

Vote Brokers, Clientelist Appeals, and Voter Turnout in Russia

Timothy Frye,^{ac} Ora John Reuter,^{bc} David Szakonyi^{ac}

^aColumbia University, ^bUniversity of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, ^cInternational Center for the Study of Institutions and Development- Higher School of Economics, Moscow

Clientelism is common in the developing world, but little scholarship examines its effectiveness. In this paper, we investigate the effectiveness of various clientelist strategies. In particular, we compare the relative effectiveness of various clientelist brokers—party activists, employers, and local officials—as well as the effectiveness of different types of selective inducements. Using a framing experiment placed on a survey of 4200 Russian citizens in October 2014, we find that respondents are most likely to respond to appeals from employers. Employers have significant levers of influence over their employees, are able to monitor voter behavior, and are engaged in repeated interactions with voters. This makes them effective vote brokers in Russia. We also find that negative inducements (e.g. threats and intimidation) outperform positive inducements (e.g. gifts and rewards).

Introduction

In March 2012, the Ryazan Electrical Instrument Factory found itself at the center of a scandal that had little to do with circuit boards. According to several major news outlets, the plant, one of Russia's largest electronics manufacturers, was forcing its employees to vote for Vladimir Putin under threat of dismissal.¹ The factory declared March 4, a Sunday, to be a working day and issued a directive requiring employees to obtain absentee ballots and vote at work. Russia's second largest daily newspaper, which is usually apolitical, published a full-length article that included reports from employees and interviews with plant management.²

This episode is remarkable not because such tactics are rare in Russia, but because the methods employed by management were so brazen. Supervisors issued written directives on factory letterhead to employees, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, these directives leaked to the press. While rarely so public, instances like this were common in the 2011-12 election cycle. Russia's largest election monitoring NGO, *GOLOS*, aggregated hundreds of citizen reports of intimidation in the workplace during the elections and concluded in its final report: "Once again, administrative pressure on

¹ See <http://novgaz-rzn.ru/novosti/708.html> and <http://www.rosbalt.ru/federal/2012/02/17/947322.html>

² See <http://www.kem.kp.ru/daily/25836/2810109/?cp=1>

voters was actively used in these elections...including pressure on the employees of individual enterprises and organizations with the goal of securing votes for V. Putin....”³

While such practices are common in Russia and other countries, it is not clear how effective they are. Do selectively targeted threats actually increase turnout? Are they more or less effective than positive inducements, such as vote buying? And how do such tactics compare to mobilizational techniques that do not rely on selective inducements?

The exchange of selective inducements for political support—also known as clientelism—is well-studied in the comparative politics literature. Hundreds of studies have examined the causes and correlates of clientelism, but there are very few that examine its effectiveness. This paper contributes to the literature on clientelism by examining the conditions and strategies that make clientelist appeals effective.

Our point of departure is to recognize that clientelism comes in many varieties. Our goal is to investigate which types of clientelist appeals are most effective, and, in so doing, better understand the mechanisms of effective clientelist exchange. One important dimension of variation is the type of inducement offered by vote mobilizers. While most of the literature on clientelism has focused on positive inducements (e.g. gifts, rewards, benefits, jobs, etc), recent literature shows that negative inducements (e.g. threats, coercion, intimidation) may be just as prevalent (e.g. Mares and Young 2016, Frye, Reuter and Szakonyi 2016). The first question we address in this paper is the relative effectiveness of positive and negative inducements. To our knowledge, ours is the first study to explicitly compare the effectiveness of different types of selective inducements.

³ “Vybory presidenta Rossii, 4 Marta 2012, Analiticheskii Doklad” GOLOS. Moscow. Available at: <http://files.golos.org/docs/6088/original/6088-doklad-2012-03-04-ok3.pdf?1338893979>

The second main question we examine is the effectiveness of various vote brokers. While politicians sometimes distribute selective inducements directly to voters, most clientelist exchange is mediated by third parties. Party activists are by far the most studied intermediaries (e.g. Stokes et al 2013). Indeed, much of the literature implies that party activists (or brokers affiliated with parties) are the only conceivable agents of clientelist exchange. But as a growing body of scholarship now demonstrates, there are many different types of brokers, including employers, state employees, traditional leaders, clan leaders, criminal bosses, and civil society leaders (e.g. Mares and Young 2016). Only a handful of studies recognize this variation and we are aware of no studies that explicitly examine the relative effectiveness of different brokers.

In this paper, we compare the relative effectiveness of employers, local officials and party activists. We place special emphasis on employers because they are a common clientelist broker that is woefully understudied in the literature.

A number of recent studies have demonstrated that workplace political mobilization is common in diverse settings ranging from Imperial Germany (Mares 2015), to Chile (Baland and Robinson 2008) to Bulgaria (Mares and Petrova 2013) the modern United States (Hertel-Fernandez 2016). In Russia, Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi (2014, 2016) use surveys and list experiments demonstrate that workplace political mobilization is very common in Russia, affecting up to 25% of all employed voters. In spite of recent progress on the topic, there is, to our knowledge, no work that examines the effectiveness of employer-mediated clientelism.

We argue that employers are likely to be more effective vote brokers than party activists and local officials for at least three reasons. First, employers have at their

disposal more consequential levers of influence than other brokers. They can threaten to fire employees, withhold (or increase) wages, or limit work hours. In other words they are able to deploy more sizable inducements than party activists or government officials. Second, because employers are engaged in repeated, long-term interactions with their employees they are better able to make their offers credible. Workers know that they will interact with employers in the future and have an incentive to maintain good relations. This makes it easier to enforce compliance. Third, because the social lives of employees are often linked to the workplace, employers are already well-positioned to monitor the voting behavior of their employees. This increases the potential costs of non-compliance for voters.

To examine these questions, we use data from a survey of 4200 Russian individuals conducted after regional elections in October 2014. Our focus is on how mobilizational strategies affect turnout. Although many studies of clientelism focus on efforts to influence vote choice, recent literature has shown that clientelist efforts to induce turnout are just as, if not more, common (Nichter 2008, Gans-Morse et al 2014). Using a survey experiment, we find that Russians are more responsive to mobilizational appeals by employers than they are to appeals by party activists and local officials. We supplement these findings with direct questions on voter mobilization in the workplace and find that voters who experienced workplace mobilization during the elections were more likely to report that they turned out.

As for the relative effectiveness of positive and negative inducements, we find that vote buying is less effective than intimidation. However, there are significant differences in the effectiveness of different types of threats. Threats to punish a voters'

entire workplace if turnout is low among employees—what we call organizational threats—are much more effective than threats directed against individuals. The latter are marginally more effective than vote buying, but they are less effective than simple, inducement-free mobilizational appeals. At the same time, we do find that individual threats are most effective when they are brokered by employers. This makes sense given the significant pressure that employers are able to apply on voters. Party activists, by contrast, lack such sticks.

Our results suggest several refinements to the literature on clientelism. More attention should be paid to employers as brokers of selective inducements, as our findings indicate that workplace mobilization is not only prevalent, but effective. In addition, models of clientelism will benefit from a broader consideration of different types of selective inducements. Various types of negative inducements appear particularly neglected, as such strategies are not only prevalent, but can be effective under certain conditions. The current literature suggests that clientelism will decline with economic modernization as the cost of buying votes increases. But intimidation, especially in the workplace can persist, and even thrive, in modern economies.

Voter Turnout in Contemporary Autocracies

Autocrats seek high voter turnout in order to bolster their legitimacy and convey an image of strength (Simpser 2012, Magaloni 2006). But how do autocrats generate high turnout? From a rational choice perspective, voting under autocracy seems like an even bigger paradox than it is under democracy. The probability that one's vote will affect the outcome of the election (Riker and Ordeshook's [1968] P term) is already near zero in

democracies, but it is even lower in autocracies, where the outcome of elections is subject to manipulation. Riker and Ordeshook (1968) proposed that a sense of civic duty (the D term) is ultimately what motivates most voters. But in non-democracies, voters are less likely to derive psychological satisfaction from participating in or legitimating an autocratic election.

To be sure, this may not be true in Fascist or Communist regimes where the act of voting obtains symbolic importance as an expression of group solidarity (Linz 1978). Such regimes generate high turnout via perpetual and thoroughgoing political mobilization, which is carried out by well-developed organizational structures—the ruling party and its associated mass organizations—that penetrate most of society. These mobilizational efforts are abetted by a systemic commitment to political socialization and indoctrination.

But few contemporary autocracies rely on these methods. Most lack the transformative ideology and well-developed social organizations that can facilitate this type of mobilization. Furthermore, in the absence of successful political socialization, politicizing the electorate can backfire. After all, politicized voters may become militant upon discovery of government malfeasance or may decide to make ideological investments in opposition parties. For these reasons, Friedrich and Brzezinski (1956) concluded that authoritarian (as opposed to totalitarian) regimes were “more reliant the apathy and passive obedience of subjects.”

This does not mean that programmatic mobilization does not matter in modern autocracies. Voting studies in electoral autocracies demonstrate that many vote for the regime because they prefer the policy positions of its leaders (Hale and Colton 2009,

Lupu 2010). Charismatic appeals also likely play a role as voters turn out because they like the personal characteristics of regime leaders and want them to stay in power. But charismatic and programmatic appeals are often insufficient to ensure the high levels of turnout that autocrats seek. In regimes that lack a strong ideology or a strong mass-based political party, the latter type of mobilization may be difficult. More generally, even if regime supporters are a large majority, collective action problems will still stymie efforts to generate high turnout.

Selective Inducements and Voter Turnout

Thus, in modern autocracies, leaders often need to find other ways to generate turnout.⁴ One possible tactic is clientelism, the exchange of selective inducements for political support. Most of the literature on clientelism focuses on the provision of positive inducements (e.g. jobs, favors, money, and the like), but as recent literature points out (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2016, Mares and Young 2016), negative inducements (e.g. threats, coercion, and punishments) can also be used. There is a voluminous literature on clientelism in both democracies and non-democracies. Much of the literature has focused on attempts to influence vote choice (e.g. Stokes 2005), but recent literature shows that using selective inducements to get voters to show up at the

⁴ One solution is to circumvent the problem altogether and simply fabricate turnout figures. To be sure, this happens, but ballot-box fraud is costly for autocrats, undermines the legitimacy of the regime, and has the potential to spur mass opposition (e.g. Magaloni 2010, Tucker 2006). For this reason, most electoral authoritarian regimes limit their use of ballot-box fraud and seek to win most of their votes via other means. Forensic studies of fraud in Russia estimate that ballot-box fraud in recent Russian elections accounts for about 5-15% of reported turnout figures (Myagkov et al 2009, Shpilkin 2011). In a cross-national study of voter turnout in autocracies, Reuter (2016) shows that the correlation between observer reports of ballot-box fraud and turnout is positive, but weak.

polls is just as, if not more, common than vote buying (Nichter 2008, Gans-Morse et al 2014).

The vast majority of the literature on clientelism has focused on the conditions that make it more likely. Scholars have identified socio-economic factors (Stokes 2005, Kitschelt 2000), the ideological orientations of voters (Stokes et al 2013, Calvo & Murillo 2013), ballot structure (Lehoucq and Molina 2002) and norms of reciprocity, (Finan and Schechter 2012) as important correlates of vote buying. A much smaller, but growing literature on negative inducements has found that intimidation is more likely in settings where intermediaries, such as employers, have significant leverage over voters (Frye, Reuter and Szakonyi 2014, Mares 2015).

While the literature on the correlates of clientelism is vast, the literature on its effects is not. Only a few studies address the question of whether selective inducements affect behavior. Using a field experiment in Benin, Wantchekon (2003) finds that candidates with platforms that promise club goods perform better than those with programmatic platforms. While path-breaking, Wantchekon's study is focused more on clientelist appeals that are targeted at whole constituencies than it is on the individualized inducements that we study here. Vicente's (2014) innovative study of vote buying in Sao Tome and Principe addresses the effectiveness of individual inducements more directly. In that study, Vicente (2014) randomizes exposure to an anti-vote buying educational campaign and reports that the campaign resulted in a decrease vote turnout. Vicente infers that the campaign had an indirect effect on turnout by reducing the effectiveness of vote buying. But, as in all studies that seek to infer behavioral effects on the basis of randomized educational campaigns, one wonders whether the campaign itself

may have directly affected turnout, perhaps by increasing levels of disenchantment with the political system. Weitz-Shapiro (2014) avoids these criticisms by using a survey experiment to study how voters react to reports that candidates are employing vote buying appeals. Weitz-Shapiro finds that middle class voters are turned off by candidates who rely on vote buying appeals. This survey experiment shares features in common with our study, but differs in that it focuses on how voters perceive candidate appeals to other voters, rather than how voters react to clientelistic appeals that they experience. More generally, all of these studies focus just on the use of positive inducements and do not address the effect of negative inducements.

To our knowledge, the only study that examines the effects of negative inducements on voter behavior is Collier and Vicente's (2014) study of electoral violence in Nigeria. Similar to Vicente (2014) they analyze a field experiment in which an anti-violence campaign was randomized among voters. They find that turnout was higher in areas that received the anti-violence treatment and conclude that electoral violence depresses turnout.

None of these studies, however, compare different types of inducements to one another. In the absence of such comparisons, it is difficult to make claims about the relative effectiveness of vote buying and voter intimidation. We attempt such a comparison in this paper.

Mediated Clientelism and Voter Turnout

Many, if not most, studies of clientelism acknowledge that clientelism must be mediated. In some settings, politicians may transact with voters face-to-face, but in most

cases an intermediary or ‘broker’ must present the selective inducement to the voter. By far the most common broker discussed in the literature are party activists or independent brokers affiliated with parties (Stokes et al 2013), but clientelism may be brokered by many different types of intermediaries. Brokers that have received significant attention in the literature include traditional leaders (e.g. Koter 2013, Lemarchand 1972), landowners (e.g. Scott 1972, Baland and Robinson 2008), strongmen (Sidel 1999, 2005), gangs and warlords (Anderson 2002, Lebas 2013), state employees (Oliveros 2013), unions (Larreguy et al 2014) civil society leaders (e.g. Holland and Palmer-Rubin 2015) and employers (Mares 2015, Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014). The type of intermediary used varies both between and within countries, but the literature has, generally speaking, done a poor job of explaining why certain intermediaries, but not others, are active in a given setting. This study helps fill that gap by examining the comparative effectiveness of employers as mediators of clientelism.

The Effectiveness of Workplace Clientelism

We focus on two general questions in this paper: 1) which types of clientelist brokers are most effective at mobilizing voters and 2) what types of selective inducements are most effective. We begin with a theoretical discussion of the first question. Here we place special theoretical emphasis on the effectiveness of employers and compare their effectiveness to that of party activists and government officials. We focus on the role of employers as vote mobilizers for several reasons. First, the topic has received little attention from scholars, despite the fact that it is a relatively common phenomenon in both historical and contemporary settings. We now have detailed accounts of the practice

in Imperial Germany (Mares 2015), early 20th century Chile (Baland and Robinson 2008), contemporary Russia (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014), and the modern United States (Hertel-Fernandez 2016). In our own surveys on this topic we have found that workplace voter mobilization is common in settings as diverse as Venezuela, Turkey, Algeria, Nigeria, Indonesia, Ukraine, and Russia. And while a number of studies examine why workplace mobilization is used in certain settings is, to our knowledge, no work that examines its effectiveness.

Second, we limit our focus for empirical reasons. In order to design an effective survey experiment (see below), we must necessarily limit the number of brokers assigned as treatments. And given our empirical focus on contemporary Russia, we focus on those brokers that previous research shows to be significant in Russian politics (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014, 2016)⁵.

We see at least three reasons to think that employers would be more effective than other types of brokers. First, employers have at their disposal more consequential levers of influence than other brokers. They may offer significant increases in wages or benefits. In terms of negative inducements, bosses can threaten to withhold wages, deprive workers of perks, or fire their employees. Or they may simply order their employees to vote, making compliance non-optional. All of these methods are commonly encountered in Russian elections. For many voters, losing one's job would be devastating, so the threats that employers offer are highly consequential and thus likely to be influential. Party activists and government officials, by contrast, usually lack such sticks.

⁵ University professors are also prominent brokers in Russia, but their targets (university students) are a limited segment of the population.

Second, employers have a comparative advantage in making their offers credible. Employers are engaged in repeated, long-term interactions with their employees. Repeated interaction instills in voters an understanding that defections will result in punishment or exclusion from future benefit streams (Stokes 2005, Hicken 2011). Workers know that they will have to interact with their bosses in the future. Workers, therefore, cannot avoid punishment by evading or ignoring their employers. In other words, compliance with the clientelist bargain is easier to enforce in the workplace.

Third, employers are well-positioned to monitor the voting behavior of their employees. It is well-known that clientelist exchange is often stymied by a monitoring problem. With the secret ballot, politicians find it difficult to determine whether voters are voting as directed. Turnout-based clientelism makes this an easier problem to solve, as monitoring turnout is easier than monitoring vote choice (Nichter 2008). But monitoring turnout is not costless. Vote brokers still need to gather information on whether a given voter turned out. At the very least, they need to imply that this information is being gathered. One common way to achieve this is to penetrate the social networks of voters. Employers have special advantages here. Sociologists have found that the workplace is a key site for the formation of “core discussion networks” (e.g. McPherson et al 2006). Outside the nuclear family, coworkers are among the most common confidantes for many employed voters. Hence, the vote decisions of employees are likely to be discovered by co-workers and supervisors. Stokes (2005) has argued that grass-roots parties with tentacle-like organizations are able to successfully monitor voter behavior, but, given the built-in social network that exists in the workplace, employers may be even better placed to monitor voters.

Theoretical Perspectives on the Comparative Effectiveness of Selective Inducements

The second topic we examine is the relative effectiveness of negative and positive inducements. Broadly speaking, the following factors are likely to determine the effectiveness of a given inducement. First is the size of the inducement. The larger the inducement the more likely it will have an influence on behavior. Offering more money or a better favor is more likely to incentivize compliance (Stokes et al 2014). Similarly, the more severe the threat the more likely that voters will comply. A second factor is the credibility of the offer. Voters must believe that vote brokers will follow through on the threat or deliver the reward. When an offer or threat is more credible, it is more likely that voters will comply. Finally, there are normative evaluations of the inducement. Voters are less likely to respond to the inducement if they view it as morally inappropriate or offensive.

Negative inducements clearly fare poorly on the last dimension. Voters almost universally condemn electoral intimidation. We know of no studies showing that voters approve of electoral coercion. Meanwhile, a number of studies demonstrate that large minorities of voters are not bothered by vote-buying, especially when the recipients of vote buying offers are poor (Ocantos et al 2013, Schaffer 2002).

Negative inducements also may be less credible. Positive inducements are typically---though not always---disbursed to voters before election day, while negative inducements, by their nature, involve a threat of future sanction for non-compliance. In other words, negative inducements always involve time-inconsistent exchanges, but positive inducements sometimes do not.

The picture is more complicated when it comes to the size of the inducement. From the perspective of conventional expected utility theory, there is no theoretical reason to assume that negative inducements will necessarily be larger than positive inducements (or vice versa). Either could be large or small. At the same time, one of the most robust findings in behavioral economics is that individuals value losses more than gains (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). Thus, voters may perceive the disutility from electoral intimidation as more consequential than the utility from vote buying offers.

In addition, vote brokers may be able to offer consequential negative inducements at lower physical cost. Ordering employees to vote or issuing threats does not require politicians or their agents to provide a material benefit to the voter as does a positive inducement. This may increase the prevalence of negative inducements that come with significant disutility to the voter.

Clearly both of these arguments require more theoretical elaboration in order to stand on their own, and testing these arguments would require further information about the specific content of the inducement. So, in this paper, we refrain from taking a strong a priori stand on the relative effectiveness of these inducements.

A Framing Experiment on Clientelist Mobilization

In order to examine the questions posed in this paper, we employ a survey experiment that was placed on a survey of 4200 Russian citizens carried out in October 2014.

Russia is a good case for examining the questions posed here. It is a prominent authoritarian regime that holds elections at regular intervals. Clientelism is common in Russian elections, and several different types of brokers—employers, local officials, hospital directors, schoolteachers, and party activists—are commonly employed (e.g.

Forrat 2016, Alina-Pisano 2010, McCann 2006). Furthermore, there are several well-regarded survey firms in Russia with extensive experience conducting complex surveys, including split-sample randomizations.

Our survey consisted of 4200 face-to-face interviews conducted in 20 Russian that held regional (executive and/or legislative) elections in September 2014.⁶ Surveys were carried out in October 2014, three weeks after the elections. The sample included a base sample of 3360 respondents selected in a representative manner and an additional oversample of 840 employed voters. The oversample of employed voters included an oversample of 240 voters in heavy industry, oil/gas extraction, and mining.⁷ The survey was not intended to be nationally representative.

The main empirical difficulty associated with studying the effects of various clientelist strategies is that clientelist appeals are not randomly assigned. It is well-known that brokers selectively target certain individuals. This makes it hard to assess the causal effect of a given clientelist appeal. In order to address this difficulty, scholars have resorted to a series of indirect experimental approaches including informational campaigns (Vicente 2014, Collier and Vicente 2014) and framing experiments (Weitz-Shapiro 2014). We adopt such an approach in this paper.

Specifically, we design a framing experiment in which we manipulate 1) the type of vote broker and 2) mobilizational technique. Each respondent was asked the following question:

⁶ A list of regions can be found in the appendix.

⁷ This somewhat complicated sampling design was chosen for a parallel project on the determinants of workplace mobilization. For that project, it was important to increase the number of respondents in the sample that had experienced workplace mobilization.

Imagine that during the next State Duma elections [**voter broker here**] approaches you and [**technique here**]. Given this, how likely would you be to vote in these elections?

Respondents were asked to rate their likelihood of voting on a five-point scale ranging from that ranged ‘definitely will not vote’ to ‘definitely will vote.’ Our large sample size permitted us the freedom to include multiple brokers and mobilizational techniques without sacrificing statistical power. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of 12 combinations of broker and technique as depicted in Table 1. Each group was comprised of between 331 and 372 respondents, and a number of covariate balance checks indicate that the randomization was successful (see appendix).

Table 1: Treatment Groups

	asked you to vote	offers you a gift, money, or reward for voting	tells you that your firm or org. will suffer if turnout among employees is low	indicates that there will be negative consequences for you if you do not vote
your employer	X	X	X	X
a party activist	X	X	X	X
a government or public official	X	X	X	X

We chose three brokers to use in the experiment: employers, party activists, and government officials. Employers are common vote brokers in Russia and are the subject of our research. Party activists were included because they are the vote brokers most commonly discussed in the literature. Government officials meanwhile were included because they are common intermediaries for the regime, especially outside major cities, where the heads of local districts are frequently tasked with mobilizing rural voters.

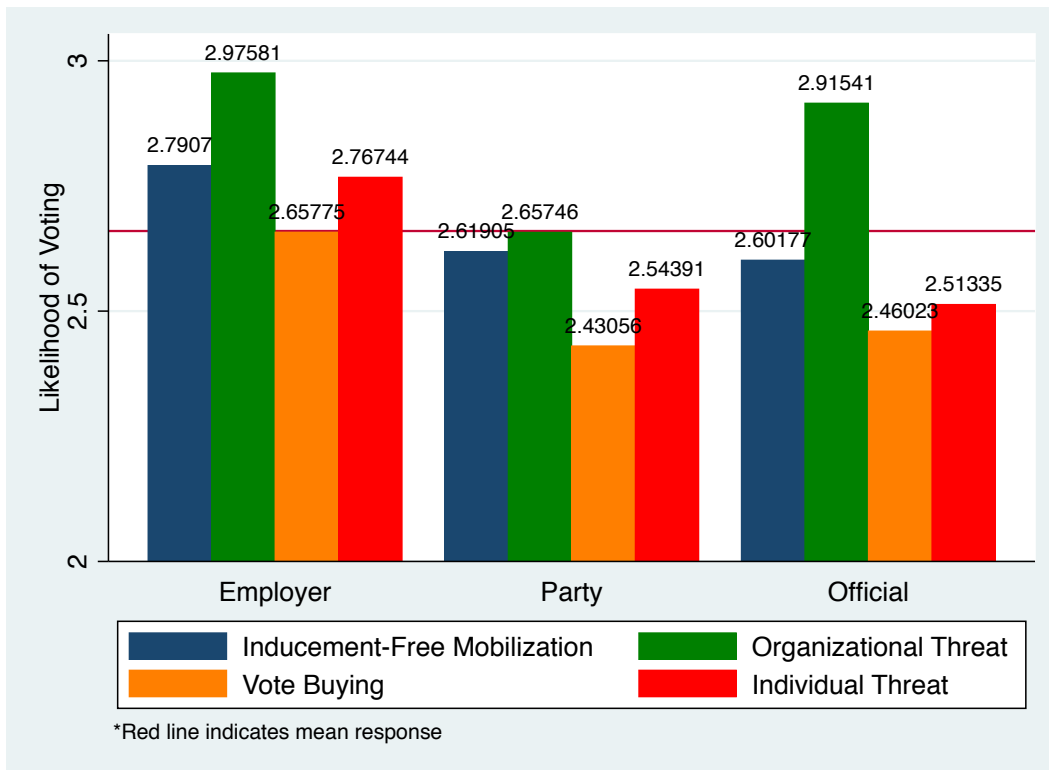
We chose four mobilizational techniques to include as treatments. We included one clientelist appeal related to positive inducements and two appeals related to negative

inducements. The first negative inducement frame focused on individualized threats, while the second focused on threats against the voter's workplace. The second was included because previous research has shown that this is a common technique used by the regime to mobilize votes. Local officials or employers frequently tell employees that there will be layoffs, plant closures, or reduced hours if the firm does not demonstrate high turnout in elections. We sought to investigate the effectiveness of such strategies here. Finally, as a control group, we also include a frame in which the broker offers no selective inducement, but simply asks the voter to turn out.

Our framing experiment is far from perfect. The major downside of using such a technique is that the scenarios are hypothetical. We are not observing actual voting behavior. At the same time, the main effect of the hypothetical prompt should be to increase variance in responses and increase the number of non-committal ("Maybe I would vote, maybe I would not") responses. This should make it harder to find a statistically significant effect for a given treatment. This suggests that any findings may be low estimates.

Results

Figure 1 show the main results of the survey experiment. The left side of the figure shows the mean response on the turnout propensity scale. All the results from our experiment can be gleaned from this table, but we will discuss some of the main results in further detail below.



The first and most important result is that respondents are more responsive to mobilizational appeals by employers. This is true for every type of vote-getting strategy in our experiment. The differences are shown more precisely in Table 2

Table 2: Effects of Workplace Mobilization

	All Other Intermediaries	Received Employer Treatment
Mean Response	2.59	2.8
N	2770	1434
Difference in Means		0.21*** (0.04)
Predicted Probability of 4 or 5 (from Ordered Logit)	.22	.27
Predicted Probability of 1 or 2 (from Ordered Logit)	.46	.38

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Two-tailed test. (Standard errors in parentheses)

Among those who received the employer treatment the mean response on the 5-point scale of *Turnout Propensity* was 2.8, while the mean response among those who received either the party activist treatment or the government official treatment was 2.59. The difference is .21, which is statistically significant, and translates into a 4.2% increase (.21/5) in *Turnout Propensity* over non-employer brokers. However, as the appendix shows responses are not uniformly distributed across the scale categories of the response variable. Instead, they tend to cluster at the mid-point (“maybe I will vote, maybe not”). This is understandable given the hypothetical frame. But the result is that it makes little sense to judge substantive effects by assessing changes across the entire scale of *Turnout Propensity*. Rather it makes more sense to evaluate substantive effects by examining effects across the effective range of *Turnout Propensity*. One simple way to do this is by examining changes in predicted probabilities from an ordered logit model, in which the dependent variable is *Turnout Propensity* and the independent variable is a binary indicator for whether the respondent received the employer treatment. The last two rows of Table 2 shows these quantities. Here we see that receiving the employer treatment

increases the likelihood of the respondent answering that they will be more likely to turnout by five percentage points. It decreases the likelihood of the respondent answering that they will be unlikely to turnout by eight percentage points.

The effect sizes are modest, but significant. As many turnout studies demonstrate, it is very difficult to increase turnout by large amounts (e.g. Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008, Green and Gerber 2008). Modest, but precisely estimated, effect sizes are common in this literature. Furthermore, the effect sizes we uncover may well be underestimates given the hypothetical nature of our framing experiment.

The findings from the survey experiment are supportive of our contention that employers, at least in Russia, are more effective vote brokers than party activists or local officials. However, we would be more confident in our findings if we could corroborate them with another, separate piece of evidence. Fortunately, our survey also included a series of direct questions about individuals' experiences with workplace mobilization as well as direct questions about their decision to turnout. We can use these questions to examine the correlation between turnout and being mobilized in the workplace, conditional on potential confounders.

Table 3 shows the results from a series of logit models in which the dependent variable is equal to one if the respondent reported turning out in the 2014 regional elections. In the first three columns of the table, the main variable of interest, *Mobilized in Workplace*, is equal to one if the respondent experienced any of the following mobilizational activities during the 2014 regional election campaign: seeing campaign posters in the workplace, management discussing elections with employees, the distribution of agitation materials at work, management providing transportation to the

polls, management asking employees to agitate, or management publicly endorsing a candidate. These are a battery of items included in a single question about the mobilizational activities that voters observed in their workplaces. In Columns 4-6, the key independent variable, *Asked by Boss to Turn Out*, is a dichotomous variable equal to one if respondents reported that their supervisor had directly asked them to turn out in the elections. This was a standalone question, separate from the battery above.⁸ It was formulated in the following way: “Did anyone (for example, your employer, a party activist, a local official) personally approach you and ask you to take part in the regional elections which took place in your region in September of this year?” If the respondent, answered yes, they were then asked to name the person that mobilized them.

⁸ Unfortunately, while we did ask direct questions about vote buying and individual threats in the workplace, the number of affirmative responses to these questions were too few to use in statistical analysis (less than 1%). Surveys from the 2011 Russian parliamentary elections found that up to 8% of employees reported—in direct questions—that their employer intimidated them. For a variety of reasons, voter intimidation was much more common in the 2011 elections than in the 2014 regional elections. In addition, as Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi (2016) show, direct questions are likely to understate the prevalence of intimidation, because it is a sensitive topic. When special techniques are used to elicit truthful responses, we obtain much higher estimates of voter intimidation. Our list experiment on coercion in the 2014 elections revealed that 10 percent of employed voters experienced coercion.

Table 3: Workplace Mobilization and Reported Turnout

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mobilized in Workplace	0.094*** (0.016)	0.101*** (0.019)	0.069*** (0.023)			
Asked by Boss to Turn Out				0.175*** (0.050)	0.153*** (0.049)	0.121* (0.062)
City Size		-0.061*** (0.007)	-0.062*** (0.010)		-0.064*** (0.007)	-0.065*** (0.010)
Income		0.022** (0.009)	0.024* (0.013)		0.021** (0.009)	0.023* (0.013)
Male		-0.057*** (0.015)	-0.084*** (0.025)		-0.060*** (0.015)	-0.086*** (0.024)
Age		0.007*** (0.000)	0.006*** (0.001)		0.007*** (0.000)	0.006*** (0.001)
Education		0.021*** (0.004)	0.022*** (0.006)		0.021*** (0.004)	0.023*** (0.006)
Employed		0.021 (0.020)			0.068*** (0.018)	
State Employee			0.072* (0.039)			0.073* (0.039)
Size of Firm			0.009 (0.010)			0.012 (0.010)
Sector Dummies			Yes			Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,108	3,956	1,841	4,108	3,956	1,841

Coefficients shown are average marginal effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Whichever question is used, however, we see that being mobilized in the workplace mobilization is positively correlated with turnout.⁹ Depending on the model used, the estimates range from an 18 percentage point increase to a 7 percentage point increase.

⁹ In the appendix, we show models that analyze the effect of each of the individual components of *Mobilized in Workplace*. All have a positive and statistically significant effect.

On their own, these correlations are only suggestive. Workplace mobilization is not randomly assigned and there are many potential endogeneity problems. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that the findings remain robust and significant while controlling for several important confounders, including the most robust predictors of workplace mobilization (firm size, sector, and ownership structure [Models 3 and 6]). And it is especially encouraging that these findings are consistent with the findings from the survey experiment, especially since these direct questions bear on actual, rather than hypothetical, voting behavior. More remarkable still is the similarity in effect sizes across the two empirical models.

Now we consider the effects of different types of selective inducements. As Figure 1 indicates, threats against the voter's workplace (organizational threats, for short) appear to be most effective, followed by inducement-free mobilization, individual threats, and vote buying. It is noteworthy that vote buying seems to be the least effective strategy, significantly less effective than inducement-free mobilization.

Individual threats appear, on the whole, to be relatively ineffective. As Table 4 shows, threats outperform only vote buying on a consistent basis. Their effect is statistically indistinguishable from that of inducement-free mobilization.

Table 4: Individual Threats

	All Other Techniques	Threats
Mean Response	2.67	2.6
N	3170	1034
Difference in Means		-0.07 (0.04)
	Inducement-Free Mobilization and Vote Buying	Threats
Mean Response	2.59	2.61
N	2105	1034
Difference in Means		0.02 (0.05)
	Vote Buying	Threats
Mean Response	2.51	2.60
N	1086	1034
Difference in Means		0.09* (0.05)

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Two-tailed test. (Standard errors in parentheses)

However, it is worth noting that threats by employers do appear to outperform all non-employer strategies except organizational threats by government officials. This is demonstrated in more detail in Table 5.

Table 5: Individual Threats by Employers

	All Other Techniques	Employer Threats
Mean Response	2.68	2.77
N	3170	344
Difference in Means		0.09 (0.07)
	Inducement-Free Mobilization and Vote Buying	Employer Threats
Mean Response	2.59	2.76
N	2105	344
Difference in Means		0.18*** (0.07)
	Vote-Buying	Employer Threats
Mean Response	2.52	2.76
N	1086	344
Difference in Means		0.25*** (0.08)

*<p0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Two-tailed test. (Standard errors in parentheses)

Employer threats narrowly outperform all other techniques when taken together. When compared to just vote buying and inducement-free mobilization, employer threats enjoy a clear advantage, however.

This is consistent with the theoretical perspectives offered in this paper. Threats are morally repulsive to voters. For this reason, they often backfire. Therefore, in order to be effective, threats must be backed by a significant threat and be credible. Employers are well positioned to deliver such threats. Threats of job loss or reductions in benefits are very severe. What is more, voters must interact with their supervisors well into the

future. Many voters would be unwilling to risk their job over not voting. By contrast, it is hard to see how party activists can make threats that carry much weight with voters.

This finding is consistent with the way in voter intimidation is actually perpetrated in Russia. Using list experiments in the 2012 elections, Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi (2016) find that intimidation is much more common among employed voters. More precisely, 17% of employed voters experienced coercion in those elections. In addition, data from crowd-sourced election violation reports (the Karta Narusheniya data) indicate that 82% of all reports of electoral intimidation in the 2011 elections involved employers. Eighty-three percent of all employer related violations involved intimidation. In other words, the workplace is the primary locus of electoral intimidation in Russia, and judging by the findings in this paper, such intimidation may indeed be effective at increasing turnout.

The last finding to discuss is the distinction between organizational threats and individual threats. Organizational threats were shown to be much more effective than any other mobilizational technique, including individual threats. Interestingly, organizational threats by government officials are deemed to be almost as effective as organizational threats by employers. This makes sense, given that government officials can credibly punish firms for low turn out. In Russia, local officials often hold campaign events at firms, and it is not uncommon for them to imply that the well-being of an enterprise will depend on the voting behavior of its employees.

The question of why organizational threats are more effective than individual threats requires further research, but several possibilities seem clear. For one thing, organizational threats may seem more credible, since meting out threats to individual

voters is time consuming and costly. Furthermore, since it is easier to monitor voter turnout at the firm level (especially in single company towns or in local settings where employees live close to their job), voters might perceive organizational threats as more credible. Still, under this view, delivering the vote in order to prevent sanction becomes a collective action problem for employees and it is not clear how voters could cooperate to overcome that problem.

Conclusion

Clientelism is common in autocracies, but few studies examine its effectiveness as a vote mobilizing strategy. In this paper, we examined the relative effectiveness of various clientelist strategies in Russia. Using a framing experiment, we find that certain clientelist brokers are more effective than others. In particular, employers appear to do a better job of generating turnout than party activists and government officials. These findings are consistent with the findings from models showing that respondents who were mobilized by their employers were more likely to turn out in the 2014 regional elections. Employers, it is argued, have an advantage in mobilizing votes because 1) they have multiple non-trivial levers of influence over their employees, 2) they can monitor voter behavior and 3) they are engaged in repeated interactions with employees (voters). Our findings support the contention that workplace mobilization is one important way that the Putin regime mobilizes votes (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014). More generally, our research suggests that scholars of clientelism should pay more attention to employers as vote brokers.

We also examined the relative effectiveness of different types of selective inducements and found that negative inducements are more effective than positive inducements. Threats against entire organizations are the most effective. Threats against individuals are less effective, though still more effective than vote buying. When brokered by employers, however, threats against individuals do seem to outperform most other clientelist strategies.

All of this suggests that models of clientelist exchange should focus more on negative inducements. To our minds, scholarship on clientelism may overemphasize the importance of positive inducements. Much of literature suggests that clientelism will decline with modernization, as the marginal cost of buying votes increases. But intimidation, especially workplace mobilization, may not decline as a country industrializes. Indeed, as the formal sector grows in many developing countries, electoral intimidation in the workplace may become a more common tool of electoral subversion.

Our findings, while striking, come with some important caveats. Our main empirical strategy involved a framing experiment that asks respondents to consider hypothetical scenarios. We do not observe actual voter behavior, and while we are heartened that our findings---on the effectiveness of employers---are consistent with the results from models that use direct questions, it is possible that voters behave differently when confronted with actual clientelist appeals.

Finally, our findings should not be taken to suggest that employers are the most important brokers in every setting. The relative importance of different brokers is likely to vary by setting. Future research could profit by comparing the effectiveness of employers in other historical and geographic settings.

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