Linkage Strategies of Political Parties in Latin America

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Paper prepared for the ECPR Joint Sessions, Lisbon, April 2009
Workshop 13 “Political Parties and Civil Society”

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Introduction
The third wave of democratic transition entailed new challenges to the research area of comparative party politics. New types of political parties emerged, overall, the role of political parties in new democracies seems less central and political parties and politicians maintain other forms of relationships with society than the classic programmatic linkage form that is predominant in Western European democracies. This has implications for the quality of democratic representation in new democracies. In particular research focused on party politics in Latin America has pointed to the existence of a ‘crisis of representation’ (e.g. Hagopian 1998; Roberts 2002).

The aim of my paper is to investigate the ways in which parties link with society in new democracies. My research question is whether political institutions have an influence on the quality of democratic representation, through privileging the creation and maintenance of party-society linkages that foster interest aggregation (i.e. programmatic linkage). Merging the existing literature on linkage structures and political parties’ goals and orientations, I develop a theoretical argument of the aggregated effect of institutional regimes on the overall quality of representation in Latin-American democracies, resulting from political parties’
choice of linkage strategies. Taking a rational-choice based neo institutional perspective this article thereby assumes that political institutions shape the decisions of political actors.\footnote{Political institutions are broadly defined as formal and informal “rules of the game” that structure political interaction. They are assumed to be relatively stable over time due to path dependency effects. Political actors are assumed to be instrumentally rational, i.e. they have rank-ordered and transitive preferences and try to maximize their utility. Relaxing the strict assumption of methodological individualism characteristic of rational choice arguments, political actors may be political parties, and party factions as well as individual politicians. But political institutions do not determine political actions. Political actors’ preferences make a difference. Even if they have to adapt to a given institutional context, in doing so they still have room to manoeuver (see for example March/ Olson 1984; Kaiser 1997; Weyland 2002).}

Comparative research on new democracies is always being confronted with a theoretical “transformation bias” (see van Biezen 2005: 149). In most cases traditional theories about political parties and party systems have been developed with a focus on Western European democracies. Many of the assumptions these models are based on do not apply in the context of most of the new democracies. This is especially true for the connection between political parties and civil society, which differs markedly between highly developed and developing countries (like those in Latin America).

To avoid this bias, it has been suggested that theory building should take its starting point outside the first world (van Biezen 2005). This appears especially important in the research area of political parties. According to the literature related to the linkage concept, different forms of relationships between political parties and society may be classified as either direct or indirect linkage mechanisms, with formal or informal ties to civil society organizations (Poguntke 2000, 2002; Kitschelt 2000). The classic programmatic linkage form corresponds to the indirect and formal type of relationships between political parties, organizations of civil society, and voters. In Latin America, however, – as well as in other regions – other types of linkages with a generally informal character (e.g. clientelistic linkages) prevail (Erdmann/ Köllner/ Betz 2004). Linkage strategies that differ from the classic programmatic ones have to be integrated into the concept of party competition if these contexts are to fall into the range of a comprehensive theory of party politics (Kitschelt/ Wilkinson 2007).

The field of comparative research on political parties and party systems in Latin America only recently arose. Studies in this area show that the Latin-American region differs in many ways from established democracies. For example, Mainwaring and Scully (1995) indicated that Latin-American party systems are barely institutionalized and volatility in the region is much higher compared to Western European democracies\footnote{Besides the negative effects of extremely low institutionalization on democratic consolidation and stability (e.g. Brazil), the opposite case of very high institutionalization, also referred to as}. Moreover, political party organizations
are less based on party membership than their Western European counterparts and competition structures between political parties are also shaped by clientelistic and charismatic means (Coppedge 2001; Erdmann/ Köllner/ Betz 2004). Recent research – mostly based on case studies – analyzes the distribution of the different linkage forms, the possibility of their combination, as well as their stability over time in Latin-American party systems (e.g. Levitsky 2007; Magaloni/ Diaz-Cayeros/ Estévez 2007).

These differences in linkage are often attributed to the socioeconomic and sociocultural contexts of the region. Cleavage structures do not have the same impact as in Western European democracies and civil society is often only scarcely developed (Nohlen 2004; Luna 2007). But political institutions may as well have an impact on these differences. As Müller points out, political institutions are “the neglected side of linkage politics” (2007: 254). This article sheds light on the “neglected” institutional causes of linkage politics.

The objective of my paper is twofold: To get a better understanding of the linkage strategies political parties maintain, it is important to compare the different types according to their costs and benefits for political parties. Thus, I will first highlight different forms of linkage strategies and their characteristics. Building on this information I develop a typology of long-term party-society linkages and argue that the different types of linkage affect the quality of representation in different ways. The focus of the paper lies on identifying the influence of institutional factors on political parties’ choice to maintain specific types of linkage with society. Thus, in a second step the structuring effects of institutional regimes on political parties’ orientations towards the linkage types identified will be analyzed.³

**Party-society linkage forms**

A key feature of representative democracies is competition between political parties for public office and power. Democratic representation is realized practically through repeated free, open, secret, and fair elections. The importance of political parties and party competition for democracy has often been emphasized in the literature. Political parties channel and express interest and they are the main actors selecting political elites for elected positions in democratic states (Sartori 1976; Mainwaring/ Scully 1995).

Referring to the concept of political competition, Bartolini (1999, 2000) points out, that the quality of political competition is judged according to the realization of accountability and, especially, responsiveness. Repeated elections make political actors accountable to their

³'partyarchy’, has extremely negative effects on the quality of representation (e.g. Venezuela) (for Brazil see Mainwaring 1999; for Venezuela Coppedge 1994).

³ Throughout this paper, I refer to specific cases only for illustrative reasons.
electorate, given the condition that political competition is open for new competitors (electoral contestability). But a crucial quality of political competition (at least in modern democracies) is that it produces the unintended byproduct of responsiveness. Political actors are responsive to the policy preferences of their constituencies when the conditions of electoral availability (i.e. the elasticity of the demand), decidability between the offered options on the supply side, and electoral vulnerability of the incumbents are realized. Political competition in this context is mostly understood as programmatic party competition, i.e. it follows the basic assumptions of the model of responsible party government (Downs 1957). But the idealization of programmatic party competition hampers awareness of other modes of political representation (Kitschelt 2000). Especially outside Western European democracies political parties do not compete just in programmatic ways, they may pursue additional or completely different electoral mobilization strategies (e.g. clientelistic or charismatic strategies).

Research on different modes of representation has to start from investigating the central actors in political competition: i.e. political parties and their relationship with the electorate. Political parties play a dual role in representative democracies. Contingent on their mediating position between the electorate and political institutions of the state, they are at the same time actors of the state as well as social organizations (Poguntke 2002: 43).

To enable political parties to fulfill their mediating function in representative democracies, political competition has to provide at least a minimum of stability. Therefore political parties have to connect themselves with the electorate in a durable fashion. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) showed that political parties in Western European democracies were built on social cleavages which stabilized their electoral support in the long run. But cleavage structures were not decisive for the emergence of political parties in Latin America (Dix 1989). In the absence of strong social cleavages the state itself gained tremendous influence on the development of political parties and party systems in Latin America. Access to state power and resources is thus more important for the survival of political parties in the region than in Western Europe (Mainwaring/ Scully 1995; Levitsky 2001).

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4 Different to economic competition the maximization of one of these conditions is not desirable (see Bartolini 1999, 2000).
5 Although, non-programmatic competition is also observable in some Western European democracies, e.g. Italy (see Piattoni 2001; Roniger 2004)
6 The only exception is Chile.
7 The declining influence of social cleavages in Western Europe similarly leads political parties to secure their survival through the connection with the state, as the concept of the cartel party highlighted (Katz/ Mair 1995).
The linkage concept

The relationship between political parties and the electorate is usually illustrated through the linkage concept. Characteristics of different linkage forms have most importantly been clarified by Poguntke (2000, 2002) and Kitschelt (2000). Whereas Poguntke concentrates on the variance among programmatic linkages based on policy pledges, Kitschelt extends the concept to party-society linkages based on other forms of electoral exchange.

In general, the linkage concept describes an interactive connection between the electorate and the state mediated by political elites. This linkage is driven by political parties’ needs for votes to win elections and to secure their survival, irrespective of whether they are motivated by office-seeking, vote-seeking or policy pursuing (Poguntke 2000, 2002).

Linkage forms are usually distinguished according to three factors: (1) Electoral appeal: To connect themselves with the electorate, parties may address voters either in a direct way (e.g. through the mass media) or in an indirect way (e.g. through policy pledges). (2) Character of organizational relations: Political elites may connect themselves to the voter through organizational structures (e.g. collateral organizations, social networks). Formal organizational ties are based on the integration of other actors into a party’s decision-making process, whereas informal ties are based on pressure or blackmailing (Poguntke 2002: 47). (3) Kind of exchanged goods: Political parties may offer either private, club, or public goods in exchange for the vote of their constituency. Different linkage strategies may either foster public regarded policy pledges or private regarded selective incentives for individual voters (or small groups of voters) (Kitschelt/ Wilkinson 2007; Hopkin 2006).

Roberts (2002) adds to the concept another factor to distinguish linkages: (4) their degree of contingency. This characteristic stands for the permanence of the party-society linkage deployed. “Linkages based on ... durable loyalties carry over from one electoral cycle to another ... and they are rarely severed in the absence of serious political trauma” (Roberts 2002: 15). This criterion is especially important concerning the quality of representation. As mentioned earlier, durable relations with the society are essential for representative democracy.

Classically three forms of linkages between political parties and society are mentioned in the literature: programmatic, clientelistic, and charismatic linkages. These linkage forms are not

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8 In a slightly different way Roberts (2002) distinguishes party-society linkages along their level of association, i.e. the individual or collective appeal of voters, which equals the electoral appeal characteristic here mentioned.

9 Roberts (2002) mentions two other types of linkages. Encapsulating linkages, which seem to be a subtype of the programmatic linkage form, and marketing linkages, which rather may be called a
mutually exclusive. Political actors may pursue different forms of linkages at the same time. It may even be a viable strategy of risk avoidance to pursue a strategic mix of linkage forms (see Magaloni/Diaz-Cayeros/Estévez 2007).

**Programmatic linkage**

Political parties that mobilize electoral support following a (pure) programmatic linkage strategy appeal to their voters with policy programs. These programs entail an idea of the greater good to the advantage of the whole society (Pappi 2000). In this sense parties make indirect policy pledges to a large range of voters. Regarding the model of ‘responsible party government’ (Downs 1957), voters have policy preferences and base their electoral decision on them. Political parties’ programs consist of policy bundles and serve as information short cuts for the voters. Usually political parties are assumed to be located on a one dimensional left-to-right policy space.

To root themselves in society political parties maintain formal and informal organizational relations with their social base. The most obvious connection between party elites and their voters is a party membership organization. But for political elites this is not the only organizational environment they may rely on. Other organizational linkages are collateral organizations – like unions or the church – and social movements. While the connection between political elites and party members is very tight, relations to collateral organizations may either be formal or informal, while those to social movements are normally informal (Poguntke 2000, 2002). Characteristic of these forms of organizations is a horizontal bottom up style that provides for participation and interest aggregation (Kitschelt 2000; Roberts 2002).

As political parties base their policy programs on an idea of the greater good, they are able to offer public policy to their voters. But political parties may also concentrate on specific, distinguishable social groups and in this sense provide club goods (pork-barrel politics). Programmatic party competition may in this sense be directed at the public as well as particularistic (Kitschelt/Wilkinson 2007).

Since parties with programmatic linkages are well anchored in society, they have a durable, stable character. The more formally attached they are to civil society organizations, the more durable and stable is the linkage (Poguntke 2000, 2002). Thus, linking a political party in programmatic ways to the electorate may be labeled a long-term strategy.

technique of voter mobilization through the mass media, used by all political parties. Poguntke (2000, 2002) as well refers to the latter as an electoral mobilization technique for political parties.
To sum up, the programmatic linkage type is characterized mostly through an *indirect appeal* to its voters, an often *formalized organizational structure*, the provision of *public and club goods*, and through the ability of binding voters to a political party in a *long-term manner*.

According to the aforementioned, programmatic linkage demands heavy investments of political elites. Firstly, they have to bear the costs of building organizational structures to solve collective action problems and offer mechanisms of interest aggregation (Kitschelt 2000). Secondly, programmatic linkages are based on trust and credibility and thus prone to path dependency effects. If victorious political parties defect from their policy pledges made earlier or engage in extreme policy switches over time they may loose the support of even loyal voters in subsequent elections (Stokes 2001).

Concerning the influence on democratic representation, programmatic political parties that link themselves to the society based on policy pledges provide for other modes of political participation than just voting. Voters may take part in procedures of interest aggregation through party membership organizations or as members of collateral organizations linked to political parties based on congruent policy positions (Kitschelt 2000). Thus, programmatic parties hold themselves responsive to voters’ policy preferences.

But, political parties in new democracies are often not linked to their voters based on coherent policy programs that fit into the classic dimensional location of political parties on a left-to-right scale (Kitschelt/ Wilkinson 2007: 3). Therefore I now turn to other – more informal – types of party-society linkages.

*Clientelistic linkage*

The concept of clientelism is widely used and referred to in very different contexts. Thus, it is prone to conceptual stretching (Piattoni 2001). Different definitions of clientelism are owed to the changing role of patron-client relationships over time and to different research interests. According to the origins of the concept, traditional clientelism describes a dyadic, personal relationship between unequals that builds on fear or obligation as bonds. But modern clientelism differs from this older version in some aspects. First of all, the patron becomes a political party that wants to mobilize electoral support. In addition, contemporary clientelistic exchange is no more limited to face-to-face contacts but may also be based on group relations (see for example Roniger 1994, 2004; Piattoni 2001; Hopkin 2006).

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10 This depiction of clientelism refers to “an archaic phenomenon of traditional and agrarian societies” (Roniger 2004: 355).

11 Target identifiability and excludability are important features of clientelistic exchange relationships. Potential groups for this exchange, thus, have to be clearly delineated.
Following this modern denotation, clientelism is defined as “asymmetric but mutually beneficial relationship of power and exchange, a nonuniversalistic quid pro quo between individuals or groups of unequal standing” (Roniger 2004: 353). Political parties that rely on such linkage, thus, appeal to individuals or identifiable groups of voters in a direct way.

But to sustain relations with their voters, clientelistic parties also have to invest in an organizational infrastructure. As already mentioned, clientelistic exchange is characterized through conditionality, i.e. a quid pro quo. In order to avoid the risk of opportunistic defection, clientelistic parties need to build enforcement mechanisms (i.e. monitoring), to guarantee the exclusiveness of the clientelistic exchange. Therefore clientelistic parties have to make investments in organizational infrastructure to identify and monitor potential voters (Kitschelt 2000).

These organizational ties are mostly informal and structured in a hierarchical top down manner (Gay 1998). The parties rely on vertical exchange networks between party elites, party brokers, and clients that organize the complex transport of benefits from the top level of the party organization to the bottom in exchange for votes (Roberts 2002; Levitsky 2001). The role of party brokers in these networks is to connect party elites with their constituencies. In this respect, informality should not be confounded with lack of organization or institutional weakness (Levitsky 2001).

Due to their direct appeal, goods offered for exchange by clientelistic parties are first and foremost characterized by exclusiveness, i.e. they provide mainly private and club goods. Thus, clientelism “focuses the popular sector’s attention on the immediate acquisition of localized and small-scale goods and services as opposed to a series of more significant, generalized and long term demands” (Gay 1998: 11). Since clientelistic linkage relies on direct material inducements, this strategy is more likely the more voters value such side payments and the lesser they value future benefits from the provision of public goods (Kitschelt 2000).  

Following Stokes, two subtypes of clientelistic exchange can be identified: patronage and vote buying. Patronage is “the proffering of public resources (most typically, public employment) by office-holders in return for electoral support” (2007: 606, italics in the original), whereas “vote buying is a more narrow exchange of goods (benefits, protections) for

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one’s own vote” (2007: 606, italics in the original).  

Clientelistic exchange, thus, takes place quasi simultaneously or close after an election was held (Kitschelt/ Wilkinson 2007). Concerning the degree of permanence, clientelistic linkages have a long-term character. In general the decline of clientelism has often been predicted, but in fact it has proven to be a highly adaptive strategy even in democratic contexts (see Roniger 2004; Gay 1998). This may be because the relationship with the voter is often marked by a dependency aspect and build on repetition (Stokes 2007). In addition, the party organization as a social network plays an important role in binding voters over time. Thus, similar to programmatic parties, clientelistic practices are based on trust and credibility and thus also prone to path dependency effects (Roniger 1994).

In sum, the clientelistic linkage type is characterized through a direct appeal to its voters, a mostly informal organizational structure, the provision of foremost private and club goods, and through the ability of binding voters to a political party in a long-term manner. Thus, the costs political parties that choose a clientelistic linkage strategy have to bear are on the one hand the need to invest in mechanisms of voter supervision, i.e. monitoring. On the other hand to build “organizational hierarchies of exchange between electoral clients at the ground floor of the system, various levels of brokers organized in pyramidal fashion, and patrons at the top” (Kitschelt/ Wilkinson 2007: 8). Thus, transaction costs for providing the exchanged benefits are high.

Unlike programmatic parties, clientelistic parties do not provide for mechanisms of interest aggregation. On the contrary, they do not offer orientation in the policy space to the voters, even cut across cleavages and cater for highly heterogeneous clients (Gay 1998; Roberts 2002). Since “the use of the vote as a currency to buy material benefits subverts the obstensible purpose of the electoral process in a representative democracy” (Hopkin 2006: 410), a negative effect on parties’ responsiveness to the policy preferences of the voters should be expected.

But, extensive party patronage and the potential misuse of public resources may bear the risk of making these parties vulnerable to critique from the part of their contenders and provoke anti-party sentiments (Mair 1994: 11). Thus, programmatic and clientelistic linkages are

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13 Other materially oriented political strategies are pork-barrel politics and programmatic redistributive politics. But both of these strategies do not deliver small-scale exclusive goods, although pork-barrel politics may be a source of patronage when realized (Stokes 2007).

14 The Radical Party in Argentina may be mentioned to exemplify the difficulties to combine patronage with a programmatic party strategy. Unlike their primary rival, the Justicialist Party (PJ), their constituency is mostly located in the middle-class. Those voters evaluate the misuse of public
only combinable to a small degree. Once a linkage strategy is established, it may be difficult to abandon it due to path dependency effects and credibility problems mentioned above (Müller 2007).

Charismatic linkage

This linkage form may also be labeled as personalistic or populist appeal. Political parties that maintain such bonds with their voters, base their strategy on the personal skills of one or a few (charismatic) leaders. Often these kinds of parties are referred to as mere electoral vehicles (Roberts 2002; Kitschelt 2000)

A charismatic linkage strategy reaches its voters through a direct, personal appeal (often combined with marketing techniques). Its organizational structure tends to be weakly institutionalized, since party leaders do not want to limit their leverage on the intraparty decision-making process (Weyland 1999; Kitschelt 2000). In analogy to this, the pledges charismatic parties make to their voters remain opaque. Party leaders “tend to promise all things to all people to maintain maximum personal discretion over the strategy of their party vehicle” (Kitschelt 2000: 849).

I assume that political parties as mere electoral vehicles for a charismatic leader are limited to short- or medium-term time horizons in democratic contexts. With a charismatic leader finishing his career the political party will probably loose its bond to its voters and dissolve. “Sooner or later, charismatic leaders or their successors will be forced to routinize authority relations and put them on a different grounding” (Kitschelt 2000: 855). Only when the personalistic linkage is combined with a long-term strategy, this risk may be diminished. In general, charismatic linkage is combinable with any of the linkage types already mentioned (Roberts 2006).

In a nutshell, the charismatic linkage type’s features are a direct appeal to the electorate, a normally informal and uninstitutionalized organizational structure, opaque electoral promises, and a rather short- or medium-term duration of voter alignment.

For itself, charismatic linkage does neither solve collective action problems nor offer alternative forms of participation and techniques of interest aggregation to voters (Kitschelt 2000). Thus, clientelistic and charismatic linkages instead of programmatic linkages “reduce parties to their most basic, self-referential political function: electing candidates from their ranks into public office” (Roberts 2002: 29).

resources as negative and overspending from Radical politicians led to decreases in their vote cast (Stokes 2007: 622-623).
The sequence of the electoral cycle

Focussing on clientelistic and programmatic linkages as political parties’ potential long-term strategies, there is another important factor that separates them from each other. Assuming a political party’s preference is to stabilize electoral support in the long-run as to secure its own survival and potential access to political power, the different sequences of the electoral cycle are emphasized differently depending on the linkage strategy maintained.

Clientelistic and programmatic parties value the three possible goals of political parties – policy pursuing, office-seeking, and vote-seeking – differently. While every political party has to seek votes in some respect because it is a means to reach both of the other goals, political parties in the end may be primarily interested in either office- or policy-seeking (Strøm 1990; Strøm/ Müller 1999).

Ideally, clientelistic parties may be assumed to be “teams of self-interested office seekers” (Roberts 2002: 30) and programmatic parties primarily as policy pursuers. Thus, programmatic parties have to use office as a means to get to policy-making power (Strøm 1990), while clientelistic parties, if at all, use policy as a means to get into office (ends).

Since political parties have to invest in their credibility to be trustworthy in the eyes of the voter, they will be judged by the promises they made during elections. In this sense, clientelistic parties have a temporal advantage in the electoral cycle (see Figure 1), because they either exchange material inducements quasi simultaneously with their voters or honor job pledges in case of victory shortly after the election. On the contrary, programmatic parties have to pass through the whole decision-making process to decide over new policies, implement them properly and, thus, to cater for a trustful relationship with their voters.

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15 Although, also programmatic parties may use policy as a means to get into office, I assume that theoretically one may differentiate the two idealtypes of party-society linkage according to this distiction.
Figure 1: Political parties’ long-term linkage strategies

Choice of linkage strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clientelistic linkage strategy</th>
<th>Offer to the voter</th>
<th>Programmatic linkage strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) patronage</td>
<td>= job promise</td>
<td>policy program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) vote buying</td>
<td>= direct exchange of goods</td>
<td>policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>redemption of job pledges (credibility)</td>
<td>office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>„material“ voter mobilization for the next electoral cycle (t+1)</td>
<td>policy-making potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indirect policy pledges (based on a specific understanding of the greater good)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

On these grounds, it is possible to evaluate the potential effects of institutional arrangements on the linkage strategies of political parties.

Having identified the different types of linkage strategies, I will now turn to the question of what determines which strategy is chosen by a party.

**Political institutions and political parties’ goals**

Many factors have been identified to explain the prevalence of non-programmatic linkage strategies in new democracies. Most frequently they have been attributed to economic developments, the timing of state formation and the process of democratization, cultural cleavages, or ideological polarization.\(^{16}\) In addition to this, clientelistic linkages are generally

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\(^{16}\) See Kitschelt (2000: 855-866) for a comprehensive overview of these arguments.
expected to be more frequent in poor societies (Stokes 2007). But little effort has been made to analyze the institutional causes of non-programmatic linkages (Stokes 2007).

Especially in the contexts with barely developed civil society organizations and only marginal cultural cleavages, like in Latin America, the structuring effects of political institutions on the strategic room of manoeuvre of political actors may have important implications for the quality of representation.

**Institutional opportunity structures**

So far research about institutional effects on linkage structures did not lead to clear results. Therefore, there may be different political institutions in one and the same political system that lead to diverging effects on political parties’ choice of linkage strategies (Kitschelt 2000; Müller 2007). Therefore, it seems promising to reanalyze the assumed effects of political institutions on linkage structures from an overall institutional regime perspective. In accordance with a neo institutionalist perspective, the notion of institutional regimes “emphasise[s] the fact that political systems are based on interrelated institutional and organizational features that systematically structure the way political actors make decisions” (Kaiser 1998: 205).

Political institutions may influence the weighting of political parties’ goals (Strøm 1990; Strøm/ Müller 1999) and in this way also have an influence on political competition and the quality of representation (Franzmann 2007).

According to Strøm (1990) every political party has to face three kinds of trade-offs: (1) the weighting of vote- versus policy-seeking motives, (2) the trade-off between vote- and office-seeking motives, and (3) considerations between policy- and office-seeking motives.

The first two of these trade-offs follow a similar logic, because votes are a means for both other goals at the same time. Firstly, the logic behind these trade-offs centers on the time horizons of political parties, i.e. on the dynamic aspect of electoral cycles. Dependent on the institutional opportunity structure, political parties may have to sacrifice present policy or office goals for future vote-seeking success (Strøm 1990; Strøm/ Müller 1999). Political parties will value future votes more, the more voters can hold them accountable for their present performance in the next elections according to their past electoral promises (retrospective voting). In other words, the more opaque the responsibilities for specific

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17 One example is the personal vote argument. While some attribute a positive effect of more personalization on clientelistic linkage building (e.g. Kitschelt 2000), others predict the opposite to be true (Stokes 2007). But empirical anomalies may be found for both argumentations.

18 Franzmann (2007) deploys the veto point concept from Kaiser (1997) to allocate general effects of institutional settings to political parties’ goals and the potential of policy innovations.
outcomes of the decision-making process are, the more blame avoidance political parties may persecute, i.e. the lesser they have to fear retrospective voting. Secondly, political parties will value votes more, the higher the electoral competitiveness is (Strøm 1990; Strøm/ Müller 1999). This leads to the following hypotheses regarding the effect of institutions on parties’ choice of linkage strategy:

**HYPOTHESIS 1a:** The more an institutional regime favors (future) vote-seeking, the more likely political parties will pursue long-term linkage strategies (i.e. programmatic or clientelistic linkages)

**HYPOTHESIS 1b:** The lesser an institutional regime favors (future) vote-seeking, the higher the potential that political parties will pursue short-term linkage strategies (i.e. charismatic linkages, professional campaign strategies via mass media).

The third trade-off between policy and office motives especially refers to the institutional opportunity structure of the decision-making process. “Under most conceivable circumstances, governing parties have greater access to policy influence and office benefits than the opposition. But the degree to which incumbents are favored varies” (Strøm 1990: 586). Two institutional sets are important in this respect: (1) Do political institutions introduce incentives for power-sharing and consensual decision-making (consociational veto points)? (2) Do political institutions introduce additional legislatory veto points? (Kaiser 1997)\(^\text{19}\). These institutional arrangements set constraints on a legislative majority’s capacity to act according to its most preferred motives. Under the assumption of high vote-seeking incentives (i.e. incentives to pursue long-term linkage strategies), following additional hypothesis may be stated:

**HYPOTHESIS 2a:** The more an institutional regime favors policy-seeking, the more political parties will pursue a programmatic linkage strategy

**HYPOTHESIS 2b:** The more an institutional regime favors office-seeking, the more political parties will pursue a clientelistic linkage strategy

\(^\text{19}\) I will exclude delegatory and expert veto points (Kaiser 1997) from this first analysis. Although they should be integrated in further research.
Specification of the incentive structure of specific institutional arrangements

To specify the aggregated incentive structure of an institutional regime, it is necessary to analyze the effects of each institutional feature on the differentials between the three goals mentioned. I will focus on three sets of institutional rules that impact on democratic representation: (1) Electoral rules, (2) Party System features, and (3) Executive-Legislative relations.

Electoral rules

In presidential systems normally at least two national institutions are directly elected: a (unicameral) national legislature and a president. Thus, in a first step the incentive structure of the electoral rules for the national legislatures will be analyzed, followed by an analysis of the presidential electoral system.

According to the basic distinction between plurality and proportional representation, the former influences the trade-offs between vote-seeking and office- and policy-seeking in favor of votes. Corresponding to Duverger’s Law “the simple-majority single ballot system favors the two-party system” (1962: 217). Thus, plurality electoral systems increase the general hurdle to get seats, i.e. potential policy- or office-influence, and thus disadvantage small parties. At the same time, plurality rule makes the relationship between electoral and legislative weights less predictive, and may increases electoral competitiveness (i.e. lead to high electoral vulnerability) (Strøm 1990; Strøm/Müller 1999; Bartolini 1999, 2000).

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20 Due to my interest in Latin American cases, I concentrate on presidential systems here. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that parliamentary systems set incentives for political parties to be more disciplined than in presidential systems. This results from the confidence requirements between the government and a legislative majority in parliamentary systems (Steffani 1979). Thus, policy-seeking parties, all else being equal, should be more frequent in parliamentary systems than in presidential systems.

21 I will focus on the electoral rules on the national level. Although the national level is not the only place where patronage resources may be found (Müller 2007), federalism will be excluded from this first intent to analyze the incentive structures of institutional regimes for reasons of simplicity. Since federalism adds an additional institutional layer to a political system it also adds an additional set of incentives to the whole institutional regime, which precludes general predictions (see also Franzmann 2007).

22 Due to the focus on presidential systems in this paper, the points (2) and (3) slightly differ from the set of institutions Strøm and Müller (1999: 21) analyze.

23 Franzmann (2009) argues that also the reversed causal relationship is true, i.e. the existence of two vote-seeking parties leads to an increase of electoral competitiveness. Thus, even in the case of a plurality system competitiveness may be low if a two party system consists of one vote seeking and one office-seeking party. In this case parties are very likely to collude.
Proportional representation, on the other side, lowers the hurdle to get seats and offers even small parties potential access to policy and office. “Parties do not necessarily compete with each other to gain votes in each district but rather establish a successful position initially in order to bargain in government formation” (Franzmann 2007: 24). Thus, the electoral vulnerability of political parties in such a system is lower than in plurality electoral systems. In addition, proportional representation allows for the pursuit of niche or minority policy positions even if they reduce the vote share for a political actor in subsequent elections (Franzmann 2007; Strøm/ Müller 1999).

Presidential electoral systems, in general, may introduce additional vote-seeking incentives. Firstly because of the mere fact that another central position of the state is selected through electoral competition in such systems. This is especially true in Latin America, where the presidential office is perceived as the highest price to win in the political system (Berensztein 2004). Secondly, presidents are elected in a nationwide constituency. They have to resemble at least a plurality of votes on them and in this sense cannot sacrifice too many votes for extreme or minority policy positions (Crisp et al 2004). Thirdly, presidents are often held accountable from the electorate for national policy performance (especially concerning the governments’ economic program). Remmer/ Gélineau (2003) highlight the fact that the fate of legislative candidates (at the national and sub-national level) is interrelated with the performance of the incumbent president (coattail effect). Thus, political parties that nominate candidates for presidential elections, face strong (future) vote-seeking incentives.

In addition, however, the extent of the vote-seeking incentive should be stronger in plurality systems (with or without thresholds) than in absolute majority systems with a second ballot (Mainwaring/ Shugart 1997: 414).

**Party system features**

As already mentioned, the structure of the party system has an important influence on each of the three trade-offs. The first two trade-offs are influenced through the fragmentation of the party system. It may be assumed that the lower the number of parties in a party system, the higher the electoral vulnerability of each political party is. Thus, the more political parties will weight their motives in favor of votes (Strøm 1990).

But, “[a]s the number of political parties increases, the probability of single-party majorities dwindles, and the complexity of strategic interaction multiply” (Strøm 1990 586), i.e. the

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24 Although the intensity of the effect depends on other features of the electoral system like district magnitude, electoral thresholds, supplementary seats (Strøm 1990).
potential of coalition governments and the necessity of *interparty bargaining* over policy and office increases. Hence, making the relationship between legislative weights and government formation less predictive and thus decrease the incentives for vote-seeking compared to policy- and office-seeking.

Another aspect that interrelates with the effects of the structure of the party system is the cohesiveness of political parties (Carey/Shugart 1995; Jones 2002). Irrespective of the fragmentation of the party system, the more candidate-centered electoral systems are, the more *intraparty bargaining* over policy decisions is necessary, i.e. public policy making becomes more difficult (Kitschelt 2000; Müller 2007). Thus, the more incentives an institutional structure provides for political parties’ cohesiveness, the stronger the incentives for policy-seeking should be compared to office-seeking.

*Executive-legislative relations*

The relationship between the executive and the legislature has special implications on the trade-off between policy- and office-seeking. Presidential systems provide for an institutional structure of power-sharing between the executive and the legislature. But the degree of power-sharing depends on the strength of the presidential position in the decision-making process. This presidential strength, i.e. the degree of power-sharing, is contingent on the electoral and the party system (Shugart/Haggard 2001).

Firstly, the trade-off between policy and office incentives depends on the formal (constitutionally guaranteed) legislative competences of the president (Shugart/Carey 1992; Carey/Shugart 1998). A weak president with marginal legislative powers does not affect the trade-off between policy- and office-seeking behavior. The stronger the president’s legislative competences are, the greater is his influence on the decision-making process. But the amount of negotiation over policy decisions between the branches depends on the partisan powers a president has. Thus secondly, the trade-off is affected by the presidents’ disciplining power over his own party’s rank and file and by the legislative weight of the presidents’ party in the legislature (Mainwaring/Shugart 1997).

Weak partisan powers of the president should influence the trade-off in favor of office-seeking, because the president has to construct presidential majorities on a case-by-case basis (either through intra- or interparty bargaining) (Kitschelt 2000). On the contrary, strong partisan powers of a president may influence the trade-off in favor of policy-seeking. Because presidents are expected to be interested in public policy pursuing, as they are held accountable
for national policy performance (Crisp et al 2004), they may use their strong powers to enact public policy programs.

Another set of incentives, that should be mentioned, concerns the structure of the legislature itself. The existence of a second chamber in the legislature may introduce an additional legislative veto point (Kaiser 1997). A second chamber introduces another point of access to the decision-making process and makes divided government more likely. A governing party needs to control both chambers of the legislature to dominate the decision-making process alone. Thus, bicameralism may influence the differential between policy- and office-seeking in favor of the latter (Franzmann 2007). But the effect differs according to the strength of the second chamber in the decision-making process (see Lijphart 1999). The stronger the second chamber is, the higher the incentives to pursue office-motives.

To sum up, the potential institutional effects are illustrated in Table 1 in the appendix. While the first column refers to specific executive or legislative political institutions, the last column indicates the intervening effects of the party system structure on the policy- versus office-seeking differential. The incentives according to the three differentials are highlighted in columns two (the policy/vote differential), three (the office/vote differential), and four (the policy/office differential).

**Empirical outlook**

The aim of my research is to carry out a cross-national analysis concerning Latin American democracies and their quality of representation. In order to test this model, data for the independent variable of my theoretical argument, i.e. the effects of an institutional regime on political parties’ goals, may be inferred from case studies and official country specific sources (e.g. electoral data).

Concerning the dependent variable, i.e. the different linkage types deployed, empirical research on democratic representation in new democracies has always been constrained due to the difficulties in measuring informal linkage strategies like clientelism properly. I would like to use recent data from the expert survey based project on “Democratic Accountability and Citizen-Politician Linkages around the World” 25 funded by the Duke University and the “Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Científico y Tecnológico de Chile (FONDECYT)” and

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directed by Herbert Kitschelt. Providing a data set covering 85 democracies all over the world, this project offers a basis for cross-national empirical research of political parties’ linkage strategies.

**Conclusion**

In concluding, it is important to emphasize that this paper marks a first conceptual step on the way to explain different patterns of party competition and the quality of representation in Latin America.

In the first part of the paper a typology of linkage strategies has been developed. After analyzing party-society linkages according to classic factors mentioned in the literature, the different weighting of the sequences of the electoral cycle was brought into focus. It has been highlighted, that according to this last factor it is possible to theoretically relate the ideal types of programmatic and clientelistic linkages to different motives political parties may pursue in contexts of political competition.

On the basis of this typology an institutional argument has been made to explain political parties’ choices of long-term linkage strategies in representative democracies. Although many contextual factors may influence political parties’ linkage choices, following a neo institutional approach it has been assumed that, all else being equal, “institutions ... are likely to influence party behavior in a variety of ways” (Strøm/ Müller 1999: 24).

Thus, unlike other institutional arguments deployed to explain party-society linkages, this paper takes an institutional regimes perspective, concentrating on the aggregated effect of different institutional arrangements in a political system.

Using data from case studies, country specific sources and the recent expert survey based project on “Democratic Accountability and Citizen-Politician Linkages around the World” directed by Herbert Kitschelt, in a next step, this theoretical argument will be tested in a cross-national analysis of Latin American cases.

Future research may use the here clarified concepts to investigate competition structures beyond mere ideological or issue oriented party competition. In addition, this may as well be helpful to analyze different abilities of political parties to adapt to institutional changes or the emergence of new political parties.
References

Altman, David, Juan Pablo Luna, Rafael Piñeiro, and Sergio Toro (2009) “Cristalización Programática de los Sistemas de Partidos Latinoamericanos” MIMEO, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.


Jones, Mark P. (2002) Legislator Behavior and Executive-Legislative Relations in Latin


Table 1: The Incentive Structure of an Institutional Regime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE INSTITUTIONS</th>
<th>P/V DIFFERENTIAL</th>
<th>O/V DIFFERENTIAL</th>
<th>P/O DIFFERENTIAL</th>
<th>STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY SYSTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure of the Legislature</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Electoral System</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>plurality rule</td>
<td>vote (+)</td>
<td>vote (+)</td>
<td>[see party system]</td>
<td>p/o dependent on party cohesiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proportional representation</td>
<td>policy (+)</td>
<td>office (+)</td>
<td>[see party system]</td>
<td>p/o dependent on coalition potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Uni- vs. Bicameralism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>unicameral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>according to the electoral system applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bicameral</td>
<td>policy (+)</td>
<td>office (+)</td>
<td>[see party system]</td>
<td>p/o dependent on strength of second chamber and party system structure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Structure of the Executive</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Presidential Electoral System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plurality (with or without threshold)</td>
<td>vote (+++)</td>
<td>vote (+++)</td>
<td>[dep. on president]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority with second ballot</td>
<td>vote (+)</td>
<td>vote (+)</td>
<td>[dep. on president]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Legislative Competences of the President</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>strong (dominant or proactive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[dep. on president]</td>
<td>p/o dependent on the presidents’ partisan powers</td>
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<tr>
<td>weak (reactive or marginal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>=</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Partisan Power of the President</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong partisan power and legislative majority or near majority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>policy (+)</td>
<td>p/o dependent on the candidate-centeredness of the electoral system and the legislative strength of the president’s party in Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak partisan power and legislative majority or small legislative coalition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>office (+)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>strong or weak partisan power and oversized legislative coalition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>office (+++)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: partly based on Franzmann 2007.