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“Clentelism, Law, and Politics: Consideration in the Light of the Argentine Case”

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CLIENTELISM, LAW AND POLITICS
CONSIDERATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE ARGENTINE CASE*

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The purpose of this article is, on the one hand, to explain what clientelism is through a description of its characteristics in its current Argentinean form. On the other hand, it will evaluate clientelism from a legal and political point of view. In order to achieve these purposes, we will distinguish clientelism from legitimate politics, and then offer a critical evaluation in case there were any differences.

Regarding the first objective, it will be necessary to resort to some kind of canonical definition, broad enough to grasp different clientelistic phenomena. Then it will be possible to explain its Argentinean particularities, noting that it happens to be a specially interesting kind of clientelism because of its refinement and breadth.

As to the second objective, we will oppose to the reasoning that equates clientelism and legitimate types of political action. We will argue that ordinary politics is different and that, in fact, this difference turns clientelism illegitimate. Criticism against clientelism may include empirical approaches but, as these only show deficiencies of a particular public policy, they lack the ability to be extended to other cases. Alternative criticism may be more interesting, but it will necessarily be weaker as it may only reveal a model of citizens and political relations upon which clientelism is grounded.

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I. AN APPROACH TO CLIENTELISM. THE ARGENTINEAN CASE

What is clientelism? Firstly, it seems clear that it is some kind of political practice and not a political theory or ideology. It is politics because it involves elections, public goods and, in general, social issues that are supposed to be dealt with by political activity, especially governmental activity. We should therefore be speaking of clientelistic practices, clientelistic relations or clientelistic policies. The first two are probably the more accurate because they do not involve a single action developed by the one who governs but by numerous agents. Then, how do we describe these practices? What are their conditions? Clientelism involves the provision of public resources in order to get political support (mainly, but not only, votes) from the recipient. This requires a third-party between the public resources and the beneficiary to channel those resources and make support more probable. We mentioned that definitions usually coincide in some basic features of clientelistic relationships. Firstly, in exchanges and reciprocity. Secondly, in inequality, as the exchange originates and reflects a disparity of wealth, power and status. Thirdly, in the personalized nature of the relationship. Finally, in informality, in the sense that the relationship may only be mediated by legal norms in a vague manner.¹

For better understanding the singularities of the Argentinean case, it will be useful to focus on the parties involved in the relationship.

1. The broker

The most characteristic figure of the clientelistic practice is the broker. His main role consists of channeling the State’s resources, goods and ser-

¹ F. CARCAR, “¿Cómo aproximarse al problema del clientelismo político? Distintos marcos de análisis para el caso argentino”, *Miríada* 48 (2008), p. 53.

vices.² Unsurprisingly, such channeling is informal³ and, thus, outside of the law, at least up to some extent. By managing those resources, goods and services, the broker generates a core of followers and tries to obtain their political support as retribution, as stated above, mainly through their vote.⁴ For people who do not have other means of participating in formal economic relationships, this intermediation can become their usual means of accessing certain resources.⁵ In this regard, the broker is a *getter*, somebody who solves problems, who works out difficulties to satisfy needs, mainly the most basic ones. And it performs that role from a quasi-monopolistic position because it is the State who makes itself present through it.⁶

It shall be mentioned that, at the same time it acts as broker, it also operates through conventional means such as political propaganda or partisan events. In the same manner, its doings can occasionally be aimed at accomplishing goods that have an impact on the local community and not only on the people directly involved in the clientelistic relationship.⁷

In order to perform its role, it naturally needs access to public resources, actually obtained by being in contact with those who administer them. That is, the broker is a link to a political referent of municipal, provincial or national level.⁸ Thus, its work constitutes a large source of information for his

² J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, Buenos Aires, Manantial, 2001, p. 105.

³ J. AUYERO, *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, Buenos Aires, Capital Intelectual, 2004, pp. 21-22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 129. On a contrary position that will be discussed below, G. VOMMARO, “Acá no conseguís nada si no estás en política’. Los sectores populares y la participación en espacios barriales de sociabilidad política”, *Anuario de Estudios en Antropología Social*, CAS-IDES, (2006), pp. 167-170.

⁷ R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, Centro de Investigación y Acción Social, Documento de Trabajo n° 2 (2013), pp. 3 and 10-12.

⁸ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 114.

political caciques, as it knows in detail the life of its neighbors⁹. That information is of particular interest because it allows the broker to strategically allocate the resources in accordance with the needs and claims of those connected to it.¹⁰ As it can be envisioned, the broker is a member of a partisan organization who uses public resources for the purposes described above. Nevertheless, unlike partisan structures, the clientelistic relationships are not frozen, but a living and evolving network as they are mainly based upon a mesh of personal relationships. For that reason, these networks can grow larger or smaller and even the brokers may compete among themselves.¹¹

At this point, we can expect what empirical research confirms: the broker lives in the same place (neighborhood, shantytown) as its clients, and it has been performing the same occupation for years, with full-time availability.¹² Indeed, closeness, personal acquaintance and permanence can explain its ability to perform its functions with effectiveness, up to the point of being more efficient than state bureaucracy.¹³ It is a fact that the broker usually offers a solution to personal problems, personalizing the solution through its own actions.¹⁴

The former, linked to the fact that it solves fundamental needs for the lives of its neighbors, may explain the broker’s self-consciousness. Although

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111. Also see R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, cit., pp. 10-12, and also R. ZARAZAGA, “La tragedia del clientelismo”, Centro de Investigación y Acción Social, Documento de Trabajo n° 1 (2013), p. 4.

¹⁰ R. ZARAZAGA, *Vote-buying and asymmetric information*, Notre Dame (Ind.), Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Working Paper 398 (2014), p. 31. By way of example of a particular case, See R. ZARAZAGA, “La tragedia del clientelismo”, cit., *passim*.

¹¹ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 109.

¹² J. AUYERO, *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 29

¹³ R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros como red de política social”, *Postdata* 20 (2015), pp. 13-23.

¹⁴ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 179. Also See J. AUYERO, *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 55; J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, *Desarrollo Económico* 50 (2011), pp. 632-635; R. ZARAZAGA, *Vote-buying and asymmetric information*, cit., p. 3; R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, cit., p. 25.

it does not refuse that its behavior leads to an expansion of its political power and to a better position to maintain it, its personal experience is primarily of self-sacrifice.¹⁵ In addition, in order to perform its role, the broker builds personal relationships that are necessarily intimate and close. Indeed, the daily contact and the extremely personal character of the relationships explain that they be characterized by trust and solidarity, and that they may derive in close friendship bounds.¹⁶ It should not be forgotten that its role as supplier of resources is, usually, at least quasi-monopolistic. In this regard, the broker often tries to make its power pass unnoticed to the beneficiary, and does not ordinarily resort to threats in order to get its retribution.¹⁷ Finally, we shall mention that, properly speaking, the broker does not have any obligation to those it assists. Because of that, it does not perceive itself as somebody who manipulates people, but rather the opposite.

The previous consideration does not prevent the broker from acting strategically to distribute the resources available to it.¹⁸ It tries to obtain loyalty by providing people with the minimum necessary.¹⁹ In this sense, knowledge of personal situations and the trusting relationships that it maintains allow it to get accurate information for making the most out of the available resources.²⁰

¹⁵ J. AUYERO, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, *Perfiles Latinoamericanos* 20 (2002), p. 42. Also M. E. V. TROTTA, *Las metamorfosis del clientelismo político. Contribución para el análisis institucional*, Buenos Aires, Espacio Editorial, 2003, p. 149; J. AUYERO, *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 42; G. VOMMARO & J. QUIRÓS, “‘Usted vino por su propia decisión’. Repensar el clientelismo en clave etnográfica”, *Desacatos* 36 (2) (2011), p. 82.

¹⁶ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., pp. 177 and 190, among others. Also see J. AUYERO, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., p. 45.

¹⁷ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 172.

¹⁸ R. ZARAZAGA, *Vote-buying and asymmetric information*, cit., p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁰ R. ZARAZAGA, “La tragedia del clientelismo”, cit., p. 4. Also R. ZARAZAGA, *Vote-buying and asymmetric information*, cit., pp. 1-2.

Lastly, it should be clarified that the broker has its own income source, as it is usually hired by a public organization, whatever be its level. As it needs all of its time for his intermediation tasks, it is usually paid a governmental salary without performing any services at all. Besides, brokers on occasion retain for themselves a share of the resources they were supposed to distribute, thus complementing their incomes.²¹

2. The client

Secondly, we shall describe the client. The client is someone who needs the intermediation in order to access certain goods. Goods necessary for life are not always involved, but many times they are, as clients may be people who do not even cover their basic needs for subsistence through informal economy.²² They find in the broker a person who solves serious problems, and perceive it as someone who helps despite the lack of family ties. This builds a trusting relationship. It is thus understandable that the retribution the client is supposed to provide is not perceived as an exaction but as an expression of loyalty, commitment and reliability. The broker is seen as somebody who is reachable and helpful, and even self-sacrificing.²³ While the

²¹ G. VOMMARO, “‘Acá no conseguís nada si no estás en política’. Los sectores populares y la participación en espacios barriales de sociabilidad política”, cit., p. 172. Also R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros como red de política social”, cit., pp. 13-23.

²² J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 100. Also E. YOLANDA URQUIZA, “Las eternas internas: Política y faccionalismo en un municipio radical, 1983-1999”, in S. AMARAL & S. C. STOKES (comps.), *Democracia local. Clientelismo, capital social e innovación política en la Argentina*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 2005, pp. 77-78. For verifying the relationship between the level of poverty and application of these practices, see R. WEITZ-SHAPIRO, “What wins votes: Why some politicians opt out of clientelism”, *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (2012), pp. 568-583.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 177-178. Also in J. AUYERO, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., p. 42; M. E. V. TROTTA, *Las metamorfosis del clientelismo político. Contribución para el análisis institucional*, cit., p. 149; J. AUYERO, *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 55; J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, cit., pp. 632-635. In a contrary position, but less interesting as it does not constitute ethnographic research, S. LEVITSKY, *La transformación del justicialismo. Del partido sindical al partido clientelista, 1983-1999*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, p. 283.

main retribution is the vote, it can sometimes involve assisting the broker with some of his tasks, or joining it in partisan events,²⁴ and it may include, on occasion, participating in other collective actions such as demonstrations and, in some cases, looting.²⁵

As in any trusting relationship, it might break if any of the parties does not fulfill expectations, if it does not act loyally. That is why the client is neither short-sighted nor altruist, but it trusts in the broker because it has shown that it is worthy of trust. But if the trust is broken, if the broker is not able to solve problems of the client anymore, the latter would have no difficulty in leaving the former,²⁶ as it happens in many human relationships based on reciprocal trust.

If we consider the difficulty in monitoring the vote, it is worth asking why the client remains loyal and votes for the candidates backed by the broker. At this point it may seem that the broker would be giving without receiving anything in return, because it has no means of guaranteeing votes. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the most strategically sensible option for the client would be to support the person who provides it with goods, as the defeat of the broker’s list of candidates would result in the broker’s loss of access to goods, which would in turn be lost for the voter.²⁷ This presents us with a

²⁴ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 172. In the same direction, M. SZWARCBERG, “Actos partidarios y clientelismo político en América Latina”, *Nueva Sociedad* 240 (2012), pp. 111-113; R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, cit., p. 16.

²⁵ J. AUYERO, F. PAGE & P. LAPEGNA, “Clientelismo político y acción colectiva contenciosa: una relación recursiva”, *Studia Politicae* 14 (2008), pp. 7-40.

²⁶ J. AUYERO, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., p. 45. Also, J. AUYERO, *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 17 and p. 29; J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, cit., p. 636, R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, cit., p. 4; R. ZARAZAGA, “Punteros con enchufe”, Centro de Investigación y Acción Social, Documento de Trabajo n° 3 (2013), p. 5; R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros como red de política social”, cit., p. 12.

²⁷ J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, cit., p. 636. Also in this regard, R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, cit., p. 4; R. ZARAZAGA, “Punteros con enchufe”, cit., p. 13 and p. 19; R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros como red de política social”, cit., pp. 25-26.

client who is a strategic player²⁸ rather than dominated automaton.²⁹ The client’s interests are aligned with the broker’s.³⁰ Even more, the fact that the latter does not try to monitor the vote helps giving the client the impression of not being dominated or manipulated by the broker.³¹ And, in fact, it seems that it is not, as it can vote anyone it pleases without anybody ever knowing which its electoral choice was.³² This conjunction of interests is complemented with the closeness of the broker and its generosity, in a way that what the client offers as political support is understood by itself as gratitude and loyal collaboration.³³ Moreover, the duration of the relationship turns it into a habit and a belief, and turns clientelistic practices into something routinary, assumed, unreflective. Ultimately, the relationship is sincerely assumed and legitimated.³⁴ The clientelistic habit is so strong and effective that it remains even after a specific broker is abandoned, up to the point that it is identified as the only means of solving everyday problems and as the only type of political action. Thus, we could speak of a loyalty to clientelism that goes beyond the loyalty to a certain broker.³⁵

²⁸ R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, cit., p. 7.

²⁹ J. AUYERO, *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 17 and p. 29

³⁰ R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros más allá de las elecciones”, cit., pp. 26-29.

³¹ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., pp. 168-169 and p. 174.

³² R. ZARAZAGA, “Punteros con enchufe”, cit., pp. 2-3. Also, *Vote-buying and asymmetric information*, cit., pp. 1-2 and “Los punteros como red de política social”, cit., p. 12. On the contrary, S. STOKES, “Perverse Accountability: a formal model of machine politics with evidence from Argentina”, *American Political Science Review* 99 (2005), pp. 315-325.

³³ J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 172 and p. 177. From the same author, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., p. 45 and *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 18. Also in agreement, J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, cit., p. 636.

³⁴ J. AUYERO *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 177. From the same author, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., pp. 40-42 and in *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 29

³⁵ J. AUYERO & C. BENZECRY, “La lógica práctica del dominio clientelista”, *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Sociales* LXI, n° 225 (2015), pp. 238-239.

3. The relationship

Even if the relationship was, up to a certain extent, described when the parties were presented, is still possible to say something else. We must draw our attention to the fact that parties do not perceive the relationship as an exchange.³⁶ Nevertheless, it seems clear that, in any case, it is an asymmetrical and unequal relationship.³⁷ However, this difference between the perception of the parties and reality should not make us think of a lack of sincerity of the parties when they express their experiences regarding the relationship. The closeness of the relationship is perceived as sincere by both parties.

Again, we must underline the fact that the broker does not own any kind of duty to the client and, even so, it is available at all times for any need. In fact, some of the means of assistance could be described as genuine social assistance. And, in other cases, it involves a form of collaboration that nobody would expect from other than a close relative. Thus, in our view, when both parties of the relationship consider the broker as somebody actually committed to the others, who acts out of love to people, they are not hiding anything. To the contrary, they are being sincere. And this is because these actions put the exchanges in a second place. Even more, these actions become the expression of that closeness, not the price to be paid to obtain something. We consider that comparing this phenomenon with ordinary friendship is helpful for understanding it. In friendships there is an exchange (words of affection, company, interest, listening, but sometimes also gifts and personal favors), and, nevertheless, we would not think about describing them as mere relationships of exchange. To the contrary, the exchange is almost obvious as it is more likely to be an expression of some-

³⁶ J. AUYERO, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., p. 45 and *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., p. 56. In agreement, J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, cit., p. 632-635.

³⁷ J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, cit., p. 632-635.

thing bigger, which is the actual content of the relationship. In any case, it is different to affirm that, in a clientelistic relationship, sincerity may hide something else.³⁸

In understanding the relationship, it may be useful to appeal to others elements. Firstly, that it is a win-win relationship in which all of the parties end up winning and perceive it like that, as advantageous. Even more, there is no loss but all is gain. In this sense, it is hard to suspect of the other party as there is never a loss for oneself. Secondly, as we have seen, the broker never attempts to make its power or dominion on the client be felt: it neither resorts to threat nor builds the relationship upon fear. On the one hand, because it is difficult and complicated to articulate mechanisms for knowing who the client voted for. On the other hand, because it does not need (and it would even be counter-productive) to make its hypothetical power be felt when it knows that its client shares the same interest in the triumph of the candidate supported by the broker. This reinforces the reasons why clientelistic practices end up being assumed and routinary, and why they become the ordinary way of solving everyday problems. In this way, these practices reinforce their legitimacy over time.

4. Recent history

It is time to say something about the origins of Argentinean clientelism. The most exhaustive and commonly accepted historical explanation links the consolidation of clientelism, firstly, with the loss of influence of the labor unions within Peronism and their departure from partisan governance. This phenomenon happened in the nineties, although it started when the Peronist party was defeated in the national elections in 1983, which generated the

³⁸ Auyero has devoted a whole article to these topics, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., *passim*.

perception that the power of labor unions in Peronism was excessive and had become an anchor before the electorate.³⁹

The elimination of the compulsoriness of reserving one third of the positions in partisan leadership for labor unions, and the emergence of internal elections for deciding on the candidates, hollowed the unions’ participation, which was replaced by clientelism. Ever since, winning internal elections requires an infrastructure capable of conquering votes, which has pushed leaders and activists to reorganize around the distribution of favors that are typical of patronage. In this situation, those who rely on the resources of the State are in an advantageous position. These resources became the main link between partisan leadership, activists and voters. In the middle, labor unions had nothing to offer. Thus, municipal and townard leaders were taken captive by partisan leaders holding public offices. There were union members who used their resources for clientelistic practices but their achievements were personalized and thus did not benefit the union.⁴⁰

In such a way, in less than a decade, the *Justicialista* party became a clientelistic party and unions stopped being a link between leadership and the working class. This change allowed the party to adapt to a post-industrial context, to appeal to new voters (the middle class), and to keep the previous ones captive (popular and working classes).⁴¹ This process coincides with the de-ideologization of the vote, which is a paradigmatic feature in the current Argentina.⁴² The switch from a labor party to a clientelistic party was made

³⁹ S. LEVITSKY, *La transformación del justicialismo. Del partido sindical al partido clientelista*, cit., p. 170

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-180.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁴² E. CALVO & M. V. MURILLO, “Cuando los partidos políticos se encuentran con sus votantes: un análisis de los vínculos políticos a través de las redes partidarias y las expectativas distributivas en Argentina y Chile”, *América Latina Hoy* 65 (2013), pp. 27-39. In order to analyze this de-ideologization phenomenon, we shall mention the fact that brokers sometimes change their partisan affiliation. In this regard, see N. G. ÁLVAREZ, “Campañas electorales y estilos políticos. El Partido Justicialista y la Unión Cívica Radical en un municipio de Misiones”, 1999, in S. AMARAL & S. C. STOKES (comps.), *Democracia local. Clientelismo, capital social e innovación política en la Argentina*, cit., pp. 36-55.

possible by a preexisting system of territorial organizations that scaffolded the relationship with the working classes. The difference is that nowadays, thanks to clientelism, that relationship also extends to the fragmented strata that emerged in the nineties as a consequence of the country’s de-industrialization: the unemployed, own-account workers and informal workers. These linkages are now made tighter by brokers, who provide these people with jobs, local services and basic goods.⁴³ In fact, activists consider that the party is based on social assistance⁴⁴ or, rather, that it is a party no longer made up by the workers, but by the poor.⁴⁵

However, we must clarify that this process does not seem to have been intended or directed.⁴⁶ It is more likely to be described as a re-accommodation. Indeed, we should consider another factor in the consolidation of clientelism in Argentina. The economic policies of the nineties resulted in a rise of unemployment, which enlarged the stratum of the unemployed and of informal workers. Paradoxically, these policies were implemented by a Peronist government. But, thanks to this re-accommodation, Peronism did not lose its ties with popular classes, and it did not see a decline in affiliation to the party.⁴⁷ During the nineties, social plans were the attempted solution to the above-mentioned problems.⁴⁸ The problems caused by the economic policies raised in the first two years of government by the

⁴³ S. LEVITSKY, *La transformación del justicialismo. Del partido sindical al partido clientelista*, cit., p. 194.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁴⁵ S. BACHILLER, *Redes clientelares y reconfiguración del populismo en Argentina. Una genealogía de las formas organizativas peronistas*, Madrid, Entinema, 2006, pp. 103-106.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 199. All the scholars are convergent in this regard: J. AUYERO, *La política de los pobres. Las prácticas clientelistas del peronismo*, cit., p. 109; M. DINATALE, *El festival de la pobreza. El uso político de planes sociales en la Argentina*, Buenos Aires, La Crujía, 2004, p. 28; R. WEITZ-SHAPIRO, “Partisanship and protest. The politics of workfare distribution in Argentina”, *Latin American Research Review* 41 (3) (2006), pp. 122-147; A. GIRAUDY, “The distributive politics of emergency employment programs in Argentina (1993-2002)”, *Latin American Research Review* 42 (2) (2007), pp. 33-55.

⁴⁷ S. LEVITSKY, *La transformación del justicialismo. Del partido sindical al partido clientelista*, cit., pp. 261-262.

⁴⁸ M. DINATALE, *El festival de la pobreza. El uso político de planes sociales en la Argentina*, cit., p. 26.

Radical party ended up in the 2001 crisis. As a consequence, since 2002 the number of public plans for social assistance was increased up to the millions. In such a way, what articles published in the nineties described as emerging has become larger and seems to be here to stay. Thus, even if clientelistic practices are older than social plans, only the latter have become the matter of discussion. For some, they represent the institutionalization of clientelism. Others view them as a valid, effective and legitimate means for the social improvement of the less favored.

II. DISCUSSION OF THE LEGITIMACY OF CLIENTELISTIC PRACTICES

1. Critical positions

We shall distinguish the empirical positions from the merely theoretical positions. For that purpose, we must refer to the positions referred to different kinds of social plans aimed at implementing assistance policies. Precisely, it can be seen that the design of such policies would later allow the emergence and consolidation of clientelistic structures. Again, it would seem that the purpose of social plans is to respond to a context of real crisis, and it is undoubted that they actually improved the living conditions of many, on occasion in critical situations.⁴⁹ In this regard, nobody has argued that social policies were carried out in order to strengthen clientelism. However, clientelism has been a significant consequence of these policies.

For example, it has been pointed out that social plans carried out between 2000 and 2001 included beneficiaries who should neither have been included nor have been kept in them. The plans were not of interest to em-

⁴⁹ L. RONCONI ET AL., “Poverty and Employability Effects of Workfare Programs in Argentina”, *PMMA Working Paper 2006-2014*, Policy and Economic Policy, 2006, pp. 26-27.

employers, they did not accomplish training or incorporation to the labor market and they achieved low productivity.⁵⁰

The most relevant policy designed to face the late 2001 crisis, the “Heads of Household” plan, had more serious flaws. In this case we notice that legal regulations did not establish which authority was entitled to decide who the beneficiary was. It lacked transparency and governmental control as it did not establish a system for complaints or accountability. The absence of a unified national register of beneficiaries made it possible for beneficiaries to simultaneously benefit from several plans. The distribution of the amount of plans among provinces was arbitrary, if such number is compared to the rates of unemployment and of unsatisfied basic needs of each of the provinces. This arbitrariness also appeared in the distribution of specific plans, as designation of beneficiaries ended up in the hands of town halls and groups of picketers.⁵¹

More recently, 2009 saw the commencement of the program “Social Inclusion with Work,” with similar flaws as the “Heads of Households” plan. This program did not provide reasons for including certain geographical zones, or for distributing job posts, or for excluding some towns and adding some others out of the chosen zone. The distribution criteria were scarce and obscure, and they were not even followed.⁵² The program worked by means of creating cooperatives. But this could not prevent clientelistic practices. The cooperatives were not autonomous, they did not organize themselves, and their councils and assemblies were fictitious. In fact, they were submissive to those who managed the resources: in 75% of cases, to the majors, and in 25% of the cases, to social organizations (the so-called picketer

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

⁵¹ M. DINATALE, *El festival de la pobreza. El uso político de planes sociales en la Argentina*, cit., pp. 50-57.

⁵² R. ZARAZAGA, “Políticas y necesidad en Programas de Transferencias Condicionadas. La Asignación Universal por Hijo y el Programa de Inclusión Social con Trabajo ‘Argentina Trabaja’”, in C. ACUÑA (comp.), *El Estado en acción. Fortalezas y debilidades de las políticas sociales en la Argentina*, Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI, 2014, pp. 89-100.

groups⁵³). In both cases, the cooperatives incorporated to the program were created by the brokers. They chose who could take part in the cooperative and, in many cases, charged a fee on the beneficiaries. Finally, attendance at work was 50%. All in all, the plan did not achieve dignification of work or horizontality in labor relationships.⁵⁴

Beyond these problems, we must speak of criticism to the phenomenon and not to particular plans or policies. This is, we must speak of criticism to the design of plans and policies that gives rise to clientelistic practices. On the one hand, there are authors who point to the harm suffered by the beneficiaries. For example, Auyero remarks that this is a case of double truth and collective denial. The hidden truth is the manipulation and coercion that is exerted and that is real, regardless of all of the parties’ denial. Clientelism does not generate civic rights and, more specifically, social rights. The clientelistic system makes it impossible to seek alternatives.⁵⁵ In the same regard, Szwarcberg holds that clientelism contributes to consolidate a circle of power, poverty and domination, where there is no alternative to the voter other than selling its vote.⁵⁶

For Zarazaga, the broker will always be strategic and will distribute resources in an arbitrary and discretionary manner, as its purpose is to get the most out of the resources in order to retain as many votes as possible. It does not provide in accordance with actual needs, but as a response to what

⁵³ These groups emerged in the nineties with social manifestations that involved roads blockings. As it was argued, their attraction is ultimately grounded on their abilities to get material benefits. Their emergence and consolidation did not depend on a collective identity of being disadvantaged groups, or on their social reputation, or on their consciousness about poverty. Their growth is tied to their capacity to get the administration of social plans funded with public resources. In this regard, see L. RONCONI & I. FRANCESCHELLI, “Clientelismo, planes de empleo y el surgimiento de los piqueteros en Argentina”, Centro de Investigación y Acción Social, Documento de Trabajo n° 10 (2007).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-105.

⁵⁵ J. AUYERO, “Clientelismo político en Argentina: doble vida y negación colectiva”, cit., pp. 46-47 and *Clientelismo político. Las caras ocultas*, cit., pp. 56-57.

⁵⁶ M. SZWARCBERG, “Clientelismo en democracia. Lecciones del caso argentino”, *Nueva Sociedad* 225 (2010), p. 154.

the client requires for remaining loyal.⁵⁷ Thus, the relationship will never be horizontal. Even more, the broker is interested in distributing in a way that poverty be never overcome. In the best of cases (a broker who does not charge a fee or retains a share for itself), it will never allow the client’s dependence to wane. This is because brokers do not serve social objectives but rather partisan electoral goals.⁵⁸

Others have pointed to harmful effects for the political community as a whole. For example, Acuña holds that clientelism is opposite to the ideal of an autonomous citizen, accountable for its own vote. Clientelism results in a voter who only thinks in its personal interest and in such a way undermines the possibility of others to get their fair share of goods and services. This eventually creates fissures in the perception of politics and, thus, the representation principle turns into a utilitarian model for solving personal problems. At the same time, it crystallizes the political practice as personalistic, authoritarian and exclusionary.⁵⁹

Under a similar aim of showing the harm done to the equality principle, Stokes holds that clientelistic votes do not help shaping political action, as they do not actually judge the actions of the candidates.⁶⁰ Particularly, they destroy the vote as a way of judging the ones who aspire to be re-elected.⁶¹ At the same time, the arbitrary use of public funds also impacts the equality principle.⁶²

⁵⁷ R. ZARAZAGA, “La tragedia del clientelismo”, cit., *passim*. See also R. ZARAZAGA, *Vote-buying and asymmetric information*, cit., p. 31.

⁵⁸ R. ZARAZAGA, “Los punteros como red de política social”, cit., pp. 13-23.

⁵⁹ I. A. ACUÑA CHAVERRI, “Elementos conceptuales del clientelismo político y sus repercusiones en la democracia”, *Reflexiones* 88 (2) (2009), pp. 34-35.

⁶⁰ S. STOKES, “Is Vote Buying Undemocratic?”, en F. C. SCHAFFER (ed.), *Election for sale. The causes and consequences of vote buying*, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner, 2007, p. 133.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

Finally, Guillén-Montero states that clientelism affects transparency and accountability of the public office. As beneficiaries can lose what they get if the candidate who acts as their provider loses, they are not interested in unveiling corruption within the government. Even more, clientelism extends corruption to the voters and thus strengthens a system corrupt in itself. This creates two other problems. On the one hand, it turns the clientelistic public official in the only candidate who is able to make promises. On the other hand, it allows the executive branch to discipline and control the legislative power, as the former manages the resources needed by the members of the latter to be re-elected.⁶³

2. Favorable positions

As it can be imagined, nobody defends political corruption. But some refuse to qualify as clientelistic the practices that we discussed above and the social plans that promote them. We are not facing an apology for clientelism but rather an apology for some legitimate political practices that are unfairly qualified as clientelistic.

Within the framework of works resulting from empirical research, Vommaro stresses that there is no quasi-monopoly for the resolution of problems in the examined zones. Indeed, he apparently found a high density of leaders and organizations acting in such territory. This density and plurality would manifest a lack of caudillism.⁶⁴ The beneficiaries of social aids and plans are not assisted people but active members of their communities. Social plans

⁶³ A. GUILLÉN-MONTERO, *As if: The Fiction of Executive Accountability and the Persistence of Corruption Networks in weakly Institutionalized Presidential Systems. Argentina (1989-2007)*, Ph. D. Diss., Georgetown University, 2011, pp. 285-286.

⁶⁴ G. VOMMARO, “‘Acá no conseguís nada si no estás en política’. Los sectores populares y la participación en espacios barriales de sociabilidad política”, cit., pp. 167-170.

are seen as rights by those who benefit from them and, therefore, as owed.⁶⁵ Furthermore, aids associated to the performance of community work generate genuine participation in the civil society and thus turn the pay into something deserved. Thus, they are an actual path to social inclusion. These aids are perceived as rights and the expectation of receiving them is not only understood as a request or favor, but as a demand.⁶⁶

In a more theoretical work, he holds that social policies focused and decentralized (this is, the ones accused of being clientelistic) postulate and encourage participation of the civil society in its implementation, and intend to combat impoverishment with civic empowerment. The relationships that are created are cooperative and generate genuine obligations. As a consequence, clientelism is just a stigmatizing label for popular sectors.⁶⁷

Other theoretical articles are especially interesting as they reveal political conceptions when it comes to evaluating practices allegedly clientelistic. In fact, for Sosa the negative approaches to those practices and relationships associate ambition for power (actually present in the brokers, partisan leaders and public officials) with bad politics. But, in reality, what is proper of politics is precisely power. In western democracies, politics is nothing more than the will of winning governmental spaces of power within the framework of electoral processes. In this regard, clientelistic practices are not distinguishable from the rest of practices.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172. Also G. VOMMARO & J. QUIRÓS, “‘Usted vino por su propia decisión’. Repensar el clientelismo en clave etnográfica”, cit., p. 79.

⁶⁶ G. VOMMARO & J. QUIRÓS, “‘Usted vino por su propia decisión’. Repensar el clientelismo en clave etnográfica”, cit., pp. 74-79.

⁶⁷ G. VOMMARO, “Diez años de *¿Favores por votos?* El clientelismo como concepto y como etiqueta moral”, in E. RINESI, G. VOMMARO AND M. MURACA (comps.), *Si este no es el pueblo. Hegemonía, populismo y democracia en Argentina*, Buenos Aires, IEC/UNGS, 2008, pp. 149-156.

⁶⁸ P. SOSA, “Los límites de la categoría clientelismo político para la comprensión de la política”, *Margen* 57 (2010), p. 6.

With more detail, Quirós contends that there is no difference between allegedly clientelistic political practices and other practices. Therefore, the use of that adjective would be superfluous. He accepts that the voter who receives aids as a consequence of these practices is loyal to its choice by moral obligation, feeling of indebtedness and expectation of a continuous relationship. But, actually, every social relationship is like that, it is subject to explicit and implicit “moral calculus” (and “calculated moralities”)⁶⁹. The judgment of relationships allegedly clientelistic departs from the impersonality and lack of particularity of political relationships: that is why it judges as illegitimate relationships that are personal and particular. They are also negatively judged because clientelism mixes the political and economic orders. Nevertheless, we all behave as clients within the framework of micro-politics: company, school and neighborhood. And also in macro-politics, as we vote according to our personal economy.⁷⁰

III. CLIENTELISM, INEQUALITY AND MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

Before getting into the purely theoretical discussion, it is necessary to make a few comments regarding conclusions based on the aforementioned empirical, field and/or statistical studies. It is not the point to evaluate the statistical techniques or the soundness of the ethnographical studies, as they exceed the skills of the author of this article and they are not the object of the present work. However, it is possible for us to verify whether the available data allow us to reach to the stated conclusions. Data plays against those who criticize the use of the term.

Thus, it is noticeable that in the study conducted by Vommaro in 2006 in the suburbs of the city of Santiago del Estero, it be held that there was a

⁶⁹ J. QUIRÓS, “El clientelismo como incógnita. Antropólogos, sociólogos y politólogos”, cit., pp. 636-637.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 638-639.

“high density of leaders and organizations that operate in the territory” when the study only describes the presence of a Peronist partisan center (*“unidad básica”*), a picketeering organization that worked as a Peronist partisan center, and the work of a catholic parish. Thus, we are presented with two Peronist organizations and the Church as the only non-partisan organization. Vommaro contends, against Auyero, that nobody holds the quasi-monopoly for the solution of problems, but we can infer that the Church is the only exception to that partisan monopoly. In addition, his contention that social plans are rights of the poor is not coherent with his recognition that nobody participates voluntarily in social plans, and that they lead to dependence. Furthermore, he has not offered any evidence pointing to the perception of plans as rights.

In a joint article with Quirós that, again, departs from ethnographic research, they stress that social plans can be perceived as rights of the poor and that the expectation of receiving them is thought not only as a favor but as a claim of what must be delivered and received. However, we do not find any hint of that conclusion in their fieldwork. According to both authors, the fact that social plans require work as a condition for receiving the aid would turn the benefit into a compensation, and they consider that the fact that people distinguish and judge between those who actually work and those who get the aid without working evidences that they are actually aware of their pay as desert. This leads, on the one hand, to the recognition that it is possible to access the aid without working, which jeopardizes the idea that social plans lead to perceive the benefit as desert. Even if the benefit be perceived, by those who actually work, as something owed, that does not mean that access to the plan is perceived as a right. Moreover, it should be verified whether the beneficiaries consider their work as a necessary contribution to the enhancement of their communities or as a means of justifying the aid.

Once the framework has been described, it is possible to present, in a more concise and organized manner, the theoretical arguments regarding clientelism in order to revise them. In my opinion, there are substantially

two arguments for defending focalized public policies which are implemented through social plans. On the one hand, the position that (1) those policies generate actual rights, promote social inclusion and the empowerment of the less-favored citizens, and they enable their participation in the civil society. On the other hand, it is contended that (2) there are no differences between these political practices and the others, which we usually consider legitimate. And this would be because politics are power and every human relationship is moral calculus. Therefore, those who judge personalized and particular political relationships as illegitimate would be wrong. The same shall be stated regarding those who consider that political relationships are different from economic ones.

The opposite arguments contend, firstly, that (1) the result is a model of voter that is harmful for democracy. Indeed, these practices end up annulling the sense of common good and replace it with a mere calculus of personal profit. Indeed, the voter does not care if others do not get what is necessary and just, nor is it interested transparency and accountability of the supported candidate. Somehow, it transfers corruption to the realm of the voter. Secondly, (2) the above-mentioned practices are contrary to a fair political game as they provide a series of advantages to those who carry them out, which hampers political permutation and even affects the very separation of powers. The advantages consist of the fact that only a clientelistic candidate can make promises, as it is the only one who can actually fulfill them. The problems for the separation of powers are expressed in the ability of the executive branch administering public resources to discipline the legislative power, insofar as the members of the latter need these resources in order to get re-elected. Thirdly, (3) they are manipulative and coercive practices, characteristic of personalist, authoritarian and exclusionary policies. Lastly, (4) the arbitrariness is essential to the practices, which undermines equality and thus becomes an unfair action. In this regard, the fact that the broker’s action is not aimed at overcoming poverty and that it always acts on the basis of strategic calculus reveals inequality and injustice.

Regarding favorable arguments, we must say that the claim stating that allegedly clientelistic practices encourage empowerment, participation in civil society and social inclusion is unverifiable. Moreover, it requires those expressions to be defined. For example, it seems obvious that providing basic resources to someone who is not capable of accessing them somehow fosters social inclusion, as the beneficiary would not have to resort to committing crimes or to mere begging.

In fact, the outcomes of these practices are heterogeneous and it is undeniable that they remedy basic needs. The issue is how they provide a remedy. That is why we attempt to evaluate the practice in itself, the kind of actions that it involves. Which is to say that, in our view, the main issue is to determine whether these political practices are illegitimate, affecting equality and entailing some kind of manipulation of the least advantaged; or, on the contrary, whether nothing distinguishes them from other legitimate and even beneficial political practices.

Regarding the argument that there are no differences between practices that are characteristic of allegedly clientelistic social policies, and other practices, we shall say that authors who hold this argument do not offer any support to their assertion. In our view, even those who hold that politics are power would affirm that there can also exist an illegitimate exertion of power. Even if it were possible to separate politics from morals (which is about to be seen), interestingly nobody refrains itself from making moral judgments on political actions.

That every social relationship be subject to moral calculus is plainly an apodictic contention. The known third sector is one of the numerous examples evidencing the falseness of the thesis. Furthermore, it would not seem accurate to argue that a negative evaluation of allegedly clientelistic practices be grounded on the personalization of politics. That personalization is inevitable and, in some cases, it is judged as beneficial for the political life, when talking about achieving a higher political participation of citizens or about the need of approaching representatives to voters. The problem is

turning a personal favor into the exercise of a right in order to get a personal benefit out of what is, more likely, a duty owed by the public powers. Or even worse, turning the illegitimate use of public sources by a third party into a personal advantage.

Lastly, we will consider the assertion that all of us eventually vote biased by our personal economy. Again, there is no evidence for that. But, beyond that, the reasons for our vote do not matter: they are neither inquired about, nor they change the value of any vote. The issue of the discussion is not there, even when some critics of clientelistic practices take it up to that point.

Regarding the critical arguments, we shall begin with a reference to the kind of voter it generates. It is really hard to demonstrate the thesis that it generates a voter who is unconcerned with the common good and that it only acts in accordance with a calculus of personal utility. That claim is nothing more than a hypothesis. On the one hand, fieldwork is likely to reflect the honesty of the beneficiaries, which excludes from them the perception of getting an arbitrary treatment, and therefore unequal and, in that sense, unfair. We are not before a cynical voter. On the contrary, it seems to perceive the benefits it gets as any other voter. Its horizon may be more limited insofar as it suffers more privations. Or it could at least be argued that its horizon is different from the rest of the voters. Moreover, it seems clear that it does not perceive the broker as someone corrupt, which could lead it to question the legitimacy of the practices allegedly clientelistic. It views the broker as someone self-sacrificed. But, beyond the fact that empirical research goes in a direction opposite to this thesis, the motives of the voter are not to be considered in democratic societies. There is no such a thing as a vote better or worse than another vote, nor a worthier or less worthy one. Motivations behind the vote are unknown and are not judged.

Even if it is supposed that the voter should take the common good into consideration, every single vote is worth the same despite its motivation. The factors that a voter may mention as reasons for its vote are as heterogeneous

as we can imagine. They may even be causes unrelated to the common good or to the personal good.

The former also explains the difficulty in talking about a captive voter. By this we mean a voter fearful up to the point that it is unable to make another choice. Again, we are facing, on the one hand, the subjective condition of the voter: fear depends on specific a character, temperament, vital experience, etc., of each person. Thus, fearful voters can also be found where no clientelistic practices are exercised. And the experience of resorting to fear is also usual in political communities with no clientelism.

Regarding the difficulties in keeping a fair and equitable play among candidates, we must say that clientelism does not limit the chance of making promises. And, also without clientelism, those who have never ruled cannot prove that they fulfill their promises. Likewise, those who run for re-election will always be in advantage if they fulfilled their promises. Regarding the possibility of the executive branch of disciplining the members of the legislative power, it seems that it will depend on the allocation of resources and on the constitutional organization of the particular political community. Whether clientelism exists or not is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for that phenomenon.

The last two critical comments generate a more personal reflection with which we will conclude this work.

From a legal point of view, the main problem is the arbitrariness that is essential to the broker. If it performs its role without being backed by a social plan, then its performance is purely and simply illegal. But if there is a social plan that covers its work, we are not before an illegal action. Rather, up to some extent, we are facing the institutionalization of a figure that by its own nature acts in an arbitrary manner.

Secondly, we must notice that we are before a personalist use of public goods and services for partisan purposes. If we are before a broker who acts outside a social plan, then we are before an illegal action presented to the

beneficiary as a personal favor. If, on the contrary, we are before an action taken within the framework of a social plan, then we are before a right of the beneficiary (if it fulfilled the requirements for the plan) which is presented as a personal favor. And if the beneficiary does not fulfill those requirements, then we are, again, before an illegal action.

From a merely political point of view, the description of the acts of the brokers causes several misunderstandings in the beneficiaries. And this is either if the brokers act with the intention of lying, or if the beneficiaries are aware of the true meaning of what is happening and, therefore, they are not being deceived. The main issue is the figure of the broker and the personalization of the resolution of problems. Empirical research shows a strategic broker, but we could imagine an angelical broker: it does not retain a share for itself, it does not charge a fee, it does not have a fictitious position, it delivers in accordance with the actual needs, and looks for ways of relieving the beneficiaries from poverty. In that case, we would be describing the role of a priest, a social worker, a volunteer, but not a broker. This is because, in the first place, the latter is the member of a partisan organization and is presented as such. Secondly, because it personalizes the exchanges, unlike the other three. Comparing the broker with the social worker would be especially interesting, as both of them manage public resources. And at this point we can better grasp the difference, as the social worker appears as a public officer who makes it clear that the social aid is received not as a favor or compensation for anything. It also remains in its position regardless of who governs. But, above all, the most significant difference is that social workers perform their duties according to rules and not in a discretionary manner. And their action is subject to such rules and under the monitoring mechanisms established by them. This prevents arbitrariness and, thus, inequality.

Therefore, it can be observed that the emergence of the broker in the implementation of a social plan makes the beneficiary perceive that it is being done a favor when, in reality, it has a right. Beyond the mentioned deceit,

the result is the loss of meaning of the beneficiary’s own rights. If, on the contrary, the performance of the broker were outside a social plan, or within it but designating as beneficiary a person who does not fulfill the requirements, then we might run the risk (just the risk) of something even worse. The bottom line is that we do not know what happens in the conscience of the beneficiary in those cases. But, if it were conscious of the illegality of its benefit, then we would be before a plain and simple case of corruption of the voters. And this is because we cannot avoid noting that clientelism can become a game in which the two main actors always win and do not lose anything. Regarding the beneficiary, it will always lose, at least, the sense of his own rights. But when this was not the case, neither the broker, nor the beneficiary can lose anything, because the resources are public. This turns the relationship into a situation that is hard to reverse, as nobody is willing to give away a good that was gotten for free. That is to say that nobody wants to get out of a situation in which there is nothing to lose. If we added other data that we have already considered in order to describe the relationship between the broker and the client (the i.e., that the client may substitute its broker or leave it behind, that the broker does not perceive itself as manipulative, that the client does not perceive itself as being manipulated, and that practices become habits), then we can appreciate the gravity of a situation that tends to become chronic. However, it seems clear that this possibility is of difficult or impossible verification. And, from the point of view of the legitimacy of the vote, nothing changes: the reasons why somebody voted do not matter. This is not an issue that is just merely difficult to grasp, as in reality there is no room for objecting to any vote because, in a democracy, reasons do not qualify a vote.

The second problem is political and it has to do with inequality. Clientelistic practices turn inequality into something structural as long as they help maintain the dependency of the beneficiary and turn it into a habit. This is the problem. We may discuss the best means for avoiding and overcoming poverty, but it is undeniable that clientelism implies keeping things the way they are: it always reinforces dependence. And in that same way it

reinforces inequality. Not every dependence entails inequality. But keeping as dependent somebody who can actually leave that position implies maintaining inequality. Even worse, turning this dependence into a habit means making the beneficiary believe that the state of dependence is the only state possible. It could be said that this habit is generated and maintained maybe because the beneficiary does not want to leave it: the only thing that is true is that the beneficiary was not provided with a chance to do so. Whether it would consider other options as better is a mere supposition.

In view of the foregoing, the disappearance of the figure of the broker is necessary but not sufficient. Indeed, a social plan may be carried out under a clientelistic design. For example, an aid policy which does not provide means to the beneficiaries for curing poverty but rather merely delivers what is necessary for surviving would perpetuate an unequal position and would turn beneficiaries into chronic dependents of aid.

The question remains open and the one posed by clientelistic phenomena is whether it is relevant for a democratic political community to know what the motivations of the voters are. Even if they are unknown, it is worth asking if there are reasons or motives better than others, or even if there are undesirable ones. Moreover, what is the model of citizen we should aspire to, in case there is one?