

Contextual Incentives are Not Enough: Clientelistic Capacity and the Politics of Enrollment in Mexico's *Seguro Popular*

José Antonio Hernández Company  and
David O. Argente Amaya 

Recent work suggests that there is a close and positive relation between poverty, electoral competitiveness, and the development of clientelistic linkages among political parties and the electorate. The prevailing argument is that high levels of electoral competitiveness in poor districts incentivize all parties competing there to buy votes. This article suggests that, even when facing these contextual incentives, parties will not be able to engage in clientelistic relations with voters unless they have the organizational ability to do so. We call this ability “clientelistic capacity” and develop an argument to explain its variation among Mexico’s three main parties. We test our claims using a regression discontinuity design to estimate the effect of a party in municipal government on enrollment in *Seguro Popular*, a public program targeted to the poor. We demonstrate that parties with clientelistic capacity enroll more persons in the program.

La literatura reciente sobre clientelismo indica que existe una relación estrecha entre la pobreza, la competitividad electoral y el establecimiento de vínculos clientelares entre los partidos políticos y los votantes. La línea de argumentación predominante señala que altos niveles de competitividad electoral en distritos electorales pobres incentivarán a los partidos políticos que compiten en estos territorios a comprar votos. Este artículo sugiere que, a pesar de existir estos incentivos contextuales, los partidos políticos no podrán establecer relaciones clientelares con los votantes a menos que tengan la habilidad organizativa para poder comprar votos. Llamamos a esta habilidad organizativa “capacidad clientelar” y desarrollamos un argumento para explicar su presencia o ausencia en los tres principales partidos políticos mexicanos. Ponemos a prueba nuestro argumento utilizando una regresión discontinua, la cual nos permite estimar el efecto de un partido gobernando un municipio sobre la afiliación al Seguro Popular (un programa público cuya población objetivo son personas de escasos recursos). Demostramos que solo aquellos partidos que cuentan con capacidad clientelar afilian a personas al Seguro Popular de manera excesiva.

最近研究表明, 贫穷、选举竞争力和政党与选民之间庇护关系的发展三者关系密切, 且呈正相关。普遍的观点认为, 贫困地区选举竞争力强, 从而激励该地区所有政党竞相购买选票。本文认为, 政党即使面临这些情境激励, 也无法与选民发展庇护关系, 除非他们有组织能力。笔者称之为“庇护能力”, 并展开论点解释了墨西哥三大政党之间的能力差异。笔者用断点回归法来检验其主张, 以评估一个市政府政党对墨西哥民众参与大众医疗保险 (*Seguro Popular*) 的影响。大众医疗保险是专为穷人设计的一个公共项目。笔者证实具有庇护能力的政党会吸引更多参与这个项目。

Key words: political parties, clientelism, authoritarian regimes, *Seguro Popular*, Mexico

Introduction

In previous elections we tried to use clientelistic methods to obtain votes here in Mexico City. Unfortunately, the Partido Acción Nacional [PAN] does not know how to practice clientelism. The main problem is, perhaps, that we do not have a network of leaders to help us in the distribution of [handouts from] social programs in the places where we govern. (personal communication, Mauricio Tabe Echartea, president of the PAN's Regional Committee in Mexico City, August 7, 2012)

These cynical words spoken by the PAN's president in Mexico City summarize nicely the main argument of this article, that political parties cannot simply choose the electoral strategy that they want to use to mobilize voters to win elections; instead, these political organizations must have specific human, organizational, or ideological endowments to establish either programmatic or clientelistic linkages with the electorate.

Various scholars have acknowledged the importance of different party endowments for the establishment of programmatic or clientelistic linkages between parties and the electorate (e.g. Kitschelt & Kselman, 2010; Szwarcberg, 2015), yet few authors have analyzed the reasons that parties differ in their ability to produce or access such endowments (Loxton, 2016; Luna, 2014; Samuels & Zucco, 2015). Why do some political parties create coherent electoral platforms, whereas others develop diffuse, erratic policy packages? Why do some parties have a strong organizational presence in a majority of localities in a country, whereas others have offices only in major cities? Why do some parties control and monitor easily an army of brokers, whereas others struggle to develop networks of intermediaries that may help them in mobilizing the electorate with clientelistic appeals? In this article, we develop an argument—based on the origins of political parties in authoritarian regimes—to answer these questions. Specifically, we suggest that due to diverse contextual circumstances at the moment of party formation in autocratic settings, only some parties are capable of developing a robust organization across a territory. Once competitive elections come about after a democratic transition, this organizational capability eventually allows these parties effectively to establish clientelistic linkages with voters. Parties that at the time of their emergence do not develop this organizational capability will struggle in mobilizing the electorate with clientelistic appeals after democratization. We test this argument using data on enrollment in *Seguro Popular*, a Mexican health insurance program targeted to the poor.

The article is organized into three sections. First, we present an overview of the literature that posits that the interaction of increased political competition

and low levels of economic development incentivize parties in new democracies to establish clientelistic linkages with the electorate. We contend that not all political parties will be able to take advantage of these contextual incentives because not all of them have the attributes to link themselves to voters in clientelistic ways. In the second section, we present an argument—which we have briefly described in the previous paragraph—to explain why only some parties develop these attributes. Based on the argument, we develop a pair of hypotheses that we test in the final section of the paper. In this final section, we use data on enrollment in *Seguro Popular* to show that in Mexico only the former authoritarian dominant party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), is capable of using clientelistic strategies effectively in poor and very competitive municipalities.

Contextual Incentives: Electoral Competitiveness and Poverty

There is a common assumption shared among political scientists regarding the relationship between electoral competitiveness and politicians' efforts to obtain support to win elections; the closer the political elites expect an electoral result to be, the more they will actively attempt to obtain votes in their favor (see Cox & Munger, 1989). The reason is that a given number of votes is more valuable for politicians who expect to be in the threshold between winning and losing an election than for politicians who expect either to lose or win by a large margin of votes.

Politicians can win elections using legal or illegal actions (Nyblade & Reed, 2008, pp. 927–930). In a majority of democracies legal actions include canvassing, mass-media advertising, party rallies, the promotion of party platforms, the proffering of non-conditional benefits to prospective voters, and similar activities. Illegal actions include electoral manipulation, intimidating activists or voters from challenger parties, modifying legal precepts to bar opponents from participating in the election, patronage and clientelism, and more. Politicians competing in democracies with a weak rule of law or with feeble state apparatuses usually face a low probability of being punished for committing illicit activities; therefore, we expect that in these settings candidates will perform more illegal electoral activities than candidates competing in democratic countries where state authorities have a high capacity to monitor and constrain the behavior of the population. This logic applies perhaps more pervasively at the subnational level. Territories where the reach of central state authorities is feeble (e.g. towns located in remote geographic regions), territories where local authorities rule in patrimonial ways, and authoritarian enclaves in numerous newly established democracies may provide great opportunities for politicians to engage in illegal but very profitable electoral activities. For example, elites belonging to a specific political party may control the local bureaucracy in a given territory and thus may easily proffer jobs to citizens in a local government agency in exchange for their votes, a co-opted local judiciary or local police apparatus may not punish candidates that break electoral rules, and other acts.

Given the previous discussion, we want to emphasize that in numerous new democracies certain contextual circumstances provide great incentives to parties and their candidates to garner votes through the use of illegal electoral activities, including (1) very competitive electoral races and (2) a weak rule of law, a central

state with feeble structural capabilities, or the presence of subnational undemocratic regimes in a given territory. We also argue that these environmental conditions must interact with a socioeconomic factor to encourage party elites to engage in a specific illicit activity—clientelism.¹ This factor is poverty. Numerous scholars argue that the poor value handouts “more highly than wealthy people” or that they prefer to have “a bag of goodies in hand today than the promise of a redistributive public policy tomorrow” (Stokes, 2007, p. 618). The poor also care deeply about having access to public services and programs such as primary education, housing, and electricity. Therefore, the poor may rely heavily on clientelistic exchanges with political parties to maintain a minimum standard of living. Unlike the poor, wealthy voters can afford to buy from private companies many of the goods and services that they need in their daily lives; similarly, according to Weitz-Shapiro (2014), these voters despise clientelism on moral grounds or view this type of transactions with politicians “as a negative signal of the quality of government performance” (p. 54).

The existing literature argues that very competitive districts will experience a high degree of both legal and illegal electoral activities as party politicians exert strenuous effort to win marginal votes. Yet unlike in electoral districts that have a large percentage of wealthy voters, scholars that study party–voter linkages expect poor competitive districts to have a high incidence of clientelistic exchanges between political parties and their constituencies. Politicians competing in these districts have ample incentives to practice clientelism because, under budget constraints, the price of marginal votes in these localities is much lower than that of rich districts. Similarly, a majority of voters in these districts prefer to sell their votes to receive handouts quickly or have access to public services instead of waiting for promised policy projects that may take years for completion. Still, this argumentation does not take into consideration that, to be successful as an electoral strategy, clientelism requires political parties to have certain abilities, attributes, and endowments.

Clientelistic Capacity

Political parties that wish to link themselves to the electorate in clientelistic ways need to deal with two important problems:

1. *The distribution problem.* Clientelistic parties need to find the means to distribute resources efficiently among the electoral districts in which they will compete. Similarly, these parties need a system to allocate those resources discretionally among the citizens that live within these districts. These citizens will fail to turn out and vote for the clientelistic party if it cannot demonstrate that by election day it will be able to send a sufficient amount of money and handouts to the localities. Parties that have an extensive organizational reach across a territory will have an easier time solving this distribution problem as compared to parties that have a weak organizational presence in a majority of regions in a country. How can a party send resources to a specific geographic area if it does not have an organized presence in that area? Party outlets, staffed formally or informally with bureaucrats or party activists, help party leaders deal with this question (Luna, 2014). These outlets are in

charge of receiving the resources that party authorities send to buy votes in the districts where the outlets are located.² Similarly, they are responsible for allotting those resources to the different neighborhoods and precincts within each district.

2. *The informational problem.* Clientelistic parties require substantial information about voters and about the persons that they employ to mobilize these voters (Stokes et al., 2013). For example, parties need to know if a voter wants medicines for her children at a particular point in time, or—if her children are healthy—the voter would instead prefer school supplies. Similarly, parties need to know if a citizen will turn out to vote only if offered a selective incentive or if she will enthusiastically go to a polling station to cast a vote on election day. Parties hire brokers to deal with these informational demands. These brokers can be bureaucrats, employers in the private sector, ethnic leaders, or even gang members. Each of these brokers may perform different activities to convince citizens to vote for the party that hired them (Mares & Young, 2016), but all of them create an additional and major informational problem for political parties; they can appropriate the resources that party leaders send to precincts to buy votes, or they can selectively favor specific persons with these resources—e.g. family members instead of pivotal voters. A party's organized presence across a territory may help its leaders solve these informational problems (Larreguy et al., 2016). The persons that work in the party outlets can send accurate information to party authorities about the brokers that were incapable of buying enough votes in a given neighborhood; they can also survey the local population to know the exact likes and dislikes of prospective voters.

We argue that parties with *clientelistic capacity* can successfully solve the two aforementioned problems. This concept refers to the ability that some political parties have in creating and maintaining *an extensive and firmly embedded local organization across a territory*. Clientelistic capacity allows parties to distribute handouts better, recruit citizens into public programs, and monitor brokers and voters. Parties that lack this capacity will be unable to establish effectively a clientelistic linkage with the population.

Various scholars have acknowledged the importance of the local organization of political parties as a precondition for the establishment of clientelistic exchanges with voters. For example, Calvo and Murillo (2012) argue that clientelistic parties have networks that “serve the critical purpose of screening prospective clients, enrolling beneficiaries, and reducing dead-weight losses in the distribution of goods” (p. 854). Similarly, Kitschelt and Kselman (2010) argue that “in order to effectively distribute targeted benefits at the local level, clientelistic parties must be extensive organizations ... by virtue of expansive formal membership and active local/regional structure” (p. 19). Although these and other authors recognize that parties require clientelistic capacity to establish a clientelistic linkage with voters successfully, few have studied its variation across parties. *Why are some parties able to develop an extensive and deeply rooted organizational presence across a territory while others fail utterly at this task?* In what follows, we present a theory to answer this important question.

On the Origins of Clientelistic Capacity in Political Parties

In line with Aldrich (2011), we begin by assuming that political elites create parties to solve a myriad of problems and to achieve a diverse set of goals. “[P]oliticians ... do not have partisan goals per se. Rather, they have more personal and fundamental goals, and the party is only the instrument for achieving them” (p. 5). We argue that the contextual conditions present a few years *before* the formation of a political party will determine the goals of the party founders. These goals in turn will encourage the founders to equip the new party with specific traits and abilities that will allow them to achieve their objectives. Do party founders want to achieve power competing for votes in free and fair elections or do they prefer to get into government through violent means? Do these founders want to mobilize citizens that belong to a particular social class or do they want to build a broad multi-class electoral coalition? Do party founders want to mobilize the electorate with programmatic appeals or do they prefer to use clientelistic strategies to obtain followers? The answers to these and similar questions necessarily require different types of political parties. Party founders will invest time and resources in creating parties with traits that are suitable to accomplish particular goals.

We suggest that the traits and attributes adopted by political parties in their first years of existence will tend to be durable—unlikely to change abruptly in a short amount of time. Three reasons explain this resiliency. First, the behavior of actors in organizations is encoded in routines—procedures, conventions, beliefs, and cultures that are “independent of the individual actors who execute them and are capable of surviving considerable turnover in individual actors” (Levitt & March, 1988, p. 320). Routines create deep-rooted practices that new and old party members will tend to use over and over again to solve a myriad of organizational problems or to face diverse contextual conditions (e.g. the constant use of raffles to finance party locales even though it may not be an effective way to obtain pecuniary resources for the organization). Second, party leaders that benefit from current party strategies and internal arrangements will promote their reproduction. If there is little leadership turnover, political parties will likely use for years or decades the same practices and techniques to canvass voters, to recruit new members, and more. Finally, maintaining a core constituency—groups that support constantly an organization with money and activists—is essential for the survival of a political party. The preferences of these core constituencies will limit the ability of any political party to modify radically its electoral strategies, political programs, or organizational characteristics (e.g. conservative activists will stop working for a conservative party if it suddenly starts promoting the expropriation of land from rich landholders; see Lupu, 2016).³ What factors lead party founders to adopt some durable traits over others? Specifically, what factors lead some founders to adopt a strong organization in a majority of localities in a country?

Given that numerous parties that compete in newly established democracies have their origins in competitive authoritarian environments, we argue that we need to examine the contextual conditions that were present in these autocracies at the moment each party originated to fully understand why only some party founders equip their respective parties with strong and functioning party locales across most geographic regions of a territory—locales that will allow

these parties to establish clientelistic relations with the electorate after democratization.⁴ What are these contextual conditions and how do they affect the goals of the party founders?

In developing our argument, we identify two sets of actors in competitive authoritarian regimes. The first set is composed of those persons who have seized power after a coup, revolution, or mass election. After the power takeover, these persons will be reluctant to share the perquisites of office with other members of society. In particular, these persons will be unwilling to share *decision-making power* with other societal groups. This particular power allows these persons to alter the distribution of society's economic resources (e.g. through taxes) at any moment in the future. In line with Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005), we call this set of persons the "authoritarian winning coalition" (AWC). The second set of actors includes all the persons that are not part of the AWC. We call this set of persons the "potential opposition coalition" (POC), because they can organize challenger organizations against the autocrats at any point in time.

We have argued that the contextual conditions that exist a few years before the emergence of a political party determine the interests and goals of its founders. Of the many circumstances that may shape these contextual conditions, which shape the objectives of the party founders the most? To answer this question, we divide any authoritarian regime into three different periods, (1) *dawn*—the period when the autocrats have to establish their rule over the opposition; during this period the POC is still relatively strong and may avert the consolidation of the autocracy through various means (e.g. violent rebellions), (2) *apogee*—the period when the autocrats can set the agenda and make decisions without consulting members of the opposition; during the apogee the AWC can easily repress the POC, and (3) *twilight*—the period when the autocrats, due to internal divisions or societal pressure, may lose the ability to repress the POC fully and set the agenda. These three periods pose different challenges for the AWC and the POC.

We begin by describing how, by creating a distinctive political party, the members of the autocracy can deal with a major challenge during the regime's dawn. During the dawn the members of the AWC first and foremost need to consolidate their hold over the apparatus of the state. This apparatus, which includes the state bureaucracy, the police, and the military, will allow the AWC to impose its decisions easily over society and to control any organized opposition. If autocrats control this apparatus, they can ask the army to repress rival social movements or specific opposition politicians, or ask the state bureaucracy to collect taxes and thus extract resources efficiently from the population. The apparatus of the state is, in sum, the main instrument that the AWC has to stabilize and sustain its rule for long periods.

A political party may allow autocrats to control effectively the apparatus of the state in a short period. For example, party members can occupy bureaucratic posts quickly following a power takeover. Similarly, by developing roots in different localities through party clubs or the planning of local party activities (e.g. soccer matches), the party organization may channel social discontent and promote quiescence across the population; the party's "local rootedness" will limit the necessity to use repression, which in turn will allow civilian rulers to control better the military and the police. Finally, by distributing spoils, the party may co-opt local notables that usually monopolize economic and political power in

their domains; in doing so, the party allows central state authorities to penetrate numerous geographical zones with little probability of popular upheavals. To achieve these multiple tasks, party founders will exert great effort into forming an extensive party organization across the country's territory. This extensive party will allow them to co-opt local leaders efficiently, register citizens into voter rolls, recruit members loyal to the autocracy, occupy bureaucratic posts in regional governments, and mobilize the population to show support in favor of the autocracy during political or economic hard times. We call this type of political party an *omnipresent dominant party* (see also Loxton, 2016).

The typical example of an omnipresent dominant party is Mexico's PRI. The party emerged in 1929. It was the solution that the then president, Plutarco Elías Calles, offered to fill the power void that the assassination of Álvaro Obregón left in the country (Obregón, an extremely capable politician, was able to pacify the country at the end of the Mexican Revolution). After Obregón's death, Calles feared that his attempts to create a strong centralized state would fall apart because multiple local strongmen were ruling the localities under their control without following the directives of the central government; these strongmen had personal rural armies, taxed the population in their domains, and expropriated land without the consent of state authorities. By creating the PRI—called Partido Nacional Revolucionario in 1929—Calles and his followers were able to tame, through co-optation, a majority of these local strongmen (Hernández Rodríguez, 2016). In its first years of existence, the PRI was an alliance of regional organizations controlled by these strongmen. By the end of the 1940s, the party's *Comité Ejecutivo Nacional* (CEN) imposed discipline over these regional organizations and was able to control the selection of candidates through the manipulation of the party statutes and the selection of the delegates that attended the party's conventions. The party cadres approved by the CEN began to occupy most government posts in the country, and the party's committees promptly registered citizens to the electoral rolls in each state. By the mid-1960s, the party had grown exponentially. According to Ezcurdia Camacho (1968, pp. 112–116), in those years the party had approximately 31,000 functioning neighborhood organizations, 178 district committees, and 29 state committees. The party's organizational extensiveness survived the transition to democracy in the year 2000.

Figure 1 shows the organizational breadth of the PRI in the years 2000, 2005, and 2010. The figure classifies the 32 states in the country according to the extensiveness of the party organization within the territory of each (data from INE, 2016). We classify states that have party committees in all of their municipalities as having “high clientelistic capacity,” those that have party committees in 50% or more of their municipalities (but less than 100%) as having “medium clientelistic capacity,” and those with fewer than 50% of municipalities with a party committee as having “low clientelistic capacity.” The figure shows that the PRI is an organizational behemoth. The party claimed that in the year 2000, it had a somewhat weak organizational presence in only a quarter of the states. These states were located in the conservative region known as Bajío (Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán), in the south (Guerrero), in the southeast (Tabasco, Quintana Roo), in the northeast (Nuevo León), and in the State of Mexico. By the end of the decade, the party had fully organized municipal committees in all but four states in the country. In the next section of the article, we

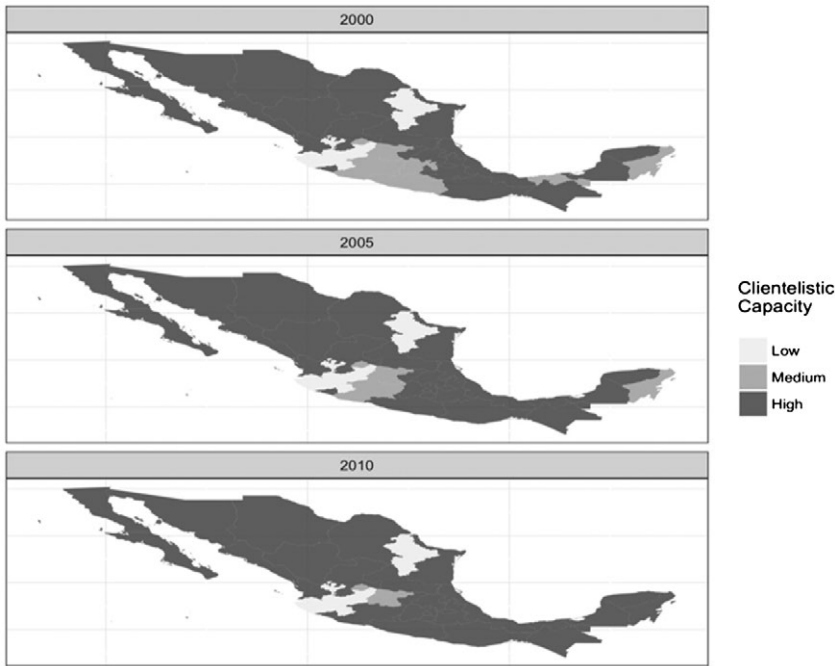


Figure 1. The PRI's Clientelistic Capacity (2000–2010)

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from INE (2016).

will show that this organizational extensiveness allowed the PRI to manipulate recruitment effectively into a public program in a clientelistic fashion.

We now focus on opposition politicians and how they create political parties to solve different challenges that they face during the authoritarian regime. We pay attention to parties that emerge during two different periods—the autocracy's apogee and the autocracy's twilight. Why would someone want to create an opposition political party during an autocracy's apogee, when the probability of winning elections with the party is extremely small? Autocrats have a myriad of instruments at their disposal to ensure that only the dominant party wins elections during this period (e.g. election fraud). Moreover, they have ample power to implement radical policies that may affect the material well-being of specific societal groups (e.g. they can expropriate the land of rich landlords). It is precisely the autocrats' unrestrained power that motivates some members of the POC to create a challenger organization to oppose the dominant party in the electoral arena. Opposition politicians realize that the authoritarian elites want to win elections by large margins.⁵ A way to force the autocrats to implement moderate policies is by creating an opposition party to appeal to those voters that are against the regime's radical policies. The AWC may lose the electoral supermajority that it values highly if enough citizens are against the autocracy's policies and attempt to vote for the opposition; committing electoral fraud (or similar activities) will become too expensive if a significant proportion of the population attempts to vote for the challenger party (see Little, 2017). Autocrats thus prefer to enact palatable policies to avoid this negative outcome.

We argue that opposition parties that emerge during an autocracy's apogee tend to be very programmatic. First, the founders of this type of political party do not have the resources or the ability to recruit citizens into public programs or to distribute handouts or patronage (which the authoritarian elite monopolizes). These parties lack the necessary assets to practice clientelism and must opt for a second option, the development of a program that can attract the vote of citizens that dislike the autocracy's policies. Second, Greene (2007) has shown that these opposition parties tend to recruit persons with extreme ideological preferences. The members of these parties usually despise clientelism, since they are "committed to universalistic principles that militate against particularistic, informal practices of resource allocation" (Kitschelt, 2000, p. 854). These opposition parties might have a robust organization in various regions in a country, but their local committees will be staffed with personnel that dislike clientelism on normative grounds or that lack the know-how to link their party to the electorate in a clientelistic fashion. We call this type of political party a *strong programmatic party*.

In Mexico, the paradigmatic case of a strong programmatic party is the PAN. The party emerged at the end of the 1930s, during Cardenismo—the name given to President Lázaro Cárdenas' term in office (1934–1940). Mr. Cárdenas transferred 47% of the country's arable land from haciendas to ejidos (a form of communal land tenure) and implemented a policy that disturbed the middle classes severely, the educational reform known as "socialist education". Scared by these policies, some members of the opposition decided to form the PAN. Based on various papal encyclicals, the PAN founders created a sound party program that condemned the intervention of the state in the economy and policies that attempted to destroy "natural communities" such as the family (Acción Nacional, 1940). Thanks to personal contacts in various states, these founders established local committees in some geographical regions. These committees allowed the party to mobilize the electorate with programmatic appeals during the duration of the authoritarian regime. Today the party has a meaningful presence in the Bajío region and a majority of Northern states. It lacks a strong organizational presence in Southern states.

The weakness of the AWC and the seemingly proximate transition toward democracy during an autocracy's twilight provide great incentives to opposition politicians to create parties with the main goal of winning elections in a short period. Given that the autocrats' ability to punish the opposition diminishes substantially during the twilight and that the odds of obtaining office increase, challenger politicians create parties to get into government as quickly as possible. The founders of this type of party have various options to obtain votes; they can create a party program, they can buy votes, or they can recruit charismatic candidates. Creating a sound party program or building an extensive organization may take time; founders must agree on what goes into the program, find office spaces across the territory, recruit and convince citizens to work in party committees, and more. They may be unwilling to wait to develop these assets; instead, these founders may prefer to promote the party with well-known candidates. We call this type of political party a *weak clientelistic party*.

The *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD) is the Mexican party that best fits the latter party type. The party emerged after the 1988 presidential election

when a couple of disaffected members of the authoritarian coalition and a multiplicity of leftist organizations joined forces to challenge the PRI in the electoral arena. To attract the vote on election day the party has relied on charismatic personalities. The party is extremely factionalized and has been unable to establish durable local committees in a majority of states in the country. Its factions compete bitterly against one another to select the leaders in these committees, and losing factions relinquish regularly to help the elected local committees mobilize citizens on election day. The PRD is a relatively robust organization only in the states where former PRI members or activists from leftist organizations joined the party in the early 1990s; these persons either brought with them the bureaucratic resources and the networks of the PRI to the PRD⁶ or were experts in organizing the lower classes into social movements.

Based on the previous argumentation, we posit the following hypotheses, which we test in the next section:

1. The PRI will be able to use clientelistic strategies in poor and competitive municipalities *across* the country.
2. The PAN will not be able to use clientelistic strategies anywhere in Mexico because it lacks clientelistic capacity.
3. The PRD will be unable to use clientelistic strategies in most municipalities in the country, yet it may have the ability to mobilize the electorate with clientelistic tactics in states where the party founders "transplanted" their personal networks or the organizational resources of the dominant party to the PRD.

Empirical Evidence: Enrollment in *Seguro Popular*

To assess the previous hypotheses, in this section we use data about recruitment into Mexico's health insurance program known as *Seguro Popular* (SP). For several reasons, the design of SP is useful to test the hypotheses and the overall theory about clientelistic capacity that we have presented in the previous section. First, it is a program targeted to *poor municipalities* that offers highly desired particularistic benefits to the end user (free medicines, free surgeries, and more). We expect that parties competing for votes in these poor municipalities will have great incentives to manipulate enrollment in the program in clientelistic ways. Second, local governments play an important role in enrolling persons in the program. "Municipal authorities may provide transport or labor to help in the affiliation process, and they may put pressure on the state [governments] ... for increased affiliation targets" (Lakin, 2008, p. 115). The *organizational extensiveness of the party governing a given municipality* facilitates the carrying out of these activities (e.g. a well-organized party in the municipality can set up recruitment campaigns to register voters in the program in a short period). Third, the end users have to *renew their enrollment* in the program every three years. This rule allows parties to manipulate the program and punish citizens that did not vote for them in the previous election, or to lure voters who have to renew enrollment in SP to vote for them in upcoming elections. Finally, *the central government is required legally to allocate more pecuniary resources to states that enroll more persons in the program*. This rule creates strong incentives among all governing parties to

register as many persons as they can in SP. Yet, if our insight about clientelistic capacity is true, we will observe that (1) only those municipalities in which the PRI wins by small margins will show sudden increments in the number of program enrollees and (2) the PRD will be effective at enrolling a disproportionate number of persons in the program in states where the party founders were able to transfer their personal networks or the organizational structure of the dominant party to the new party in the early 1990s.

For our dependent variable, we collected data on the number of persons enrolled in SP in each municipality in the country⁷ for each year between 2002 (the year SP started as a pilot program in five states) and 2011 (when the program had reached full coverage). Although various scholars suggest that SP is a non-discretionary program that contains clear rules regarding how the government should allocate resources to it and who can register in it (see e.g. Garay, 2016), there is a plethora of qualitative evidence that shows that politicians at the local level manipulate constantly enrollment in SP or assign the program's benefits only to those enrollees that vote for them. For example, during the 2006 presidential election, a non-governmental organization (*Alianza Cívica*) interviewed approximately 2,000 SP beneficiaries⁸; of these, 58% stated that, "they have to vote for a given party if they want to keep receiving the program's benefits" (El Universal, 2006). *Alianza Cívica* reported that "Seguro Popular is one [of the two] federal programs that are the least protected against [party] manipulation [the other program being Procampo, which provides subsidies to peasants and farmers]" (El Universal, 2006). Similarly, in 2015—a congressional election year—numerous health professionals working for SP complained that local authorities were pressuring them to mobilize voters in favor of specific political parties. For example, in the state of Zacatecas, authorities of the local Health Ministry (in charge of administering state enrollment in SP) were forcing SP personnel to "create networks of no more than 150 persons to guarantee the vote in favor of the PRI. [Those that did not follow this instruction] did not receive a wage increase" (Villagrana, 2015). In sum, enrollment in SP is a useful metric of clientelism because the program offers particularistic benefits to voters (most of them poor), and local politicians can easily manipulate the number of persons that join the program each year (mainly because SP is administered at the state level with little federal scrutiny).

Our main independent variables are indicators that categorize whether a given municipality is governed by the PRI, the PAN, or the PRD in a specific year. As controls, we include variables that may affect the annual rate of enrollment in SP (mainly sociodemographic data at the municipal level)⁹ and two dummy variables that specify whether the state in which a municipality is located is governed by the PAN or the PRD in a given year (the excluded category represents municipalities located in states with a PRI governor). Finally, we have data on the number of families registered in the poverty-relief program *Oportunidades* in each municipality from 2002 to 2011.¹⁰

Our goal is to demonstrate that the PRI is the only political party in Mexico capable of manipulating SP in clientelistic ways *across the territory*. We also provide evidence to show that the PRD can bias enrollment in the program in a few states, those where the party founders were either former PRI members or activists in social movements that could transfer their organizational skills (or

even the dominant party's networks) to the new party. We use two strategies to test our argument. First, using a series of multivariate regressions, we present descriptive evidence that is highly consistent with our hypotheses. Second, we present the results of a regression discontinuity design that takes advantage of the fact that municipalities with very competitive electoral races are equal in many variables, except in the main variable of interest—the party that wins the election. The results of the discontinuity model provide strong causal evidence in favor of our hypotheses.

Descriptive Evidence

We first examine if, compared to municipalities governed by the PAN or the PRD, the municipalities that are governed by the PRI recruit more individuals into SP *in election years*. We assume that clientelistic parties do not have a strong incentive to manipulate public programs in non-election years. First, citizens have short-term memories and will remember receiving a handout or access to a service only in the months or days close to the election, so clientelistic parties will not be able to claim credit for proffering goods long before an election. Second, political parties have limited budgets. Clientelistic parties can maximize their vote-buying efforts by spending most of their resources during the electoral campaign—on activities such as hiring brokers, surveying voters, and purchasing handouts to distribute on or just after election day.

To test this idea, we use the following specification:

$$y_{mt} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 PRI_{mt} + \alpha_2 Election_{mt} + \alpha_3 (PRI_{mt} * Election_{mt}) + \alpha_4 X_{mt} + \lambda_m + \varepsilon_{mt} \quad (1)$$

where y_{mt} represents the change—with respect to the previous year—in the number of persons registered in SP in the municipality m in year t . We transformed this variable into logarithms to facilitate the interpretation of the regression coefficients. PRI_{mt} is a dummy variable that equals one if a municipality m is governed by the PRI in year t , and equals zero otherwise. Similarly, $Election_{mt}$ is a dummy variable that equals one if a municipality m has an election in year t , and equals zero otherwise. Finally, X_{mt} is a set of baseline controls (which we have described above in an endnote 9) and λ_m represents the municipality fixed effects.

Table 1 shows the results of the model. The first column shows that there is no statistical difference between municipalities governed by the PRI and municipalities governed by either of the two other political parties in terms of the growth rate at which they register individuals in SP. Similarly, the second column of this table shows that there is no statistical difference in the growth rate at which individuals are registered in SP in election years and in non-election years. The third column in the table shows that, unlike the other two parties, the PRI tends to enroll more persons into the program *in election years* (the effect remains almost the same even after adding municipality fixed effects; see the fourth column in the table). This result provides evidence in favor of our argument; by controlling the timing at which it recruits persons into SP, the PRI manipulates this program with clientelistic goals in mind. The composite coefficient, reflecting the addition of the main effects in the model with the interaction term, is .05, meaning that on average and in contrast to the other parties, the PRI recruits 5% more persons into the program in election years than in non-election years.

Table 1. Affiliation to SP: Municipalities Governed by the PRI

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
PRI	-.018 (.026)		-.051 (.031)	-.036 (.051)
Election		.039 (.028)	-.013 (.037)	-.005 (.046)
PRI * Election			.114** (.058)	.101* (.061)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	No	No	Yes
N	7,893	7,893	7,893	7,893

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. The * and ** denote, respectively, statistical significance at the .1 and .05 levels. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Three placebo tests allow us to assess the robustness of the results presented in Table 1 (the results of these placebo tests are in Tables A1–A3 in the Appendix). In the first tests we ran the regression model specified in equation (1) with a different independent variable. We substituted the indicator $Election_{mt}$ with the indicator $Election_{m(t-1)}$. This last variable equals one if a given municipality has an election *the upcoming year*, and zero otherwise. Similarly, in the second test we substituted the indicator $Election_{mt}$ with the indicator $Election_{m(t+1)}$. This variable equals one if a given municipality had an election *the previous year*, and zero otherwise. These two variables are indicators for non-election years. In each of these two placebo models, we interacted the respective variable with the dummy variable that indicates if the PRI is governing a given municipality in year t . The coefficients of these interactions are not statistically significant and do not show the expected signs; the PRI does not have an incentive to manipulate enrollment in SP in non-election years.

For the last placebo test, we ran a regression using the specification in equation (1) but substituted the dependent variable for a variable that measures for each municipality the number of households affiliated to the poverty alleviation program *Oportunidades* in each year between 2002 and 2011. The main difference between *Oportunidades* and SP is that the latter is a program administered at the state level while the former is a program under the control of the national Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL). The PAN was in control of SEDESOL between 2002 and 2011, so the PRI was not able to decide where to assign the resources of *Oportunidades* in those years. In contrast, governors and municipal authorities have a lot of leeway in deciding how, where, and when to spend the resources of SP. We expect the PRI to be able to manipulate a program like SP but not a program like *Oportunidades* at the municipal level during this period. The composite coefficient of the placebo model (using the results from column 3 in Table A3) shows exactly this result; between 2002 and 2011, the PRI recruited, on average and in contrast to municipalities governed by the other two parties, 4% fewer persons into *Oportunidades* in election years than in non-election years.

Table 2. Affiliation to SP: Municipalities Where the PRD Has Clientelistic Capacity

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
PRD	.057 (.040)	.022 (.042)		.021 (.046)	-.053 (.011)
Clientelistic Capacity		.088** (.042)	.085** (.040)	.061 (.047)	
Election	.041 (.030)		.026 (.029)	.025 (.031)	.011 (.036)
Election * Clientelistic Capacity			.052 (.075)	.009 (.100)	.151 (.10)
PRD * Clientelistic Capacity		.031 (.075)		.059 (.086)	.102 (.156)
PRD * Election	-.005 (.078)			.079 (.091)	.034 (.116)
PRD * Election * Clientelistic Capacity				-.087 (.169)	-.171 (.200)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
N	7,893	7,893	7,893	7,893	7,893

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. The ** denotes statistical significance at .05 levels. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level. In model 5, clientelistic capacity is collinear with the municipality fixed effects and is not reported.

Our argument also makes predictions about the clientelistic behavior of the PRD. We hypothesized that this party was unable to create an embedded organizational structure across the territory at the time of its formation in 1989. The reason is that its founders wanted to win elections right away and had little time or interest in developing a strong organization in most regions of the country. Yet some PRD founders were former members of the dominant party or leaders of social movements that had great organizational skills. These founders brought with them a large following and powerful relational networks for the PRD. This party is usually effective in getting votes in the states where its founders were located—Guerrero, Mexico City, Michoacán, Tabasco, and Oaxaca. We speculate that the PRD may be successful in manipulating recruitment into SP in these states—places where the party may have developed clientelistic capacity. To test this idea, we estimated the model in equation (1) for the PRD. We interacted the main independent variables in the model with an indicator that equals one for each municipality located in any of the five states just mentioned, and zero otherwise (we named this indicator “clientelistic capacity”). The results can be seen in Table 2; they suggest that the PRD is incapable of utilizing clientelistic appeals, even in states where it has had a somewhat strong presence over the years. Due to the rush at its birth, PRD founders never really cared about developing a robust party organization, and the consequences were readily observable in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Regression Discontinuity Models

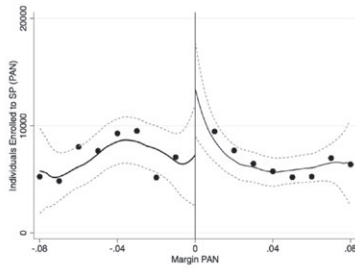
In this section, we use a regression discontinuity (RD) approach to test if there is a causal correlation between a party with clientelistic capacity governing a given municipality and the propensity of that municipality to enroll persons into SP disproportionately. To allow for causal identification, our RD design is based on the idea that municipalities with very competitive elections are equal on all variables except one, the party that wins the race. Under this assumption, any positive difference in the number of SP affiliates between municipalities where a party wins by a very small margin and municipalities where the same party loses by a very small margin is due to the fact that the party has clientelistic capacity and ends up governing the first but not the second set of localities. With the RD design, all the systematic factors that could affect enrollment in SP other than the party governing the municipality are controlled for (our data suggest that this assumption holds overall; see Table A4 in the Appendix).

One advantage of our RD strategy is that it allows us to test empirically the validity of the scholarly argument that we reviewed in the first section of this article. This argument states that contextual factors—the interaction between competitive races and poor constituents—explain the type of linkage strategy that *all* the parties competing in a poor district will pursue to attract the vote of the population. We challenged this assertion by claiming that in these impoverished districts, only parties with clientelistic capacity can link themselves to the electorate in clientelistic ways. Our RD strategy uses only information from very competitive municipalities, and the SP is a public program targeting the poor. Given these two conditions, if we observe that on average *all* political parties recruit the same number of persons to SP, we will reject our main hypothesis. To the contrary, if only the PRI recruits more persons into the program in places where it wins by small margins, we will be providing robust evidence in favor of our argument.

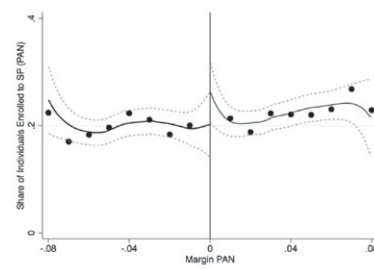
We begin the RD analysis with a series of graphs that examine the relationship between the number of SP enrollees in competitive municipalities and the percentage of votes obtained by each party in these localities (see Figure 2). To make each graph we selected municipalities located within an 8% bandwidth from the discontinuity threshold. The dots in the graphs situated in panels A, C, and E in Figure 2 represent the average number of individuals recruited to SP in 1%-vote spreads. Similarly, the dots on the graphs in panels B, D, and F represent the proportion of individuals recruited to the program in 1%-vote spreads. The solid line in each graph represents the smoothed values of a locally kernel-weighted least-squares regression estimated separately on either side of the win-loss threshold; the dashed lines show the 95% confidence intervals of these smoothed values.

The graphs in Figure 2 show that the PRI is the only party capable of altering drastically recruitment into SP in places where it wins by a small number of votes. The graphs corresponding to this party show a substantial and statistically significant jump at the win-loss threshold. Municipalities where this party lost a close election between 2002 and 2011, recruited approximately 7,000 persons to the program on average. In contrast, municipalities where this party won by a very small percentage of the vote tended to recruit approximately 14,000 persons to SP in those years. Likewise, a PRI electoral victory increases the percentage of the population recruited to the program by approximately five points. Given

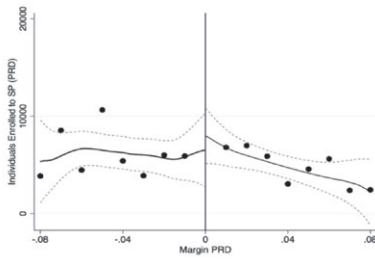
Panel A: Individuals Enrolled (PAN)



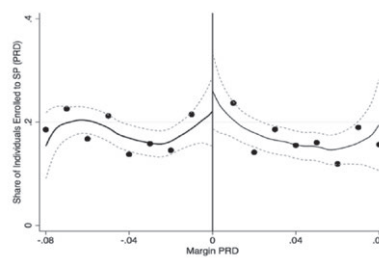
Panel B: Share of Population Enrolled (PAN)



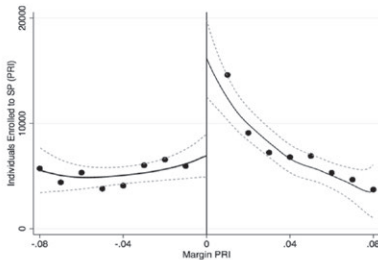
Panel C: Individuals Enrolled (PRD)



Panel D: Share of Population Enrolled (PRD)



Panel E: Individuals Enrolled (PRI)



Panel F: Share of Population Enrolled (PRI)

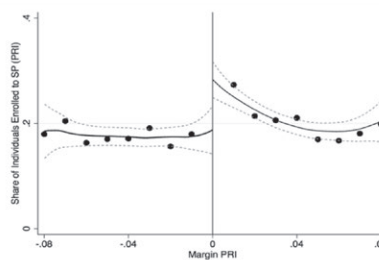


Figure 2. Competitive Elections and Enrollment in *Seguro Popular*

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

that municipalities where the PRI wins or loses by a very small margin are counterfactuals of each other, we can attribute the sudden increments in the number of SP affiliates to the fact that this party is manipulating the program in clientelistic ways.

The parametric version of the RD model is:

$$y_m = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 PartyWin_m + \alpha_2 PartyWin_m * f(Spread_m) + \alpha_3 (1 - PartyWin_m) * f(Spread_m) + \epsilon_m \tag{2}$$

where y_m denotes the outcome of interest. In one specification of the model this outcome represents the number of individuals registered to SP in municipality m ; in another specification of the model the outcome represents the proportion

Table 3. Close Elections and Enrollment in *Seguro Popular*

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	PAN win	PRD win	PRI win
Individuals Enrolled in SPS	-1018.4	-1227.2	3235.6**
	(999.1)	(1759.1)	(1522.8)
Share of Individuals Enrolled in SPS	-.011	.021	.038**
	(.019)	(.026)	(.017)
N	1,727	1,233	2,714

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. The sample includes the municipalities in which the respective party won or lost by eight percentage points or less. The ** denote statistical significance at the .05 level. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

of individuals registered to the program with respect to the total population living in municipality m . $PartyWin_m$ is an indicator that equals one if the specific party won the election in municipality m during 2002 and 2011, and zero otherwise. The content of $PartyWin_m$ changes in each of three regression models; in one model it refers to PAN victories, in another to PRD victories, in the last one to PRI victories. This indicator is the main variable of interest; we expect the coefficient referring to PRI victories to be the only one to show a large and statistically significant effect. $Spread_m$ denotes the margin of victory of each party in the respective regression model. Finally, $f(\bullet)$ is the RD polynomial that we estimated separately on either side of the win-loss threshold. Our baseline results use a quadratic polynomial but are robust to many other specifications.¹¹

Table 3 shows the results of the RD models described in the previous paragraph. The results are uncontroversial; only the PRI manipulates SP in a clientelistic fashion. Despite facing favorable contextual conditions—poor and very competitive municipalities—the PAN and the PRD are incapable of using recruitment into SP in their favor. The table shows that PRI victories at the municipal level increase considerably the number and the proportion of people registered in the program. On average, there is a difference of 3,236 people registered to the program between municipalities where the PRI wins by a small margin of votes and those localities where it loses by a similar number of votes. This increment corresponds to 4% of the program's eligible population in these places; this percentage is more than enough to win close elections. Our results are robust to the inclusion of controls for factors that could affect the spatial distribution of SP affiliates in the country (see Table A5 in the Appendix). Therefore, we cannot attribute these astonishing increments to any factor other than the PRI and its clientelistic capacity.

Conclusion

Not all political parties competing in the same party system have the ability to mobilize the electorate with clientelistic appeals. Most Mexican political parties are incapable of taking advantage of contextual conditions that favor the

establishment of clientelistic linkages with their constituencies—poverty and competitive electoral races. It is good news for Mexico's young democracy, since clientelism is a practice that creates poverty traps and tarnishes democratic accountability and representation. Yet political parties that cannot practice clientelism are, on average, organizationally weak and lack a noticeable territorial presence in a majority of places in the country. These parties are unlikely to recognize the needs of the communities that vote for them or to solve a myriad of problems at the subnational level.

We have developed an argument to explain why Mexican parties differ in their ability to establish clientelistic linkages with the electorate. We have argued that clientelism poses particular challenges for political parties. This linkage strategy requires a constant monitoring of voters and brokers and an efficient and prompt distribution of resources among numerous electoral precincts. Not all parties can effectively face these challenges. We argue that those able to do so have developed clientelistic capacity, meaning that these parties have created deeply embedded organizational structures in a majority of localities in a country. Different historical circumstances at the moment of party emergence determine why only some political parties are able to develop these structures. The PRI is the only organization in Mexico that can effectively mobilize the electorate with clientelistic appeals in every region in the country.

Future research on party-voter linkage strategies may evaluate why parties such as the PAN or the PRD cannot develop clientelistic capacity fully even years after their emergence. If the current leaders of these parties observe that they can win elections only by buying votes in poor municipalities, why do they fail to invest time and resources into creating a strong organization in these places? As we have argued, a path-dependency process may provide clues to answer this question, but further research is needed to understand better the mechanisms that block the development of clientelistic capacity years after a party's birth. Finally, we need to understand better the internal workings of parties with clientelistic capacity and answer a set of questions that will allow us to comprehend why these parties are so successful at mobilizing the electorate with clientelistic appeals. How do these parties maintain their local outlets actively between election years? What type of jobs and skills do the persons in charge of these outlets have? The answers to these and similar questions may open a new research agenda about the linkages between parties and the electorate.

About the Authors

José Antonio Hernández Company is an assistant professor at the Tecnológico de Monterrey School of Government and Public Transformation.

David O. Argente Amaya is a research economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The views expressed herein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis or the Federal Reserve System.

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Notes

¹We define clientelism broadly, as any non-programmatic distributive strategy in which political parties, through the discretionary allocation of goods and services, seek to compel partisan loyalties on the part of recipients. Clientelism usually implies conditionality (i.e. parties can take away the good or service if the recipient fails to develop the expected partisan loyalty).

²For example, during the 2017 electoral campaign for the governorship of Estado de Mexico, approximately 100 brokers were waiting in line to get paid in front of a PRI outlet in the municipality of Nezahualcóyotl. Unfortunately, the 4 million pesos that the PRI leaders sent to the outlet to pay these brokers got stolen (Reforma, 2017).

³Of course, party change is possible, and we suggest that parties will adopt innovative attributes or substitute old traits for new ones when facing environmental challenges that affect their ability to accomplish vital goals (e.g., winning votes, recruiting members, defending their constituencies' interests in parliament) or when dominant party factions lose power and are replaced by groups with divergent interests. Yet if party adaptation occurs, we contend that it may take years for parties to adopt new traits, particularly if these new traits require substantial investments of time, money, or human resources.

⁴Our theory of clientelistic capacity applies only to parties created in authoritarian settings that, after a transition to democracy, mobilize voters on election day to win elections. Our theory can explain variation in clientelistic capacity among parties that emerged during the autocratic periods of democracies such as in Brazil (Workers' Party, Brazilian Democratic Movement Party), Greece (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), Indonesia (Golkar, United Development Party), Taiwan (Kuomintang, Democratic Progressive Party), Senegal (Socialist Party of Senegal), and others. The theory may also explain variation in clientelistic capacity among nineteenth-century European parties (see the description of the emergence of European conservative political parties during the advent of democracy and mass politics in Ziblatt, 2017) and may explain, after a democratic transition in the respective country, clientelistic capacity among parties that currently participate in elections in autocracies (Russia's parties such as United Russia or A Just Russia).

⁵According to Magaloni (2006), elites in competitive authoritarian regimes "possess strong incentives to remain united as long as the population supports the ruling party. If electoral support begins to wither, so do incentives to remain united within the ruling party. These autocracies, [therefore,] want to [win by large margins] to generate an image of invincibility in order to discourage party splits" (pp. 14–15).

⁶For instance, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the main founder of the PRD, argued that "numerous members of the PRI in the state of Michoacán just jumped [sic] with me to the PRD in 1989. These persons really helped in organizing the [new] party there. I guess that the party in Michoacán would have been an empty shell if they had not jumped to the PRD ... we used our personal relations and [political] expertise to appeal to the electorate in this state" (personal communication, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Mexico City, March 24, 2014).

⁷We excluded from the sample the "usos y costumbres" (traditions and customs) municipalities. Officially, all of them are located in the state of Oaxaca (418 municipalities in total before 2012). In these municipalities there is no party competition, and authorities are elected into office using a variety of different procedures. Similarly, approximately 30% of the municipality-year pairs we consider in our sample period are missing observations. These are years in which specific municipalities had no individuals enrolled in SP. It is because the SP was gradually introduced across the Mexican states and across municipalities. In our sample period, we consider an average of 4 years per municipality, and we observe 1.3 elections per municipality.

⁸This number includes beneficiaries of three other programs: *Programa de Empleo Temporal*, *Procampo*, and *Oportunidades*.

⁹The control variables in all our econometric models are the following (all measured at the municipality level, which is our main unit of analysis): number of dwellings with electricity; number of dwellings with piped water; proportion of employed population, proportion employed in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors; proportion of the population 15 years old or older with primary schooling, with post-primary schooling, and with no schooling; proportion of the population 15 years old or older that is illiterate; proportion of the population with a disability; proportion of women living in the municipality; proportion of households in the municipality where a woman is the head of the family; proportion of the population 5 years old or older that speaks and indigenous language; proportion of the population with health insurance; electoral turnout for each municipal election occurring between 2002 and 2011.

¹⁰Data on the number of people registered in SP in each municipality come from SALUD, 2018. Socioeconomic data for each municipality come from INEGI, 2018. Municipal electoral data and data on the party governing each state between 2002 and 2011 come from CIDAC, 2018. Data on the number of families registered to *Oportunidades* in each municipality come from SEDESOL, 2018.

¹¹Table A5 in the Appendix shows the results of the RD models including several control variables. Table A6 shows the results of the RD models using cubic and quartic polynomials. Tables A7 and A8 show the results of the RD models using a 10% and a 12% bandwidth, respectively. Our main results are very robust to any of these specifications. Table A9 uses as a dependent variable the number of households registered to *Oportunidades*; as expected, PRI victories in this case do not show a substantial or statistically significant effect.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Affiliation to SP: Municipalities Governed by the PRI (Year Before the Election)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
PRI	-.017 (.026)		-.020 (.034)	-.037 (.005)
Election ($t - 1$)		-.022 (.029)	-.033 (.045)	.005 (.051)
PRI * Election ($t - 1$)			-.021 (.059)	.003 (.068)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	No	No	Yes
N	7,893	7,893	7,893	7,893

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. The dependent variable is the log change of individuals enrolled in *Seguro Popular* in a given year and municipality. *PRI* is an indicator equal to one if the PRI is governing the municipality, and *Election ($t - 1$)* equals one the year prior to the election. The baseline controls at the municipality level are described in the main text. The sample includes all mayoral elections held between 2000 and 2011, in municipalities with *Seguro Popular* enrollees. The ** denotes significance at the .05 level. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A2. Affiliation to SP: Municipalities Governed by the PRI (Year After the Election)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
PRI	-.017 (.026)		.011 (.033)	-.009 (.048)
Election ($t + 1$)		-.036 (.032)	.024 (.050)	.047 (.059)
PRI * Election ($t + 1$)			-.119 (.065)	-.125 (.076)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	No	No	Yes
N	7,893	7,893	7,893	7,893

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. The dependent variable is the log change of individuals enrolled in *Seguro Popular* in a given year and municipality. PRI is an indicator equal to one if the PRI is governing the municipality and Election ($t + 1$) equals one the year after the election. The baseline controls at the municipality level are described in the main text. The sample includes all mayoral elections held between 2000 and 2011, in municipalities with *Seguro Popular* enrollees. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A3. Affiliation to Oportunidades: Municipalities Governed by the PRI

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
PRI	-.017*** (.005)		-.032*** (.007)	-.027*** (.009)
Election		-.028*** (.006)	-.048*** (.008)	-.057*** (.009)
PRI * Election			.041*** (.011)	.042*** (.012)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	No	No	Yes
N	16,766	16,766	16,766	16,766

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SEDESOL (2018).

Note. The dependent variable is the log change of families enrolled in *Oportunidades* in a given year and municipality. PRI is an indicator equal to one if the PRI is governing the municipality, and Election ($t + 1$) equals one the year after the election. The baseline controls at the municipality level are described in the main text. The sample includes all mayoral elections held between 2000 and 2011, in municipalities with families enrolled to *Oportunidades*. The *** denotes significance at the .01 level. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A4. Baseline Characteristics: Competitive Municipalities

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	PAN won	PAN lost	<i>t</i> -stat difference	PRD won	PRD lost	<i>t</i> -stat difference	PRI won	PRI lost	<i>t</i> -stat difference
Turnout	.82	.84	-.23	.80	.76	1.03	.85	.79	1.24
Dwellings with Electricity (thousands)	1.51	12.05	-.94	8.46	8.29	.14	8.87	9.15	-.27
Dwellings with Piped Water (thousands)	9.59	11.04	-.92	7.29	7.14	.12	7.84	8.11	-.27
Employed Population	.985	.987	-1.95*	.986	.985	.75	.986	.987	-2.47**
Employed Primary Sector	.36	.37	-.39	.40	.40	.18	.39	.38	1.22
Employed Secondary Sector	.24	.25	-.57	.22	.22	.35	.23	.24	-.95
Employed Tertiary Sector	.34	.34	.43	.33	.33	-.35	.32	.33	-2.87**
Population ≥ 15 Complete Primary	.13	.13	-.45	.13	.12	.75	.13	.13	-1.14
Population with any Disability	.02	.02	-.32	.02	.02	-.63	.02	.02	-1.33
Female Population	.50	.50	.68	.51	.50	1.65	.50	.51	-2.40**
Households Female Head	.04	.04	1.04	.05	.05	-.16	.04	.04	-1.33
Population ≥ 15 Illiterate	.09	.09	.77	.11	.11	1.28	.10	.10	-.96
Population ≥ 15 Incomplete Primary	.17	.17	.37	.16	.16	-.60	.17	.17	-.45
Population ≥ 15 No Education	.09	.09	.71	.11	.11	1.33	.10	.10	-1.10
Population ≥ 5 Speaks Indigenous	.11	.12	-.42	.15	.12	2.23**	.13	.14	-1.11
Population ≥ 15 Post-Primary	.21	.21	.37	.20	.20	-.12	.20	.20	-1.62
Population With Health Insurance	.35	.33	2.49**	.26	.27	-.68	.30	.30	.72
Families with <i>Oportunidades</i>	1,816.53	1,822.57	-.05	2,195.80	2,224.12	-.18	2,046.09	1,986.89	.58

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. Columns (1) and (2) show the corresponding mean value or proportion of each variable for municipalities with close elections involving the PAN. Columns (4) and (5) report these statistics for municipalities with close elections involving the PRD. Columns (7) and (8) report these statistics for municipalities with close elections involving the PRI. Columns (3), (6), and (9) report the *t*-statistic of the difference in means between municipalities where each party barely won and where it barely lost. The * and ** denote, respectively, significance at the .1 and .05 levels.

Table A5. Close Elections and Enrollment to SP (with Controls)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	PAN win	PRD win	PRI win
Individuals Enrolled in SP	-321.9 (641.2)	-2,017.7* (1,181.2)	2,231.7** (982.6)
Share of Individuals Enrolled in SP	-.004 (.012)	.024 (.019)	.021* (.012)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	1,702	1,211	2,689

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. Columns (1)–(3) examine the average number of individuals enrolled in *Seguro Popular* and the share of individuals enrolled in a given municipality for the three major parties. We run the same specification for each political party, where Party Win is an indicator equal to one if a candidate from a specific party won the election. The sample includes elections where each party won by a vote margin of 8 percentage points or less. The specification includes a quadratic RD polynomial estimated separately on either side of the win–loss threshold. The baseline controls at the municipality level are described in Table 3 in the main text. The ** and * denote significance at .05 and .1 levels, respectively. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A6. Close Elections and Enrollment to SP (Cubic and Quartic Polynomial)

	Cubic			Quartic		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	PAN win	PRD win	PRI win	PAN win	PRD win	PRI win
Individuals Enrolled in SP	-511.0 (1,262.0)	609.3 (1,792.8)	4,794.5*** (1,726.4)	-522.0 (1,401.0)	-507.9 (2,647.7)	3,639.0* (2,051.3)
Share of Individuals Enrolled in SP	-.010 (.021)	.001 (.036)	.055*** (.018)	-.008 (.023)	-.017 (.056)	.061*** (.021)
N	1,727	1,233	2,714	1,727	1,233	2,714

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. Columns (1)–(6) examine the average number of individuals enrolled in *Seguro Popular* and the share of individuals enrolled in a given municipality for the three major parties. We run the same specification for each political party, where Party Win is an indicator equal to one if a candidate of a specific party won the election. The sample includes elections where each party won by a vote margin of 8 percentage points or less. The rows correspond to different specifications of the RD polynomial (i.e. Quartic or Cubic). The ***, **, and * denote significance at .01, .05, and .10 levels, respectively. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A7. Close Elections and Enrollment to SP (Bandwidth 10%)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	PAN win	PRD win	PRI win
Individuals Enrolled in SP	-1,161.4 (1,029.5)	-2,253.3 (1,562.7)	4,007.3*** (1,371.5)
Share of Individuals Enrolled in SP	-.004 (.018)	.004 (.024)	.040** (.016)
N	2,068	1,470	3,253

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. Columns (1)–(3) examine the average number of individuals enrolled in *Seguro Popular* and the share of individuals enrolled in a given municipality for the three major parties. We run the same specification for each political party, where Party Win is an indicator equal to one if a candidate of a specific party won the election. The sample includes elections where each party won by a vote margin of 10 percentage points or less. The specification includes a quadratic RD polynomial estimated separately on either side of the win–loss threshold. The ***, **, and * denote significance at .01, .05, and .10 levels, respectively. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A8. Close Elections and Enrollment to SP (Bandwidth 12%)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	PAN win	PRD win	PRI win
Individuals Enrolled in SP	-1,565.3 (996.9)	-2,306.9 (1,545.7)	4,135.2*** (1,253.3)
Share of Individuals Enrolled in SP	-.006 (.018)	.0061 (.0228)	.036** (.015)
N	2,387	1,652	3,742

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SALUD (2018).

Note. Columns (1)–(3) examine the average number of individuals enrolled in *Seguro Popular* and the share of individuals enrolled in a given municipality for the three major parties. We run the same specification for each political party, where Party Win is an indicator equal to one if a candidate of a specific party won the election. The sample includes elections where each party won by a vote margin of 12 percentage points or less. The specification includes a quadratic RD polynomial estimated separately on either side of the win–loss threshold. The ***, **, and * denote significance at .01, .05, and .10 levels, respectively. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A9. Close Elections and Enrollment in Oportunidades

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	PAN win	PRD win	PRI win
Families Enrolled in	-167.0	268.3	168.8
<i>Oportunidades</i>	(148.3)	(277.1)	(189.3)
Share of Families Enrolled in	-.022	.015	.008
<i>Oportunidades</i>	(.708)	(.029)	(.019)
N	1,727	1,233	2,714

Source: Authors' elaboration, with data from CIDAC (2018), INEGI (2018), and SEDESOL (2018).

Note. Columns (1)–(3) examine the average number of families enrolled in *Oportunidades* and the share of families enrolled in a given municipality for the three major parties. We run the same specification for each political party, where Party Win is an indicator equal to one if a candidate of a specific party won the election. The sample includes elections where each party won by a vote margin of 8 percentage points or less. The specification includes a quadratic RD polynomial estimated separately on either side of the win-loss threshold. The standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.