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### **‘Who is Using Whom?’ Clientelism from the Client’s Perspective**

In Mexico City, the poor want for nutritious foods, employment, decent housing, education, health care and urban services such as sewage, electricity, running water and transportation.<sup>1</sup> As much as these resources should be accessible universally, the reality is that the city’s government is unable to finance goods and services for all residents and that its formal market does not provide enough jobs. Many citizens must thus choose between going without much-needed resources and using personal relationships with local politicians, operators and social leaders to obtain housing, services and work. Under these circumstances, the poor tend to consider patron-client exchanges a strategic mechanism for achieving physical and economic security. Some researchers highlight the importance of this strategic tool for basic needs fulfilment, while others focus on the negative consequences that the discretionary public resource distribution involved has for democratic institutions. While my evidence supports both of these conclusions, it also suggests that some clients learn important citizenship responsibilities in their interactions with patrons.

I examine perceptions of clientelism from the position of civil society members who have come in contact with it and consider how they see the politicians (and their parties) involved in clientelism, as well as how clientelism affects clients’ community and political participation. The findings presented here form part of a larger research project on clientelism in Mexico and within the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Democratic Revolutionary Party, PRD), based on fieldwork undertaken in the summers of 2002 and 2003 and from August to December of 2004. I engaged in formal, unstructured interviews with 81 patrons, clients and politicians and observed a series of community and party meetings. I targeted groups and individuals based on a maximum variation goal, identification of key players in party documents and newspapers, as well as opportunistic sampling and snowballing. Given the focus of the larger project, the information discussed here comes largely from individuals associated in some way with the PRD. With the exception of those presented in the case on the *Partido del Trabajo* (Workers’ Party, PT), the individuals either have direct exchange relations with PRD politicians or their representatives, or have exchange relations with the leader of a social organization, who – in turn – has a clientelist link to the party.

In the interviewees’ experiences, responses and what I observed of their political lives, I was able to find three types of perception of, and response to, clientelist exchanges. In the pages that follow, I have selected what I consider to be emblematic cases that illustrate each of these three types. A first category of informants viewed clientelist relations as useful in a utilitarian sense. They participate in community and political activities because this gives them access to resources held, or brokered, by a local leader. Their perception of the political party to which the leader is linked depends on the quality of the goods and services she provides. A second category is made up of individuals with the economic means, education and/or organizational and political experience to have options beyond clientelistic ties. Correspondingly, they can permit themselves to take positions much more critical of clientelism. These people have been engaged in, or directly affected by, clientelism and recognize that it is used because of its short-term

benefits, but cannot reconcile it with their political values and vision for the country. The final category felt that clientelist relations go beyond simple utilitarian bargaining and involve important aspects of community building, such as teaching the value of political mobilization. These people tend to support the project of their patron even after they have received the tangible benefit that first motivated them to mobilize.

In sum, the issue of clientelism is complex. Although it has a series of corrosive effects on society, it cannot be roundly dismissed as negative: the socioeconomically marginalized perceive clientelism to be a useful strategy for fulfilling basic needs and, in some cases, clientelism actually has positive effects on collective action and political involvement by giving poor citizens organizational and participative skills.

### The Literature

Clientelism has been defined as a voluntary, dyadic arrangement in which two individuals of unequal status, who have a long-term personal relationship that may include elements of friendship and affection, engage in diffuse reciprocal exchanges of non-comparable goods and services to mutual benefit. The alliance is informal, but is governed by a set of norms based on reciprocity, integrity, honour, respect and obligation.<sup>ii</sup> The concept has been used to describe traditional relations between landlords and peasants or among villagers, links between politicians and the poor in modern societies and alliances among members of the middle class, elites, bureaucrats and politicians.<sup>iii</sup>

To be sure, this is an inclusive definition, one whose elements have been the subject of fervent debates. In the early heyday of research on clientelism, undertaken from the 1950s to the 1970s and largely from a structural functional perspective, the most important of these included: whether and when dyadic relations are strictly instrumental or involve sincere sentiments between exchange partners; whether dyads exist only due to their importance to the social system that surrounds them or whether normative principles of reciprocity create obligations that must be fulfilled between people; whether dyads strictly involve individuals or whether groups can be considered; whether clientelism necessarily stunts political development or can be positive because it allows for the inclusion and mobility of the otherwise marginalized.<sup>iv</sup>

More recent studies of clientelism are firmly grounded in very distinctive research traditions, whose foci on different entities of ontological importance also result in diverging views of clientelism. Sociologists and anthropologists, as well as political scientists with an affinity for the former disciplines, engaged in ethnographic studies tend to view clientelism as a highly dynamic relationship that can be effective across a variety of settings and is often used strategically by clients, as much as by patrons, to access scarce resources. Thus, Fox describes the differences between an 'authoritarian clientelism' where patrons firmly control political power and back clientelistic negotiations with credible threats of coercion to subjugate clients, and a 'semiclientelism' where patrons in a more competitive political environment can only threaten clients with benefit removal.<sup>v</sup> Gay recounts a community leader's negotiations of one-shot exchanges of votes for benefits with electoral candidates across a series of contests in terms of the community's best alternative for ensuring political accountability.<sup>vi</sup> Shefner argues that independent community mobilization allows flexible material goal setting through organizing

mechanisms that may morph into broader political projects, but that clientelism is an important alternative if it provides easier access to resources.<sup>vii</sup> Harking back to earlier work on urban<sup>viii</sup> and rural<sup>ix</sup> settings, these authors bring out the utilitarian aspects of relationships with patrons from a client's perspective.

Researchers writing from a rational-institutional perspective, on the other hand, tend to highlight the negative effects clientelism has on democratic institutions. For example, Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes describe clientelism as a system of social control that undermines democracy and motivates politicians to preserve economic stagnation so that they may continue to prey on the poor.<sup>x</sup> Kitschelt also argues that clientelism inhibits political freedom and participation while perpetuating economic inequality.<sup>xi</sup> More specifically, a number of authors hold that clientelism undermines (among other things) democratic legislative action, as legislators in clientelistic settings focus on delivering particularistic benefits rather than on generating policy to advance universal socioeconomic interests.<sup>xii</sup>

Of course the authors concerned with clients' needs and strategies recognize that clientelism generally undermines formal, impersonal, democratic institutions. However, they emphasize the problems created by gaps in the contemporary democratic, capitalist system. The latter is often imperfect in delivering goods and services to the poor, who therefore use personalistic tools to fulfill their material needs. Yet, as we will see, clientelism does not always undermine community organizing. The variability of clientelism is aptly demonstrated by the Mexican case: historically, in the shift from the PRI's dominant rule to a competitive party environment, and presently, in the experiences of a number of clients in Mexico City.

### The Mexican Context

The hegemonic PRI used clientelism as a mechanism of social control in both rural and urban arenas throughout the 71 years of its rule (1929-2000). In the post-revolutionary years, it bargained with local strongmen to ensure their loyalty, and that of their clients, thus patching over its uneven reach into the countryside. Although these strongmen had to deliver benefits to their clients in order to merit the position of patron, unjust treatment of clients was fairly widespread since possible patrons were in short supply and were subject to little oversight.<sup>xiii</sup> As economic modernization and the concomitant urbanization progressed, the PRI also began to use local strongmen to subjugate urban slums.<sup>xiv</sup> However, urban clients had access to a greater number of potential patrons, who not only had to compete for clients but also had to refrain from egregious exploitation since the party would not always tolerate this in the city, in sight of the general population. Thus, the affectivity and longevity of the traditional clientelist relationship diminished, while clients' bargaining power increased.<sup>xv</sup> The PRI itself always used both promises and threats in its clientelistic bargains. For example, dissidents of the regime were often offered lucrative bureaucratic positions in exchange for political quiescence, but failure to cooperate resulted in the application of force.<sup>xvi</sup>

Through the 1970s and 1980s, the PRI instituted a series of electoral reforms that resulted in its near upset by a coalition of left-wing opposition parties in the 1988 presidential elections.<sup>xvii</sup> The coalition was reconstituted as the PRD in 1989 and, along with other opposition parties,

increased its electoral activity and victories at the municipal and state levels. This rendered the political arena evermore competitive and culminated in the PRI's loss of power to the conservative *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party, PAN) in the year 2000. With the opposition contesting its every move and citizens becoming more openly critical, the PRI had less recourse to the stick it had used in the past to back its clientelistic bargains.<sup>xviii</sup>

Despite their staunch opposition to priísta methods, perredistas also use clientelism to gather political support. However, they rarely employ force.<sup>xix</sup> Force is not only counter effective in the highly mediatized, politically competitive urban areas where the PRD is most successful, but has never formed an accepted element of clientelism in the party. The absence of force probably renders clientelism less efficient from the patron's perspective – regardless of her party affiliation – but increases its attractiveness for clients. To be sure, clientelism continues to have non-democratic aspects, such as the discretionary distribution of public goods to clients. Those who do not have a patron or choose to forego such bargains go empty handed or must endure lengthy bureaucratic procedures. Nonetheless, perredistas' privatization of public goods has gone hand-in-hand with the party's attempts to improve the general socioeconomic and political situation of the marginalized. Nowhere is this more evident than in Mexico's Federal District.

The government of Mexico City has been held by the PRD since 1997 and was headed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador at the time of my investigation. López Obrador's aim was to create a state of justice and equality in which the lower classes are given the opportunities, skills and resources – through programs providing access to education, work, health care, housing and good nutrition – to improve their standard of living.<sup>xx</sup> Local PRD politicians were continually campaigning for this project and the programs that had already been established were very popular among the poor.<sup>xxi</sup>

In addition to using the popularity of the party's platform, party politicians and operators actively sought to increase support among the poor through clientelist means. They negotiated with individuals and with leaders of social organizations to exchange goods and services for affiliation to the party, participation in rallies and demonstrations to support the party and Andrés Manuel López Obrador and/or their vote. Individuals received a variety of incentives, ranging from food baskets, eyeglasses and cinema passes, to the installation of street lamps and preferential treatment by social housing authorities. Where a social leader brokered the link between citizen and party, the leader was given resources that were then distributed discretionarily to organization members and the leader may even have negotiated a political position in return for convincing members to support the party. It is the perceptions of these interactions and the resulting longer-term responses to the party, its politicians and sociopolitical participation in general, that are analyzed here.

#### Clientelism Effectively Satisfies Basic Needs

Some of the urban poor interviewed view their clientelistic relationships from a very utilitarian perspective. They need food, shelter and work and would like to be able to educate their children so that they may have a better life, but cannot easily achieve their objectives through official channels. In order to meet their needs, they negotiate informal exchanges with persons who have some kind of privileged access to the required resources. They operate in a world marked by

clientelism with a heavy political content, but are not necessarily interested in the meaning of this politics beyond the role it plays in their alliance with a patron who provides goods and services.

To be sure, the clients' actions per se are political. First, their needs are not only individual but the direct result of socioeconomic structures that affect an entire segment of the population: the urban poor as a sector lack stable employment, adequate housing and access to public infrastructure. Second, filling their needs requires organization and interaction with individuals or groups in government, or at least with brokers who have access to the latter.<sup>xxii</sup> However, the political activity of urban slum dwellers is often motivated by an individualistic rationale and ceases when the goal triggering mobilization has been reached.<sup>xxiii</sup> The activity is, thus, objectively political but subjectively personal. That is, the key for clients is the material aspect of the exchange relationship and the manoeuvring that is necessary to keep open the channels through which the resources flow. It does not necessarily matter to whom the channel leads – whether a conservative, centrist, or leftist politician – as long as that patron is competitive. Where clientelism unfolds in this way, there is a positive effect on clients' perceptions of the party whose politicians engage in the negotiations, as long as the latter continue to be competitive patrons.

The *Unión Popular Benita Galeana*.<sup>xxiv</sup> The *Unión Popular Benita Galeana* (UPBG) is a social organization founded by two PRD politicians to help residents of Mexico City with limited means to acquire subsidized housing. One of its projects involves a plot of land with an apartment complex, a house and several shanties, which are to be destroyed to make room for a new building to house the plot's current inhabitants. The people all have to sign on to the project and make their down payment in a fixed time span in order for the government credit to be granted and construction to commence. There is some difficulty in this because not all of the inhabitants want to proceed with the UPBG as administrator. At a meeting of community leaders and the UPBG, it was revealed that 68 of the 154 families on the plot have organised an alternative group under the leadership of a politician from the *Partido Verde Ecologista de México* (Green Ecologist Party of Mexico, PVEM). The dissidents do not want to pay rent owing (some have not paid for 15 years) and complain that the UPBG group is politicized because of its founders' involvement. If the protesters are not convinced to come aboard, the proposal will fail because the *Instituto de Vivienda del Distrito Federal* (Federal District Housing Institute, INVI) requires the unanimous consent of all tenants. Due to these issues, it is important that the project's directorate include the tenant group's natural leaders, who command respect and have the ability to sway opinions. Doña Antonia is one of these people and, although she is a rebellious character who does not make an ideal administrator, one UPBG leader says that, 'she's been here a long time and people look to her, so we have to pull her in.'

Doña Antonia is an older woman with little patience for the dissidents and openly admits that she will give them confrontational replies when they ask her questions, rather than attempting to explain why they should join her side. In fact, she is ready to become aggressive with these people and hints that she may bring a weapon to the next general meeting. Privately, she tells me that she is afraid the credit application and construction processes will be much too difficult and take too long. Doña Antonia has lived on this plot of land almost her entire life, in self-

constructed stone and corrugated aluminium dwellings. Now she says that she has already lived her life; she just wants her house, her property.

Always a *priista*, Doña Antonia is becoming convinced of the merits of the PRD because she sees the good work of the party through the two politicians who founded the UPBG. She says that the PRI politicians talk a lot, but they never do anything and the PAN, which is in power in Doña Antonia's municipality, is elitist: 'they only pay attention to the middle class. They ignore the poor.' The politicians involved in the UPBG, on the other hand, will rub shoulders with anyone and make an effort to ensure that the people have what they need. She first met one of them many years ago, when he began to come around with a truck to sell cheap food packages. She knows the second one better and thinks he is a very good person because he has worked hard for UPBG members. For example, she asked him to help her convince the municipality to have a light installed in the passageway that leads from the street to her slum dwelling, 'and look, there's the light. Of course, I pay for the electricity, but he had the lamp put up.'

Doña Antonia does not see the exchanges between the politicians, the UPBG and the tenants as political or of personal benefit to the politicians involved. 'The [UPBG] does not ask us for anything, no quotas, nothing [...] If anything, it's the reverse. For example, [the politician] has helped many of the older women to get their birth certificates, which are necessary documents for the transactions with the INVI.' The tenants will occasionally be asked by the association to do something in support of its founding politicians, or the two politicians will invite them to an event, but attendance is strictly voluntary. 'No one is obligated to go to anything. When we go, then they just say, thanks a lot for coming and supporting us, companions.'

A PRD activist who volunteers for the Unión clarifies that the two politicians have the Unión members to thank for their political positions. She says that many votes for the two candidates came from the organization and, in return, they contribute money from their salaries to pay for administrative costs and make sure that the INVI processes UPBG projects with due attention. For example, when the current development began, there was talk of the down payments for members being 30,000 pesos.<sup>xxv</sup> Negotiations with the INVI resulted in agreement to a much higher than usual amount of credit, leaving the members with a lesser, 15,000 peso, down payment. Smiling, the activist says, 'it's all a big circle'.

Doña Antonia is not interested in using diplomacy to ensure the smooth functioning of her group, or in the opinions or needs of other members. Nor does she care about party platforms beyond noting the party adhesion of the politicians who have responded to, or ignored, her resource needs. Her actions are strictly circumscribed by individualistic goals. It is only in conversation with a party activist that the greater political repercussions of Doña Antonia's participation, and that of other group members, are made explicit.

Senior Citizens' Groups. Some PRD politicians have used brokers to form groups for senior citizens in their electoral districts. One such broker introduces me to her Thursday evening group, where 13 women are in attendance. All of the women agree that they attend these meetings because they like to spend time together and share experiences, have fun, dance and exercise. When I ask about the PRD, one of the women says that they have nothing to do with the party here and the rest chime in, in a general 'no'. Then Doña Gloria speaks. She rises from

her place in the circle of chairs and begins to walk about, gesturing with her arms and hands to underscore her point: she is with the PRD. Doña Gloria tells the group of López Obrador's help to the elderly and everyone concurs that the Mayor is doing a good job. She goes on to describe the merits of the district's federal congressman (PRD) and his wife, who attended her daughter's funeral and wake and who provide her with food packages and eye glasses. Doña Gloria concludes, 'the only way I can repay them is with my support, so if they ever need my help for anything, I'll be there.' She asks the others how they feel about this and yeses are heard around the room.

Several weeks later, I join the broker and members of her groups at a demonstration against firearms, led by the congressman's wife, who is a member of the Federal District's Legislative Assembly for the PRD. Here, I meet Catalina, a 62-year-old widow who sits on the Board of Directors for the broker's largest group, which comprises approximately 65 people. She was elected to this position by the group and her responsibilities include responding to members' questions and concerns when the broker is not present, as well as making sure that everyone signs in at the beginning of a meeting. Her group is meeting as we speak and she forgot to sign in before joining the march, but she hopes this oversight will not have repercussions since the broker is also demonstrating and will know that Catalina participated. She explains that this is important since she will not be able to get her monthly food package from the municipality if she has not attended all of the meetings. Regular presence at gatherings also qualifies her for the municipality's program of providing eye glasses to seniors, but if she chose this option, she would have to forego her food packages for one year.

Before her husband died, Catalina and he spent 25 years selling tomatoes from a dolly in the market. She is no longer strong enough to do this work alone and is now supported by her family. While the municipality's monthly food packages are only worth about 100 pesos, they contain the essentials: one kilo each of sugar, rice, beans and powdered milk, as well as salt, cooking oil, coffee, fresh milk, sardines, tuna, chiles and chocolate. Rounding this out with the meat and tortillas that she buys herself, the package does last her almost the entire month, taking some of the burden off her family.

Her seniors' group is important to Catalina not only due to the tangible benefits she receives as a result of attendance. Much like the Thursday assembly members indicated, Catalina also enjoys the others' company. After her husband died, she became very depressed and refused to leave her house for a long time. Catalina says it took her family years to convince her to participate in something in order to get out of the house. Now, she is in the group, is happy once again, talks to everyone and especially enjoys the dances and exercise sessions. She admits that she does not go to many demonstrations because she does not like to walk long distances, but when she does participate it is because she wants to have fun, not for political reasons.

Members of the seniors' groups are motivated primarily by the desire to socialize as well as by the food baskets and health care available through participation. It is not of immediate importance to them that a political party sponsors the groups or that their activities with these groups have a political impact. Thus, Catalina demonstrates because it is a sunny day, she enjoys others' company and because it lowers her family's grocery expenses, not because she has any active interest in firearms legislation or in the PRD's position on the matter.

A *Partido del Trabajo* Shanty-town. The pragmatic vision of personal exchange relations also exists among clients of other parties. In a shantytown organization administered by the *Partido del Trabajo* (Workers' Party, PT), a number of members explain to me that they do not really know or care about the politics related to their activities. This organization has housing projects in eight Federal District municipalities and I am visiting the two projects closest to its headquarters. Both of the shanty towns I see were established as a result of land invasions – the members of the organization set up a camp on an unoccupied plot of land overnight and then began to build their homes. Due to the manner in which they take possession of property, these people are called '*paracaidistas*' (parachuters) in Mexican slang. Once they are on the land, they generally barricade and patrol it, so that law officials and non-members cannot enter to disturb their activities. While the leader of the project is a PT politician, the members are only there to meet their own needs.

Dolores has been with the organization for over 20 years, living in various shantytowns. She and other members of the project go to demonstrations and sit-ins in minibuses, paid for either by the PT or by the settlers, when their leader tells them that such an event will take place. What happens if they do not attend these events? 'They fine us,' Dolores laughs, 'no, no, it's not true'. She explains, 'we go for our thing, for economic reasons. The political side doesn't interest us, we don't know anything about it.' Her friend chimes in, '[the leader] is the boss, we just show up to see what's going to be done, what demonstration we have to go to. We're just interested in housing, that's why we're with [the leader]. He's the one who's a politician.'

Adela, who lives on the second plot, confirms the other two women's statements. She is a 27-year-old mother of six, whose husband lives with her off and on.

I have been here for four years. I like it here because it feels like a family atmosphere. I used to live with my parents-in-law, but I didn't want that anymore because it doesn't work ... I go to demonstrations and sit-ins because it's fun. I leave my kids with their grandparents, so I get to go without them and I can chat with other people – it's relaxing, de-stressing, entertaining... We hear about the events at assemblies, where the settlers are told where and when to go. I am saving for an apartment with the INVI because I want something more for my kids.

These women are not interested in politics, but in having a place to live and finding security for their families. If they can improve their economic situation through an alliance with a political patron, they are happy to do so and do not see their participation in political events – even though they do not bother to inform themselves what these are for – as an undue burden. Adela, in fact, finds the political events to be a welcome change from her everyday activities.

In sum, the women we have met so far participate in social organizations and construct relationships with politicians or their brokers for personal reasons. Through these connections, they gain significant benefits that can go a long way toward fulfilling their basic needs of food, shelter and human interaction. Though mobilization in general and their relationships with politicians of a particular ideological stripe have an important political content, the women do



not engage directly with the political aspect, relegating it to a level of secondary importance and regarding it through the lens of their personal relationship with the party representative. As long as their liaison with the latter has positive results, they will regard the party in question kindly. Miguel, however, views the link between the leaders of his association and the PRD skeptically.

The *Panteras*. Miguel drives a taxi under the judicial protection of the *amparos* that have been granted to approximately 20 taxi associations whose drivers operate without legal permits in Mexico City.<sup>xxvi</sup> Unemployment here is high and taxi driving is one of the preferred jobs for those unable to find work elsewhere.<sup>xxvii</sup> Since it is time consuming and expensive to become legally licensed as a taxi driver, many drivers simply join one of the associations whose affiliates operate under an *amparo* conceding them the right to work. Known as pirates, these drivers thus continue to be illegally employed, but are supposedly beyond the reach of police. The largest such association is the *Panteras* (Panthers), operated by a radical popular movement and linked to the PRD through one of its leaders. The *Panteras* have somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 members – a number difficult to pin down since it fluctuates constantly and leaders tend to inflate the size of their organization – and operate from 24 offices in the Federal District. They are considered the most militant direct action group of the popular movement because members are often sent to close important streets to traffic and clash with police to make known the presence of the movement and its position on political issues.

Miguel has been driving with the *Panteras* for the past year and describes the organization as providing an important opportunity.

With the *Panteras*, you buy the *amparo* for 3,500 pesos, pay a 100 peso weekly quota, make sure your car is in good condition, buy your insurance and get your license. Official taxi plates cost about 80,000 pesos, so this is much more expensive than the *amparo*. Plus, if you have problems with the police, your leader promises to solve them.

Miguel explains that the weekly quota is supposed to be a support for the services provided by leaders. These include paying for the return of impounded cars by bribing officials; paying off politicians to allow the pirates to operate; and ordering t-shirts and banners that will make the *Panteras* identifiable in pro-PRD demonstrations. Regarding the latter, Miguel says that he does not participate in these kinds of events as he is ‘not ok with playing the leaders’ game because they benefit personally [...] they exploit people; their motive is to make themselves look strong and benefit by getting people together.’ He estimates that the leaders keep about 30% of the various quotas, enriching themselves and building mansions. The final destination of the fines Miguel has to pay for not attending political events is also not traceable, but he thinks it goes into the leaders’ pockets.

Nonetheless, Miguel points out that many people are in agreement with the way in which the group operates. This is because the difficult employment situation in the city makes them dependent on organizations such as the *Panteras* for work. Relatively few are able to afford the official plates and wind up driving for someone else, paying the car’s owner a quota of approximately 200 pesos daily. The money they keep allows them to survive, but they will never have enough to buy their own plates. With the *Panteras*, on the other hand, they must buy the

*amparo* and pay the weekly quota, but their income is theirs to keep. Because the trade of official plates is lucrative, many drivers – including Miguel – will sell them, buy one or two cars with the profit and join the *Panteras* with a small fleet. This is not a safe business since the police harass the pirates, claiming that the *amparo* is no longer valid, but it is a worthwhile risk for people who have no other opportunities to build capital. Supporting these assertions, a reporter covering the *Panteras*, states that the drivers he has spoken with tend to regard their association positively. They usually tell him of their families' economic need and how the association works to help them get ahead.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Much like the women whose experiences are recounted above, Miguel participates in clientelist exchanges because they bring him personal benefits. Through the association he has joined, he is able to generate an income that is unattainable for him in the formal economy. However, he tries to pocket the benefits without fully complying with what is expected of him because he feels that the organization leaders abuse their position. Miguel does, thus, take into account the implications of organizing and knows that the *Panteras* leaders profit politically from their capacity to mobilize great numbers. This colours his view of the PRD and if a broker or politician offering a better deal than the *Panteras* came along, he would switch allegiance.

From the perspective of the PRD, the approximately 18,000 *taxis pirata* operating in Mexico City are a sign of the difficulties involved in governing in a democratic era marked by great income inequalities.<sup>xxix</sup> Unlike the PRI in its hegemonic heyday, the PRD cannot afford to rule the city with an iron fist. The PRD in government has to respond to increasing pressures to deal with crime in the city, coming in particular from the middle and upper classes, hundreds of thousands of whom demonstrated to protest insecurity on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The *piratas* are perceived as a significant source of crime, not only because they operate illegally, but also because they are feared as potential robbers and kidnappers.<sup>xxx</sup> However, the PRD in government also has to represent the interests of its poor constituents, among them the *piratas*, who cannot find jobs with decent pay in the formal economy and have to turn to the informal sector. As a result, the city administration on the one hand fines *piratas* and impounds their vehicles and on the other hand grants them *amparos* so that they may continue to operate. In this context, some PRD politicians and city officials act as brokers between *pirata* organizations and the law. The politicians and officials form clientelistic alliances with *pirata* representatives, in an exchange that allows the former to build political capital and the latter to provide their members some security in their work.<sup>xxxi</sup> Regardless of the difficulties involved in governing Mexico City, educated citizens often judge the PRD's methods and alliances harshly.

### Clientelism Manipulates and Demobilizes

The second category of interviewee perceptions of, and responses to, clientelist relations is made up of individuals who are not entirely dependent on clientelism to reach their goals and who see clientelism as clashing with their worldview. These clients' comments and experiences bear out the conclusions drawn by researchers studying the effects of clientelism on democratic institutions, that clientelism demobilizes citizens and individualizes their demand making, while providing incentives for politicians to privatize public goods.<sup>xxxii</sup> Of course, it is no accident that the only cases I found of individuals for whom the trade-offs of clientelism proved too inconvenient or insufficiently rewarding were not poor persons, but rather educated professionals

or community leaders with alternative opportunities. Their experiences with clientelism in the PRD have left them disappointed with a party that they had once considered to be a great hope for Mexico.

Casa Lomas Social Housing Cooperative. Beatriz and her sister had already tried various unsuccessful approaches to buying an apartment, when they joined the Casa Lomas project, which is run by one of the city's urban popular organizations. The banks asked for prerequisites they were unable to meet and other housing groups only wanted to steal from them. They even considered an organization run by a politician from the PAN, but Beatriz says this was worse than others because the leader showed no interest in creating a political environment in which the claimants' general needs would be looked after. The sisters found their way into the Casa Lomas cooperative at the invitation of an aunt who had already been a member for some time and because they realized that, despite the work expected of them, this project would allow them to get ahead.

Beatriz had to strike a bargain with the Casa Lomas leader in order to join the project. She says that everyone has to make a deal because, on top of paying the leaders ten pesos every week, one has to donate something to become a member. Being a psychologist, Beatriz was asked to give talks to others in the cooperative. The association uses the skills of those wanting to join to fill its needs: professionals have to volunteer their expertise and those who do not have any particular abilities make up the manual labour force and direct action groups (*grupos de choque*). The latter are those sent to protect land that has been invaded or to confront police in demonstrations.

Other than volunteering her skills as a psychologist, Beatriz had to pay a deposit into a housing fund and attend weekly meetings of the organization as well as a variety of political protests and demonstrations. She explains that the movement that founded Casa Lomas has always had to protest to be recognized because it organises the poorest of the poor, but that it claimed not to be a political entity until it began to mobilize in favour of the PRD once the party won power in the Federal District. Then, when one of the movement leaders ran for election to the Legislative Assembly, everyone had to vote for him. 'It really wore you down,' Beatriz says of the requirements, but she carried on until she reached her goal.

However, it was not unusual that members would avoid participating in events, or leave the organization altogether, because they tired of the incessant activities. At demonstrations,

people go, look for the person who writes down that you were there and then leave. That's what I did. But, if you don't go at all, you have to pay a fine between 30 and 50 pesos. The idea is that you pay this so that they can pay someone else to go in your place, but they never end up giving that person the full amount. Those who collect the money keep some of it. But, none of this matters because as long as you don't have a house, you do whatever they say to get it. And you say whatever it is they tell you to say: down with the PRI, down with the PAN. Once you already have a house, you stop going. The [movement] enslaves people. It exploits them as much as it can.

Beatriz sympathized with the left before becoming a member of Casa Lomas. She had many left-wing ideas and would participate in political events of her own accord. After her experience in the Casa Lomas association, however, she stopped doing all of this because she felt deceived. ‘They [the cooperative and organization leaders] do have many leftist ideas, but it’s a manipulated left.’ Whatever political education the organization imparts is given to its leaders, who then pass it on to the membership in assemblies where accords are made and work is organised. Members of the rank and file who are interested in meeting procedures could learn something from the assemblies, but Beatriz doubts that there is an impact on the people in general. ‘People who are in there and who are leftists are going to do what the Front asks of you and more because you’re convinced, but many aren’t leftists and only do it because they have to.’ She speculates that, of the 500 Cooperative members, only 10 to 20 % were actually swayed by the Front’s ideas and activities and these people generally became representatives in the leadership commissions.

Beatriz and her sister had reservations about exchange relations in which resources are traded for political support, but found that this was the only way they could get their own residential property. When they made the decision to enter a social housing claimants’ organization, they tried to choose one in which the requirements for participation in various meetings, demonstrations and payments were not too heavy to bear. Nonetheless, the process wore them down and made them feel used to such an extent that they came to regard their patron and the entire organization as crooks. This attitude encompasses the PRD. Since the patron and organization are allied with the party, Beatriz and her sister now think that the party itself – and the political left in general – is manipulative. They no longer see the benefits of the PRD platform and have stopped being politically active.

*Unión Popular Revolucionaria Emiliano Zapata.* The *Unión Popular Revolucionaria Emiliano Zapata* (Emiliano Zapata Popular Revolutionary Union, UPREZ) is rooted in a number of popular settlements and was formally constituted in 1987, as an anti-electoral organization that refused to ally with any politician. In the 1988 presidential elections, the leaders and many members decided to support the coalition that later became the PRD, but did so on an individual and voluntary basis, rather than affiliating the organization as a whole. Since that time, the UPREZ has participated in various PRD electoral processes and currently boasts one federal deputy, one local deputy in Mexico State and two Legislative Assembly deputies in the Federal District. Rafael is one of the primary leaders of the UPREZ, but works with a faction of the organization that has remained politically independent. He is personally averse to clientelism and feels that exchange-based relationships between social movements and the PRD have done a disservice to society by demobilizing the politically independent organizations that tried to hold government accountable.

In the organization right now we’re discussing clientelism in the PRD because the party uses the people’s demands for clientelistic purposes. We’ve fallen into these practices as well: many comrades lose their social objectives and use people to win campaigns. For example, we have a supplies project through which we buy produce directly from peasants as a long-term project to resolve the needs of families, but at election time some

people give out food baskets and this derails the project ... To stop clientelism you have to structure the organization so that people are there voluntarily, not because they need housing or supplies.

The PRD has broken our organizations and led to fractures within the organizations. It gets so that people have personal interests: they want to be representatives and have privileges rather than having projects ... The problem is one of dynamics. Once people are in government, they become separated from the organizations because of the dynamics they're put into in government ... People who engage in clientelism and corporatism also often don't have a real interest in the PRD. They only use it as a tool to get to power.

However, Rafael's lengthy experience in organizing the urban poor and in watching clientelism at work has also led him to the conclusion that clientelism can have counterintuitive effects in some instances.

People may get together and form a group or join a group because they have a specific need, but, once in a group, they learn new things. Some don't know how to read and write when they enter, but then they learn. Often, when they enter, they only see their own specific need, but within the group they learn to see the larger problematic – they come in seeing a tree and then learn to see the forest. Therefore, they might start out organizing as an administrative necessity, but end up learning about the benefits of organizing in general, as well as the skills it takes to organize. Therefore, you can't say that clientelism destroys all natural forms of organization: it may actually create some. The bad thing is that some individuals use the organization to further their own interests.

### Clientelism Teaches Participatory Values

As Rafael points out, some poor interviewees initiated clientelist links with social organization leaders or political brokers in order to fulfil personal needs, but learned from these relationships that they could help their community and thus become socially or politically engaged citizens. These people came to see the importance of the activities that are a required aspect of the exchange bargain. Many social organizations that are linked to the PRD base benefit distribution on members' participation at association meetings, in research groups, at political rallies, at classes on the political process and so on. As described above, some clients do not put much thought into what goes on at such gatherings and others consider the process manipulative and anti-democratic. There are some, however, who came to see activism as personally fulfilling and important for society at large. These erstwhile clients responded to their experience of clientelism by making the patron's projects their own and actively supporting the party – either directly or through the associations with which it is connected.

*Asamblea de Barrios*. The ‘Santa Clara’ faction is one of the remaining splinter groups of the *Asamblea de Barrios* (Neighbourhoods Assembly), an urban popular movement that was very powerful in the Federal District in the 1980s. Santa Clara was founded in 1983 with the objective of providing organizational aid and solidarity for social housing claimants in the neighbourhood. One of the architects working on the Santa Clara projects became a candidate for the PRD when it was founded in 1989. While he abandoned his direct work with the organization he has been very successful in the political arena and the Santa Clara Assembly came to benefit from his political patronage. One long-time militant in the urban popular movement and the party explains that the politician is friendly with the director of the INVI, through whom he ensures that Santa Clara developments are processed rapidly.

To show me how the Santa Clara Assembly functions, its leader invites me to one of the meetings that take place every Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. As I file into the meeting hall in a throng of Santa Clara members, I see people clustered around two areas. The first is a desk operated by three individuals helping Santa Clara members to fill out PRD affiliation forms. The second is a section of wall with group headings pasted on it. Under each heading people are signing in for the meeting to make sure that they receive attendance points. Points are given for participation in various types of events and those with the highest scores are placed on the top of the waiting list for new social housing units. Once we are seated in the front of the auditorium and the rows have almost filled, a woman from the PRD desk asks the leader to make sure everyone brings their electoral credentials to the next meeting because she cannot fill out the affiliation forms without these.

When the meeting begins, I am struck by the variety of activities carried on by this organization. The environmental group makes a presentation on the water contamination problem in the Federal District, the women’s council showcases handicrafts that are made and sold by its members, a representative of each of the 14 commissions (health, press, judicial, etc.) notifies the crowd of recent business and a woman informs – to everyone’s delight – that she won 50 points toward her apartment for attending López Obrador’s recent march to the city centre. Finally, the leader rises to introduce me, explaining,

she has the idea that the party gives us things and that it has opened all the doors for us, but this isn’t true, right? The party hasn’t done anything for us, right? Everything we have, we’ve gotten through our own work, right? Afterwards she’ll want to interview some of you, so you’ll tell her, right?

He goes on to hold a lengthy speech about the value of participation and hard work and the need to support López Obrador, concluding with a call for a peaceful revolution through the vote. ‘Speaking of this, our friend is outside doing party affiliations and she’ll be here on the weekend too. Even if you’re not convinced yet, affiliate anyway because we need your help.’

After the meeting, I speak with a man from the Transition Commission, a group of people being trained by the leader to run the organization in case he succeeds in one of his bids for political office. Iginio already has his apartment, but continues to work for the organization in order to help others facing the challenges caused by the Federal District’s housing shortage. The Santa

Clara Assembly provides its members with a support network and with organized activities teaching general knowledge and specific economic skills. For example, a women's committee makes and sells crafts, adolescents are kept off the streets through structured activities and ill individuals receive financial aid. The Statistics Commission keeps track of who participates in the various activities, giving out points that are collected by claimants so that they may advance on the list of people to receive apartments and then on that of who chooses the best apartments. Iginio pronounces a slogan that I have heard from the leader as well as other members, 'work and saving go together. Here, nothing is given for free.' Iginio is grateful for the organization's help.

I have my house now. As I got ahead, I realized that others were getting the same thing I was. I realized that we were receiving something like a subsidy in terms of the help of the people in the organization. Now, I feel that I have to give something back. We have to keep the organization running for services and to help those who have even less than we.

'Suárez' Housing Project. Like Iginio, Isabel - a divorced mother of two - is pleased with the organization that is representing her interests as a housing claimant. The venture Isabel is part of differs from the above projects in that she already owns an apartment in the centre of Mexico City. The 1985 earthquakes damaged her building's structure, so that the various proprietors are applying for a government credit to destroy the existing structure and re-construct. They initially created a small independent association to negotiate the credit, but soon realized the difficulty of navigating the legal maze of requirements without prior experience in such matters. One of the members had heard that there was a PRD activist who managed housing developments and contacted him for help. When they asked him what he would charge for his services, he replied that there would be no direct fee, but that they could help him with their vote for the party.

Isabel says that when one goes to the INVI, one is immediately struck by the difference in treatment of independent claimants versus those with representation. 'When you get there, the first thing they ask you is whether you're represented' and if you are not, the authorities keep you waiting. 'When we go to the INVI with [the party activist], he knows what our rights are. He makes the appointment for us and reviews the documents and they treat us better than when we go alone.' Just because they have found someone to speak for them, does not mean that the applicants' job is done. They have to attend weekly meetings with Jorge and participate in political events.

The meetings revolve around the housing question and party things. For example, with the videoscandals<sup>xxxiii</sup>, [the activist] explains to us what is going on. They're giving you a kind of schooling, such as the habit of participating in something on a weekly basis. They are training us and manage us with points for participating. We go to the meetings and then you have to go to other events. Going to the meeting is worth one point and events depend on what the leaders give. Those with the highest points get to choose their apartment first.

Regardless, Isabel feels positive about her political activity: ‘I don’t feel manipulated because I do like to participate [...] I like to learn and to understand what’s going on in politics [...] I’ve learned a lot from [the activist].’ She describes her political involvement as a direct result of the realization that elected officials respond to popular mobilization. Eventually she affiliated with the PRD and she thinks she will continue to be politically active when her construction project is finished. Isabel says, ‘they didn’t force us to affiliate, but since we saw that they’ve been resolving problems for us, everyone wanted to affiliate.’ Then she admits that she is not sure whether everyone did affiliate and that there are a few group members who invent excuses so that they will not have to participate as much.

Iginio and Isabel were motivated to organize by personal problems but learned to appreciate, and to continue working for, the community. Iginio is linked to the PRD indirectly through a broker – his organization leader – with whom he has had a clientelistic relationship and who, in turn, has a clientelistic link with a party personage. Isabel’s link to the party is direct, since her clientelist relationship with the activist is not brokered by a third person. Through what has been required of them in these exchange relations, both individuals have learned about the responsibilities of citizenship and have taken these on as their own. Some clients will, thus, not only judge their patron and his party based on the selective incentives they receive, but will also use their initiation into politics and community building to continue working on the projects espoused by their patrons.

## Conclusion

The Mexican case demonstrates clientelism’s dynamic nature. In the gradual shift from the PRI’s hegemonic rule to a politically competitive context with uncertain electoral outcomes, clientelism has changed. It was initially used by the PRI to provide enough incentives to the socioeconomically marginalized sectors (and to political dissidents) to ensure their subjugation and was backed by credible threats of force. Should clients not accept the offered carrot, the stick would be used to impose compliance. With political opening, the use of the stick became less viable and clients gained in freedom. Since the democratic transition, patrons must compete vigorously for clients who can now choose among candidates from various parties. In the PRD, clientelism has gone hand-in-hand with an ideological project to improve the living conditions and political influence of the poor. Although some clients of perredistas have become politically cynical and demobilized as a result of their experiences, others report the opposite effect.

Since clientelism has traditionally been a method of social control used by authoritarian elites the world over to ensure political stability, we tend to equate it with non-democratic politics. My evidence confirms the findings of researchers highly critical of clientelism: patron-client relationships are exclusionary and they can, and do, sometimes undermine grassroots organization and mobilization.

Yet, clientelism is a highly dynamic form of exchanging goods and services that also performs well in competitive political contexts. In such an environment, clientelism can provide greater political transparency and accountability to the urban poor than the impersonal institutions formally associated with democratic government. Güneş-Ayata argues that a representative democracy provides citizens little personal contact with elected officials.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Citizens feel



alienated by complicated and impersonal bureaucratic procedures and do not know whom to address to discuss their needs, or feel uncomfortable doing so with strangers. Shefner adds that the urban poor may not highly value highly abstract democratic ideals that do not have a visible impact on their resource needs.<sup>xxxv</sup> Under competitive clientelism, however, clients have significant direct negotiating powers because patrons make their bids in the client's presence and must outperform each other. Patrons are easily identifiable, easily held accountable and the rules of the game are clear.<sup>xxxvi</sup> My evidence also shows that clientelism builds, in some cases, the participatory skills and values that are the building blocks of democracy.

The evidence of demobilizing *and* mobilizing effects is an indication that clientelism is a highly complex phenomenon. A series of contextual factors – including degree of political competition and scarcity of resources – determine the internal meaning associated with, and the socio-political consequences of, clientelistic bargains. Although non- (or anti-) democratic characteristics may be common, they should not be imputed automatically to such relationships.

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i Marianne Fay (ed.), *The Urban Poor in Latin America*, Washington, World Bank, 2005.

ii This definition is based on John Duncan Powell, 'Peasant Society and Clientelist Politics', in Steffen W. Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl H. Landé, and James C. Scott (eds), *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977, pp. 147-61; James C. Scott, 'Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia', in Schmidt, Guasti, Landé, and Scott (eds) *Friends, Followers, and Factions*, pp. 123-46; S.N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger, *Patrons, clients, and friends. Interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984; and Luis Roniger, *Hierarchy and Trust in Modern Mexico and Brazil*, New York, Praeger, 1990.

iii For landlord-peasant relationships see Peter Singelmann, *Structures of Domination and Peasant Movements in Latin America*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1981. For relationships among villagers see George M. Foster, 'The Dyadic Contract: A Model for the Social Structure of a Mexican Peasant Village', in Schmidt, Guasti, Landé, and Scott (eds), *Friends, Followers, and Factions*, pp. 15-28. For relationships between politicians and the poor see Simona Piattoni, 'Clientelism in Historical and Comparative Perspective', in Piattoni (ed.), *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 1-30. For middle class, elite, bureaucratic, and political relationships see Merilee Serrill Grindle, *Bureaucrats, Politicians, and Peasants in Mexico. A Case Study in Public Policy*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977.

iv See the works collected in Steffen W. Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl H. Landé, and James C. Scott (eds), *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977.

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v Jonathan Fox, 'The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Mexico' *World Politics*, 46:2, 1994, pp.151-84.

vi Robert Gay, 'The Broker and the Thief: A Parable (Reflections on Popular Politics in Brazil)', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 36:1, 1999, pp. 49-70.

vii Jon Shefner, 'Sponsors and the Urban Poor: Resources or Restrictions?', *Social Problems*, 46:3, 1999, pp. 376-97, and 'Coalitions and Clientelism in Mexico', *Theory and Society*. 30, 2001, pp. 593-628.

viii See Wayne A. Cornelius, *Politics and the Migrant Poor in Mexico City*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1975; and Alejandro Portes, 'Rationality in the Slum: An Essay on Interpretive Sociology', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 14:3, 1972, pp. 268-86.

ix See Judith Adler Hellman, 'The Role of Ideology in Peasant Politics: Peasant Mobilization and Demobilization in the Laguna Region', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 25:1, 1983, pp. 3-29.

x Valeria Brusco, Marcelo Nazareno, and Susan C. Stokes, 'Clientelism and Democracy: Evidence from Argentina', Paper presented at the conference on *Political Parties and Legislative Organisation in Parliamentary and Presidential Regimes*, Yale University, March 2002.

xi Herbert Kitschelt, 'Linkages Between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities', *Comparative Political Studies*, 33:6/7, 2000, pp. 845-79.

xii See contributions to Herbert Kitschelt and Stephen I. Wilkinson (eds), *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, and to Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky (eds), *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

xiii Jeffrey W. Rubin, *Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism, and Democracy in Juchitán, Mexico*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1997.

xiv Cornelius, *Politics and the Migrant Poor*. Susan Eckstein, *The Poverty of Revolution: The State and the Urban Poor in Mexico*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977.

xv Cornelius, *Politics and the Migrant Poor*.

xvi Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York, Holmes and Meier, 1988.

xvii In fact, the front likely did win the election, but after a 'computer crash' stalled the publication of vote tallies by several days, the PRI came out victorious.

xviii Fox, 'The Difficult Transition'.

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xix In my interviews with urban slum leaders and inhabitants, I did come across some examples of force used by local level perredistas, such as families being forced from their homes. See also Hermann Bellinghausen, 'Persecución selectiva en Zinacantán' *La Jornada* (Mexico, DF), 15 April, 2004.

xx Andrés Manuel López Obrador, *Un Proyecto Alternativo de Nación: Hacia un cambio verdadero*, México, D.F., Grijalbo, 2004.

xxi On the popularity of López Obrador's Mexico City programs see *Carta Paramétrica*, 'Pensión alimentaria para adultos mayores', November 2003, and 'Aprobación y base social AMLO', August 2003, both available at [www.parametria.com.mx](http://www.parametria.com.mx).

xxii For a discussion of the evolution of the politics of the marginalized urban poor in Mexico, see Jon Shefner, "'Do you think democracy is a magical thing?'" From Basic Needs to Democratization in Informal Politics', in Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Jon Shefner (eds), *Out of the Shadows: Political Action and the Informal Economy in Latin America*, University Park, Penn State University Press, 2006, pp. 241-68.

xxiii Portes, 'Rationality in the Slum'.

xxiv I have used the real names of large, well-known organisations – such as the UPBG and the Panteras – but have changed the names of smaller projects and the people involved in order to protect their identity..

xxv At the time of research, \$1 (Canadian) equaled roughly 9 pesos and \$1 U.S. equaled roughly 11.5 pesos.

xxvi The *amparo* is a judicial protection that reinstates the constitutional rights of citizens who can prove that these have been violated. In the case of taxi drivers, the right in question is that to a dignified occupation.

xxvii The official urban unemployment rate for 2004 is 3.78% (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática* (INEGI), 'Tasa de desempleo abierto general', 2005, available at [www.inegi.gob.mx](http://www.inegi.gob.mx)), but this rate is artificially low since workers in the informal economy – including illegal street vendors and taxi drivers, as well as sex workers – are considered as employed (Zuñiga and Cardoso, 'En 2004, la tasa de desempleo más alta desde 1997: 3.78%: INEGI', *La Jornada* (Mexico City), January 21, 2005). It is estimated that at least 20% of the working population is employed in the informal economy (Zuñiga, 'En tres años creció 71 por ciento el desempleo abierto: INEGI', *La Jornada* (Mexico City), February 16, 2004.)

xxviii Personal conversation with José Luis Flores, Mexico City, November 30, 2004.

xxix Estimate of *piratas* from Bernardo Navarro Benítez, 'Los Taxis y la Contaminación en la Ciudad de México', *Programa Integral sobre Contaminación del Aire*, 3, 2003, pp. 8-9, available at [mce2.org/newsletter/nwsltr\\_3/nwsltr3\\_esp.pdf](http://mce2.org/newsletter/nwsltr_3/nwsltr3_esp.pdf). It is difficult to judge exactly how

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many *piratas* are in circulation, given that they operate illegally, and estimates conflict. The Navarro Benítez estimate is based on an independent professional survey.

xxx See, for example, Óscar Herrera, 'Inician campaña para combatir delitos en taxis', *El Universal.com*, Dec. 14, 2004.

xxxii For an account of a similar process involving street vendors and a PRI administration in the Federal District, see Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexican Lives*, New York, New Press, 1994, pp. 34-42.

xxxiii Kitschelt and Wilkinson, *Patrons, Clients, and Policies*.

xxxiv In 2004 a series of videotapes showing PRD politicians accepting large amounts of cash from entrepreneurs, or discussing such transactions, were released to the media. The subsequent crisis is referred to as the videoscandals.

xxxv See Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, 'Clientelism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern', in Luis Roniger and Ayşe Güneş-Ayata (eds), *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1994, pp. 19-28.

xxxvi Shefner, 'Coalitions and Clientelism'.

xxxvii See Gay, 'The Broker and the Thief'.