Mobilizing Poor Voters

Democracy has provided opportunities for political representation and accountability, but it has also created incentives for building and maintaining clientelistic networks. Why has clientelism consolidated with the introduction of democracy? Drawing on network analysis, *Mobilizing Poor Voters* answers this question by describing and explaining the emergence, maintenance, and disappearance of political, partisan, and social networks in Argentina. Combining qualitative and quantitative data gathered during twenty-four months of field research in eight municipalities in Argentina, *Mobilizing Poor Voters* shows that when party leaders distribute political promotions to party candidates based only on the number of voters they mobilize, party leaders incentivize the use of clientelistic strategies among candidates competing to mobilize voters in poor neighborhoods. The logic of perverse incentives examined in this book explains why candidates who use clientelism succeed in getting elected and reelected over time, contributing to the consolidation of political machines at the local level.

Mariela Szwarcberg is an assistant professor of political science at Reed College. She specializes in the study of democracy, with a geographic focus on Latin America. Her research has been supported and funded by the Fulbright Commission, the Social Science Research Council, and the Mellon Foundation. Her articles have appeared in the *Journal of Comparative Politics*, the *Latin American Research Review*, *Party Politics, Social Networks, Latin American Politics and Society*, and *Women’s Policy Journal of Harvard*. She received her PhD in political science from the University of Chicago.
Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences
Mark Granovetter, editor

The series Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences presents studies that analyze social behavior and institutions by reference to relations among such concrete social entities as persons, organizations, and nations. Relational analysis contrasts on the one hand with reductionist methodological individualism and on the other with macro-level determinism, whether based on technology, material conditions, economic conflict, adaptive evolution, or functional imperatives. In this more intellectually flexible structural middle ground, analysts situate actors and their relations in a variety of contexts. Since the series began in 1987, its authors have variously focused on small groups, history, culture, politics, kinship, aesthetics, economics, and complex organizations, creatively theorizing how these shape and in turn are shaped by social relations. Their style and methods have ranged widely, from intense, long-term ethnographic observation to highly abstract mathematical models. Their disciplinary affiliations have included history, anthropology, sociology, political science, business, economics, mathematics, and computer science. Some have made explicit use of social network analysis, including many of the cutting-edge and standard works of that approach, whereas others have kept formal analysis in the background and used “networks” as a fruitful orienting metaphor. All have in common a sophisticated and revealing approach that forcefully illuminates our complex social world.

Other Books in the Series
1. Mark S. Mizruchi and Michael Schwartz, eds., Intercorporate Relations: The Structural Analysis of Business
3. Ronald L. Brieger, ed., Social Mobility and Social Structure
4. David Knoke, Political Networks: The Structural Perspective
6. Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos, The Logics of Social Structure
7. Philippa Pattison, Algebraic Models for Social Structure
8. Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications
9. Gary Herrigel, Industrial Constructions: The Sources of German Industrial Power
10. Philippe Bourgois, In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio
11. Per Hage and Frank Harary, Island Networks: Communication, Kinship, and Classification Structures in Oceana
12. Thomas Schweitzer and Douglas R. White, eds., Kinship, Networks, and Exchange
15. Rebecca Adams and Graham Allan, Placing Friendship in Context
17. Robert F. Freeland, *The Struggle for Control of the Modern Corporation: Organizational Change at General Motors, 1924–1970*
18. Yi-min Lin, *Between Politics and Markets: Firms, Competition, and Institutional Change in Post-Mao China*
22. Roberto Franzosi, *From Words to Numbers*
25. Patrick Doreian, Vladimir Batagelj, and Anuška Ferligoj, *Generalized Blockmodeling*
27. Wouter de Nooy, Andrej Mrvar, and Vladimir Batagelj, *Exploratory Social Network Analysis with Pajek*
28. Peter J. Carrington, John Scott, and Stanley Wasserman, eds., *Models and Methods in Social Network Analysis*
30. Martin Kilduff and David Krackhardt, *Interpersonal Networks in Organizations*
34. Sean F. Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks*
35. Dean Lusher, Johan Koskinen, and Garry Robins, eds., *Exponential Random Graph Models for Social Networks: Theory, Methods, and Applications*
36. Silvia Dominguez and Betina Hollstein, eds., *Mixed Methods Social Networks Research: Design and Applications*
37. Benjamin Cornwell, *Social Sequence Analysis: Methods and Applications*
Mobilizing Poor Voters

*Machine Politics, Clientelism, and Social Networks in Argentina*

MARIELA SZWARCBERG

*Reed College*
To my parents,

Dora Psenne and Joel Szwarcberg
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xi</td>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mobilizing Poor Voters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Microfoundations of Political Clientelism</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Building a Party Network: Political, Partisan, and Social Networks in Argentina</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Moral Hazard and Asymmetric Information Networks</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Logic of Perverse Incentives</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Scaling Up: The Logic of Perverse Incentives at the Subnational Level</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mobilizing Poor Voters: A Comparative Perspective</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Conclusions: Winners Lose</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am genuinely indebted to my advisors who supported this project from its inception. Susan Stokes has been a continuing source of thoughtful and constructive criticism. Her analytical and rigorous thinking had an enormous impact on my intellectual development, and for that, and many other things, I owe her an enormous debt of gratitude. John Padgett taught me to see and understand the world through the lenses of network analysis, enriching my professional development. Ernesto Calvo has been following my work since I was an undergrad in Torcuato Di Tella University. Throughout the years, he has patiently guided my intellectual curiosity, pushing me to ask better questions and develop analytical tools to answer them.

This research project benefited from the support and advice of several people and institutions in both the United States and Argentina. I thank the Fulbright Commission, the Tinker Foundation, the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago, the Social Science Research Council, the Mellon Foundation, the Yale Program on Democracy, the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, and Reed College for their financial support. Some of the findings presented in Chapters 2 and 4 were initially published in “The Microfoundations of Political Clientelism: Lessons from the Argentine Case” in the *Latin American Research Review* and “Uncertainty, Political Clientelism, and Voter Turnout in Latin America: Why Parties Conduct Rallies in Argentina” in the *Journal of Comparative Politics*.

I am particularly indebted to Javier Auyero and Steve Levitsky. Without their works on Peronism and Argentine politics, much of this book could not have been thought, much less written. Their works were a great source of inspiration for my own. I am also indebted to friends and colleagues for their comments and passionate conversations about politics in Argentina and Latin America. I thank Isabella Alcañiz, Luciano Andrenacci, Alyson Benton, Taylor Boas, Valeria Brusco, Eddie Camp, Horacio Cao, Thad...
Dunning, Marcelo Escolar, Roberto Gargarella, Carlos Gervasoni, Kenneth Greene, Claudio Holzner, Gabriel Kessler, Joy Langston, Marcelo Leiras, Germán Lodola, Noam Lupu, Luis Fernando Medina, Vicky Murillo, Ana María Mustapic, Marcelo Nazareno, Ana de la O, Ezequiel Gonzalez Ocantos, Virginia Oliveros, Andreas Schedler, Luis Schiumberini, Alberto Simpser, Catalina Smulovitz, Maristella Svampa, Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, and Rodrigo Zarazaga. Since our time in Chicago, two gifted physicists who share my obsession for politics have enhanced the way I think analytically about the problems examined in this book. I treasure those long nights of conversations in Chicago, Istanbul, Italy, and New York with Panos Oikonomou and Ignacy Sawicki about this book and politics in our countries: Argentina, Greece, and Poland.

I am also grateful to the local Argentine journalists, politicians, activists, party bosses, brokers, and voters who spoke with me about their experience and understanding of clientelistic politics. I cannot express in words the debt of gratitude that I have to them. In particular, I want to thank Jorge Ghirardi, Fabián Domínguez, and Alberto Sayus for spending uncountable hours in coffee shops and asados (during the electoral campaign), teaching me about the intricacies of the politics of the Conurbano. Most of all, I am truly grateful to those who “do” local politics and who spent hours talking and showing me how they do politics on the ground. Anabella Museri and Sara Niedzwiecki provided great research assistance during fieldwork in Argentina.

In Lima, I benefited enormously from my affiliation with the Universidad Católica. I am indebted to Carlos Melendez, Aldo Panfichi, Cynthia Sanborn, Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla, Martín Tanaka, and Jorge Valladares for their generosity and enthusiasm regarding the project. I also benefited from comments I received in presentations at the Centro de Estudios Políticos y Sociales de Córdoba, Universidad Católica de Lima, Universidad de General Sarmiento, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Universidad de San Andrés, University of Utah, the Institute for the Quality of Government at the University of Gothenburg, and the workshops of Comparative Politics at the University of Chicago, Yale University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, as well as conferences organized by the American Political Science Association, the Midwest Political Science Association, and the Latin American Studies Association.

I am also indebted to all of my students who took different versions of my seminar on distributive politics over the years. I want to thank my terrific Reed students, who endured reading the whole manuscript and providing thoughtful comments and criticism: Elaine Andersen, Mariuxi Andrade, Gyulnara Barnett, Ari Galper, Daniel Kallick, Megan Keating, Monty La Salle Hill, Tess Lallemant, G. Luhman, Cristobal Mancillas, Eli Rau, Sydney Scarlata, and Oliver Silverton-Peel.
Acknowledgments

Robert Dreesen of Cambridge University Press was a dream-come-true editor: thorough and fast. He helped me all the way through the editorial process for first-time authors and found me terrific reviewers. The book is much better because of their constructive criticism and suggestions. Philip Alexander helped me throughout the production process, and Suzette André Costello was a superb copy editor.

My final acknowledgments are to my friends and family. I would have never been able to learn so much about politics were it not for years of long nights and unending weekends discussing and participating in politics with my Argentine compañeros and friends. Most still engage actively in politics in various spaces, and we have remained friends despite ideological and geographical differences; I want to thank especially Pablo Pelazzo and Martín “Poca” Tornay.

My best friend since childhood, Paulita Feijoo, shared this long journey with me for many years, and I am grateful for every moment we spent together. I still cannot believe she is gone and unable to “finally see ‘the’ book.” I miss her every single day, but console myself imagining her screaming “grosa” as she used to do whenever she saw my name in print (a good sign that she was, indeed, family).

I want to thank my brother, Leandro, and his wife, Eleonor, for sharing with me their sense of humor, which always makes me feel at home in spite of the distance. My parents, Joel and Dora, are my constant and unending source of love and support. Throughout the years they have encouraged me to pursue my goals even when doing so meant long separations. Their strength, courage, and love always push me to do better without forgetting where I come from.

My grandfather arrived in Argentina after escaping the Nazi occupation of his native Poland when he was seventeen years old – without speaking one word of Spanish and without any money. With no time to continue his education, he was unable to finish high school. My father, like my grandfather, needed to work hard to afford basic things and could not afford to go to college. Through his effort, though, he was able to give my brother and me the opportunity to go to college. I did not grow up in a house full of books, but in one of hard-working and curious people who afforded me the chance to pursue my dreams. Many of the activists and voters in this book work as much as my grandfather and father did to give their children a better future. It is in the hope that others can have the opportunities I had that I wrote this book.