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Rethinking Clientelism:

Demands, Discourses and Practices in Contemporary Brazil

Robert Gay*

Introduction

It has now been more than a decade since the Brazilian military relinquished its hold on the electoral process. Effective democratic governance has yet to be established, however. Traditional elites still dominate the scene, political parties remain weak, fragmented and unstable, and public administrations continue to pay lip-service to demands for citizens' rights. The source of these various problems of democratic governance is, by all accounts, the widespread practice of exchanging votes for favors, otherwise known as clientelism. It is clientelism that forges relations of dependency between masses and elites. It is clientelism that stifles popular organization and protest. And, it is clientelism that reduces elections to localized disputes over the distribution of spoils.¹

In this essay, I will argue that clientelism is indeed an essential and enduring feature of the Brazilian political landscape. I will also argue, however, that both the form and the function of contemporary clientelism remain unexamined and that, as a consequence, its role in the political process has been misunderstood or, worse still, ignored. With few exceptions, clientelism is condemned as an instrument of elite control and called upon to explain all that is wrong with Brazilian democracy. I will argue that clientelism should not be seen as some immutable force or fixed thing, but as a relationship that is subject to constant challenge, renegotiation and change. I will also argue that, under certain circumstances, clientelism plays a positive and largely unheralded role in the process of democratic consolidation.

My comments in the first part of this essay shall be confined, for the most part, to the literature on democratization in Brazil. Towards the end, however, I will be drawing on recent research on clientelism from other contexts in Latin America. There are two reasons for this. First, there is precious little research on the way that clientelism works in Brazil. And, second, it has become accepted practice to blame clientelism for the slow and halting pace of democratic consolidation not only in Brazil, but in almost every other country in the region.²

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Clientelism is Dead...

Between 1964 and 1985, dates that roughly correspond to the most recent period of authoritarian rule, Brazil underwent a dramatic transformation from an agrarian, primary product producer to one of the world's largest industrial economies. Industrialization was accompanied by the proletarianization of much of the labor force, the emergence of a complex social class structure and rapid rates of urbanization that were fueled, in part, by a massive population shift from the now peripheral Northeast to the dynamic and overburdened cities of the South.

Observers of Brazilian politics predicted that, together, these processes of 'massification' would weaken the power of traditional landed elites and liberate an increasingly mobile population from the tyranny of small town and rural life. Others pointed to the expansion, throughout the authoritarian era, of an increasingly powerful and interventionist state. According to Paul Cammack, this state was created, in part, to introduce rational policy making and planning procedures to an administration that, to this point, had been dominated by corrupt, so-called traditional politicians who distributed public goods and services as patronage. This state also provided a significant source of new employment opportunities that were allocated according to merit and promoted at least the idea that government intervention was based not on the principle of political favoritism but of social need.³

More recently, scholars of Brazilian politics have maintained that the elimination of clientelism has also been facilitated by the rapid development of print and, more significantly, television media as the principal means of mass communication and political socialization. According to Venício de Lima, mass media, as opposed to local party structures, has been the deciding factor in a number of what, in recent years, can be characterized as regularly held and relatively free elections.⁴ Regularly held and relatively free elections, in turn, have meant increased competition among elites and an electorate that is both more familiar and comfortable with its recently acquired democratic responsibilities.⁵

Finally, many scholars attribute the transformation of Brazilian politics in recent years to the emergence, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, of so-called new social movements. Inspired by what was often described as the resurrection of civil society, early observers of the new social movement phenomenon predicted that the popular sector would wage a 'war of position' that would destroy the legitimacy of the authoritarian state, undermine support for clientelist political parties, and sweep the radical, democratic Left to power.⁶ Subsequent disappointments, the near election of Partido dos Trabalhadores' (PT) Luis Ignácio da Silva notwithstanding, have given rise to more cautious perspectives on the impact of social movements on post authoritarian politics. Instead of predicting the strategic gains to be made by popular-based formal organizations and political parties, scholars now focus their attention on the democratization of political culture and social relations as a whole.⁷ What this means is that while few would claim that new social movements have revolutionized Brazilian politics, there is a consensus that they have articulated new demands, established alternative discursive arenas, challenged dominant practices and achieved, at the very least, a measure of symbolic power.⁸

More specifically, there are those who argue that the emergence of an autonomous and vital popular sector has meant that political actors are forced to work much harder as they are confronted by an ever increasing number of popular organizations, NGOs and representative bodies.⁹ They also argue that politicians, political parties and public administrations can no longer rely on the distribution of patronage, in the form of public works and political appointments, as a means to generate or secure votes.¹⁰ In other words, the foundations of clientelism are gradually being undermined.

Sonia Alvarez and Evelina Dagnino, for example, claim that what they refer to as social movement webs have 'rewoven or reconfigured...the fabric of collective action in Brazil'.¹¹ They also maintain that social movement webs have fashioned new constituencies based on 'communities of equals' that are confrontational, oftentimes disloyal, and committed to the ideal of rights. These new popular movements, argue Alvarez and Dagnino, are to be distinguished from those that endured traditional clientelist ties with the 'populist-corporatist and authoritarian political establishments' of the recent and not so recent past.¹²

Long Live Clientelism...

The claim that clientelism is of declining significance in Brazil has not gone unchallenged. Many scholars dispute the widely-held assumption that clientelism is the inevitable victim of modernization and point out that, while personalism and dependency have characterized elite-mass relations since the time of the conquest, the exchange of votes for favors is, in fact, a relatively recent phenomenon.¹³ It was only in the post World War II era that the more traditional elements of the landed elite confronted the fact that they needed new, more sophisticated strategies to protect their interests in the face of the rapid expansion of the state. It was also in the post World War II era that Brazil entered the age of mass politics, meaning that, for the first time since the end of the nineteenth century, a significant element of the population was granted the right to vote.¹⁴

Others argue that the process of bureaucratization, far from eliminating clientelism, has, in fact, greatly increased the opportunities that exist for buying votes. Maria Castro and Vilmar Faria insist that government emergency and assistance programs continue to be made available on a selective and piecemeal basis and that administrative posts, while short-term and inherently unstable, provide access to considerable public resources.¹⁵ Barry Ames has also argued that despite recent attempts to 'modernize' the civil service, it is still the case that the fate of perhaps the majority of public sector employees, and a significant proportion of the population as a whole, depends on the presence and goodwill of a patron, or what is popularly referred to as a *quem indica* or *pistolão*.¹⁶

There are also those who claim that too much has been made of the impact of mass media and that the outcome of both local and national elections is still largely determined by carefully constructed political networks and the relationships that are brokered between them.¹⁷ Many scholars argue that 'modern' political parties developed exceptionally late in Brazil and that the mil-

itary inherited a clientelist system that it maintained through restricted, but nonetheless continuous, electoral competition, low levels of repression, and substantial government spending. As a consequence, the transition to democracy, when it came, was dominated by so-called traditional political actors whose power was based on archaic patterns of mobilization and who subsequently engaged in a spree of 'wild clientelism' in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁸

Frances Hagopian argues that the spending spree of the immediate post authoritarian era was made possible by an increase in government payroll spending, the decentralization of power to state and municipal governments and massive local government borrowing from state controlled banks.¹⁹ Others maintain that the post authoritarian spending spree was a product of the institutional context within which elections were now held. The combination, peculiar to only a few countries, of proportional representation, open party lists and large multimember districts resulted in extreme party instability and considerable inter and intra-party competition.²⁰ Furthermore, according to Scott Mainwaring, the Brazilian military had, by then, stripped Congress of any real legislative function. This meant, in effect, that politicians had little alternative but to rely on the distribution of patronage as a means to secure election or reelection. Thus, for many, democratization resulted not in the elimination of clientelism but in the proliferation of clientelist-based 'deals'.²¹

Scholars have also disputed the assumption that so-called new social movements have transformed authoritarian structures and democratized political and social relations. They have argued that popular organizations tend to be extremely unstable and short-lived and that they bring together an insignificant element of the population.²² They have also argued that the vast majority of popular sector demands are for limited, primarily economic resources that are easily absorbed or diverted by the state.²³ Finally, scholars have also argued that the obsession with radical, if somewhat marginal aspects of Brazilian culture has led social scientists to underestimate support for the military and to ignore the fact that many organizations serve traditional functions and reproduce relations of hierarchy upon which clientelism ultimately depends.²⁴

Perhaps the most common explanation for the persistence of clientelism, however, is widespread poverty and increasingly savage inequality. Literally millions have failed to benefit or have benefitted only marginally from the fruits of capitalist development in Brazil.²⁵ Indeed, widespread poverty and inequality have led many scholars to suggest that it is difficult, if not impossible, for Brazil's poor to participate effectively in the political process and that they have become, to quote Marx, the 'bribed tool of reactionary intrigue'.²⁶

The assumption that the least privileged elements of Brazilian society are unable to participate effectively in the political process needs to be examined extremely carefully, however. I say this because it informs not only the largely academic debate about democratization, but also attempts at institutional reform such as the elimination of the compulsory vote.²⁷ The problem with this assumption is that it is based on extremely thin evidence and that it misrepresents what is, arguably, the vast majority of the Brazilian population's most effective political weapon.

Clientelism as Tradition

Scholarly images of clientelism, from both Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, are overwhelmingly negative. As a system of what is often considered pre-modern politics it is blamed for everything from cycles of ruinous inflation to the breakdown of democratic regimes. More importantly, at least for the purposes of this essay, clientelism is also blamed for the disorganization and marginalization of Brazil's poor. Most scholars agree that the extreme vulnerability of perhaps the majority of the Brazilian population compels it to literally 'sell' its votes to candidates for public office in exchange for the delivery or simply the promise of patronage. The consequences of this exchange are thought to be as follows.

First of all, most scholars argue that clientelism is responsible for the establishment and consolidation of networks of solidarity, trust and, more significantly, subordination between political elites and masses that interfere with, if not preclude, the collective organization of the popular sector on the basis of social class.²⁸ Collective organization is inhibited because political returns are offered along vertical lines and because of what are perceived as asymmetrical, patron-client relations between leaders and followers of client organizations themselves. Indeed, Guillermo O'Donnell insists that clientelism is not only responsible for the fragmentation of the poor, but that it generates 'fierce resistance on behalf of subalterns to organize as collective subjects and to be represented as such'.²⁹

Second, there are many who believe that clientelism discourages what is alternatively referred to as 'real' or 'meaningful' political participation and that the relationship between politician and voter is so unequal that the exchange of votes for favors is almost wholly dependent on the goodwill and generosity of those in positions of power. Indeed, Fábio Wanderly Reis argues that the uncertainty and asymmetry of this relationship encourages would-be clients to become passive, uninformed and essentially disinterested participants in the political process and to shy away from alternative, more confrontational means of interest representation.³⁰

Third, most scholars claim that the rewards that are sometimes obtained through clientelism are inconsequential and unworthy of the vote and that the role played by patronage in elections is evidence of the backwardness, deficiency and low level of sophistication of the average Brazilian voter. One of the problems associated with clientelist exchange, therefore, is that it focuses the popular sector's attention on the immediate acquisition of localized and small-scale goods and services as opposed to a series of more significant, generalized and long term demands. Thus, for many, clientelism makes it extremely difficult for voters to organize their thoughts in terms of a left-right or any other continuum and places tremendous strain on what is often referred to as ideological or programmatic politics.³¹

Finally, most scholars agree that clientelism, when looked at from a systemic level, constrains universalism, devitalizes civil society and prevents the popular sector from mounting sustained pressure on the state.³² Clientelism also, by implication, allows politicians to ignore what are perceived to be weak and disorganized actors and to by-pass and, as a consequence, undermine so-called normal democratic procedures by essentially buying votes.³³

My objective in this essay is not to deny that any, or even all, of these observations about the relationship between Brazilian elites and masses are true. Rather, the point is to suggest the possibility that clientelism performs other functions and to caution against its use as a largely unexamined and residual category that accounts for all that is wrong with contemporary Brazilian democracy. Unfortunately, as José Murilo de Carvalho observed almost three decades ago, ‘the relationship between leaders and followers is not clarified. This relationship is often characterized as ‘paternalistic’ or ‘clientelistic’ but these terms are not clearly defined and no systematic procedure is adopted to clarify how this relationship works’.³⁴

The most recent and, in many ways, most systematic research on clientelism has been conducted by Frances Hagopian. Hagopian claims that the Brazilian military was ultimately compelled to enlist the support of so-called traditional political elites who controlled ‘the underside’ of the state, which conducts ‘low politics’ and organizes consent’.³⁵ These political elites, argues Hagopian, subsequently used their access to the spoils of state-led capitalist development to lock up an expanding and increasingly urban electorate that had, nonetheless, been ‘conditioned by years of patronage-based appeals’.³⁶

Contemporary clientelism, according to Hagopian, can best be described as a distinctive and resilient system of top-down mobilization that is based not so much on coercion or traditional forms of authority, but on the selective and highly personalized exchange of goods, services and employment opportunities for the vote. This system, she argues, discourages political participation beyond the ballot box, is nonideological in character, and interferes with, if not precludes, the extension of democracy.³⁷

Hagopian’s work is interesting in that she recognizes that certain aspects of the clientelist relationship have changed. Unfortunately, her research focuses almost exclusively on institutional representations of the clientelist system in terms of the career trajectories of so-called traditional political elites, with particular emphasis on the state of Minas Gerais. Hagopian is left no choice, therefore, but to assume that the persistence of traditional elites can be explained by the persistence of traditional, by which she means clientelist, politics. Hagopian pays little or no attention, however, to the meaning or form of clientelism at the popular level or, in her words, the specific ways in which the state and the popular sectors in contemporary Brazil are ‘attached’.³⁸

Similar conclusions as to the significance of clientelism in Brazil were reached by Eli Diniz in her classic study of the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB) in Rio de Janeiro.³⁹ Diniz claimed that the image of the MDB in Rio was very much at odds with that of the national party in that the electoral prowess of its dominant faction, otherwise known as *Chaguistas*, depended almost exclusively on the selective exchange of votes for favors.

Diniz argued that the city of Rio de Janeiro in the early 1980s could be divided up into distinct, mutually exclusive zones that were dominated by individual Chaguista politicians. These politicians disposed of a certain number of low level government jobs, facilitated access to state and municipal administrations, and controlled both the activities and outlook of local popular sector organizations. This was particularly true, according to Diniz, of the relationship between traditional elements within the MDB and favela neighborhood

associations that adopted passive, nonconfrontational strategies for the pursuit of a series of local, relatively inconsequential demands.⁴⁰

The Chaguistas' stranglehold on the local population was only challenged in the late 1970s and early 1980s when elements of the favela movement pushed for the organization of more autonomous, combative and ideologically-oriented neighborhood associations. This led, according to Diniz, to the emergence of competing federations of favelas in Rio which represented, what were fast becoming, distinct and diametrically opposed bases of popular political support.

Diniz's study is interesting in that it represents at least an attempt to come to grips with the phenomenon of clientelism at the local as opposed to regional or national level of politics. Like Hagopian, however, Diniz relies too heavily on aggregate-level election data and largely untested assumptions about the political behavior upon which such data are based; save for a small selection of interviews with politicians and leaders of favela neighborhood associations. Furthermore, Diniz is guilty of insisting on a stark and extremely rigid distinction between traditional, or clientelist, politics and modern, or radical, politics at both the legislative and popular levels.⁴¹

The notion that clientelism and radicalism represent different styles and patterns of collective action, or inaction, has been developed most fully by Susan Stokes in her study of a low-income neighborhood in Lima, Peru.⁴² Stokes argues that for much of this century the urban poor existed as the passive, fatalistic, loyal and, most significantly, misinformed clients of an oligarchic state. Then, in the late 1960s, the Velasco military regime unleashed hitherto dormant counterhegemonic forces that it was subsequently unable to control. This led, according to Stokes, to the emergence of a bifurcated popular political culture that expressed the very different world views of what she characterizes as hierarchical clientelists and class-solidary radicals who 'promulgated an ethic of rights, protest, participation, and egalitarianism'.⁴³

Stokes' work is interesting in that it is based on extensive field research among the urban poor. Unlike others, therefore, she gives us a sense of the ways in which the various relationships between elites and masses are both perceived and played out. Her research is problematic, however, in that in her haste to convince us of the rising tide of popular radicalism and protest, she reduces clientelism to a timeless and unchanging mode of participation, or non-participation, that is the product, not even of strategic or symbolic resistance, but of 'false consciousness'. In other words, Stokes wishes us to believe that the subordination of the least privileged elements of Peruvian society has been so successful and complete that it has been unaffected by massive social change, labor union organization, land invasion, peasant-led rebellion and the dissemination of radical or even liberal democratic discourse.⁴⁴

Clientelism as (Post) Modernity

In his study of union politics in the industrial suburbs of São Paulo, John French argues that it has become accepted dogma that, until fairly recently, Brazilian labor unions have been subordinated to the state. This dogma, he suggests, is based not on careful empirical investigation but on theoretically-

charged speculation. More to the point, French suggests that this has enabled scholars of 'new' unionism, particularly in São Paulo, to make largely unsubstantiated claims about the greater class-consciousness of contemporary Brazilian workers.⁴⁵

Much the same could be said about recent research on popular political participation outside of the context of organized labor. Scholars of contemporary Brazilian politics have argued that new social movements in the post authoritarian era have been organized on the basis of new ideas about collective identity and citizens' rights that distinguish them from the fragmented and hierarchical 'action sets' that tied the popular sector to elites in the past.⁴⁶ This comparison, I would argue, is no longer valid, if indeed it ever was, in that changes in the relationship between elites and masses in Brazil have had an impact on *all* political relationships, *including* those based on clientelism.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that clientelism, both in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, is increasingly a means to pursue the delivery of collective as opposed to individual goods.⁴⁷ This means that political clienteles are less likely to assume the form of loose clusters of independently negotiated dyads than organizations, communities or even whole regions that fashion relationships or reach understandings with politicians, public officials and administrations. In other words, contemporary clientelism exhibits both hierarchical and relational elements *and* elements of collective organization and identity.⁴⁸

There is also evidence that clientelism is an increasingly voluntary, transactional and, as a result, unstable relationship between both political elites and masses and the representatives and rank-and-file members of clientelist-based organizations themselves. Clientelist politicians and community leaders who fail to deliver on a consistent basis soon lose support and are replaced by others. Indeed, there are those who argue that the relationship between clientelist politician and voter is more sporadic, instrumental and diffuse in nature than the dense, stable and all-embracing networks of informal reciprocity and mutual solidarity that characterize the relationships between and among elites and the middle class.⁴⁹

Finally, it is also important to note that the relationship between clientelist politician and voter in Brazil is by no means as unequal as it once was. The recent transition to democracy has witnessed a dramatic increase in the level of both inter and intra-party competition for votes.⁵⁰ Furthermore, changes in election procedure, such as the introduction of official ballots and, more recently, automated voting machines, have significantly reduced both the opportunities that are available for fraud and the degree of control that politicians enjoy over the vote. It is not uncommon, for example, for voters to demand compensation prior to an election and to throw their support behind someone else. The consequences of such a deception are, arguably, much greater for a candidate for public office than for those who chose to dishonor such an 'agreement'.⁵¹

This is not to say that patronage is no longer rewarded at the ballot box. On the contrary, this is still the essence of clientelism. The problem is that we have become so accustomed to thinking of clientelism as a mechanism of institutional control – often referred to as corporatism – or the product of 'false consciousness' – often referred to as populism – that we have failed to consider the possibility that clientelism might be embraced as a popular political strategy.⁵²

Even Jonathan Fox, in his brilliant and ground-breaking essay on elite-mass relations in Mexico, claims that the distinction between what he refers to as 'semiclientelism' and pluralism is the ability of the popular sector – in the latter case – to gain access to material resources without giving up its right to express its interests autonomously.⁵³ Fox also argues that 'if the state's mechanisms for enforcing voter compliance continue to weaken, then more and more citizens may well accept pork-barrel funding but also still vote their conscience, as civic activism broadens and deepens'.⁵⁴

What I am suggesting is that there is no necessary contradiction between rewarding patronage at the ballot box and 'voting one's conscience'. I am also suggesting that rewarding patronage at the ballot box is increasingly a means by which a seasoned and increasingly disillusioned electorate expresses its collective approval, or disapproval, of a candidate for public office or administration's performance.⁵⁵ And, finally, I am also suggesting that, under such circumstances, clientelism has less to do with the exchange of votes for favors, than with the exchange of votes for what political actors would like to present as favors but the least privileged elements of the population demand or claim as rights. In other words, not only is it becoming increasingly difficult for political actors to create a sense of loyalty or obligation on the part of the electorate, it is also becoming increasingly necessary for politicians, public officials and administrations to disguise the fact that they are, ultimately, in the business of buying votes.⁵⁶

Of course, as I have already mentioned, there are those who would insist that rights have little to do with the selective and occasional distribution of milk tokens, the paving of roads, the building of schools or the installation of neighborhood sewage systems. And, furthermore, that clientelism, as a strategy that is based on the delivery of such goods and services, undermines any attempt to propagate coherent ideologies or establish programs based on principles of universalism and entitlement. This perspective, I believe, is both simplistic and, more to the point, elitist.⁵⁷

First of all, it is a mistake to assume that the exchange of votes for goods and services is necessarily devoid of ideological content. Since the early 1980s everyone, including the Right, has been talking about popular participation in government. Popular participation, in and of itself, is no guarantee, however, that issues of popular concern will be resolved. Indeed, there are those who claim that popular participation in government is a cheap and effective way of demobilizing and exhausting the opposition.⁵⁸ In this context, it is important to appreciate that the role played by patronage in elections is evidence, in many instances, of the emergence of a new breed of voter who demands respect, efficiency and, most important of all, accountability from public officials and administrations of *all* political persuasions. All too often, the 'politically incorrect' electoral choices of the popular sector are dismissed, out of hand, without considering the possibility that they are based on criteria that cut across traditional political boundaries.⁵⁹

Second, the assumption that the popular sector is somehow the captive domain of clientelist-oriented politicians is clearly unfounded. Many scholars have found evidence to suggest that different elections mean different things and are approached as such. In other words, while individuals, or groups of individuals, may vote on the basis of the promise or delivery of fairly specific

and localized goods at one level, they are just as likely to 'vote their conscience' at other levels.⁶⁰ This appreciation of the different functions of various levels of municipal, state and federal government suggests that clientelism is not an all-embracing, imposed-from-above world view but a strategy that is both selectively employed and the product of a sophisticated and reasoned grasp of the political process as a whole.⁶¹

Finally, it should also be kept in mind that while universalism and citizenship are attractive concepts in the abstract, they take on very different meanings in the course of everyday life. A decade or so of regularly held and relatively free elections has done nothing to convince people that politicians are any less corrupt or insincere and has left more people without access to decent paying jobs, education, health care and housing than ever before. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the least privileged elements of Brazilian society should be suspicious of what are essentially foreign ideologies, distrust formal institutions, and embrace clientelism as a hedge against what is often perceived not as democratization but as bureaucratic indifference and exclusion.⁶²

Unfortunately, there is very little empirical research that focuses specifically on the way that clientelism works in contemporary Brazil. Some of the best research has been done by Geert Banck who warned, a long time ago, that clientelism was becoming a largely untested and static image and that it 'neither slips away nor is it immutable until some insurmountable contradictions destroy it'.⁶³ Banck's work is interesting because he recognizes that political actors in contemporary Brazil have to work much harder to cash in on favoritism, nepotism and corruption. The problem, he points out, is that politicians are under increasing pressure from above and below to be both more transparent and accountable *and* to deliver the goods. Banck is also one of few to attempt to examine the specific mechanisms that politicians employ in their attempts to maintain their increasingly unreliable bases of support, such as the notorious *trem de alegria*.⁶⁴

Outside of Brazil, some of the best research has been done by Gerrit Burgwal.⁶⁵ Burgwal found that clientelism and radicalism were competing yet complementary strategies that were alternatively employed by the urban poor in their attempts to extract, primarily collective, resources from the state. His research in a low-income settlement in Quito, Ecuador, demonstrates quite clearly that the distinctions that are made between different political strategies are much less clear than we are led to believe. More specifically, Burgwal's nuanced and extremely thorough ethnography suggests that not only are collective organization and protest fundamental aspects of contemporary clientelism but that nepotism, favoritism and exclusion are, themselves, no strangers to so-called radical approaches to community development.⁶⁶

Similar conclusions were reached by Cristina Escobar in her research on peasant movements in Sucre, Colombia.⁶⁷ Escobar found that in the region she was studying a strong peasant movement emerged to contest the future of the agrarian sector in the face of the processes of modernization and capitalization. What she discovered was that this movement succeeded in breaking the power of traditional landed elites, reconfiguring certain aspects of its relationship with a new breed of political brokers, and achieving greater returns for the vote. Furthermore, while Escobar recognizes that the success of the peasant movement was greatly constrained by the relatively authoritarian nature of the

Colombian state, clientelist relations were entered into ‘not in the absence of ‘class consciousness’ but in spite of it’.⁶⁸

Finally, some of the most innovative research is being conducted by Javier Auyero on the micro-sociological aspects of Peronism in Argentina. Auyero argues that the delivery of patronage is a necessary but insufficient condition for the operation of contemporary clientelism and that the ‘cluster of beliefs, assumptions, styles, skills, and habits encompassing the exchanges – explaining and clarifying them, justifying and legitimizing them – is as important as the actual exchanges themselves’.⁶⁹ Auyero’s work is important in that it suggests that clientelism is as much a social construction as it is an objective or essential phenomenon in the abstract. Furthermore, it also suggests that as the relationship between elites and masses changes, clientelism becomes as much a struggle over symbolic resources and political ‘credit’ as it is over jobs, infrastructure and access to the state.

Concluding Remarks

Clientelism is one of those social science concepts that has achieved honorary status over the years. This means that while it features prominently in all but a few texts on Latin America, it is rarely the subject of scrutiny. In this paper I have argued that, with few exceptions, recent scholarship has insisted on a crude, static and misleading distinction between clientelist and non-clientelist politics and misrepresented or ignored the ways in which contemporary clientelism functions, its meaning as an expression of popular engagement – or disengagement – and its broader political significance.

This is not to say that clientelism is no longer a mechanism of political mobilization that serves the interests of conservative or even authoritarian elites. On the contrary. What it means is that we must take clientelism more seriously and be open to the possibility that it plays a role in the democratic process that transcends notions of conformity and resistance. Indeed, I would argue that recent research on local politics in Brazil and other countries of Latin America suggests that many of the so-called ‘progressive’ features of popular political culture that have been attributed to new social movement activity are, in fact, elements that are essential, if not specific, to clientelism. In other words, while those who embrace or make use of clientelism have not rewoven or reconfigured the fabric of collective action in Brazil, they have, without a doubt, articulated new demands, established alternative discursive arenas, challenged dominant practices and achieved, at the very least, a measure of symbolic power.

More specifically, it could be argued that clientelism – in its more contemporary guise – has fashioned new constituencies that are confrontational, often-times disloyal and committed to the ideal of rights and that, as a consequence, politicians in Brazil have to work much harder at delivering goods and services as a means to generate or secure votes. Finally, it could also be argued that the constituencies that embrace or make use of clientelism are to be distinguished from those that endured traditional clientelist ties with the populist-corporatist and authoritarian political establishments of the recent and not so recent past.

The question is, why has clientelism escaped our attention for so long? Part

of the answer, I would suggest, has to do with a lack of attention to matters of definition. In Brazil, clientelism is a term that is often associated with a very specific image of a rural and distant past. Alternatively, it is used so loosely and indiscriminately that it characterizes every initiative, statement or position that is introduced, made or defended by the opposition. Either way, little attention is paid to the spectrum of clientelist relations in Brazil or the ways these various relations work.⁷⁰

Part of the answer also has to do with the way that we chose to examine clientelism. It is no mystery why those who adopt a state-centered approach and focus on formal political institutions see clientelism as a powerful and extremely resilient mechanism of manipulation and control, and why it is primarily anthropologists who visit what Joel Migdal refers to as the 'trenches' and 'dispersed field offices' who insist that the relationship between elites and masses is contested at each and every turn.⁷¹ The question is not so much who is right and who is wrong, but rather how can the insights produced by these admittedly very different research perspectives and strategies be reconciled and used to inform each other?⁷²

Finally, clientelism has also escaped our attention because we insist on organizing our thoughts about what is a fluid and extremely complex social phenomenon in terms of a simplistic and uncompromising dichotomy that, in reality, simply does not exist.⁷³ As a consequence, clientelism has long been considered a residual, static and uninteresting category that is unworthy of analysis. Unfortunately, this means that the ways in which the least privileged elements of Brazilian society participate in the political process have been given short shrift. It also means that instead of being perceived as agents of social and political change, the poor are, essentially, blamed for everything.

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Notes

1. A version of this introduction appears in Robert Gay, 'The Broker and the Thief: A Parable (Reflections on Popular Politics in Brazil)', forthcoming in *Luso Brazilian Review*.
2. See, for example, Frances Hagopian, 'Traditional Power Structures and Democratic Governance in Latin America', pp. 64-86 in Jorge I. Domínguez and Abraham F. Lowenthal (eds), *Constructing Democratic Governance: Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s – Themes and Issues* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1996). See also Guillermo O'Donnell, 'Illusions About Consolidation', *Journal of Democracy* 7(2)(1996): 34-51.
3. Paul Cammack, 'Clientelism and Military Government in Brazil', pp. 53-76 in Christopher Clapham (ed.), *Private Patronage and Public Power* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982). For a discussion of changes in Brazilian society during the authoritarian era, see also Eli Diniz and Renato Boschi, 'A Consolidação Democrática No Brasil: Atores Políticos, Processos Sociais e Intermediação de Interesses', pp. 15-75 in Eli Diniz, Renato Boschi and Renato Lessa (eds),

- Modernização e Consolidação Democrática No Brasil: Dilemas da Nova República* (Rio de Janeiro: Vértice & IUPERJ, 1989).
4. Venício A. De Lima, 'Brazilian Television in the 1989 Presidential Election: Constructing a President', pp. 97-117 in Thomas E. Skidmore (ed.), *Television, Politics, and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
 5. For the impact of elections on the transition to democracy and post authoritarian politics, see Bolívar Lamounier, 'Authoritarian Brazil Revisited: The Impact of Elections on the Abertura', pp. 43-79 in Alfred Stepan (ed.), *Democratizing Brazil: Prospects of Transition and Consolidation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Glaucio Ary Dillon Soares, 'Elections and the Redemocratization of Brazil', pp. 273-298 in Paul W. Drake and Eduardo Silva (eds), *Elections and Democratization in Latin America, 1980-1985* (San Diego: University of California, 1986).
 6. For an illustration of the associations that were made between popular organization and politics, see Maria Helena Moreira Alves, 'Grassroots Organizations, Trade Unions and the Church: A Challenge to Controlled Abertura in Brazil', *Latin American Perspectives* 2(11) (1984):73-102.
 7. For example, Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato argue that the impact of new social movements on democratization 'should be conceived not in terms of the achievement of certain substantive goals or the perpetuation of the movement, but rather in terms of the democratization of values, norms, and institutions that are rooted ultimately in political culture'. Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), p. 562.
 8. The literature on new social movements is vast. Among the more influential pieces are Jean Cohen, 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements', *Social Research* 52(4)(1985):663-716; Tilman Evers, 'Identity: The Hidden Side of New Social Movements in Latin America', pp. 43-72 in David Slater (ed.), *New Social Movements and the State in Latin America* (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1985); Eunice Durham, 'Movimentos Sociais e a Construção da Cidadania', *Novos Estudos* 10(1984):24-30; and Pedro Roberto Jacobi, 'Movimentos Sociais – Teoria e Prática em Questão', pp. 246-275 in Ilse Scherer-Warren and Paulo J. Krischke (eds), *Uma Revolução No Cotidiano? Os Novos Movimentos Sociais Na America Do Sul* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987).
 9. See, for example, Inaiá Maria Noreira de Carvalho and Ruthy Nádia Laniado, 'Transição Democrática, Políticas Públicas e Movimentos Sociais', pp. 108-133 in Alexandrina Sobreira de Moura (ed.), *O Estado E As Políticas Públicas Na Transição Democrática* (São Paulo: Vértice, 1989).
 10. For the suggestion that public works no longer translate into votes, see Teresa Pires do Rio Caldeira, 'Electoral Struggles in a Neighborhood on the Periphery of São Paulo', *Politics & Society* 15(1)(1986-87):43-66.
 11. Sonia E. Alvarez and Evelina Dagnino, 'Para Além da 'Democracia Realmente Existente': Movimentos Sociais, a Nova Cidadania e a Configuração de Espaços Públicos Alternativos'. Paper presented at the Encontro Anual da Associação Nacional de Pós Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais (ANPOCS), Caxambú, MG, 1995, p. 10.
 12. Alvarez and Dagnino, 'Para Além da 'Democracia Realmente Existente', p. 20. See also Ana Maria Doimo, *A Vez e a Voz do Popular: Movimentos Sociais e participação política no Brasil pós-70* (Rio de Janeiro: ANPOCS, 1995).
 13. Linda Lewin suggests that clientelism has been overlooked because 'attention has been directed...to urbanization, immigration, industrialization, and nationalism rather than to those aspects of social organization that conserved historical patterns of political life'. Linda Lewin, *Politics and Parantela in Paraíba: A Case Study of Family-Based Oligarchy in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 10.
 14. Richard Graham argues that in 1881 Brazilian legislators reduced the size of the electorate from an estimated 1,000,000 to 150,000. According to Graham, this decision was made at the behest of rural and urban elites who feared that rapid social change and the impending abolition of slavery would undermine their ability to control the political participation of the so-called 'dangerous classes'. Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth Century Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 182-206. See also Cammack, 'Clientelism and Military Government'; and Scott Mainwaring, 'Brazil: Weak Parties, Feckless Democracy', p. 355-398 in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully (eds), *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
 15. Maria Helena Guimarães Castro and Vilmar E. Faria, 'Política Social e Consolidação De-

- mocrática No Brasil', pp. 194-215 in Sobreira de Moura (ed.), *O Estado E As Políticas Públicas*.
16. Barry Ames argues that government employees constitute between 5% and 10% of the economically active population in Brazil and that 'voters whose likelihood depend on local government will surely support their leaders'. Barry Ames, 'The Reverse Coattails Effect: Local Party Organization in the 1989 Brazilian Presidential Election', *American Political Science Review* 88(1)(March 1994):95-111. Also, in 1985, Minister of Administration Aluisio Alves estimated that 125,000 people had been given positions in the federal administration through public service exams, and that 1.7 million had been hired 'according to criteria I don't understand, because they are eminently political'. Quoted in Mainwaring, 'Brazil: Weak Parties'.
 17. Ames, 'The Reverse Coattails Effect'.
 18. See, for example, Frances Hagopian, *Traditional Politics and Regime Change in Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 17; Mainwaring, 'Brazil: Weak Parties'; and Guillermo O'Donnell, 'Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes', pp. 17-56 in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela (eds), *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).
 19. Hagopian, *Traditional Politics*, pp. 241-243.
 20. For details as to Brazil's electoral system, see Alan Angell, Maria D'Alva Kinzo, and Diego Urbaneja, 'Electioneering in Latin America', pp. 183-205 in Roderic Ai Camp (eds), *Democracy in Latin America: Patterns and Cycles* (Wilmington: Jaguar, 1996).
 21. Mainwaring, 'Brazil: Weak Parties'.
 22. See, for example, Renato Boschi, 'Social Movements and the New Political Order in Brazil', pp. 179-212 in John D. Wirth, Edson de Oliveira Nunes and T.E. Bogenschield (eds), *State & Society in Brazil. Continuity and Change* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987); and Ruth Corrêa Leite Cardoso, 'Popular Movements in the Context of the Consolidation of Democracy', pp. 291-302 in Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez (eds), *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).
 23. Speaking of popular sector demands in Latin America in general, Joe Foweraker claims that 'The majority of "economic corporate" demands can easily be absorbed or diverted within political systems organized along clientelist and corporatist lines. Indeed, such systems are especially effective in separating and isolating this order of demand, and then providing partial satisfaction, and often ensuring cooptation, through granting (personal) favours and according (restricted) privileges'. Joe Foweraker, *Theorizing Social Movements* (London: Pluto, 1995), p. 81.
 24. See, for example, Roberto DaMatta, 'On the Brazilian Urban Poor: An Anthropological Report', Democracy and Social Policy Series Working Paper no.10, Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame, Spring 1995; Cecília Loreto Mariz, *Coping With Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); and Kurt Von Mettenheim, *The Brazilian Voter: Mass Politics in Democratic Transition 1974-1986* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), pp. 11-13.
 25. Many social scientists speak of a system of 'social apartheid'. See, for example, Elimar Pinheiro Nascimento, 'Exclusão: A Nova Questão Social', *Proposta* (FASE)(61)(1994):40-43.
 26. See, for example, Frances Hagopian & Scott Mainwaring, 'Democracy in Brazil: Problems and Prospects', *World Policy Journal* 4(3)(1987):487-514; Scott Mainwaring, 'Brazilian Party Underdevelopment in Comparative Perspective', *Political Science Quarterly* 107(4)(1992-3):677-707; and José Iálvaro Moisés, 'Dilemas Da Consolidação Democrática No Brasil', pp. 119-177 in José Iálvaro Moisés and J.A. Guilhon Albuquerque (eds), *Dilemas Da Consolidação Da Democracia* (São Paulo: Paz E Terra, 1989).
 27. Of course, those who argue against the compulsory vote do not talk about its impact on the political participation of the poor. It is clear from research that examines who would and would not vote, however, that the poor would be effectively disenfranchised. This is particularly true of local level elections which determine how and even if a whole range of basic public goods and services will be delivered. For recent data as to who would and would not vote in Brazil, see the various articles in the *Jornal Do Brasil* 10/27/96. For the context of the debate in Brazil, see Timothy Power, 'Why Brazil Slept: The Search for Political Institutions, 1985-1997'. Paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association meetings, Guadalajara, Mexico, 1997. For a discussion of the compulsory vote in comparative perspective, see Arend Lijphart,

- 'Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma', *American Political Science Review* 91(1)(1997), pp. 1-14.
28. For the relationship between clientelism and collective action, or inaction, see Hagopian and Mainwaring, 'Democracy in Brazil'. For the notion that clientelism involves the extension of trust, see Luis Roniger, *Hierarchy and Trust in Modern Mexico and Brazil* (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 13.
29. O'Donnell, 'Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes', p. 44.
30. See, for example, Fábio Wanderley Reis, 'Partidos, Ideologia e Consolidação Democrática', pp. 296-326 in Fábio Wanderley Reis and Guillermo O'Donnell (eds), *A Democracia No Brasil: Dilemas E Perspectivas* (São Paulo: Vértice, 1988). See also comments by Elizabeth Jelin as to the association between clientelism and what she calls the 'naturalization of domination'. Elizabeth Jelin, 'Citizenship Revisited: Solidarity, Responsibility, and Rights', pp. 101-119 in Elizabeth Jelin and Eric Hershsberg (eds), *Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Citizenship, and Society in Latin America* (Boulder: Westview, 1996).
31. See, for example, Angell, Kinzo, and Urbaneja, 'Electioneering in Latin America,' and André Singer, 'Collor na Periferia: A Volta Por Cima do Populismo?', pp. 135-152 in Bolívar Lamounier (ed.), *Geisel A Collor: O Balanço da Transição* (São Paulo: IDESP, 1990).
32. Bryan Roberts argues that while there is overwhelming evidence that the poor in Latin America are in no sense 'marginal', their mobilization has been of a limited nature such that the 'political pessimism of the early analysts of marginality was, in that sense, well founded'. Bryan Roberts, 'The Social Context of Citizenship in Latin America', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 20(1)(1996):38-65.
33. See, for example, Hagopian and Mainwaring, 'Democracy in Brazil,' and Amanda Sives, 'Elite Behavior and Corruption in the Consolidation of Democracy in Brazil', *Parliamentary Affairs* 46(4)(1994):549-62.
34. José Murilo de Carvalho, 'Estudos de Poder Local no Brasil', *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Políticos* 25-26(July-January)(1968-69):231-48.
35. Hagopian, *Traditional Politics*, p. 138.
36. Hagopian, *Traditional Politics*, p. 152.
37. Hagopian, *Traditional Politics*, p. 16.
38. To her credit, Hagopian does mention the fact that voters can no longer be herded to the polls and that bosses are now mediators for categorical as well as individualistic transactions. Hagopian, *Traditional Politics*, p. 60.
39. Eli Diniz, *Voto e Máquina Política: Patronagem e Clientelismo no Rio de Janeiro* (Paz e Terra, 1982).
40. For the relationship between the MDB and low-income communities in Rio, see Diniz, *Voto e Máquina Política*, pp. 139-158.
41. For an incisive critique of Diniz's work, see Alba Zaluar, *A Máquina e a Revolta: As Organizações Populares e o Significado da Pobreza* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985), pp. 48-49.
42. Susan Stokes, *Cultures in Conflict: Social Movements and the State in Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For similarities between the Peruvian and Brazilian case, see Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, 'Conclusion: Parties and Democracy in Latin America-Different Pattern, Common Challenges', pp. 459-474 in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully (eds), *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
43. Stokes, *Cultures in Conflict*, p. 116.
44. The idea that clientelism is associated with a distinct and separate culture is a common one and has been taken to its logical extreme by Robert Putnam in his work on Italy. Putnam talks about two Italies: one characterized by mutual trust, honesty, civic engagement and horizontal forms of association, the other by mistrust, lawlessness, civic apathy, corruption, personal dependency and hierarchy. Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 115.
45. John D. French, *The Brazilian Workers' ABC: Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern São Paulo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 1-16.
46. This term is very often used to describe patron-client groups and to distinguish them from more 'natural' categorical associations. See, for example, James Scott, 'Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia', pp. 123-146 in Steffen W. Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl

- H. Landé and James C. Scott (eds), *Friends, Followers, and Factions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
47. For the observation that clientelism does not impede the formation of horizontal ties among the poor, see Zaluar, *A Máquina e a Revolta*, p. 232. For a well developed analysis of the concept of 'collective clientelism' see Gerrit Burgwal, *Struggle of the Poor: Neighborhood Organization and Clientelist Practice in a Quito Squatter Settlement* (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1995). The collective, or corporate, nature of contemporary clientelism has also been noted by John Martz in his recent work on Colombia. Having said this, however, Martz remains faithful to a very traditional conception of the form, meaning and significance of clientelism. See, John D. Martz, *The Politics of Clientelism: Democracy and the State in Colombia* (London: Transaction, 1997).
 48. Bryan Roberts argues that '[p]atronage, the old stand-by of Latin American governments [is] not enough to buy off opposition since it [is] no longer the case of buying off particularly well-organized neighborhood groups, but of satisfying a general urban need'. Roberts, 'The Social Context of Citizenship', p. 55. Roberts fails to appreciate, however, that clientelism can describe not only the explicit exchange of votes for goods and services between political actors and specific individuals or well organized and defined groups, but also a more implicit but nonetheless firm understanding between public administrations and whole regions that it takes a certain amount of government activity to produce votes.
 49. For this observation vis-a-vis Brazil, see Marcos P.D. Lanna *A Dívida Divina: Troca e Patronagem no Nordeste Brasileiro* (Campinas: Unicamp, 1995), p. 33; José de Souza Martins, *O Poder Do Atraso: Ensaios de Sociologia da História Lenta* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1994), p. 29; and Peter McDonough, *Power and Ideology in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 96. For similar observations from other contexts, see Judith Chubb, *Patronage, Power, and Poverty in Southern Italy: A Tale of Two Cities* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 167; and Larissa Adler Lomnitz, 'Informal Exchange Networks in Formal Systems: A Theoretical Model', *American Anthropologist* 90(1988):42-55.
 50. For party volatility, see Scott Mainwaring, 'Parties, Electoral Volatility, and Democratization: Brazil since 1982', Paper Presented at the Latin American Studies Association Meetings, Washington, D.C., 1995.
 51. Victor Nunes Leal observes that there were reports of employees betraying their landlords in Brazil as far back as the elections in 1945 and 1947. Victor Nunes Leal, *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto: O Município e o Regime Representativo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Alfa-Ômega, 1975), p. 12. For an account of the way this game is played in contemporary Brazil, see Robert Gay, *Popular Organization and Democracy: A Tale of Two Favelas* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), pp. 101-112.
 52. Populism, corporatism and clientelism are terms that are used interchangeably and somewhat indiscriminately in the literature on Latin American. In general, however, corporatism refers to attempts by the state to interfere with and control popular organizations such as labor unions and neighborhood associations. Populism, on the other hand, is a concept that is used to describe the relationship between a largely urban, unorganized and pre-political electorate and anti-establishment, manipulative and oftentimes charismatic elites. And, finally, clientelism is used to describe the relations of dependency, unequal exchange and subordination that are assumed to be essential to both corporatism and populism. For an illustration of the way corporatism has been applied to Brazil, see Youssef Cohen, *The Manipulation of Consent: The State and Working-Class Consciousness in Brazil* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1989). For populism in Brazil, see Francisco Weffort, *O Populismo na Política Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1980). For an insightful essay on the way that populism has been vilified by social scientists, the political Right and, in particular, the Left, see Paul Drake, 'Conclusion: Requiem for Populism?', pp. 217-246 in Michael L. Conniff (ed.), *Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982).
 53. Fox distinguishes between authoritarian clientelism, semiclientelism and pluralism. Authoritarian clientelism refers to situations where the political subordination of the masses is secured by means of the selective distribution of patronage and the use or threat of force. Semiclientelism refers to situations where the political subordination of the masses is solicited by means of the selective distribution of patronage in the form of nonenforceable but explicit 'deals'. Pluralism refers to situations where access to state resources no longer depends on an individual or group's status or political persuasion. Jonathan Fox, 'The Difficult Transition

- from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Mexico', *World Politics* 46 (January 1994):151-184.
54. Fox, 'The Difficult Transition', p. 180.
55. This observation is made by Zaluar, *A Máquina e a Revolta*, pp. 237-238. See also, Ann L. Craig and Wayne A. Cornelius, 'Houses Divided: Parties and Political Reform in Mexico', pp. 249 in Mainwaring and Scully (eds), *Building Democratic Institutions*.
56. For a brilliant and insightful analysis of this situation in the context of the U.S., see Thomas Guterbok, *Machine Politics in Transition: Party and Community in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 75.
57. The words of José Murilo de Carvalho proved, once again, prophetic when he remarked of research on clientelism that: 'an evaluative position is almost always present, implicitly or explicitly. Coronelismo... is considered something that must disappear because it is incompatible with a truly democratic regime'. Carvalho, 'Estudos de Poder Local', p. 240.
58. See, for example, Hagopian's comments vis-a-vis PRODECOM. Hagopian, *Traditional Politics*, p. 165.
59. For example, there is evidence that the Partido Democrático Trabalhista's (PDT) recent troubles in Rio de Janeiro have to do with the party's inability or unwillingness, whilst in power, to deal with the increase in drug-related violence. See, Gay, 'The Broker and the Thief'.
60. Many scholars insist on what, I would argue, is a false distinction between the clientelist vote and the 'free' vote. See, for example, Ian Rouqui, 'Clientelist Control and Authoritarian Contexts', pp. 19-3, in Guy Hermet, Richard Rose and Slain Rouqui (eds), *Elections without Choice* (New York: John Wiley, 1978).
61. Teresa Caldeira argues that 'the distinction we make between the 'ideological vote' and the 'clientelist vote' is a false one: they are but two aspects of the same practice, two sides of the same coin'. Teresa Pires do Rio Caldeira, *A Política Dos Outros: O Cotidiano dos Moradores da Periferia e o que Pensam do Poder e dos Poderosos* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1984), p. 239. See also, Geert A. Banck, 'Poverty, Politics and the Shaping of Urban Space: A Brazilian Example', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 10(4)(1986):522-540; Gay, *Popular Organization and Democracy*, pp. 125-126; and Zaluar, *A Máquina e a Revolta*, p. 225.
62. Carvalho and Laniado argue that, in the case of unemployment benefits, the institutionalization of specific, universalistic criteria has excluded larger and larger numbers of workers in Brazil. Carvalho and Laniado, 'Transição Democrática'. Others have questioned the assumption that universalism is necessarily embraced by the least privileged elements of society. See, for example, Roberto DaMatta, 'The Quest for Citizenship in a Relational Universe', pp. 307-335 in Wirth, Nunes and Bogenschield (eds), *State & Society in Brazil*; and Ayse Günes-Ayata, 'Clientelism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern', pp. 19-28 in Luis Roniger and Ayse Günes-Ayata (eds), *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994).
63. Banck, 'Poverty, Politics and the Shaping of Urban Space'.
64. Geert A. Banck, 'Democratic Transparency and the Train of Joy and Happiness: Local Politicians and the Dilemmas of Political Change in Brazil', pp. 135-156 in Jojada Verrips (ed.), *Transactions. Essays in Honor of Jeremy Boissevain* (Amsterdam: Spinhuis, 1994).
65. Burgwal, *Struggle of the Poor*.
66. See also, Beth Cohen, 'Squatter Settlements, Community Leaders, and the Local State: The Role of Participatory Policy in Brazil's Transition to Democracy', Master of Public Affairs and Arts Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1995; Linda M. Gondim, 'Quando os Movimentos se Organizam: Burocracia versus Democracia Direta nas Associações de Moradores', pp. 67-91 in Elimar Pinheiro do Nascimento and Irllys Alencar F. Barreira (eds), *Brasil Urbano: Cenários da Ordem e da Desordem* (Rio de Janeiro: Notrya, 1993); and Nico Vink, 'Does Popular Culture Exist in Brazil?' pp. 151-162 in Geert Banck and Kees Koonings (eds), *Social Change in Contemporary Brazil: Politics, Class and Culture in a Decade of Transition* (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1988).
67. Cristina Escobar, 'Clientelism and Social Protest: Peasant Politics in Northern Colombia', pp. 65-85 in Roniger and Günes-Ayata (eds), *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society*.
68. This apparent contradiction was also observed by Carl Landé who remarked that 'extreme differences in wealth and power between members of different social strata, facilitate the harsh exploitation of those who are not given special protection of some patron. This may explain why clientelism may flourish, or be idealized, in societies which in other respects are harshly exploitative and where there prevails a general cynicism as to the possibility of genu-

- inely selfless benevolence in the relations between different social classes. As a result a man who has been favored above his fellows...may still be impelled to revolt against a system...which he finds to be inequitable'. Carl Landé, 'Introduction: The Dyadic Basis of Clientelism', pp. xiii-xxxvii in Steffen W. Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl H. Landé and James C. Scott (eds), *Friends, Followers, and Factions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
69. Javier Auyero, 'Performing Evita. A Tale of Two Peronist Women'. Forthcoming in the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.
 70. In this sense, there is a need for research that documents and examines the different varieties of clientelism that exist in Brazil, along the lines of Roniger's more comparative and historically-grounded work. See, Roniger, *Hierarchy and Trust*.
 71. Joel S. Migdal, 'The State in Society: An Approach to Struggles for Domination', pp. 7-34 in Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue, (eds), *State power and social forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1994). See also Sérgio Paulo Pinheiro, 'The Legacy of Authoritarianism in Democratic Brazil', pp. 237-253 in Stuart S. Nagel (ed.), *Latin American Development and Public Policy* (St. Martin's Press, 1994).
 72. For a recent attempt to provide a 'decentered' approach to state power in Mexico, see Jeffrey W. Rubin, 'Decentering the Regime: Culture and Regional Politics in Mexico', *Latin American Research Review* 31(3)(1996):85-126.
 73. Of course, scholars who employ such dichotomies make sure to qualify their positions by recognizing that there is a certain amount of slippage between the two extremes. The effect, nonetheless, is to direct our attention to what are usually clear cut and idealized extremes and away from what is, more often than not, the more interesting and analytically troubling material in the middle.