI supporters to vote for the party's candidate. However, for the most part, the machine's supporters remained supportive, regardless of whether they received campaign largess. And they tended to vote

[62] On theories of party identity, see e.g., Green et al. 2004, Achen 1992, Campbell 1960.

for their party's candidate, gifts or no gifts. The results fall short of revealing endogenous loyalty as the resolution of the anomaly of too much largess going to loyal supporters.

The surveys are also suggestive of an electoral cost imposed when brokers fail to target swing voters, a point to which we return in the next two chapters. When PRI gifts did end up in the hands of swing voters, these voters showed some heightened propensity to vote for the PRI presidential candidate, Labastida. In the first wave of the survey, 782 respondents – 33 percent of the sample – reported no party affiliation. Among nonaffiliated or swing voters, 30 percent of those who reported receiving a PRI gift in some subsequent wave said in the final pre-election survey that they planned to vote for Labastida. Of the swing voters who reported *not* receiving a gift, 22 percent planned at the end to vote for the PRI. Because of attrition of respondents and small numbers of swing voters who received gifts, it would be unwise to make too much of these results.[63] Nevertheless, they are suggestive of some electoral responsiveness to campaign largess among swing voters and therefore that channeling resources to loyalists causes parties to win fewer votes than they could.

2.2.3 New Programs in Venezuela and Party Membership in India

Venezuela's recent history of targeted programs affords another opportunity to test the endogenous-loyalty hypothesis. The targeted Missions programs mentioned earlier were the Chávez government's first efforts to use distributive policies to shore up its support among Venezuelans of modest incomes. If today's apparently "loyal" supporters are simply yesterday's swing voters who are grateful for the distributive largess, we should see the Venezuelan government, at the outset of its efforts at distributive politics, cultivate relatively indifferent voters. But as we saw earlier, this was not the case. The government's programs had as their primary beneficiaries people who were already predisposed in its favor; swing voters, including those who resisted signing pro- or antigovernment petitions, were second in line for benefits.

Turning to India, we reported earlier Dunning and Nilekani's finding that the recipients of targeted benefits in Karnataka, India, were preferentially members of the same party as the president of their village councils. Again, one can debate the direction of causality; perhaps citizens become party members as a result of the incumbent party's distributive largess. What's more, party membership is not randomly assigned, and in principle there could be confounders associated

[63] A total of 976 respondents answered both the first-wave question regarding party affiliation and the third-wave one regarding vote intentions. Of these, 72 reported receiving a gift from the PRI over one of the pre-election waves in which this question was asked; 49 of them were partisans and 23 nonpartisans.

TABLE 2.5. *Partisan Ties and Benefit Receipt in India: A Survey Experiment*

	Candidate Is Co-Partisan	Candidate Not Co-Partisan	Difference of Means
Vote intention	5.25	4.78	0.47
(by party membership)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.10)
Vote intention	5.07	4.75	0.32
(by party closeness)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.07)
Expected benefit receipt	7.73	7.30	0.43
(by party membership)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.17)
Expected benefit receipt	7.26	6.82	0.44
(by party closeness)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.12)

Source: Dunning and Nilekani 2012. Survey experiment in Rajasthan and Bihar. Probability sample of N = 1,755 party members and N = 3,603 residents who name a party to which they feel closest, in N = 314 village council constituencies. Vote intention is measured on 1–7 scale; expectations of benefit receipt are measured on a 2–14 scale combining two survey questions. Standard errors in parentheses.

both with sharing the party of the council president and receiving benefits from the council. However, returning to Table 2.3, the final row shows that merely feeling closest to the party of the council president is *not* statistically related to benefit receipt. This finding may allay some concerns about reverse causality: after all, if we had found a stronger relationship here, it could well have been that benefit receipt causes citizens to feel close to the council president's party, rather than the other way around. Instead, as we emphasize in Chapter 4, it appears that integration into party networks, through party membership, causes citizens to be rewarded by the party in power with material benefits.

Hence only the most committed partisans are here rewarded with benefits. An "endogenous loyalty" explanation might instead find swing voters being targeted and thus moving into the "weak supporter" category – that is, into the set of voters who lean toward a party but are not party members. Instead, we find in our India evidence that such weakly supportive voters are no more likely to receive benefits than voters who do not feel positively toward the incumbent party.

Moreover, drawing on Dunning and Nilekani, Table 2.5 reports the results of a survey experiment in the states of Bihar and Rajasthan, in which the caste and party affiliation of a hypothetical candidate for village council president was experimentally manipulated.[64] In this context, as discussed earlier, council presidents often play the role of local brokers for party higher-ups, distributing benefits at election time and also throughout the term of the village council (for evidence that the president plays this role, see Dunning and Nilekani 2013).

[64] Dunning and Nilekani 2013.

In this survey experiment, respondents were randomly assigned to a candidate who shared their partisan affiliation (alternately, the party to which they feel closest, or the party of which they are a member); they were also assigned to a cross-cutting condition, a candidate from their own caste or a different caste. Pooling across the caste assignments, then, we have a survey experiment in which we can cut into the endogeneity and reciprocal causality of survey-based self-reports of party identification and benefit receipt.

As Table 2.5 shows, respondents were substantially more likely to support – and to expect to receive benefits from – a candidate from their own party. Thus loyal voters expect to be rewarded when a local broker from their own party comes to power. This evidence helps to allay concern about reverse causality, in which citizens support candidates from whom they have in fact received benefits, because here candidates' party ID was randomly assigned.

In sum, individual-level data from Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, and India yield little evidence that voters' loyalty is an endogenous result of their receiving party largess. Loyalty attracts largess, rather than largess inducing loyalty. The anomaly remains.

2.3 EXPLAINING THE ANOMALY: TURNOUT-BUYING?

Theorists of distributive politics sometimes relax the assumption of full turnout. A modification of the voter's utility from voting for party P would add a cost term, c:

$$U^i(b^i, \sigma^i, \sigma^P) = -(\sigma^i - \sigma^P)^2 + b^i - c^i$$

Some theorists assume that the cost of voting is the same across all voters and conclude that parties pay voters not to change their vote but to turn out. This conclusion would solve the loyal-voter anomaly: if parties deploy targeted benefits as a way of getting people to the polls, they will focus their payments on people who are likely to vote for them – their loyal supporters.[65] Others treat the cost of voting as a trait that varies from voter to voter and hence, implicitly, as a continuous variable.[66] In this case, largess focuses on a different kind of swing or "marginal" voter, this time one who is on the fence between voting and staying away from the polls.[67]

Dunning and Stokes distinguished people for whom the cost of voting is negligible (even negative) – "Certain Voters" – from those for whom voting is costly – "Potential Voters."[68] Treating the propensity-to-turnout dimension as independent of the partisanship (σ) dimension, Dunning and Stokes's key formal finding is that distributive parties will target Potential Voters who are

[65] Nichter 2008.
[66] Lindbeck and Weibull 1987.
[67] This is Lindbeck and Weibull's language.
[68] Dunning and Stokes 2008.

TABLE 2.6. *Electoral Rewards and Two-Dimensional Voter Types*

	Potential Voters	**Certain Voters**
Loyalists	**Mobilization**	*Persuasion of Loyalists*
Swing Voters	*Mobilization of Swing*	**Persuasion**

loyalists (a strategy they call *mobilization*; see Table 2.6). And they will target Certain Voters who are swing or weakly opposed, a strategy Dunning and Stokes call *persuasion*. The intuition is straightforward: when it comes to voters who always go to the polls, a machine can only gain additional votes by bribing swing voters or opponents; constituents who prefer the party sincerely will vote for it anyway. In turn, the party tries to get out to the polls only voters whom it expects will support it on ideological grounds, whereas it is happy to see its opponents' supporters stay home.

2.3.1 Probing for Turnout Buying in Argentina

Are the loyal Peronists who appear to be receiving too many of the party's goodies actually potential abstainers? It is not obvious that this is the case. In all our Argentine surveys, a larger percentage of non-abstainers than abstainers received campaign gifts.[69] This is true when we restrict the analysis to party loyalists, as Dunning and Stokes's paper suggests we should.[70] The result holds no matter how we define abstainers – whether they are people who abstained just in the past election or who have abstained in at least one election in which they were eligible to vote – and no matter how we define receiving a gift – whether we treat nonresponders as missing data, as gift receivers, or as nonreceivers.

As an example, our 2003 survey revealed that among loyalists, a higher proportion of non-abstainers (10 percent) than abstainers (7 percent) received campaign gifts. Here we mean by "abstainers" people who, by their own recounting, failed to turn out to vote in at least one presidential or gubernatorial election in which they were eligible to do so, since the return to democracy in 1983. (Our use of this nonexacting definition of being an "abstainer" reflects high turnout rates, and behind them compulsory voting laws, in Argentina, discussed in more depth later. In our sample, 52 percent never abstained at all across the elections for which they were eligible.) The theoretical prediction of a correlation between abstention and receiving a reward also fails to find support in people's responses to questions about the receipt of "subsidies," or government programs (as opposed to gifts from candidates during campaigns).

[69] Here, we focus on the 2003 surveys; we present data elsewhere for 2001 and 2009.
[70] Dunning and Stokes 2008, see also Gans-Morse et al. 2009.

Here again, a larger percentage of voters than abstainers benefitted from such programs.[71]

But simply comparing abstention rates among those who do and do not receive largess may be misleading. As Nichter points out, in equilibrium those who might abstain receive gifts and, as a consequence, go to the polls.

If machines preferentially target people who they think are in danger of abstaining, they must perceive an underlying propensity to abstain, and they must have some read on the turnout propensities of the individuals whom they target. Beyond the behavioral measures discussed earlier (turnout histories), we also try to discern an underlying propensity to turn out or abstain, and to study its effect on the probability of a person's receiving rewards. Our 2009 surveys asked:

> If you found yourself on election day in a situation that made it difficult for you to vote – for instance, if you had a bad cold – how likely would it be that you would vote anyway?

Respondents were asked to score their probability of voting from zero – or very unlikely – to 10 – very likely. Nearly a third of the sample indicated that they would definitely vote even despite significant inconvenience. This result shows the habituation to voting in this country with compulsory voting laws and is consistent with high – though not universal – turnout rates, generally above 70 percent. (This result might also reflect social desirability bias). If turnout buying is the solution to our anomaly, we should find higher rates of vote-selling among people with low propensities to turn out and lower rates among those who are quite sure that they would vote anyway.

In fact we find no significant differences. Indeed, among those who indicated a willingness to vote come hell or high water, we found one of the highest rates of having received campaign handouts (around 6 percent). The correlation between the hypothetical probability of voting despite illness and receiving a campaign gift was small but positive. (Interestingly, if social desirability bias leads some voters to report having never abstained, it is especially striking that these same voters are more likely to say they have received handouts, presumably a socially undesirable action). Moreover, whether the person predicted, in a separate question, that abstention would lead to a sanction with a very low or a very high probability was uncorrelated with receiving a campaign gift.

Another way to deal with potential simultaneity in these results – that receipt of gifts drives people both to turn out to vote and to prefer the party doing the gift-giving – is to make use of the hypothetical question, mentioned earlier,

[71] Where the theory predicts more discretionary government spending going to those in danger of abstaining, in our 2003 sample 36 percent of non-abstainers received subsidies, and 30 percent of abstainers.

that we posed in the 2009 Argentina voter survey. The respondent was asked to make a prediction about the effect of voters' types (defined by turnout propensities and party affinities) on the actions of a hypothetical broker. The question wording avoids any suggestion that potential recipients had previous dealings with the broker that might have influenced either participation or affinities.

In each of the four treatment conditions of this survey-experimental question, the initial description of the situation was the same:

> Imagine a local party broker during a very competitive election campaign. The party has given the broker resources and has asked him to mobilize voters.

We then posed four differing versions of the remainder of the question to each of one-quarter of our sample, with the versions being assigned at random (our labeling of these versions corresponds to our terminology in Table 2.6):

> **Loyal Certain vs. Swing Certain** There are two neighbors who always turn out to vote of their own accord. One neighbor prefers the broker's party, and the other neighbor is indifferent between the two parties. To which of the neighbors would the broker give the benefit (a bag of food, a mattress, or a subsidy)?

> **Loyal Potential vs. Swing Potential** There are two neighbors, neither of whom always turns out to vote of their own accord. One neighbor prefers the broker's party, and the other neighbor is indifferent between two parties. To which of the neighbors would the broker give the benefit?

> **Loyal Certain vs. Loyal Potential** There are two neighbors, both of whom prefer the broker's party. One is always disposed to vote even if no one takes him to the polls, the other is not disposed to turn out to vote. To which of the neighbors would the broker give the benefit?

> **Swing Certain vs. Loyal Potential** There are two neighbors. One neighbor is indifferent between the two parties' candidates but is always disposed to turn out to vote. The other prefers the broker's party but is not disposed to turn out to vote. To which of the neighbors would the broker give the benefit?

All treatments produced split decisions. In only one did the theoretically predicted strategy prevail over nonpredicted ones: among voters who are not disposed to vote, respondents predicted that loyal voters would be favored over swing voters. Respondents understood intuitively that parties will prefer to buy the participation of loyal supporters over the uncommitted.

In all other ways, the results are substantially at odds with the prevailing theories. Many people predicted rewards going to loyalists, even when these imagined loyalists were not at risk of abstaining. For instance, a majority of voters expected Certain, Loyal voters – those who would vote for the broker's party even absent an inducement – to be preferred over potential, loyal voters, a stance that is nonsensical from the vantage point of the prevailing theories.

2.3.2 Probing for Turnout Buying in Venezuela and Mexico

Venezuela again offers an excellent setting in which to study the impact of voters' propensity to turn out on their receipt of campaign rewards, one that allows us to circumvent to a substantial extent the problem of endogenous turnout. This is because the ruling party's Maisanta database coded all voters as abstainers or participants, giving us a unique window into a distributive party's categorization of voters on the propensity-to-turn-out dimension. And the window was opened at the outset of the government's major boost in distributive outlays.

The Maisanta database, as mentioned, coded individuals by their partisan orientations, reflecting their actions during the recall referendum campaign, as well as their then-current participation in social programs, suggesting that the information in the database would be used in connection with ongoing distribution of benefits. (It is difficult to verify systematically the extent of actual use by brokers, but, as discussed in Appendix C, it is clear that Maisanta's user-friendly interface was intended for this purpose.) The database also recorded whether individuals were "abstainers" (*abstencionistas*), as indicated by the corresponding box on the bottom-left of Figure 2.4; this coding would have been readily available to any local broker or activist with access to the Maisanta interface, which was widely distributed by the Chávez government. Although we have not been able to verify precisely how the dichotomous indicator for "abstainer" was coded by the government – for instance, whether one became an *abstencionista* simply by having failed to vote in any election for which one was eligible or whether another, less demanding criterion was used – the important point is that the measure reveals the government's perception of each voter's turnout propensity. Using the Maisanta software's user-friendly interface, local militants could therefore learn about voters' partisan or ideological tendency, past turnout/abstention history, and extent of participation in social programs at the time of the recall campaign.

Had the post-2003 distributive policies been about "turnout buying" – an effort to get these abstainers to the polls – we would expect to see abstainers receiving scholarships or other targeted benefits at higher-than-average rates. This is not the case. In fact, pooling across partisanship, we find nearly identical percentages (15 percent) of participation in the individually targeted social programs among abstainers and non-abstainers (Figure 2.12).

These unadjusted results also persist in the presence of multivariate strategies. Table 2.7 presents the predicted probabilities, expressed as percentages, of receiving a benefit from a targeted Mission, based on estimation of a logit regression model. Here, covariates include sex, age, education, occupational category, and a dummy for public-sector workers; to calculate the predicted probabilities, covariates are set at their sample means.[72] This multivariate

[72] Here, education is used as a (less-noisy) measure of socioeconomic status than self-reported income, but results are qualitatively similar using self-reported income.

TABLE 2.7. *Persuasion vs. Mobilization in Venezuela (Predicted Probabilities, Logistic Regression Analysis with Covariates)*

	Loyal Voters (Signed Against the Opposition)	Swing Voters (Did Not Sign)	Opposition Voters (Signed Against Chávez
Certain voters	29.8%	12.5%	6.6%
(not *abstencionistas*	[19.8, 39.8]	[7.1, 17.9]	[2.0, 11.1]
Potential voters	13.4%	17.9%	13.6%
(*abstencionistas*)	[0.92, 25.9]	[7.6, 28.3]	[−1.3, 28.4]

Each cell of the table gives predicted probabilities, expressed as percentages, of participation in a targeted Mission (*Misión Ribas* or *Misión Robinson*). Cell entries come from estimating a logistic regression model and setting covariates at their sample means. Covariates include sex, age, education, occupational category, and a dummy for public-sector workers. Ninety-five percent confidence intervals, calculated by the delta method, are in brackets. Political ideology and turnout propensity are as recorded in Maisanta. Respodents are those interviewees whose cédula ID numbers we matched to the Maisanta database. N = 483 (10 dropped due to missing data on covariates).

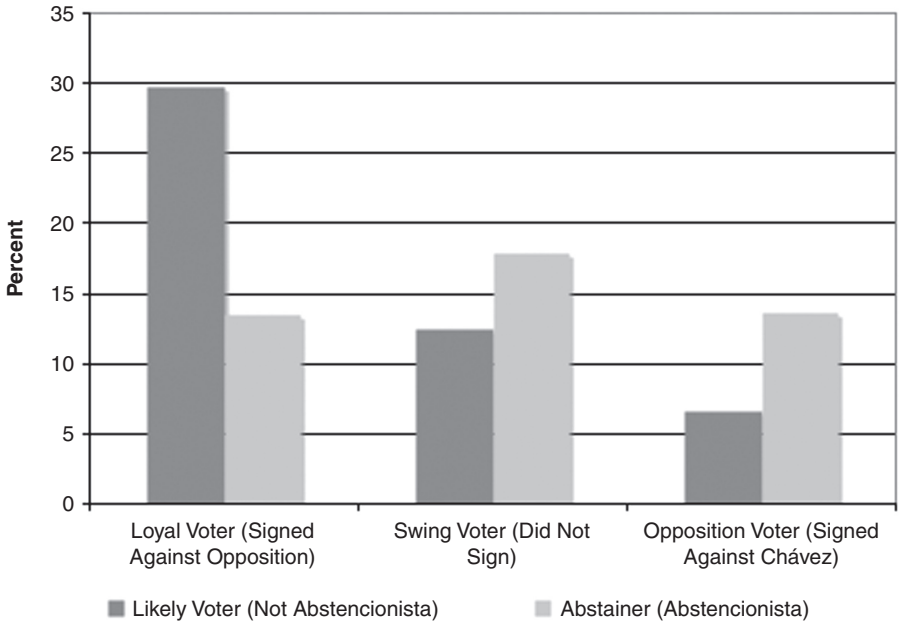


FIGURE 2.12. Venezuela: Percent of Voters, by Loyalty and Turnout Propensity, Participating in *Misiones*. *Source:* Maisanta and Survey Data, N = 483.

analysis is consistent with the unadjusted results displayed in Figure 2.12. In particular, notice that the largest predicted probability of participation in a targeted Mission – of 29.8 percent – is for Certain, Loyal Voters. Indeed, this predicted probability is substantially larger than for either Certain, Swing voters – 12.5 percent – or Potential Loyal voters – 13.4 percent. Although the confidence intervals for each predicted probability are fairly large, this evidence is clearly not consistent with the claim that clientelistic parties would persuade Certain, Swing voters and turn out Potential, Loyal voters. Instead, again, we have more evidence that loyal supporters who are also consistent participants receive more in the way of benefits than conventional theories of distributive politics would suggest.

Finally, the Mexico 2000 panel data also fail to offer much support for the turnout-buying solution of our anomaly. Each wave of the survey asked people the likelihood that they would abstain in the upcoming national election. In all relevant waves, a stated intention to abstain was negatively correlated with receipt of a gift. And a stated intention to abstain in the first wave was also negatively correlated with receipt of a gift in the second or third waves.

We do not mean to suggest that turnout buying is never important or never provides a basis for the targeting of ideologically sympathetic voters. Indeed, the evidence that distributive politics is about buying turnout rather than persuading people to vote for one's own party – rather than a rival – is mixed. In some settings, like the United States, where turnout is low, the prospects of victory are much better for the side that turns out its electoral base (even though persuading independents is also clearly key for voting in many U.S. elections).[73] The logic of turnout buying may also help explain the tendency to target loyal voters suggested by our evidence from India.[74]

In countries such as Argentina, however, with compulsory voting laws and high turnout, machine politics is unlikely to be all about boosting turnout, as our evidence indicates. Thus turnout buying is unlikely to provide a complete explanation for the tendency of parties to target many more loyalists than prevailing theories of distributive politics would predict. What's more, even if distributive politics is sometimes a strategy to turn out loyalists, if some voters are likely to turn out of their own accord, and especially if intense partisans – loyalists – are particularly keen to participate even without being nudged along with a benefit, then it remains puzzling, within the assumptions of the models we have discussed, why loyalists are the preferential targets of distributive politics.

2.4 EXPLAINING THE ANOMALY: SUBCONTRACTING?

We now explore a final resolution to the anomaly: perhaps the loyal supporters whom our surveys detect as receiving many gifts are not simply voters but also

[73] Chen 2009.
[74] We pursue this line of argument in Chapter 4.

campaign workers, activists, or brokers. They might receive benefits as payment for their work in mobilizing voters. The idea, following Camp and co-authors, is that:

> core supporters will vote for you anyway, but if taken care of and given some cash or appropriate in-kind transfers, are more likely to be energized and become activists who provide extra services such as holding meetings, going door-to-door before elections, volunteering as observers at polling stations, giving rides to voters who need to get to and back from voting."[75]

This solution shifts toward the analytical disaggregation of parties into leaders and brokers, which we pursue more fully in Chapter 3, though here we simply assume that these brokers' interests are basically in line with those of their parties.

If our loyalist/gift recipients are actually brokers, we would expect them to be especially active in campaigns and party organizations. Were they?

A challenge in answering this question is that many of the campaign activities and settings about which we asked were simultaneously places where one would expect party workers to show up and where voters in attendance might receive, say, bags of food or certificates authorizing them to participate in social programs. For instance, our surveys inquired about attendance at rallies or motorcades featuring candidates, settings in which small benefits were likely to be distributed.

Helpful in this regard was our 2001–2002 Argentine voter survey. As part of a series of questions about respondents' organizational memberships (in, e.g., labor unions, professional associations, parent–teacher associations, sports clubs), we asked whether they belonged to a political party. Only 2.25 percent of the sample said they did, suggesting that our general pattern of results is unlikely to be driven by the experiences of party employees or brokers. And among the small group who described themselves as party members, there was basically no difference in the percentage who said they did or did not receive party benefits or social assistance during the campaign.

We would also expect brokers and activists to be more engaged in politics than plain voters and to talk more frequently about it. Therefore, we can treat interest and engagement in politics as a proxy for a person's working as a party broker. In Argentina, only a slightly smaller percentage of respondents to our 2001–2002 survey who described themselves as "very well informed" about politics received party benefits than those who said they were "uninformed."[76] In Mexico, respondents to the 2000 panel surveys who said they spoke about politics daily or several times per week were no more likely to receive campaign gifts than those who said they rarely or never spoke about politics.

To summarize the argument of this chapter, theories of distributive politics do not square with the evidence. Too many loyal supporters receive benefits,

[75] Camp et al. 2013, p. 9.
[76] The respective percentages are 7 and 9.

too few swing or uncommitted voters. This is the conclusion that emerges from fine-grained evidence from four developing-world democracies. Small modifications of the theory do not eliminate the anomaly. The loyalists on whom largess is visited are not basically loyalists *because* they receive benefits; nor are they generally people who would otherwise stay away from the polls; nor, in all likelihood, are they activists and brokers who will turn around and mobilize swing voters. In view of the tensions between received theories and the evidence, in the next chapter we undertake a more basic reconsideration of the theory.