

WHAT SHOULD CONGRESS MEMBERS DO? USING SURVEY EMBEDDED EXPERIMENTS TO STUDY CITIZENS' CLIENTELISTIC EXPECTATIONS IN MEXICO

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Abstract: How do citizens view the work of their legislators? Do they think representatives should legislate and oversee the executive,

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or do they believe representatives should deliver resources to their community and help individuals with problems? Do they expect both? In Latin America surveys typically show that popular evaluations of the national congress are overwhelmingly negative but are not able to explain why. Are congresses held in low esteem because people think that congress is not legislating well or efficiently overseeing the executive, or because citizens do not know what legislators are supposed to do and want them to deliver pork for their district and personalistic benefits for themselves? Since clientelism targets the poor and plays an important role in elections in developing democracies, it is important to know if poor citizens truly have different views than wealthier citizens about what a member of congress should do once elected. We use quasi-experimental procedures in a public opinion survey administered in Mexico City to begin to address these questions. Our findings indicate that poorer citizens, people with no or very little education, have greater expectations of clientelism than wealthier citizens but that their view of a legislator's job is more subtle, and more democratic than would be predicted by clientelism theory.

Síntesis: ¿Cómo perciben los ciudadanos la labor de los legisladores? ¿Se piensa que los representantes deben legislar y supervisar la labor del Ejecutivo? ¿O se cree que los representantes deben llevar recursos a las comunidades y ayudar a individuos con sus problemas? ¿O se esperan ambas cosas? En América Latina, la mayoría de las encuestas muestran una opinión negativa generalizada de los congresos nacionales, pero no explican la razón de ello. ¿La pobre evaluación ciudadana tiene que ver con la creencia de que los congresos no legislan bien o no supervisan eficientemente el trabajo del Ejecutivo? ¿O es más bien porque los ciudadanos desconocen lo que debe de hacer un legislador y esperan beneficios propios y para sus comunidades? Como el clientelismo se focaliza en los pobres y juega un papel importante en las elecciones de democracias en desarrollo, es relevante saber si los individuos de menores recursos tienen opiniones significativamente diferentes que los de mayores

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recursos en relación con lo que deben hacer los legisladores una vez elegidos. Nuestro ensayo intenta responder estas preguntas usando una encuesta en la ciudad de México con un diseño cuasiexperimental. Nuestros hallazgos muestran que las personas sin educación, o con una educación básica, tienen mayores expectativas clientelares que ciudadanos de mayores niveles educativos, pero que su visión de los legisladores es más sutil y más democrática de lo que predice la teoría del clientelismo.

1. Introduction

What do citizens expect of legislators? Constitutions in presidential democracies typically give a congress the power to develop legislation, pass laws, and oversee the executive. Constitutions also commonly assert that members of congress should act as “representatives of the people.” What does it mean to the mass public for congress members to be their representatives? Do they think that the job of a member of congress is to legislate, supervise the executive, and work on legislative committees? Alternatively, do they expect legislators to attend to their individual needs, bring resources to the community, and stay in touch with the district? Do they want some combination of the above?

These questions are particularly important for less established democracies where the regime needs to build popular affective support that will sustain democracy -so that democracy is understood to not just be the “only game in town” but the best game in town (Easton, 1975; Linz and Stepan, 1996, p. 15; Lagos, 2003). If people expect their elected representatives to do a job that is different from the job outlined in the constitution then their dissatisfaction may become a destabilizing factor. Public opinion surveys in Latin America show that the congress is held in low regard (see Table 1). Such opinions may stem from misaligned

expectations, and might help explain decreasing support for democracy overall.

Interviews conducted with state legislators in Nuevo León and Veracruz, Mexico in 2005 show that state legislators see their job as legislating, supervising the use of public monies, and assisting constituents.⁵ However, when deputies were asked “What do the people of your district (your state) think is the job of a deputy?” 79% of the deputies interviewed in Nuevo León, and 62% in Veracruz explained that people want assistance in receiving government services, benefits for themselves and public works for their neighborhood.⁶ They went on to explain that many people do not understand that such work is the job of the municipal government. Deputies from both states said that the people, particularly poor people, think deputies are “little mayors.”

Table 1. Confidence in Democracy and Democratic Institutions in Latin America (Percent from all 18 Latin American countries included in the Latinobarometer surveys)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Satisfaction w/democracy (very or fairly satisfied)	37	25	33	29	29	31	38	46	37	44
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	57	48	56	53	53	53	58	55	57	59

⁵ Interviews were conducted with 14 of the 40 members of the Nuevo León state legislature, and 29 of the 50 deputies in Veracruz. Interviews were roughly in proportion to party representation in each legislature, and to the number of deputies elected from single member districts and from party lists.

⁶ Deputies elected from all major parties and by single member districts and party lists offered this assessment.

Have a lot or some confidence in:										
National Congress	28	24	23	17	24	28	28	29	31	34
President	39	30	--	31	37	43	47	43	--	--
Judiciary	34	27	25	20	32	31	36	30	28	32
Political Parties	20	19	14	11	18	19	22	20	21	24
Number of respondents	18135	18135	18552	18658	19605	20206	20232	20212	20204	20204

Source: Lagos, 2003: Tables 7.2, 7.4, and 7.5; Latinobarometer Report, 2005, pp. 56-60; Latinobarometer, 2006-2009 Surveys.

Note: Before 2004 the Latinobarometer survey covered 17 countries, the Dominican Republic entered the survey in 2004.

Deputies also said that people are not aware of the legislative function of the Congress, or that they don't know that deputies make laws. When asked whether people of different classes have different ideas about their job, some deputies said that it is primarily poor people who want personal assistance and poor and middle class people want public works for their communities. Some deputies explained that middle and upper class people were more likely to be aware that legislating is a deputy's job, though not all deputies expressed this view.

When a country makes a transition to democracy it is not clear how citizens are supposed to learn what elected officials are intended to do. In Mexico during the many decades of hegemony by the PRI (Institutionalized Revolutionary Party), a façade of democracy was established that included elections with multiple parties, legislatures that rubberstamped executive initiatives, and clientelistic campaigning and personal favours directed to voters. By 1997 the PRI's hegemony ended in national government but institutions, such as elections and legislatures have not been redesigned. Consequently, it is quite likely that

many citizens are uncertain what the job of a *democratically elected* legislator is supposed to entail. Several state legislators in fact said during interviews that in the past deputies did not legislate or check the executive, they only provided public works to communities, and that this is part of the reason why people do not now understand the job of a deputy in a plural, democratic legislature.

A long history of clientelism is another reason why citizens may have conceptions of the job of legislators that clash with the needs of a checks-and-balances system. Clientelism is a “contingent exchange of political support for targeted benefits” and patrons maintain the support of clients by helping them with their personal needs, giving handouts, and bringing local club goods such as infrastructure projects to communities of loyal supporters (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007, p. 324). In Mexico, poor people in particular are expected to view elected officials as patrons. If they do, how do poor people evaluate a deputy who spends time developing bills and checking the executive, instead of providing clientelistic benefits to supporters?

We conducted a survey in Mexico City in July 2008 to explore what citizens think the job of legislators should be, and if opinions vary with socioeconomic status. This survey includes conventional-style survey questions and an embedded experimental component. In this paper we provide a brief overview of clientelism and Mexican politics, then go on to present our hypotheses about clientelism. Next we explain the types of survey instruments used to determine how citizens think about the job of legislators, and how we measure the socioeconomic status of survey respondents. We then present our findings from non-experimental questions and from experiments embedded within the survey and provide an assessment of how citizens in Mexico City view the job of a legislator. We conclude by exploring what this preliminary study indicates for studying clientelism

and democratization, as well as for developing mass public affective support for democratic institutions.

2. Clientelism and how people view the job of legislators

Literature that explores when people will vote based on clientelistic benefits instead of policy predicts that people will vote for the benefit provider as long as the benefit (i.e., a handout, help with a personal problem, a service for the community) is of value to the voter (Desposato, 2001; Lyne, 2007; Taylor-Robinson, 2010). Thus, a person who has the means to take care of their own and their family's basic needs (e.g., pay for a doctor's appointment, obtain a job, provide adequate food and shelter) is not expected to exchange their vote for clientelistic benefits. In essence, a middle class person could vote for a patron in exchange for a service, but the patron (politician or party) is unlikely to use a clientelistic strategy to try to attract middle class votes because it would be very costly to provide targetable benefits that would be of value to wealthier voters (see Calvo and Murillo, 2004; Hagopian, 2009). Poor people may also vote in exchange for clientelistic benefits because they devalue policy benefits that are uncertain to help them directly and will be implemented in the distant future.

Research also shows that clientelistic practices will be prevalent where one party has a political monopoly (Magaloni *et al.*, 2007; Medina and Stokes, 2007). The electorate will vote for the ruling party so long as the party continues to deliver benefits and favours, and there are no credible alternatives. New parties are less reliable for voters because they cannot usually keep campaign promises (Keefer, 2005; Keefer and Vlaicu, 2005). Moreover, the established party can punish districts that did not support

them in the past election by withholding monies or services. Under such circumstances it is in the best interests of the electorate, especially poor voters, to continue to support the dominant party, whether or not they like their politics. Thus, if new parties want to make inroads against the traditional party in a new democracy, at least with poor people, they must find ways to provide clientelistic benefits (Roberts, 2002, p. 9; Stokes, 2005). To gain access to votes, new parties may use local patrons who have credibility with voters (Keefer, 2005; Keefer and Vlaicu, 2005; Scott, 1969). These patrons can help provide the goods and benefits voters have come to expect in such political settings, and clientelism may be the norm for citizens even though democracy is taking hold.

2.1. Clientelism in Mexican politics

Mexico is an interesting case for studying citizens' attitudes about the job of legislators. Clientelism has long been important in Mexican politics and Mexico was governed for over 70 years by the PRI, which governed with an authoritarian regime that regularly held elections.⁷ Unlike many Latin American countries that experienced repeated military rule, often closing down the legislature and making political parties illegal, Mexico was governed by a civilian party that maintained a façade of democracy. The PRI manipulated legislatures, elections, and even the opposition parties, but legislatures were always elected and in operation (Cornelius, 1996).

Clientelism helped the PRI to maintain the support of poor voters, and to recruit ambitious politicians. By

⁷ Fox (1994) described clientelism in Mexico during the long period of the PRI's hegemony as producing "political subordination in exchange for material rewards" where the poor were obliged "to sacrifice their political rights if they want access to distributive resources" (pp.152-153).

deterring voters from exiting the patron-client relationship with threats of benefit retraction (jobs, income subsidies, local infrastructure projects), the PRI was able to assure itself hegemonic rule (Magaloni *et al.*, 2007).⁸ For ambitious politicians, this meant that staying loyal to the PRI was the way to advance their careers. The PRI controlled recruitment by operating as a highly centralized organization where one's reputation within the party as a loyal *PRIista* meant more for advancement than one's reputation with the electorate (Nacif, 2002; Langston, 2008).⁹ The need to build a political career through the party was enhanced by Mexico's ban on reelection. Mexican legislators are always looking for their next elected, bureaucratic, or party post (Langston and Aparicio, 2008).

The PRI modified electoral institutions when necessary to maintain their ability to control policy, and to keep other parties participating in the system. These changes did not, however, end clientelistic practices (Molinar and Weldon, 2001). State and national legislators are elected via a mixed-member system where parties nominate candidates to stand for election in single-member districts, as well as party lists of candidates that are elected from a single state-wide district for state legislatures, or via 5 sub-national districts for the lower chamber of the national congress. The single-member districts are won by plurality. Over time genuine opposition parties – in particular the National Action (PAN) and Democratic Revolution (PRD) parties began to win more seats. The opposition became more militant in its demands and the PRI recognized that it had to make

⁸ The PRI still is known to use such tactics in states and municipalities where it is still the dominant party (Cleary and Stokes, 2006, p.52).

⁹ As the PRI's hegemony waned, the party gave more control over nominations to governors and former governors, and they selected more candidates for the legislature with careers rooted in local politics, though these more local candidates were still party loyalists (Langston, 2008, p. 150).

concessions (Eisenstadt, 2003). The PRI's decreasing voter support became obvious in 1997 when it lost its majority in the national congress, and regime change was clear in 2000 when the PRI lost the presidential election.

During the long period of PRI hegemony, the PRI's presidents benefited from a largely compliant Congress. As the effective head of the PRI, presidents were able to get their initiatives passed even though they did not enjoy remarkable formal powers over the Congress (Casar, 2002). PRI governors had similar power in state governments (Solt, 2004; Langston, 2008). When Zedillo of the PRI was elected president in 1994, he responded to critics by supporting primary elections to determine who would run in future elections and denouncing his role as party leader. These moves effectively undermined the loyalty the executive needed from members of Congress to fulfill their agenda goals. Since the PRI could no longer guarantee political careers for party loyalists, more politicians started to switch parties, and it became possible for legislatures to gain strength relative to executives. There have also been opportunities for state legislatures to check governors, though there is "considerable variation in the style and apparent willingness to 'let go' on the part of the state executive" (Ward and Rodríguez, 1999, p. 690).

In the last 10+ years much has changed in Mexican party politics and executive-legislative relations, yet it is not clear how much of this change was being communicated to voters who had seen the Mexican government dominated by strong presidents for decades. There are more party options, but clientelism still plays a role for seeking the votes of poor voters. With the installation of competitive democracy, the PAN and PRD also provide clientelistic benefits (Hilgers, 2008, Greene, 2001). Why would citizens expect the legislature to start overseeing the executive given the long history of legislatures acting subservient

to the executive?¹⁰ Why would voters reward deputies for checking the executive or for legislating independently if such activity meant the deputy lost access to clientelistic resources they could deliver to constituents? Nacif (2002) argues that what was a single centralized party model in Mexico has become a centralized multiparty system where party loyalty is now assured by similar methods as before; to advance to other seats or jobs party members need to support the party line (also see Weldon, 2002).

Given this history and the ongoing system of patronage and use of clientelism, it is not clear how citizens in Mexico's new democracy develop their expectations of their elected officials. The rationale for poor people to place a positive utility on clientelistic benefits that are immediate and certain compared to legislation or checking the executive whose benefits to them are uncertain, indicates that poor people could still prefer clientelism over other types of behaviors by deputies even with the installation of democracy. Rational choice theory melded with literature on clientelism predicts that it is people who can provide for their own immediate needs who can afford to reward politicians and parties for working on policy whose benefit is uncertain and likely to be slow to arrive (Kitschelt, 2000; Desposato, 2001). Thus we hypothesize:

H1: Poor people will be more likely than those who are better off to view the job of legislators as helping individuals with their problems.

¹⁰ There is evidence that the news media gives coverage to the new work being done by at least some legislatures. Solt (2004, p. 161) explains how newspapers and TV in Michoacán began to cover the work of legislators and committees after the PRI lost control of the government in the 2001 election. However, we don't know who pays attention to this type of news and media attention could correlate with SES.

H2: People of higher socioeconomic status will be more likely than those who are less well off to view the job of legislators as developing laws.

3. The 2008 Mexico City Survey: An Overview

In July 2008 an original survey was administered to 800 residents in the Federal District of Mexico (Mexico City).¹¹ All seventeen *delegaciones* of Mexico City were sampled.¹² Survey questions were designed to determine what it is citizens think elected deputies are supposed to do in a democracy. We use education attainment as a proxy for the socioeconomic status of respondents. Education levels proved to be a more reliable measure in our survey than reported income since all but two respondents reported their years and type of education, while 221 (27.6%) did not answer the question about income. In addition education is a theoretically relevant measure as, “Inadequate education is one of the most powerful determinants of poverty” (Aoki *et al.*, 2002, p. 223; also Psacharopoulos, 1994),¹³ and poverty creates conditions where clientelistic benefits are likely to be perceived as a rational exchange for electoral support.

¹¹ The survey was funded by Texas A&M University’s Scholarly and Creative Enhancement Program, and carried out by Data OPM (www.dataopm.net).

¹² Eighty sampling points were selected by a proportional to size procedure from the IFE’s electoral districts. Five interviews were conducted in two “manzanas” in each sampling point. Households were selected by systematic randomization and then the adult in the household with the most recent birthday was asked to take the survey.

¹³ The *Poverty Reduction Strategies Sourcebook* (2002) by the World Bank provides an in-depth discussion of various indicators of poverty including education, income, health indicators and consumption measures (web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY).

We divide education attainment into three categories. The low category includes those respondents who indicated that they have no formal education or who did not complete elementary school ($n=83$), the middle category ranged from those who completed elementary school to those who completed high school ($n=544$), and the high category ranges from some university classes to graduate work ($n=171$). Since we are interested in determining if the least educated view the work of representatives differently than the more educated and the highly educated, these categories conservatively capture socioeconomic status (SES) differences among survey respondents. Based on the clientelism literature, we expect people with the least education to value what we will refer to as “clientelistic representation” (see Desposato, 2001).

Data from the National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI) in 2005 shows that approximately 10% of the Mexico City population does not complete elementary school and 66% of the population ranges from completing elementary school to completing high school. This indicates that our categories are an appropriate representation of the population’s education levels with 10% of our survey population indicating that they had not completed elementary school and 68% completing primary school to completing high school.

4. What traditional survey questions tell us about people’s expectations of officials

Table 2 lists survey questions that ask respondents about the type of work deputies are supposed to do once they are elected. As explained above, based on the clientelism literature we predict that people with very low levels of education will want elected officials to help them with

personal or community needs. In contrast, people with more education will have expectations of deputies that are more in line with the “civics” view of the job of elected representatives since they will be more likely to have the capacity to address their own needs.

As expected level of education has a significant effect on mean clientelism in the responses to the three questions. In general, the trends imply that the higher the education of the respondent the lower is the expectation for clientelism of the deputy. To be conservative in our analyses we performed Scheffe posteriori contrasts to identify statistically significant differences among the three education groups. For Q10 (writing laws vs. obtaining resources for the community) and Q11 (supervise the governor vs. help individuals with personal problems) there is no statistical difference in clientelism between the low and middle education group. However, for Q10 both these groups are higher in expectation of clientelism than the university education group ($p < 0.10$ for the low vs. university education comparison, $p < 0.01$ for the middle vs. university education comparison). For Q11 the middle education group is significantly different from the university education group ($p = 0.06$). Overall this supports our clientelism hypothesis, but it indicates that the education cut-point is at a higher level of education than anticipated. For Q50 (legislate vs. maintain contact with people in the district), the mean response is highest (most clientelistic) for the low education group, as predicted by our clientelism hypothesis, and the posteriori contrast (Scheffe) between the low education group and the other two education groups is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$ for the difference between the low and medium education groups, $p < 0.10$ for the low and high education groups).

Table 2. Perceptions of the proper job of elected legislators*

Question	Mean low educ group	Mean middle educ group	Mean univ educ group	F test for Main Effect (significance)	Total N
(Q10) In your opinion, the job of a deputy is to write laws or to obtain resources for projects in your community?	1.58	1.56	1.43	5.03 (.01)	774
(Q11) In your opinion, the job of a state deputy is to supervise the governor or to help individuals with personal problems?	1.45	1.48	1.38	2.79 (.06)	769
(Q50) There are people who say that the job of a deputy is to legislate while other people say that the job of a deputy is to maintain contact with the people in his or her district. What phrase is closer to your opinion?	1.54	1.4	1.4	3.14 (.04)	765

* Responses of "legislate" or "supervise the executive" coded 1 (i.e., the "civics" response), "clientelism" response coded 2. Responses of "both are the job of a deputy" were coded 1 as well because it includes the civics response.

In sum, we learn from these questions that people with little or no education are more likely than those with university-level schooling to think that the "job of a deputy is to obtain resources for projects in their community," "help individuals with personal problems," or "maintain contact with the people in his or her district." The middle education category is more variable in its clientelistic tendencies. They favor a deputy

providing local and particularistic service, but are more like those in the highest education category when asked about whether deputies should maintain contact with the people in their district. Based on what we learn from these traditional survey questions it appears that state legislators were correct to be concerned that some types of citizens view them more as “little mayors” than as legislators, and do not have a view of the job of deputies that is compatible with the legislating and oversight aspects of their job as defined by the constitution.

5. Survey embedded experiments and what they indicate about citizens’ expectations

To enhance our understanding of whether and how SES impacts citizens’ expectation of politics we embedded experiments within the survey. The controlled manipulation of scenarios enables us to assess the respondents’ sensitivity to clientelism and provides a fine tuned test of our hypotheses that attenuates effects of social desirability in responses.

The treatments of clientelism were embedded in two separate experiments –each targeting a distinct political context. The first dealt with behavior of a candidate during the campaign; the second experiment with the behavior of a deputy in office. The experiments were embedded in different parts of the survey questionnaire. Each experiment was structured as a between-group design and the respondents of each education group were randomly assigned to one of the clientelism scenarios. The experiments were designed as randomized complete block experiments with multiple replications per block and factorially related treatments. There were 12 or 18 replications per block, depending on the experiment, and 22 blocks totaling 800 experimental units. Treatments of the experiments of each block of 36 questionnaires were present in all possible combinations

so that there was not systematic interaction possible among the various experimental treatments.

5.1. Experiment I: Clientelism During the Campaign

Since in Mexico deputies cannot be reelected candidates are rarely able to establish a personal reputation with the electorate (Nacif, 2002). Consequently, candidates rely on their nominating party's resources and standing in their home municipalities to win a campaign and it is during campaigns when much clientelism occurs. For example, a wealthy community leader could sponsor a campaign event for a candidate. During the campaign event, there may be medical personnel available to see some of the neediest community members, and bags of concrete may be made available to participants. Such benefits are clientelistic in nature and though they are technically not coming from the candidate or a party directly, they are designed to incentivize voters to support the event's candidate of choice.

The first experiment was designed to provide insight into what people in a young democracy with a history of clientelistic politics expect candidates to do during elections. Education groups (the proxy for respondent's SES) are the same as in the analysis of the non-experimental questions.

In this campaign experiment, respondents were read one of three scenarios (See Appendix A for full text). Scenario 1: a deputy candidate for the Mexico City legislature visits the respondent's community and gives a speech about a bill he will propose if elected to expand the public high school in the district ('bill' condition). Scenario 2: the candidate gives the same speech, but during the campaign event there is also an opportunity for attendees to receive free services from a medical specialist, and party members distribute construction materials and bags of food ('bill and goodies' condition). Scenario 3: the party provides an opportunity for free services

from a medical specialist and distributes construction materials and bags of food and there is no mention of any bills the candidate would propose if elected ('goodies' condition).

Respondents were then asked: "In the story that was just read, please select one or more of the following options that in your opinion describes correctly what occurred in the story." Answer options were: (1) the candidate gave a speech about a bill, (2) building materials and groceries were distributed, (3) there were free medical services. If the respondent did not correctly answer this manipulation check question they were excluded from the analysis.¹⁴ Then they answered three questions that ask if, given the scenario they were read, they consider the activities described in the scenario as *correct*, if they were *satisfied* with such activities, and if the activities were *appropriate* for a candidate, creating three dependent variables in our analysis.

The campaign experiment thus has a 3 x 3 design, with the 3 treatment scenarios and the 3 education groups. However, it is also possible to analyze this experiment as a 2 x 3 design, analyzing the two "pure" treatments: where the candidate only talks about the bill at the campaign event versus where the campaign event only hands out goodies. Results are similar for the 3 x 3 and 2 x 3 designs, but are cleaner and sharper on the 2 x 3 design, which is reasonable since the middle treatment is a hybrid (bill + goodies). The 3 x 3 design decreases the power of rejecting the null hypothesis, so results are less conclusive, but they are in the right pattern. Therefore, we report here the 2 x 3 analysis (findings of the 3 x 3 analysis are in Appendix B).

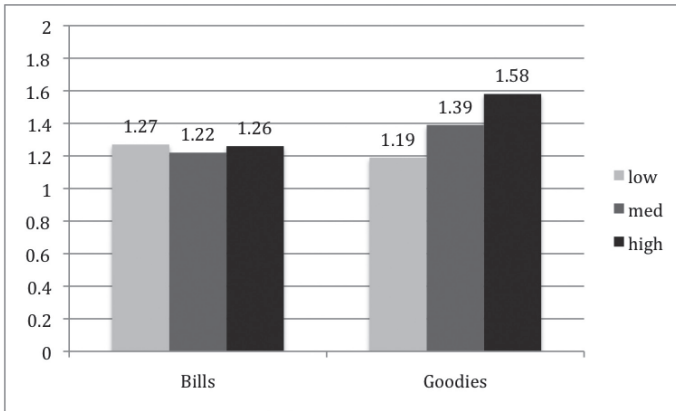
The scale for all dependent variables ranges from 1 to 2. Lower scores imply higher level of correctness, satisfaction,

¹⁴ Sixty-six percent (165) responded correctly for scenario #1, 21% (56) for scenario #2, and 67% (177) for scenario #3. Correlation with respondent education was only 0.08.

or appropriateness. We find that across the three education levels the candidate's different behavior (providing goodies or planning to introduce a new bill) comes close to meeting traditional significance levels in its effect on respondents' perception of the extent of its *correctness* [$F(1, 336)=2.58$ $p = .11$], and the approval is higher for the bill (mean=1.25) than for the clientelistic behavior (mean=1.36). Level of education yielded a significant effect [$F(2, 336)=3.01$ $p = .05$], and approval is higher, regardless of the treatment, as education decreases (mean= 1.20 for low education respondents, 1.30 for respondents with a medium level of education, 1.42 for respondents with university education). The interaction of education and the treatment is also significant [$F(2, 336)=2.82$ $p = .06$]. As predicted by our hypothesis, respondents in the lowest education group have a more favorable view of the correctness of clientelistic behavior (mean=1.12) than of legislative behavior (mean=1.27), and the reverse is true for respondents with middle (means of 1.39 for clientelistic behavior, and 1.22 for the bill) or university levels of education (mean of 1.58 and 1.26). As can be seen in Figure 1, all education groups have an almost equal evaluation of bill behavior, yet the results suggest that people with lower education tend more than others to accept the 'legitimacy' of the candidate's actions, and that this is particularly true for clientelistic behavior. By contrast, as education increases people find clientelistic behavior objectionable.

The second measure addressed how *satisfied* respondents would feel with regard to the pure types of candidate's activities depicted in the scenarios. Again, the treatment is significant [$F(1, 329)=6.19$ $p = .01$], mean=1.34 for the bill, mean=1.53 for goodies. This indicates that respondents had a more positive reaction to bills than to clientelism. The level of education had no statistical effect on the extent of satisfaction, nor did it statistically interact with the treatment.

Figure 1. Interaction of treatment and education in Experiment 1 with “correctness” dependent variable*



* Respondents who thought the treatment (“bill” or “goodies”) was correct were coded 1. Respondents who thought the treatment was incorrect were coded 2.

For the *appropriate* dependent variable again the main effect of the treatment was significant [$F(1, 324)=4.55 p=.03$], and again the bill was more favorably evaluated (mean=1.37) than clientelistic behavior (mean=1.54). People in the low education category overall had a more favorable evaluation of the candidate (mean=1.38, 1.46, 1.53 for low, middle, university education respectively), though the main effect of education was not significant [$F(2, 324)=1.15 p=.32$]. The education / treatment interaction was not significant ($p=.21$).

This first experiment yields several interesting findings. First, legislative behavior (discussion of a bill) is more favorably evaluated than clientelistic behavior (distribution of goodies). This lends evidence to the internal validity of the experiment as the respondents were sensitive to the variations in the scenarios and reacted to them. Second, for all

three dependent variables we find a lack of preference for goodies and respondents always find their provision objectionable. Especially with the “correct behavior” dependent variable, goodies are most strongly objected to by well educated people. How much people resent outright clientelistic behavior appears to be a function of education. Yet people with little education overall give the politicians –regardless of behavior– a more favorable evaluation than do people with more education (see Table 3). People with little education thus appear to be less critical of what politicians do.

Table 3. Mean Response Values for 3 Dependent Variables by Education & Treatment (Candidate Experiment) (Low values indicate greater approval)

	Bill	Goodies
<i>Little to no education</i>		
CORRECT	1.27	1.12
SATISFIED	1.30	1.35
APPROPRIATE	1.40	1.35
<i>Medium education</i>		
CORRECT	1.22	1.39
SATISFIED	1.35	1.55
APPROPRIATE	1.35	1.55
<i>University education</i>		
CORRECT	1.26	1.58
SATISFIED	1.36	1.68
APPROPRIATE	1.36	1.70

Overall from this experiment we conclude cautiously that people in Mexico City are saying ‘do not bribe me with goodies –it is too obvious.’ But this signal is most clear and strong from people with a high level of education. This could be because they are not benefiting from the clientelistic goodies that are distributed in the scenario –such goodies are not valuable to a person who is well off, as is

likely for a person with extensive education. These findings from the experiment are in line overall with the findings of the traditional survey questions presented in the previous section. In the experiment we find that poor people do not view distribution of goodies as *incorrect*, but well educated people *disapprove* of clientelism. The middle education group is the group for whom it is most difficult to define their needs, and they are also the group with the biggest variance in how they respond to clientelism, both in the experiment and in the traditional survey questions (see tables 2 and 3).

5.2. Experiment II: Work by a Deputy in the Legislature

The second experiment explored respondents' expectations of officials once they are in the legislature. This experiment included two scenarios regarding the activities of a deputy, with the respondents randomly assigned to the experimental treatments (see Appendix A for the full text). Scenario 1: the deputy is busy working on several legislative committees and does not have time to visit his local constituents. Scenario 2: the deputy has the same committee duties but also maintains a local office where three assistants are available to help constituents with requests. After being read a scenario respondents were asked: "In the story that was just read, please select one or more of the following options that in your opinion describes correctly what occurred in the story:" (1) the deputy works on committees in the congress, (2) the deputy has an office in your community with assistants who help people.¹⁵ Respondents were then asked if they think that

¹⁵ 317 survey participants correctly answered the manipulation check question: 230 (58%) who had received scenario #1 (committee work only), and 87 (22%) for scenario #2 (committee + local office). Education level was not related to whether respondents answered the manipulation check correctly

the work the deputy is doing is *correct*, if they are *satisfied* with the deputy's activities, and if they think these activities are *appropriate*. We explored reactions of the same three education groups to these two experimental scenarios, so the experiment has a 2 x 3 design.

The first analysis is of the perceived *correctness* of the deputy's behavior. The scale for all dependent variables ranges from 1 to 2. Lower scores imply higher level of correctness, satisfaction, or appropriateness. Approval evaluations are higher for the committee work treatment (mean=1.32) than for the committee work + local office treatment (mean=1.49), [F(1, 304)=3.85 p<.05]. The education level of respondents does not have a significant main effect or interaction (F<1.0) with the treatment for predicting how respondents evaluated the work of the deputy. All respondents appear to expect that once elected, the deputy should focus on committee work—they are not expecting the elected official to return to the community. This finding is contrary to our clientelism hypothesis and is unexpected given the consistent effect of education found in the non-experimental questions, in particular question Q50 (see Table 2). However, the two experimental scenarios are not suggestive of any direct distribution of "goodies" to the people so it is plausible that the concept of clientelism is not salient.

When we asked respondents whether they were *satisfied* with the deputy's behavior, the analysis indicates that the treatment, education, and the treatment*education interaction are all not significant. Still, the mean responses across education categories show that people in the low and medium education categories are more satisfied with committee work (mean= 1.43 for low education, 1.55 for medium education) than with committee work + community office (mean=1.71 for

(correlation<.01). As in the first experiment, respondents who did not correctly answer the manipulation check were excluded from the analysis.

low education, 1.65 for medium education). In contrast, people with university education have a similar level of satisfaction with either behavior (mean=1.63 for committee work alone, 1.60 for committee work + community office) (see Table 4).

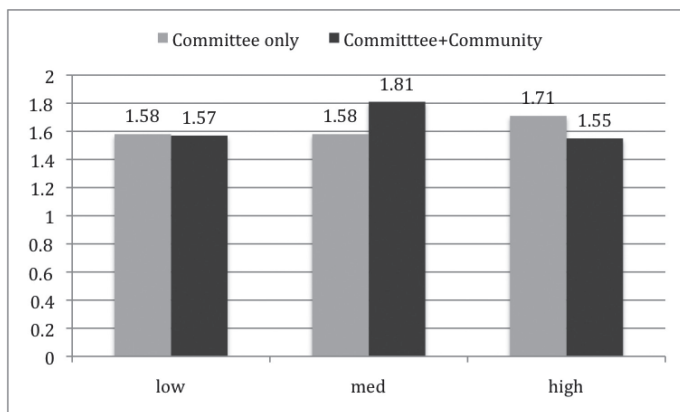
Table 4. Mean Response Values for 3 Dependent Variables by Education & Treatment (Committee Work Experiment) (Low values indicate greater approval)

	Committee Work	Committee Work + Local Office
<i>Little to no education</i>		
CORRECT	1.25	1.43
SATISFIED	1.43	1.71
APPROPRIATE	1.58	1.57
<i>Medium education</i>		
CORRECT	1.33	1.54
SATISFIED	1.55	1.64
APPROPRIATE	1.58	1.81
<i>University education</i>		
CORRECT	1.39	1.50
SATISFIED	1.63	1.60
APPROPRIATE	1.71	1.55

Our analysis of the *appropriateness* of the deputy's depicted behavior demonstrates an interaction effect of education and the experimental treatments [$F(2, 281)=3.84$ $p<.03$]. For those with low education, it does not matter whether the deputy has an office in the community (1.57) or is busy with legislative work (1.58). Respondents with a middle level of education actually prefer that the deputy will be busy legislating (1.58) to the option of combining legislating and a having an office in the community (1.81). Respondents with university education, however, tend to favor the "dual" responsibility (legislating and community office) (1.55) more than "pure" legislating (1.71) (see Figure 2).

The findings from this second experiment indicate that well educated respondents expect the deputy to have an office in the district. Perhaps well-educated people do not view a district office as “clientelistic behavior”, but as “representation.” People in the middle and low education groups did not have such a favorable evaluation of a deputy combining committee work + a district office. This difference across education groups may reflect respondents’ different levels of knowledge about the job of a deputy, which we discuss further below.

Figure 2. Interaction of treatment and education in Experiment 2 with “appropriate” dependent variable*



* Respondents who thought the treatment (“committee” or “committee plus community”) was appropriate were coded 1. Respondents who thought the treatment was inappropriate were coded 2.

6. Conclusion

We used both traditional survey questions and embedded experiments to begin to understand how the mass public views the job of members of the legislature. Across Latin America congresses are held in low regard, and interviews with state legislators in Mexico indicate that part of the reason people lack esteem for congress and deputies is that people do not understand the job of a deputy. Particularly in a country where politics has historically been based on clientelism more than on policies, and where the legislative branch bowed to the dictates of the executive, why should citizens understand the type of work deputies are supposed to do in a democratic regime? Rather than developing or investigating policy initiatives, or checking the power of the executive, the theory of clientelism would lead us to expect that people living in a young democracy would regard deputies as a source of connection to government and of particularistic and community benefits.

With our survey of 800 residents of Mexico City we found that poor people are more likely than people who are better off to view clientelistic behavior as a deputy's job, which supports expectations derived from clientelism literature. People with a high level of education view legislating and oversight of the executive as a deputy's job, and they have a much more negative view of clientelistic behavior. People in the middle of the education spectrum have less consistent attitudes about what a deputy should do. However, the embedded experiments indicate that even for people with no or very little education, their views are more subtle, and more democratic than would be predicted by clientelism theory.

An important difference between the traditional survey questions and the experimental scenarios is that in the traditional questions the respondent has to contrast two

specific behaviors –one more clientelistic and the other more legislative. Due to social desirability, such traditional survey questions increase almost artificially the sensitivity of respondents to the two options because they have to pick one. But politics in real life does not always present a citizen with two contrasting options from which they must pick the one they prefer. In reality a citizen goes to a political rally, or hears about a political event, and *responds* to the rally they attend or hear about. So the structure of the experiment can give us cleaner, more valid results in terms of how people react to what happens in the rally. We found that people do not react well to goodies. Even people with little education tend to have a favorable evaluation of the rally where the candidate talks about a bill and no goodies are distributed. They are the people the Mexican state legislators thought had the least understanding of the job of a deputy, yet they reacted favorably to bill discussion (experiment 1) and committee work (experiment 2).

Another issue pointed to by the findings of this research is that education is not only a proxy for wealth, or the likelihood that a respondent will place a positive value on clientelistic goodies, but it is also an indicator of how much knowledge citizens may have about democracy. Survey participants with more education, particularly with university education, are likely to have been taught about politics or about philosophical concepts such as democracy. If so, they may not simply be reacting to the lack of value for themselves of the clientelistic goodies, but reacting to the clientelistic behavior as undemocratic, or as clashing with their view of what democracy should be. We noted that people with a high level of education formed the group that was most favorable to the deputy having a district office along with doing committee work. Highly educated citizens may view presence in the district,

or accessibility of officials as part of *representation*, and not as clientelistic behavior.

Studies have shown that people with higher levels of education participate in politics at a higher rate in Mexico, as in the United States (Klesner 2003; Brady et al. 1995). But most people in Mexico, or in other Latin American countries, do not have a university education. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), in 2006 Mexico's turnout rate was just over 60%. Though the more highly educated citizens, about 25% of the population in Mexico City, may be (and in our survey results appear to be) more aware of the type of work democratically elected representatives are supposed to do once they take office, most votes are cast by people with less education –people who may see distribution of clientelistic benefits as valuable even if they are viewed as no more appropriate than legislating. If the expected utility of legislation is low to poor people, they may give politicians who engage in clientelistic behavior a favorable evaluation because the immediate benefit of clientelistic goodies is useful to them. However, we found that people with little education –those who would be most expected to devalue legislation as of little concrete benefit to themselves– gave an equally favorable evaluation to bills and to goodies for two of the three dependent variables in experiment 1. They also gave a more favorable evaluation to the deputy working on committees than combining a district office with committee work in experiment 2. Thus it appears that while they are willing to view old-fashioned clientelistic behavior from politicians as “correct”, they also express a “democratic” attitude by approving of legislating, indicating that they may have a greater understanding of the job of deputies in a democratic system than the deputies themselves realize. More studies, examining the attitudes of citizens in different institutional settings and with different political histories

will further our understanding of what different categories of citizens expect of their officials, and whether expectations line up with the type(s) of representation institutions give career-seeking politicians incentives to provide. Opening up the black box of citizen-government relations as filtered by different types of institutions is an important frontier in understanding the consolidation phase of democratization.

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Appendix A: Survey Experiments

Experiment 1: a candidate running for the legislature

Scenario 1 (bill only): Jose Rodríguez is a deputy candidate for your district for the Mexico City legislature. During his campaign he visits with your community and gives a

speech about a bill he will propose if he is elected, to expand the public high school in your district

Scenario 2 (bill + goodies): Jose Rodríguez is a deputy candidate for your district for the Mexico City legislature. During his campaign he visits with your community and gives a speech about a bill he will propose if he is elected, to expand the public high school in your district. During the campaign event there is an opportunity for people at the event to obtain free services from a medical specialist, and members of the party distributed construction materials and bags of food

Scenario 3 (goodies only): Jose Rodríguez is a deputy candidate for your district for the Mexico City legislature. During his campaign he visits with your community. During the campaign event of Mr. Rodriguez there is an opportunity for people at the event to obtain free services from a medical specialist, and members of the party distributed construction materials and bags of food.

Experiment 2: committee work by a member of the legislature

Scenario 1 (committee work only): Congressman Flores is the representative of your district. When the Congress is in session he dedicates every day of the week to work on different legislative committees. The deputy is President of the Finance Committee, Secretary of the Transportation Committee, and he is a member of the Agriculture Development Committee. Due to the quantity of work on the different committees, he does not have much time to visit his district.

Scenario 2 (committee work + district office): Congressman Flores is the representative of your district. When the Congress is in session he dedicates every day of the week to work on different legislative committees. The

deputy is President of the Finance Committee, Secretary of the Transportation Committee, and he is a member of the Agriculture Development Committee. Due to the quantity of work on the different committees, he does not have much time to visit his district. But the Congressman has an office in the community where 3 assistants are available to help people of the community with their problems and the assistants can fax Congressman Flores with requests from groups in the district.

Follow up questions used for each experiment:

1) *“Correctness” dependent variable:* Thinking about the story you were read, tell me if you are strongly in agreement, somewhat in agreement, a little in agreement (all coded 1), or not at all in agreement (coded 2) with the following statement: This type of activity is correct for a candidate / legislator.

2) *“Satisfied” dependent variable:* Thinking about what you were read, are you satisfied with what the candidate / deputy did? (yes satisfied coded 1, no coded 2)

3) *“Appropriate” dependent variable:* Do you think that what occurred in the story you were read is the sort of thing that a candidate / legislator should do? (yes coded 1, no coded 2)

Appendix B: Results of the 3 x 3 analysis of Experiment 1

“Correct” dependent variable: The results of the first experiment show across the three education levels that the candidate’s different behavior (providing goodies, introducing a new bill, or both) did not affect respondents’ perception of the extent of its *correctness* [$F(2, 389)=1.31$ $p = ns$]. Level of education yielded a significant effect [$F(2,$

389)=3.49 $p<.04$], and lower education respondents had a higher perception of candidate's correctness than did those with greater education regardless of the candidate's behavior (1.18, 1.30, 1.41 for low, medium, high education respectively).

"Satisfied" dependent variable: We find a significant effect of the experimental treatment [$F(2, 391)=3.58$], but no effect for education [$F(2, 391)=1.31$ ns]. Either the bill alone (1.35) or in conjunction with goodies (1.36) were considered more satisfactory than the condition that described only provision of goodies (1.56). In other words just offering clientelism is not satisfying. More so –the relative dislike of goodies was not associated with high education– but was evident across the board as the interaction of level of education and experimental treatment is not significant [$F(4, 391)<1.00$ ns].

"Appropriate" dependent variable: The 3 x 3 ANOVA on the *appropriateness* of the different candidate behaviors yielded patterns that are only at the verge of acceptable levels of statistical significance. Legislative behavior (bill only) was perceived as more appropriate (1.36) than bill + goodies (1.45) and goodies only (1.57), across all education levels [$F(2, 385)=2.31$ $p<.10$]. Respondents with lower education perceived all candidates' behavior as more appropriate (1.36) than middle (1.45) and higher education individuals (1.54), [$F(2, 385)=2.09$ $p<.12$]. The interaction of these factors is not significant ($F<1.0$).