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Dilemmas of Electoral Clientelism: Taiwan, 1993

CHIN-SHOU WANG AND CHARLES KURZMAN

ABSTRACT. For many years, studies of electoral clientelism regarded clients as the captive votes of patrons. In recent years, this conventional wisdom has come under challenge, as scholars have come to recognize the widespread noncompliance of clients. This article uses the case of the 1993 Taiwan election to offer the first ever systematic data on noncompliance. Documents from the ruling Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) campaign office in one Taiwanese district, combined with district electoral results, demonstrate considerable leakage in this instance of clientelistic mobilization: at least 45 percent of voters who sold their votes to the Kuomintang did not, in fact, vote for the Kuomintang's candidate. This article argues that clientelistic mobilization faced at least four serious obstacles, including (1) broker scarcity, (2) factionalism, (3) embezzlement, and (4) financial limitations. These obstacles prevented the Kuomintang from making full use of its broker organizations, even as it devoted extensive economic and political resources and personnel to the election.

Keywords: • Clientelism • Electoral corruption • Kuomintang • Taiwan
• Vote buying

The Study of Electoral Clientelism

There is no consensus in the study of electoral clientelism about the mechanisms that bind clients to patrons. But for many years, there was a common agreement in the field that such mechanisms are highly effective. Patrons were thought to mobilize and deliver “vote banks” or “blocks of votes” (Chubb, 1981: 80–1; Graziano, 1975: 33; Hagopian, 1996: 48–9; Rouquie, 1978: 25). Clients were often treated as “captive votes,” whose support for their patrons was automatic and unproblematic (Ames, 1994: 96; Coppedge, 1993: 262–3; Graziano, 1977: 370; Guterbock, 1980: 10; Mouzelis, 1985: 337; Rouquie, 1978: 24–5). The client’s obedience was frequently characterized as total and permanent, as in Carl H. Lande’s (1977: xxvii) introduction to an influential anthology on political clientelism: “The client must attempt to

pay part of his unrepayable debt in advance through a continuous display of affection, deference and obedience to his patron. Even then, it is made clear to him that he remains perpetually a debtor.”

But there is little empirical research on the effectiveness of clientelistic mobilization. Indeed, in recent years increasing numbers of scholars have started to recognize the importance of clients' noncompliance with their patrons. A study of Chilean elections in the 1960s, for example, notes that “while regidores [clientelistic patrons] boasted that they could deliver many of ‘their voters’ to the congressional candidate of their choice, they also admitted that many times clients did not follow their directives” (Valenzuela, 1977: 83).¹ A study of Colombia notes that there is often “little guarantee that this aid [that is, patronage] would translate into actual ballots” (Hartlyn, 1988: 173). A study of Brazil concludes that clientelism can be “fraught with uncertainty and subject to constant challenge, renegotiation and change” (Gay, 1999: 49; see also Gay, 1994, 1998). In addition, recent work on Argentina has explored poor people's perceptions of political clientelism, perceptions that are often less than positive, concluding that clients outside of a patron's inner circle are not nearly so beholden as commonly thought (Auyero, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). Frederic Schaffer's introduction to a new anthology on electoral clientelism adopts quite a different tone from Lande's 1977 anthology: “vote buying is not as effective as one might suspect given the heavy financial and organizational investments that candidates and parties are willing to make” (Schaffer, 2007).

But there has been no systematic study of clientelism's performance during the election process. This article addresses this gap with a case study of a clientelistic system that was arguably in crisis: the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) vote-buying apparatus during the Taiwanese elections of 1993. A comparison of Kuomintang vote-buying lists in one Taiwanese county with actual electoral results shows considerable leakage in clientelistic mobilization: at least 45.4 percent of voters who accepted Kuomintang money for their votes did not actually vote for the Kuomintang's candidate. In the process of mobilizing voters and brokers, this article argues, the Kuomintang faced at least four serious obstacles that prevented the Kuomintang from making full use of its broker organizations, even as it employed considerable economic and political resources and personnel in the 1993 election.

Captive Voters?

The clientelistic relationship runs in two directions. The patron appeals to the client, and the client responds to the appeal. The literature on clientelism, while stressing the importance of both aspects, has focused its research and debate almost exclusively on one side of the equation: what appeals do patrons make? The literature identifies three sorts of appeals: material, normative, and coercive (see Schaffer and Schedler, 2007).

Material Appeals

The dominant approach to political clientelism has long been the “resource-based” model. According to this model, the simplest and most important mechanism of political clientelism is the exchange of material resources (Clapham, 1982: 2; Lande, 1977: xv). “The interaction on which they [patrons and clients] are based

is characterized by the simultaneous exchange of different types of resources, above all instrumental, economic, as well as political ones (support, loyalty, votes, protection) on the one hand and promises of solidarity and loyalty on the other" (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1981: 276). Patrons give material resources to clients before and during the election period or promise to do so after elections. The election of patrons to public office can mean an increase in resources for patrons and thus for clients, though empirical studies show that the resources that clients receive does not always correlate with their level of political support (Chubb, 1981, 1982; Guterbock, 1980: 221; Hagopian, 1996: 166–7; Rhodes, 1984). Patronage resources may include jobs (Johnston, 1979; Scott, 1969), tenancy of land (Powell, 1970; Scott, 1972b), community construction (Gay, 1994, 1999), desired social policy changes (Fox, 1994), promotions (Grindle, 1977), loans (Chubb, 1982), regional oligopolies economic resources (Chen and Chu, 1992; Chu, 1989), direct payment for votes (Schaffer, 2007), or other favors. In short, the resource-based model focuses on "exactly what kinds of resources are made available to whom, through what channels and within what kinds of economic and political constraints" (Lemarchand, 1981: 26).

Normative Appeals

Many proponents of the resource-based model emphasize the additional importance of normative appeals. The patron's authority, in this view, is undergirded by sentiments of loyalty, friendship, obligation, affection, trust, hospitality, and generosity (Eisenstadt, 1995: Ch. 9; Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Gunes-Ayata, 1994; Lande, 1977; Roniger, 1990, 1994). Among scholars who consider material appeals to have been overemphasized (Chubb, 1981, 1982; Guterbock, 1980; Rhodes, 1984), "there is a denial of utilitarian motives and an insistence instead upon the non-priced demands of loyalty, friendship, or being almost like one of the family" (Silverman, 1977: 298). Patrons and clients are expected to behave altruistically toward each other, up to and including sacrificing their own interests for their ally.

Coercive Appeals

Both the material and normative approaches characterize clients' participation in patronage as essentially voluntary (Flynn, 1974; Hall, 1977: 511–12; Sidel, 1999). Given their constrained circumstances, clients strategically accept resources or acknowledge the authority of the patron. A third approach, however, suggests that patrons may resort to coercion when other methods fail (Fox, 1994: 154–5; Graziano, 1977: 377; Hall, 1977; Lemarchand, 1981: 17–19). Coercion may include crude violence, threats of punishment, or the withdrawal of benefits that clients currently enjoy (Rhodes, 1984; Scott, 1972b: 99–100). "For the patrons, fear among the clients is a major lever of their power" (White, 1980: 172; see also Fox and Hernández, 1995). Coercion may be combined with other appeals (Chubb, 1981: 80; Lemarchand, 1981: 9–10; Ozbudun, 1981: 255; Scott, 1972b: 99–100); some scholars suggest that the mix of coercion versus other appeals determines whether the system should be considered oppressive or mutually beneficial (Powell, 1970: 412).²

Each of these approaches has emphasized the appeal of the patron without investigating thoroughly the clients' response to such appeals. While the literature

includes several vivid descriptions of the mobilization process (for example, Gay, 1994: Chs 4–5; Guterbock, 1980: 56–8), there has been no systematic study of the clients' behavior during this process. This article provides evidence of such behavior, and documents scholars' recent suspicion that patrons' appeals may not be so effective as the concept of "captive voters" implies.

The Case of Taiwan

The Kuomintang took control of Taiwan in 1945 and established its government in exile in 1949. It faced a Taiwanese population with whom it had little previous connection. The intention of the Kuomintang in building an electoral institution was not to create a democratic system; rather, national ruling elites viewed the establishment of electoral institutions as the only way to secure popular support and elicit cooperation from local social-political elites (Wu, 1987: 196–7). With a few exceptions, elections remained at the local level for almost 40 years. Citizens could elect local officeholders, from village executives to members of the provincial assembly, but the most important positions (the president, members of Congress, and governor) were unelected.

Clientelism has long been viewed as the key to understanding the Kuomintang's maintenance of long-term, stable, authoritarian rule in Taiwan (Wu, 1987). Clientelism "was created deliberately on an extensive scale, to an intensive degree and operating bureaucratically in a relatively modern society by a rather sophisticated ruling group for a very clear political purpose" (Wu, 1987: 12). Beginning in the 1950s, the Kuomintang allied itself with small-scale sociopolitical organizations, rooted in Taiwanese society, that are known in the literature on Taiwan as "factions" (Bosco, 1992, 1994). The Kuomintang blocked these factions from organizing beyond the county level, but struck a bargain with them for political control at the local level. Through clientelism, the Kuomintang rewarded local factions with political and economic privileges; in return, local factions helped the Kuomintang rule areas that it found difficult to penetrate. The Kuomintang granted local factions four types of economic privilege: regionally chartered economic activities, such as banking, credit, and transport; privilege in obtaining government loans; provincial and county procurement and contracting; and economic interests obtained at the expense of the government public authority, from zoning manipulation to protection of underground and illegal business (Chu, 1989: 148–52). The Kuomintang relied heavily upon local factions to win local elections. From 1954 to 1994, 61.9 percent of the Kuomintang's nominees for Taiwan's provincial assembly seats had a local faction background, and 92.6 percent of those candidates were elected (Lin, 1998: 164).

There were two main forms of political clientelism in Taiwan: party clientelism, in which full-time party officials performed clientelistic activities directly, and electoral clientelism, in which local elected politicians played the role of intermediate patrons (Wu, 1987). However, after the beginning of Taiwan's democratization in 1986, the role of party clientelism gradually diminished and electoral clientelism started to play a more important role. Factional mobilization became the major strategy of the Kuomintang (Bosco, 1994).

In Kuomintang clientelism, the primary tool for factional mobilization was vote buying, which was common despite being illegal under the Kuomintang's own legal system.³ Candidates of the opposition party, the Democratic Progressive

Party (DPP), argued that “money is the meat on the faction skeleton; without money, factions are worthless bones” (Bosco, 1994: 40–1).⁴ Academic discussion of vote buying in Taiwan dates back to Bernard Gallin’s (1968) article, which argued that vote buying has been a common practice throughout Taiwan since the 1950s, when candidates gave voters a few packets of cigarettes or some bath towels and soap in exchange for votes. Since that time, however, aside from brief mentions (for example, Bosco, 1994; Jacobs, 1980), vote buying has not been discussed at length in English-language analyses of Taiwan’s electoral process, though many scholars assume it exists. “It is hard to say which is more difficult: finding someone in Taiwan who denies that vote-buying exists, or finding concrete evidence to prove that it does” (Rigger, 1999: 94). In Taiwanese scholarship, however, such evidence is well established: using survey methods, several studies have estimated the extent of vote buying in Taiwan at 25 percent of voters (Yang, 1994), 27 percent (Cheng et al., 2000), 30 percent (Chu, 1994), or 45 percent (Ho, 1995). The ethnographic research presented in this article suggests that these figures may be underestimates.

The founding of the DPP in 1986 provided the Kuomintang regime with its first significant challenge since the 1940s. In national elections, the DPP received about 30 percent of votes, despite having a much smaller organizational and membership base than the Kuomintang (Bosco, 1994). Instead, the DPP relied on ideological appeals emphasizing true democracy, clean government, national identity, and Taiwanese ethnicity. In response, the Kuomintang came to rely more than ever on local factions, in addition to its own ideological themes, such as opposition to Taiwanese independence.

In 1993, Taiwan held nationwide elections for county executives, which the first author investigated through participant observation and in-depth interviews in a largely rural, agricultural county with a population at that time of close to 1 million. Participant observation included two months within the campaign of a Kuomintang candidate, both at campaign headquarters and at a branch office in “Township 20.” Interviews were conducted with 20 campaign participants and observers (see Appendix), including an official in the mobilization department of the campaign headquarters, several Kuomintang party officials, and several vote-buying brokers.

This particular county and township were selected because of their accessibility. The study of vote buying, like the study of other illegal activities, is by its nature fraught with difficulties. This is one reason why there has been so little empirical research on the mechanics of vote buying. This research site offered a unique opportunity for insight into a vote-buying operation. We make no claim that the site was representative of Taiwan as a whole. However, the general findings from this location were confirmed in extensive, but less systematic, interviews in 1993 with municipal, and county-level campaign officials in several regions of Taiwan.

In addition, several aspects of the election were particularly favorable for electoral clientelism, making this a strong case study for the theoretical issue under consideration. The county was in a rural area, where we would expect clientelism to be more rampant than in urban areas (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Powell, 1970). In the past, the Kuomintang had applied an unusually large array of methods to mobilize and control its clients in this region, including tactics of divide and rule, checks and balances, accelerated elite turnover, parachute tactics, and legal purges (Wu, 1987). Moreover, the structure of local factions in this county

was typical of faction organization throughout Taiwan. There were two county-level factions, which the Kuomintang had to ask to cooperate with each other to mobilize votes for Kuomintang candidates. At the same time that they were asked to cooperate, the single-nontransferable-vote (SNTV), multimember-district electoral system forced local factions frequently to compete with each other for Kuomintang nominations and political positions. In general, clientelism is more likely to thrive in SNTV and open-list proportional representation systems than in closed-list proportional representation systems (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Grofman et al., 1999). SNTV electoral systems may be more likely to experience vote buying than other systems (Hicken, 2007). However, since the current case study involved a single seat, SNTV dynamics were not especially visible.

As it happens, the DPP candidate was the incumbent in the municipal executive race under investigation, having won the 1989 election. Prior to that time, he was a Taiwan provincial assembly representative and was highly praised not only in his home county, but also elsewhere in Taiwan. Before the 1993 election, most surveys showed that he would likely win. Because the DPP candidate was so strong, the Kuomintang mobilized more political and economic resources and personnel for this race than for any other county-executive elections in the county.

There were two campaign headquarters for the Kuomintang candidate, one for 25 of the 33 townships in the county and the other for the eight remaining townships, which were populated by aboriginal peoples. The operation, budget, and even the publicity for this second office were independent of headquarters; however, this article will not explore this aspect, as it is less relevant to the whole of Taiwan. In addition, the aboriginal townships constituted less than 5 percent of the total number of voters in the county. Most importantly, the Kuomintang did not need to campaign actively in these townships, where it easily gained more than 80 percent of the votes. Therefore, unless specifically indicated, the term "township" does not include the aboriginal towns.

Vote buying was central to the Kuomintang's campaign in this election. An official in the mobilization department of campaign headquarters said succinctly in an interview that the most important duty of his unit was "to arrange the organization for vote-buying." In the 1993 election, the Kuomintang arranged broker organizations for vote buying in all 25 non-aboriginal townships. The two countywide factions operated in some of these townships, but not in others (see Table 1), a difference that affected the process of mobilization. In Township 1 (an urban area with no apparent factions or mobilization system), for example, mobilization was assigned to several powerful political figures, who shared these duties. Six townships had only a single mobilization system (Townships 2, 18, 20, 21, 22, and 24), four of them having no factional competition and two of them having limited competition: in Township 18, Faction B played the dominant role, with the frequent involvement of some members of Faction A; in Township 24, only Faction A was involved in vote buying, while Faction B leaned toward the opposition party, the DPP. The bulk of the townships in the county had two or more mobilization systems cooperating in a single township campaign office, called the Campaign Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate (CKC). Only three townships had two CKC offices (Townships 4, 9, and 13). In other words, the CKC was in most cases composed of rival factions; in practice, the rival factions conducted their vote buying separately.

TABLE 1. *Kuomintang Mobilization System in the 1993 County Election, by Township*

Township	Kuomintang mobilization system	Township	Kuomintang mobilization system
1	Multiple systems ^a	14	Irrigation Association, Township Public Office
2	Faction B ^b	15	Faction A, Faction B
3	Faction A, Faction B	16	Faction A, Faction B
4	Faction A, Faction B	17	Faction A, Faction B
5	Faction A, Faction B	18	Faction B ^c
6	Farmers' Association, Township Service Station	19	Township executive, Township Service Station
7	Faction A, Faction B	20	An entrepreneur (no apparent mobilization system)
8	Faction A, Faction B	21	Farmers' Association cooperating with the Kuomintang congress
9	Faction A, Township Service Station	22	Farmers' Association cooperating with the Township Public Office
10	A provincial assemblyman, Township Service Station	23	Farmers' Association, Others ^d
11	Township Public Office, Farmers' Association	24	Faction A
12	Farmers' Association, Township Service Station	25	Faction A, Faction B
13	Faction A, Faction B		

Source: Interviewee 10, April 9, 1994.

Notes:

^aTownship 1 was arranged by village units, and vote buying was arranged by several politicians.

^bIn Township 2, Faction B has taken all the key positions, which approximates a non-factional township.

^cIn Township 18, Faction A split several years previously, and Kuomintang mobilization included a branch of Faction A.

^d"Others" means that several unaffiliated people also engaged in mobilization.

The Making of a Vote-Buying Machine

There are three distinguishing features in the Taiwanese case. First, compared to many systems described in studies of political clientelism,⁵ the broker organization in Taiwan is quite extensive. In the case of Brazil, for example, there seemed to be only a single broker, the president of a *favela*, to buy the entire community's votes (Gay, 1994: 102). In Taiwan, by contrast, the Kuomintang hired large numbers of brokers, called *tiau-a-ka* (literally, "pillars"), each of whom was responsible for buying relatively few votes.⁶ Along with the extensive broker organizations, no single broker or privileged family played the role of the "gatekeeper" of the community (see Auyero, 2000a; Caciagli and Belloni, 1981: 40–1; Knoke, 1990: 144–6;

Powell, 1970: 413; Silverman, 1977). Second, the Kuomintang built its broker organization carefully and deliberately, with excellent political skill, expending much energy, time, money, and personnel. It did not simply piggyback on existing patronage structures within the community, but embarked on a huge political undertaking to build its own structures. The third notable characteristic of Taiwan elections was that coercion played a very limited role in the process of mobilization, though the Kuomintang would sometimes purge local factions by legal means (Wu, 1987: 324–7).

We will use Township 20, which was without local factions, to illustrate how the Kuomintang arranged the organization of vote buying; faction-based vote buying differed only in the division of the networks into two separate systems, as discussed in the next section. In Township 20, with approximately 21,000 eligible voters in 1993, the CKC office was organized in a top-down fashion as shown in Figure 1.

Three months before election day, the Township Service Station (TSS), the local branch of the Kuomintang party office, held a convention for leading local supporters during which the party office introduced the candidate and his platform to party members. One month later, the TSS held another convention. The president and vice-presidents of the CKC were selected by “recommendations” after discussion. Other important individuals were appointed as consultants by the president. CKC staff included a planning officer, an administrative officer, three receptionists, and a janitor. The planning and administrative officers led the design and promotion of campaign rallies.

The planning officer and vice-presidents then chose directors, who then appointed assistant directors (Interviewee 11). Of the 26 directors, 25 had social connections with top-level CKC leaders, such as having been classmates, fellow villagers, or colleagues, or having worked in the same party mobilization networks or by being relatives. However, not all the directors were mobilized through these “direct” connections; some were mobilized by third parties.

The brokers were chosen by the directors and assistant directors and were assigned to contact voters directly, but CKC officers reserved the right to filter or add members (Interviewee 1; Minute Book 3; Minute Book 6).⁷ In this election, the broker list was determined one month before the election. In short, the Kuomintang contacted, persuaded, and mobilized brokers to engage in the process of electoral mobilization and vote buying; the brokers did not appear of their own accord.

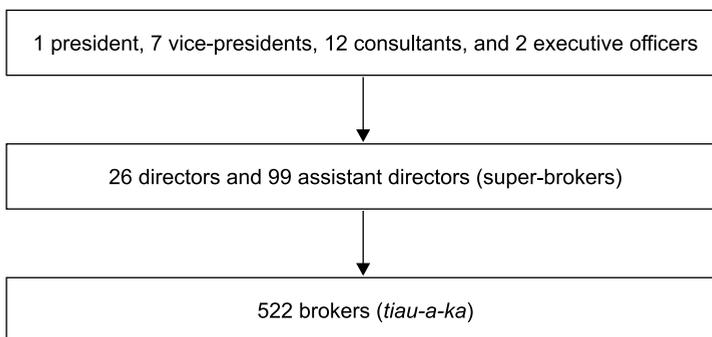


FIGURE 1. *tiau-a-ka*

The conventional process for assigning brokers to clients whose votes the broker would buy was as follows: (1) brokers created a list of voters whose votes they intended to buy; (2) they then sent this list to the directors or assistant directors for review and revision; (3) finally, the directors returned the list to the brokers. But this process had two inconsistencies. First, brokers were not always influential with the voters they listed. The directors might then wish to delete some names from a broker's list, and brokers might object. Second, names might be duplicated on different lists, and comparing lists to find duplicate names consumed both time and energy that the campaign wished to devote to other activities. A better technique was to gather all the brokers from the same district in a single meeting and parcel out voters by residential location. With this approach, every broker was responsible for his or her neighboring voters (almost 7 percent of brokers were female), unless there were no eligible brokers in a particular area (Interviewee 1). This parceling process relied on pre-existing social relations, such as those between neighbors, friends, and relatives. Each voter would then be mobilized by the broker who lived closest to him or her.

Campaign officials then calculated the percentage of votes being bought in each electoral precinct, that is, the number of votes being bought divided by the total number of voters. This figure was based on the voters' responses to the brokers, as well as on experience in past elections (Interviewee 5; Interviewee 6; Interviewee 7). The figures were verified by CKC leaders and super-brokers. The percentage varied from precinct to precinct (see Table 2). Precinct 1 had the highest rate with 86 percent, and Precinct 9 the lowest with 51 percent.

TABLE 2. *Vote Buying in Township 20, by Precinct*

Precinct	Huang Fu-hsing votes bought	Other votes bought	Total votes bought	Total number of voters	Percentage of voters bought
1	68	1193	1261	1465	86.1
2	155	421	576	801	71.9
3	34	720	754	1051	71.7
4	1	506	507	785	64.6
5	14	1063	1077	1803	59.7
6	60	1226	1286	1787	72.0
7	60	766	826	1378	60.0
8	17	1200	1217	1909	63.8
9	31	850	881	1731	50.9
10	35	650	685	1026	66.8
11	35	750	785	1183	66.4
12	2	520	522	799	65.3
13	134	670	804	1052	76.4
14/15	25	1650	1675	2487	67.4
16	30	350	380	545	69.7
17	19	500	519	910	57.0
18	35	300	335	449	74.6
Total	755	13,335	14,090	21,161	66.6

Source: Internal document of the Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate in Township 20, November 24, 1993.

The average rate of vote buying in the whole town was 67 percent. Determining the percentage of vote buying was important to the CKC; if the percentage was too high, officers at the CKC would cut back the budget, and if the percentage fell below an established bottom line, brokers would be commanded to raise the percentage (Interviewee 1). Notice that brokers were instructed to buy more than a mere majority of votes, suggesting that the party did not expect every bought vote to materialize on election day.

Voters usually received money for the purchase of their votes on the eve of election day. This prevented other candidates from giving a larger sum to voters after an initial "purchase" (Interviewee 7), if a "standard charge" per vote was not established (Interviewee 1). In Township 20, two categories of voters were given money for their votes: (1) members in the Huang Fu-hsing Branch of the Kuomintang and their families⁸ and (2) ordinary voters. Staff workers at the party office made the list of Huang Fu-hsing members and their families; officers then subtracted those who would not be able to vote; finally, officers gave money to the staff (not to brokers) for distribution to Huang Fu-hsing Branch members. Other voters received money from brokers (Interviewee 1). See Table 3 for the number of directors, assistant directors, and brokers in each precinct or village of Township 20. If one assumes that every broker was involved in vote buying, and divides the number of brokers (including super-brokers) by the number of voters in every precinct, the result was the number of people for whom each broker was responsible. In a town with 647 brokers who bought 13,335 votes, every broker would therefore have bought votes from an average of 20.6 voters. In Precinct 7, for example, the lowest number of voters a broker was assigned to was six and the highest 56; for households, the lowest figure was two and the highest was 17, with an average of 6.74 households per broker.

We will use the broker referred to as Interviewee 20 in Precinct 16 of Township 20 as an example of relations between brokers and voters. Aside from his immediate family members, Interviewee 20 was responsible for vote buying in 10 households. These households could be divided into three categories, according to their social relations with the broker: relatives, friends, and neighbors. Examples of each category in the case of this broker are as follows:

1. *Relatives.* One voter was a nephew of the broker and helped the broker to buy votes in the families of the voter's brother and two daughters; another relative, a cousin, helped the broker deliver the vote-buying money to the voter's neighbors.
2. *Friends.* One voter not only accepted money from Interviewee 20, but also helped Interviewee 20 distribute money to the voter's brothers.
3. *Neighbors.* The broker bought votes from one neighboring household.

These multidimensional social relations facilitated campaign mobilization and guaranteed the privacy and security of vote buying.

The last stage of the process was "vote-calling" on election day. Brokers visited voters, secured their votes, responded to the voters' needs, and, most importantly, amplified the effects of mobilization and vote buying as much as possible through their connections with the voters. They had to determine how many voters would be home, how many family members who were away would return to vote, and whether they would vote for the candidate that the broker recommended. If a

TABLE 3. *Broker System in Township 20, by Precinct*

Precinct	Directors	Assistant directors	Brokers	Total number of CKC agents	Number of votes bought ^a	Votes bought per CKC agent
1	2	8	39	49	1193	24.3
2	1	4	20	25	421	16.8
3	2	9	37	48	720	15.0
4	2	3	27	32	506	15.8
5	2	5	35	42	1063	25.3
6	3	10	45	58	1226	21.1
7	3	6	49	58	766	13.2
8	1	6	38	45	1200	26.7
9	1	8	28	37	850	23.0
10/11 ^b	2	7	36	45	1400	31.1
12	1	5	20	26	520	20.0
13	1	4	30	35	670	19.1
14/15 ^b	2	13	65	80	1650	20.6
16	1	5	9	15	350	23.3
17	1	2	39	42	500	11.9
18	1	4	5 ^c	10	300	30.0
Total	26	99	522	647	13,335	20.6

Source: Internal document of the Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate in Township 20, November 24, 1993.

Notes:

^aThe number of votes bought does not include members of the Huang Fu-hsing Branch of the Kuomintang and their families.

^bPrecincts 10/11 and 14/15 had two ballot booths in the same village.

^cThe number of brokers of Precinct 18 is not included in the source document; this figure was given by Interviewee 1.

voter was not persuaded by a particular broker, then that broker would turn to another broker who might have closer ties to the voter. The link between brokers and voters was not simply a cash nexus; indeed, for vote buying to work, it had to be situated within a broader array of social relations between brokers and voters. From the CKC to the super-brokers, from the super-brokers to the brokers, and from the brokers to the voters the mobilization of social relations must extend in a smooth continuum for the system to be successful.

Leakage in the Vote-Buying System

In this election, the Kuomintang candidate defeated the DPP candidate, the highly praised incumbent, winning 51.3 percent of the vote. Clientelism worked. But two issues should be kept in mind. First, many interviewees indicated that the Kuomintang employed more economical and political resources and personnel in this race than for any other county executive election in the county. Second, the expenditure of resources was plagued by inefficiencies, most dramatically illustrated by the “leakage” of votes bought and paid for by the Kuomintang.

It is commonly thought that Taiwanese voters only accept a candidate’s money if they plan to vote for the candidate (Crissman, 1981: 111; Jacobs, 1980: 148;

Liu, 1999: 199). In Township 20, however, the number of Kuomintang votes was 45.4 percent lower than the number of votes bought by the local Kuomintang campaign (see Table 4). The difference was not due entirely to broker embezzlement, according to a leading campaign official (Interviewee 1). Rather, many voters who accepted money from the Kuomintang simply chose not to vote for the Kuomintang candidate. Since some people may have voted for the Kuomintang candidate without accepting Kuomintang money, 45.4 percent may be a low estimate of the rate of leakage in this clientelistic system.

Obstacles to Clientelism

Kuomintang clientelism encountered many obstacles in this election, some of which may help to account for the dramatic level of leakage. This section outlines four challenges to clientelism: (1) broker scarcity, (2) factionalism, (3) embezzlement, and (4) financial limitations.

Broker Scarcity

The extensive broker organization built by the CKC had several significant benefits. First, it ensured a large “iron-ticket,” that is, brokers and their families who would almost certainly vote for the Kuomintang candidate. Second, most brokers were responsible for relatively few voters, so that voter reaction could be monitored accurately and no single broker had to be trusted with too much money (on embezzlement, see below). Third, limiting brokers’ assignments to

TABLE 4. *Leakage of Vote Buying in Township 20, by Precinct*

Precinct	Kuomintang votes bought	Kuomintang votes cast	Minimum leakage %
1	1261	640	49.2
2	576	455	21.0
3	754	409	45.8
4	507	287	43.4
5	1077	659	38.8
6	1286	676	47.4
7	826	437	47.1
8	1217	611	49.8
9	881	537	39.0
10	685	343	49.9
11	785	383	51.2
12	522	193	63.0
13	804	384	52.2
14/15	1675	1006	39.9
16	380	216	43.2
17	519	291	43.9
18	335	164	51.0
Total	14,090	7691	45.4

Source: Internal document of the Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate in Township 20, November 28, 1993.

close social relations reduced the risk that a voter would report the operation to the law-enforcement authorities. Most brokers and executive officers of the CKC had no fear of being caught, since the police were assumed not to care much and almost all candidates (with the exception of DPP opposition party candidates in national-level elections) conducted vote buying (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 7). Still, having bought voters socially connected with the brokers would make any report to the police a breach of trust.

Although there was great merit in this extensive broker organization, it was extremely difficult to build. The first obstacle the CKC encountered was the scarcity of brokers. This obstacle was notably more serious in non-factional townships than in factional townships, because local factions could provide many brokers. Not all citizens were interested in elections or political affairs, so the number of people in a community who were willing to be brokers was finite. Consequently, when there were several candidates running in elections, brokers became a scarce resource for which all candidates competed (Interviewee 5; Interviewee 7). One super-broker indicated in an interview that all eight candidates in one election, regardless of their party, had come to ask him for help (Interviewee 5). Thus, it is clear that the more competitive an election is, the earlier the broker list must be determined (Interviewee 5; Interviewee 7).

The scarcity of brokers led the CKC to select some who were not fully competent or loyal. Some brokers failed to visit voters or to report voters' responses to the CKC. Worse, some brokers failed to deliver money they had committed to voters on the eve of election day. It was not unheard of, as well, for campaign managers to do such a poor job of screening that they hired brokers who supported opposing candidates. Although super-brokers had different standards for choosing their brokers, some requirements were common to all: capability, initiative, and partisanship. Capability entailed prestige and popularity: when brokers had a significant social or economic reputation, it was more likely that voters would follow their opinions. Initiative was a requirement because brokers did much more than buy votes; they also sought out and visited voters and tried to respond to voters' needs (Interviewee 1). The brokers participated actively in their community throughout the entire process. Younger brokers were preferred to older ones because younger brokers were thought to be more aggressive (Interviewee 1; Minute Book 6). Finally, some super-brokers mentioned that partisanship was a concern, though less important than capability (Minute Book 6). As more and more Kuomintang members identified with the DPP, the opposition party, partisan loyalty became increasingly important in the choice of brokers (Interviewee 7; Minute Book 6).

Factionalism

The existence of factions helped solve the scarcity problem, since factions generated plenty of brokers. However, factions presented other sorts of difficulties. Factionalism is a very common phenomenon in clientelistic systems (Scott, 1977), one of the most serious consequences being loss of party cohesion (Warner, 1997: 540–1). Unlike other campaigns, such as those for national or provincial assembly representatives, the Kuomintang had only one candidate in the election for county executive. Effective “integration” of the local factions was a key objective in such races. Yet, it was difficult to get rival factions to cooperate (Interviewee 8;

Interviewee 10; Interviewee 14), especially on broker mobilization and vote-buying arrangements, which carried serious implications for the local balance of power.

In some cases, if one faction supported a Kuomintang candidate, the rival faction might in turn support a DPP candidate simply to oppose the rival faction (Interviewee 10). In Township 3, for example, Faction A tended to be pro-Kuomintang, but the Kuomintang approached Faction B first, because Faction B had won the election of the local Farmers' Association and was considered to be the dominant faction. The leaders of Faction A then intended to support the DPP candidate and, in fact, the DPP approached Faction A for support (Interviewee 13). The campaign headquarters of the Kuomintang candidate tried to dissuade Faction A from supporting the DPP candidate, using a variety of political connections, but failed. Finally, the campaign manager went to talk with an important local political figure, who had had strong connections with the family of the founder of Faction A for two generations, to persuade Faction A to take at least a neutral stance in the race and perhaps even to support the Kuomintang candidate. This approach succeeded in mobilizing Faction A for the Kuomintang.

Yet even where both factions supported the same Kuomintang candidate, difficulties remained. In one such township, both factions cooperated to found the local Kuomintang campaign headquarters together. However, this cooperation did not extend to broker management or the vote-buying operation, and the two factions remained antagonistic throughout the mobilization process. So-called "factional integration" served at best to ensure that rival factions supported the same candidate, while maintaining separate broker and vote-buying operations.

As a result, factionalism frequently led to "redundancy." Even in towns where rival factions were extremely divided, it was quite possible for some voters to be assigned to both factions for mobilization, increasing costs and reducing the number of actual votes being bought. This was difficult to monitor, since rival factions seldom checked their vote-buying lists with each other. For example, in Township 5, the Kuomintang candidate gave Faction A money to buy 14,000 votes and Faction B money for 6000 votes. Yet Township 5 had only about 18,000 voters – at least 2000 voters, and probably many more, sold their vote to both factions.

Embezzlement

Embezzlement by brokers and local factions was quite common. Some brokers simply pocketed the money allocated to them for vote buying. Even in rural areas with strong social ties, such as Township 20, there were still a few cases of "money-looting" brokers (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 5; Interviewee 7), forcing Kuomintang campaign leaders to monitor the brokers closely. More frequently, the brokers would give away part of the money as instructed by campaign headquarters and keep the rest for themselves. It was very rare for a broker to steal the entire amount (Interviewee 1). As discussed earlier, campaign leaders tried to reduce embezzlement by recruiting large numbers of brokers and trusting each one with relatively small sums.

Occasionally, an entire faction embezzled from the vote-buying fund. In at least one instance, Faction B in Township 16, the Kuomintang campaign knew this would occur and sent the money anyway. The campaign did not believe that the

local factions would attempt to mobilize voters, but dispatched money simply to discourage them from shifting to the camp of the opposition candidate (Interviewee 18). In a few towns, headquarters could convince local campaign officials to intervene in broker arrangements and in the vote-buying process to prevent large-scale embezzlement. In Township 1, for example, campaign officials asked witnesses such as faction leaders and the local Kuomintang leader to be present to prevent embezzlement (Interviewee 18). In Township 2, headquarters officials gave away the money in the presence of four witnesses. In Township 7, five people were present. Although this provided no guarantee, it made embezzlement on a large scale more difficult.

Financial Limitations

In the 1993 election, each voter received only NT\$300 (about US\$10), approximately equal to the cost of two meals in an inexpensive restaurant. In the Philippines, a common laborer might receive the equivalent of an entire month's wages for a vote (Scott, 1972a: 97).⁹ The monetary impact of vote buying in Taiwan was thus relatively low. However, because the campaign headquarters of the Kuomintang candidate bought votes on a large scale, it still cost a great deal of money. If the campaign bought 67 percent of votes in the whole county (about 620,000 qualified voters), they would have had to spend more than NT\$124 million (more than US\$4 million) on a single county executive election – not including staff salaries, broker commissions, advertising, and other campaign costs, all of which totaled at least as much as vote buying according to our estimates. This total would have been 12 times the campaign expenditure limit for this county. (Although the Central Electoral Commission in Taiwan asked candidates to report their campaign expenditure, almost no candidates reported it honestly, because a large portion of this expenditure was devoted to vote buying, which was illegal.) Even a long-time ruling party with vast resources, such as the Kuomintang, could not have maintained this level of vote buying for county elections nationwide – not to mention municipal, parliamentary, presidential, and other elections.

Conclusion

We have argued that clients' political support for patrons should not be taken for granted. In the case of the 1993 Taiwanese county election studied here, clientelism was arguably in crisis. Patrons had difficulty finding enough competent and trustworthy brokers to staff the patronage machine; local political factions undermined the national party; and 45.4 percent or more of the voters who sold their votes failed to deliver these votes on election day – this in a country where the ruling party had a long track record of successful electoral mobilization, a well-organized operation, and a serious attitude toward the campaign. We conclude that clientelism can be hard.

This finding raises the question: why do ruling elites bother with clientelism when it is so hard, and when the payoff is so uncertain? Is elite preference for clientelistic mobilization, which Wu (1987: 47) calls the "patronage mentality," based on a false perception of clientelistic efficiency? Not necessarily, for two reasons. First, while this article has focused on vote buying, patrons seldom rely exclusively on a single strategy to mobilize voters. They often combine material

patronage with other appeals, including ideology, universal programs, and coercion, which may be more effective than any single strategy alone (Valenzuela, 1977: 166; Warner, 1997, 1998). Second, political clientelism may serve other purposes besides electoral mobilization. It may also be a tool of demobilization, suppressing alternative forms of collective action, for example, class mobilization (Graziano, 1977: 372–3; see also Cammack, 1982; Flynn, 1974; Guasti, 1977). “Clientelism in this sense is an organization of individualization. People are organizing to be disorganized” (Wu, 1987: 33). Clients are generally unable to engage in collective action to press patrons and rulers. For both these reasons, patrons may find it rational to cling to even a clientelistic system in crisis.

Nonetheless, the Taiwanese case suggests that clientelism takes considerable effort to be reproduced year after year, election after election, and may not be the invincible machine that some observers have suggested. The case under study presents only a single location at a single point in time, but it implies that conditions of democratization and economic development may serve to undermine clientelism: the existence of a viable opposition party clearly made the Kuomintang’s mobilization more difficult, and the rising wealth of the Taiwanese people may have made effective vote buying impossibly expensive. Let us conclude, then, with a hypothesis for future research: to the extent that democracy spreads and economic development succeeds around the world, obedient clients may become less and less common.

Appendix 1. Interviewees

1. Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate, planning official, Township 20.
2. Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate, administrative official, Township 20.
3. Democratic Progressive Party, local leader, Township 20.
4. Kuomintang, local official, Township 20.
5. Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate, director, Precinct 2, Township 20.
6. Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate, director, Precincts 14 and 15, Township 20.
7. Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate, director, Precinct 6, Township 20.
8. Faction A, planning official, Township 5.
9. Broker, Township 1.
10. Kuomintang, county official.
11. Journalist.
12. Kuomintang candidate campaign headquarters, publicity department official.
13. Faction A, local leader, Township 3.
14. Faction A, planning official, Township 16.
15. Democratic Progressive Party, member, Township 2.
16. Journalist.
17. Kuomintang provincial assemblyman.
18. Kuomintang candidate campaign headquarters, mobilization department official.
19. Committee for the Kuomintang Candidate, director, Precinct 16, Township 20.
20. Broker, Precinct 16, Township 20.

Notes

1. Regarding Taiwan, see Wu (1987: 40–1).
2. A fourth approach, less prominent in the literature, emphasizes patrons' use of indirect social pressures to mobilize clients (Hermet, 1978: 3). This kind of indirect pressure may come from a dominant ideology (Hermet, 1978: 3) or from a closed network of primary social ties (Guterbock, 1980).
3. For works with overlapping, but distinct, emphases on Taiwanese political mobilization, see Jacobs (1980) and Rigger (1994).
4. Kuomintang candidates were not the only ones to buy votes; many other candidates also did so in local elections. Recently, some non-Kuomintang candidates have begun to buy votes in national elections, though on a smaller scale than Kuomintang candidates.
5. Regarding Brazil, see Gay (1994, 1999). On the Philippines, see Lande (1965: 132). On Colombia, see Schmidt (1977: 305–6). On Chile, see Valenzuela (1977: 80–3). See also the comparative studies in Schaffer (2007).
6. For a discussion of the role of brokers, see Rigger (1994: Chs 4–5; 1999: 87–102).
7. The minutes are internal documents of the CKC in Township 20.
8. Members of the Huang Fu-hsing Branch of the Kuomintang are retired military professionals. Most of them are mainlanders. In the past, the votes of Huang Fu-hsing Branch members generally were not bought, but the Kuomintang decided to buy their votes in the 1993 election (Interviewee 10).
9. For the variety of prices paid for votes, see also Schaffer (2007).

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