# **WORKING PAPER**

## Do Vote-Buyers Target the Poor? Evidence from Elections in the Philippines

Tristan A. Canare Ateneo de Manila University

Mario Antonio Lopez Asian Institute of Management

Ronald U. Mendoza Ateneo School of Government

### ASOG WORKING PAPER 17-001



# **Ateneo School of Government**

Electronic copy available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2874007

### ATENEO SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT WORKING PAPER SERIES

### Do Vote-Buyers Target the Poor? Evidence from Elections in the Philippines

Tristan A. Canare Ateneo de Manila University

Mario Antonio Lopez Asian Institute of Management

Ronald U. Mendoza Ateneo School of Government

### January 2017

The authors thank the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and Young Public Servants (YPS) for supporting this study.

This working paper is a draft in progress that is posted online to stimulate discussion and critical comment. The purpose is to mine reader's additional ideas and contributions for completion of a final document.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Ateneo de Manila University, National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and Young Public Servants (YPS).

Corresponding authors:

Tristan A. Canare, Ateneo de Manila University Tel: +632-426-4279. Fax: +632-426-5997. E-mail: tristan.canare@gmail.com

Ronald U. Mendoza, Ateneo School of Government Tel: +632-426-4279. Fax: +632-426-5997. E-mail: rumendoza@ateneo.edu

#### 1. Introduction

By now there are numerous empirical studies of how policymakers target low-income individuals and households for more efficient social protection and public service provision. Yet, another form of targeting may be taking place—this time involving vote buyers and the poor. Vote buying is rampant in many developing democracies, notably those in Africa and Latin America (see Figure 1). As seen in this figure, some of the highest vote buying incidences can be found among African countries. Latin American nations posted lower vote buying rates, while Thailand is somewhere in the middle. Vote buying is a pervasive phenomenon in many developing countries. Despite their prevalence, however, there is still very little evidence analyzing the possible correlates of vote buying.



Figure 1. Estimated Prevalence of Vote Buying Across Selected Democracies

Sources: For Latin America, the source is the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) - Americas Barometer Survey 2012. The survey question used in generating the graph is: "Has a candidate or someone from a political party offered you something?". Possible answers are "Frequently", "Rarely", and "Never". The figures in the graph are share of "Frequently" and "Rarely" responses. For Africa, the source is the Afrobarometer Survey 2014/2015. The question used is "In your opinion, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections? Voters are bribed". Possible answers are: "Never", "Sometimes", "Often", "Always", "Don't Know". The figures in the graph are share of "Sometimes", "Often", and "Always" responses. For Thailand, the source is Finan and Schechter (2012), citing Phongpaichit, P., N. Treerat, Y. Chaiyapong, and C. Baker (2000). "Corruption in the Public Sector in Thailand: Perceptions and Experience of Household.". Working Paper, Chulalongkorn University.

As a contribution to the nascent literature, this study examines patterns of vote buying among poor voters in 17 cities in Metro Manila, using a dataset closely following the 2016 national and local elections. Specifically, it will examine the possible factors linked to vote buying, hopefully uncovering evidence on whether and how this is targeted at poor voters. This study also looks at the correlates of other aspects of vote buying, including of accepting the offer and of voting for the candidate who made the offer.

The main focus is on the poor because extensive anecdotal evidence suggests that this could be the group most prone to sell their votes, in large part because of their needs. This paper finds evidence that vote buying among poor voters in Metro Manila appears to be a finely targeted activity, wherein various things of value can be used to buy votes, while money is used only in tight Mayoral races. Based on the survey that was the basis of this paper, the evidence suggests that in the Philippines' May 2016 national and local elections, vote buyers offered an average of around PhP500 per targeted voter in poor communities in Metro Manila.

#### 2. Related Literature

The early work on vote buying emphasized the distinction between paying to curb voting decisions from one candidate to another, versus paying to simply encourage voter turnout (or event refraining from voting, if the vote buyer wishes to erode the opponent's voter base). Nichter (2008), for example, developed a theoretical framework distinguishing vote buying from turnout buying (see Figure 2). In particular, he considered how vote buying involves targeting weakly opposed voters, while turnout buying focused on targeting unmobilized strong supporters. This framework helped to clarify the possible different strategies behind vote buying efforts—likely influenced by the political context, the ability to hold voters accountable to the agreement, and other factors. Using data on Argentina, Nichter's empirical analysis found stronger evidence that campaign operators targeted for stronger turnout, rather than on changing voter preferences.



#### Figure 2. Framework of Vote vs Turnout Buying

Source: Nichter (2008:20).

Moreover, Brusco et al (2004) implemented a vote buying survey in Argentina in 2002, in order to examine the possible factors associated with vote buying in that country. They hypothesized that vote buying is best seen as a form of probabilistic selective incentive—good(s) that a voter receives into the future only with her/his continued support for the political party buying her/his vote. This framework, they argued, proves effective in holding the voter to the vote buying agreement, due to factors such as social networks linking the voter to the party, the ability to monitor the voter such as attendance in rallies and meetings, and the conducive environment of smaller towns and cities whereby voters are more easily known and monitored.

Alternatively, they also acknowledged that norms of reciprocity could be possible to leverage, in order to ensure the vote buying agreement is carried out by the voter. These authors found evidence that the Argentine poor are most likely targeted with clientelistic appeals, including vote buying. Political party affiliation was also critically important, given the types of policies some parties were associated with—for instance, receiving a handout from a Peronist increased the likelihood that a voter would vote for a Peronist presidential candidate in 1999 from just under, to well over 50%. (Brusco et al 2004 :83).

The importance of reciprocity in vote buying was also emphasized by Finan and Schechter (2012). According to these authors, vote buyers target reciprocal voters; and this targeting can be performed by political operators or "middlemen" who know and are familiar with the communities assigned under their watch. Indeed, in a survey conducted among voters and middlemen in Paraguay, the authors found evidence that reciprocal persons do receive more offers of vote buying.

Recent work, including by Vicente and Wantchekon (2009) and Vicente (2014), also turn to data from field experiments on election campaigns. These authors utilize field experiments in Benin and Sao Tome and Principe, in order to examine the extent to which vote buying activities are effective in garnering votes for politicians. They also examine the extent to which information campaigns against vote buying could curb the effectiveness of this practice. Their experimental design included agreements with politicians to randomize the content of their campaigns (including an agreement not to diffuse clientelistic or purely redistributive messages and vote buying in some of their stronghold villages), as well as a randomized information campaign against vote buying<sup>1</sup> which allowed them to generate rather rich empirical results.

They found evidence that clientelistic messages were more effective among men, and were approaches that were deployed more effectively by incumbent politicians (i.e. those with control over public services provision). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of clientelistic approaches by incumbents was counteracted by vote buying strategies used by political challengers. These are successful in increasing voter turnout. Furthermore, the anti-vote-buying campaign eroded the effectiveness of more clientelistic approaches, but only among women voters.

In addition, research on Latin American voters also emphasized the importance of trust. For instance, Carreras and Irepoglu (2013) utilized the 2010 wave of the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys in order to analyze how low trust in elections and exposure to vote buying affects electoral participation in that region. They found evidence that perceptions of unfairness in elections led to lower willingness to participate. On the other hand, receiving vote buying incentives to participate counteracted this effect.

Broad social and economic conditions, as well as the interaction between political and economic elites, could also possibly influence election fraud and vote buying prevalence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The intervention was essentially a leaflet distributed to 10,000 households containing the slogan: "Do not let your conscience be bent by vote buying—Your vote should be free and in good conscience."

Chaves, Fergusson and Robinson (2015), for instance, developed a theoretical model whereby political and economic elites engage in or tolerate election fraud. They predict that "fraud will be lower and public good provision higher when land inequality is higher, the overlap between elites lower, and the strength of the state higher (ibid: 124). They test their hypothesis using data from Colombia's 1992 Presidential elections and find evidence supporting their hypothesis.

Recent vote buying studies have also turned to new estimation methods to try and assess the correct vote buying estimate, considering that survey respondents could face a social desirability bias. For example, based on a survey of over 1000 respondents after the 2008 municipal elections in Nicaragua, Gonzalez-Ocantos et al (2011) estimated vote buying patterns in that country using the list method and found that 24% of registered voters in Nicaragua were offered a gift or service in exchange for votes. Nevertheless, only 2% of survey respondents reported the behavior when using a direct question on vote buying. They also found evidence of two key vote buying linkages in the Nicaraguan context. First, there were strong perceptions that the government could monitor citizens' votes. And second, state actors easily engaged citizens through the government-sponsored (and Sandinista-controlled) *Consejos de Poder Ciudadano* (Citizen Power Councils, CPCs) which distributed goods for clientelistic purposes. Both these mechanisms made it easier for vote buying to take place.

Moreover, Carkoglu and Aytac (2015) turn to an expanded version of a list experiment, in order to overcome possible social desirability bias in the response to vote buying survey questions. Using the list method, they found that up to one-third of the electorate was targeted for vote buying in the 2011 Turkish parliamentary elections. And this was over twice the estimated vote buying admitted by voters surveyed using direct survey questions. They also utilized a population based list experiment with an estimator in order to analyze what types of voter groups are targeted by vote buyers. They found evidence that less-educated, low income and urban residents were the preferred targets, along with strong partisans of the ruling political party (i.e. an approach that was meant not to curb votes but increase turnout).

#### 3. Methodology

#### A. The Survey

The primary data used in this study is a survey among low-income voters in Metro Manila. The focus is on the low-income group because anecdotal evidence indicates that it is the group targeted by vote buyers given their needs and possible longstanding relationships with political patrons (Mendoza et al 2015 and Schaffer 2015). Moreover, studies on Argentina (Brusco et al 2004), Turkey (Carkoglu and Aytac 2015) and the Philippines (Schaffer 2015) find evidence that vote buying is effective in gathering electoral support, particularly among low-income voters who also tend to be more dependent on support from politicians.

Two sets of instruments are used in the survey underpinning this study. One uses direct questioning, i.e. respondents are asked if they themselves received an offer to sell their vote. The other uses indirect vote buying questions, i.e. respondents are asked if they know someone who received an offer to sell their vote. Chaudhuri and Christofides (2013) and Fisher (1993) discuss how indirect questioning can elicit more truthful answers on socially sensitive topics, such as vote buying.

In an earlier study focused on vote buying during the 2013 elections, Mendoza et al (2015) utilized the list method, in addition to indirect survey questions, precisely to test for the possible social desirability bias in the survey results. They did not find evidence of bias, and this study builds on that earlier approach by focusing instead on direct and indirect questions, in order to enable multivariate analysis of the types of individuals targeted for vote buying.<sup>2</sup>

The instrument contains other questions related to vote buying such as if the respondent voted for the candidate who made the offer, if he/she accepted the offer, and what was offered in exchange for his/her vote. The instrument also collects information on socio-economic conditions, demographic information, questions pertaining to access to information, how the respondents view the government and certain public services, and their well-being and outlook in life. A total of 400 respondents each for Set 1 (direct) and Set 2 (indirect) instruments are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Interviews with both campaign operators (i.e. those tasked with vote buying) and the survey team also appears to confirm less risk of a social desirability bias in the survey results. Indeed, vote buying is a widely acknowledged practice, with common anecdotal evidence of how workers in Manila return to the provinces to vote despite the high expense of transportation, primarily to "earn" from vote selling opportunities.

selected. The survey instrument is shown in Annex 1. The survey itself was rolled out in July 2016, around two months after the national and local elections.

The survey uses multi-stage area probability sampling in selecting respondents. It covers all 17 cities in Metro Manila and the number of respondents per city is proportional to the number of registered voters. The first stage is randomly selecting low-income communities for each city/municipality. The list of low-income communities is based on information from the 17 city governments. The second stage is systematic sampling of 10 respondents from each drawn community. Face to face interviews with the respondents are conducted; and the first choice respondent is the household head of each selected household. In his/her absence, the second choice is the spouse, and the third is any adult member of the family.

#### **B.** Correlates of Vote Buying

The general vote buying question in the instrument asks whether the respondent has been offered anything in exchange (explicitly or implicitly) for his/her vote. As vote buying involves not only cash, but a range of other things with value, a question is also asked on what items have been offered. These questions could provide evidence if vote buying in general is targeted at certain groups of people, and whether specific forms of vote buying (money, food, other material things) are also targeted. Testing for the correlates of receiving an offer to sell one's vote could shed light on this. Related to this, questions on whether the respondent accepted the offer and voted for the candidate who attempted to buy his/her vote are also asked. Testing for the correlates of accepting the offer and of voting for the candidate could provide evidence on who among the poor are more likely to sell his/her vote.

For each of the four vote buying types specified in the instrument (money; food, rice, and groceries; other material things; and any help or favor), we implement a probit regression using indicators such as gender, age, income proxy variables, and proxies for need. To test whether vote buying is targeted, only indicators that are observable or potentially observable are included among the independent variables. The closeness of the race in the previous election is also controlled for using the margin of victory of the winning mayoral candidate as a share of total votes cast for mayor. To control for the effectiveness of the government, indicators representing the quality of public services are also included.

The independent variables included are (variable names in parenthesis): sex (*male*), age (*age*), employed (*employed*), average household monthly income (*income*), dummy for ownership of house the family lives in (*own\_house*), dummy variable for being a 4Ps (conditional cash transfer) beneficiary (*pppp*), dummy variable = 1 if household experienced a calamity in the past year (*calamity*), dummy variable = 1 if the respondent rates water service to be good or very good, (*water\_good*), dummy variable = 1 if the respondent rates local government performance as good or very good (*localgovt\_good*), number of appliances the household owns (*assets*), dummy = 1 if the respondent experienced involuntary hunger (*hunger*), and margin of victory of the winning mayoral candidate as a share of total votes cast for mayor (*margin victory*).

We also implemented probit regressions examining the factors linked to accepting the vote buying offer; and voting for the candidate who made the offer as dependent variables. The independent variables include income and asset proxies, socio-demographic indicators, and variables that represent outlook in life and satisfaction with government performance and public services.

The possible correlates tested are: sex (male), age (age), employed (employed), average household monthly income (income), dummy variable =1 if respondent said that his/her family's life improved or somewhat improved over the past three years (*life improve*), dummy = 1 if respondent witnessed cheating in any of the past elections (cheating), hours spent listening to or reading the news per week (news), hours spent accessing the internet per week (internet), presence of an immediate source of credit (credit), dummy variable = 1 if the household experienced a calamity in the past year (*calamity*), dummy = 1 if respondent said he/she believes that candidates will know who he/she voted in the elections (*believe*), number of appliances the household acquired over the past three years (assets acquired), dummy variable = 1 if the respondent rates national government performance as good or very good (natlgovt good), dummy variable = 1 if the respondent rates local government performance as good or very good (localgovt good), dummy variable = 1 if the respondent rates water service to be good or very good, (*water good*), dummy = 1 if the respondent said that crime is prevalent or really prevalent in his/her city (*crime*), dummy = 1 if respondent said that he/she is very happy or rather happy (happy), and dummy = 1 if respondent said that he/she expects his/her quality of life to improve in the next three years (*expect improve*). Also included are categorical variables for educational

attainment: elementary graduate and attained some high school units (*elemgrad*), graduated from high school (*highschool*), and attained any post-high school education (*posths*), with less than elementary degree as the base variable. The analysis also includes a proxy for tightly contested races which is the margin of victory of the winning mayoral candidate as a share of total votes cast for mayor (*margin\_victory*). The vote buying type is also controlled for by including dummies of each of the four types of vote buying.

We examine the correlates of vote buying, of accepting the offer, and of voting for the candidate who made the offer using observations from respondents to the direct question instrument. Table 1 shows the summary statistics of the independent variables.

Variable	Oba	Maan	Std Day	Min	Mox
variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	MIII	Iviax
male	400	0.1875	0.3908	0	I
age	400	44.9850	13.2480	20	79
employed	400	0.5450	0.4986	0	1
income	399	11,844.730	8,803.373	0	72,000
children	400	3.3550	2.0517	0	12
owns_house	400	0.6825	0.4661	0	1
рррр	400	0.3350	0.4726	0	1
calamity	400	0.3175	0.4661	0	1
water_good	400	0.6050	0.4895	0	1
localgovt_good	400	0.4450	0.4976	0	1
assets	400	4.7250	1.9504	0	8
hunger	400	0.2925	0.4555	0	1
margin_victory	400	49.6991	38.8145	0.3891	100
elemgrad	400	0.3625	0.4813	0	1
highschool	400	0.3625	0.4813	0	1
posths	400	0.2125	0.4096	0	1
life_improve	400	0.3500	0.4776	0	1
cheating	400	0.1575	0.3647	0	1
new	400	9.4423	8.5711	0	74
internet	400	3.0819	9.7270	0	94
credit	400	0.7000	0.4588	0	1
believe	400	0.1525	0.3600	0	1
assets acquired	400	1.4400	1.5629	0	8
natlgovt good	400	0.5025	0.5006	0	1
crime	400	0.4375	0.4967	0	1
happy	400	0.6150	0.4872	0	1
expect_improve	400	0.6475	0.4783	0	1

Table 1. Summary statistics of independent variables

Source: Authors' calculations using survey data.

#### 4. Empirical Results

This section is divided into four sub-sections. The first part reports the general results of the survey. The second discusses the correlates of vote buying, while the third and fourth discuss the correlates of accepting the offer and of voting for the candidate who made the offer, respectively.

#### A. Survey Results

The first remarkable result is that 100 percent of respondents in the survey answered "Yes" to the general vote buying question, both in the direct and indirect question. Since the survey was focused on sampling low income voters in Metro Manila, this result suggests that a vast majority of this group may have been targeted for vote buying by campaign operatives. It means that all respondents reported that they were offered something in exchange for their vote (for the direct question), or that they know another person who was offered something in exchange for votes (for the indirect question). Further survey results are summarized in Table 2, indicating statistics on the type of vote buying offer, the acceptance and the reasons for voting for the candidate.

As mentioned earlier, another noteworthy pattern was that responses, however, differed when vote buying was disaggregated into four different types. The most direct form of vote-buying – offering money in exchange for votes – was reported by 28.5 percent of direct question respondents and by 34.9 percent for respondents of the indirect question. This is not a major difference across the two methods, suggesting that there is less risk of a social desirability bias in our survey results.<sup>3</sup> The amounts offered for vote buying ranged from PhP 50 to PhP 5000 pesos (or roughly US\$1.03 to US\$103 using the exchange rate at the time of writing this study) with an average of PhP493 pesos (roughly US\$10.2).

Offers of food, rice, or groceries were reported by 35.3 percent of respondents of the direct question and by 41.1 percent for the indirect. The share of respondents who received an offer of other material things<sup>4</sup> was highest among the four vote buying types at 54.8 percent for the direct question and 54.5 percent for the indirect. Finally, 17.3 percent direct question respondents

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in an earlier study, we also confirmed that the list method did not reveal any evidence of a social desirability bias in survey results (see Mendoza et al 2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The other material things identified by respondents are mostly shirts, umbrellas, mugs, fans, and the like.

reported that they were offered any help or favor, lower than the 21.6 percent among those who were asked the indirect question. Moreover, four percent of direct question respondents said that they received an offer in exchange for them not to vote in the 2016 elections. Among indirect question respondents, 10.8 percent reported this.

A large majority of respondents (90.8 percent for direct; 97.4 percent for indirect) reported that they accepted the offer made to them. However, the reported acceptance rate widely differed across vote buying types, at least for the direct question respondents. Among those who were offered money, 84.2 percent said they accepted the offer. The acceptance rate among those who were offered food, rice, or groceries was even higher at 95.0 percent; and 96.8 percent for those who were offered other material things. "Other help or favor" was the vote buying type with the smallest acceptance rate at 75.4 percent. The acceptance rate had less variation across vote buying types for indirect question respondents. Offers of money, food, other material things, and help or favor had acceptance rates of 96.0 percent, 98.1 percent, 98.6 percent, and 94.9 percent, respectively.

Compared to those who accepted the offer, a smaller share reported that they voted for the candidate who made the offer (67.3 percent for the direct question; 81.5 percent for the indirect question). Interestingly, among those who voted for the candidate, 94.4 percent of direct question respondents said that they did so because the candidate was qualified, and only 16.7 percent said that it was because of the offer. This pattern coheres with those uncovered by other studies suggesting that vote buying does not really change people's minds on their votes—rather this merely caps a protracted patron-client relationship (and thus there is a pre-formed view by the voter of the politician) (Schaffer 2015).

Furthermore, a mere 1.1 percent said that is because they fear losing government benefits that they were receiving. This is an important finding given rumors prior to the election that candidates were using the country's social protection system as a bargaining chip with voters – supposedly some candidates threatened to remove poor voters from the beneficiaries list, if they did not support them. This result suggests that this threat did not seem to be as effective as most expected it to be.

For the indirect question respondents, the share of those who voted for the candidate because they are qualified is 79.5 percent, because of the offer is 37.7 percent, and because they might lose government benefits is 4.1 percent. None among the direct question respondents said that they voted for the candidate because he/she was intimidated (while for the indirect question respondents 0.6 percent said so).

Among those who did not vote for the candidate who made the offer, 62.3 percent of direct question respondents said it is because of the candidate's lack of qualification, while 30.7 percent said it is because the candidate tried to buy the respondent's vote. Among indirect question respondents, these figures are 48.3 percent and 33.3 percent, respectively.

Related to this, among the respondents who accepted the offer, 69.7 percent did vote for the candidate who made the offer (using direct question). For the indirect question respondents, this proportion is 82.3 percent. These figures suggest that a minority of respondents who accepted the vote buying offer chose not to vote for the candidate. Possibly, this again reflects the fact that most vote buying offers are made within the context of longstanding relationships between candidates and voters who already tend to support them. In addition, there is anecdotal evidence that campaign operatives often feign knowledge of voters' choices, so that voters themselves feel obliged to carry out the vote buying agreement.<sup>5</sup>

Variable	Direct	Indirect
variable	Question	Question
Vote Buying Offer (General)	100.00%	100.00%
Vote Buying Offer (Money)	28.50%	34.85%
Vote Buying Offer (Food, Rice, or Groceries)	35.25%	41.12%
Vote Buying Offer (Other Material Things)	54.75%	54.52%
Vote Buying Offer (Help or favor)	17.25%	21.61%
Vote buying not to vote	4.00%	10.75%
Accepted offer	90.75%	97.40%
Voted for the candidate	67.25%	81.52%
Reasons for voting for candidate (among those		
who voted)		
Qualified	94.42%	79.52%
Because of the offer	16.73%	37.65%
Intimidated	0.00%	0.60%
Might lose govt benefits	1.12%	4.14%
Reasons for not voting for candidate (among those		
who did not vote)		
Not qualified	62.28%	48.28%
Because candidate attempted to buy vote	30.70%	33.33%

Table 2. Selected survey results.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See among others Schaffer (2015) and Mendoza et al (2015), notably on vote buying techniques detailed from discussions with actual campaign agents.

*Note: "Don't know" answer not included in computing for % share among indirect question respondents.* 

#### **B.** Correlates of Vote Buying

Turning to our analysis of vote buying patterns using probit methodology, we examine some of the characteristics and factors linked to vote buying. This approach highlights whether and to what extent targeting of poor voters could be taking place.

Table 3 to

Table 6 show the average marginal effects of the different independent variables on the likelihood of receiving a vote buying offer for each of the four types of vote buying.

The first column shows marginal effects with only indicators of need and wealth as the independent variables. In a similar survey after the 2013 Philippine elections, Mendoza et al (2015) observed that respondents with less income and fewer tangible assets reported more vote buying. Indeed, individuals with lower income and more needs could be more susceptible to vote buying as politicians may try to take advantage of their condition to buy votes. The second column shows marginal effects after demographic factors are controlled for; and the third further includes perception on the performance of the government and public services. The fourth column includes the margin of victory in the mayoral race as a share of the total votes cast for mayor during the last election.

The results show that different vote buying types have different correlates. As expected, the closeness of the previous election – measured by margin of victory of the winning mayoral candidate as share of total votes cast for mayor – is positively correlated with vote buying, but only when money is involved. This coheres with the findings from our discussions with campaign operators who emphasize that vote buying is most intense during tightly contested races, particularly for the Mayoral position which is key to mobilizing large numbers of voters at the local level (see also Mendoza et al 2015).

Respondents are more likely to have been offered money when the ex-post margin of victory was smaller (i.e. when elections were tighter). However, the story was entirely different with other forms of vote buying. The variable on margin of victory was insignificant in vote buying using food, rice, and groceries and in vote buying using "help or favor". In sharp contrast to money vote buying, respondents from areas where the elections are least contested are more likely to receive offers of other material things such as shirts, mugs, umbrellas, and the like.

Several indicators of wealth and need were significantly correlated with some vote buying types. Individuals with less wealth and more needs are more likely to receive offers of money and food in exchange for votes. For vote buying offers using money, respondents who do not own their house and those who experienced hunger are more likely to receive an offer. For vote buying using food, having more children and less tangible assets increases the likelihood of receiving an offer for this type of vote buying. In smaller communities wherein campaign operators are able to build strong ties, knowledge of these voter characteristics is possible to build up over time. Indeed, similar patterns have been observed in vote buying activities in other countries (e.g. Argentina, see Brusco et al 2004).

Being a CCT beneficiary is also a positive correlate of receiving a money vote buying offer, but its significance disappears as the closeness of the election race is controlled for. Once again, with repeated interactions with communities at a local level, it is possible to for campaign operators to be able to tell beneficiaries of the social protection program. Targeting these beneficiaries should be straightforward. Nevertheless, it is possible that in more tightly contested races, the targeting of CCT beneficiaries by campaign operatives is relaxed from being tightly focused on CCT beneficiaries (who tend to be among the poorest in these low income communities) to an approach that covers more low income voters including those that are not necessarily identified as poor under the government's social protection program.

A seemingly contrasting result is the positive and significant effect of income in money vote buying – respondents with higher income are more likely to receive money vote buying offer – but it is significant only in the equation where everything is controlled for. There are two possible ways to interpret these findings. First, even among low income voters, the threshold for securing support may vary depending on socio-economic and other conditions. Unsurprisingly, voters with less may be ingratiated with smaller offers, while those with more (proxied by higher income) will likely expect more. In addition, campaign operatives may anticipate this and provide different offers across target communities. Indeed, even where money is offered to buy votes, there is a large variation across the 17 cities sampled. Among the 17 cities, the average amount of money offered ranged from PhP50 to around PhP1,800. The mean of this average is around PhP540 and the median is P380. Three cities have an average of at least PhP 1,000, while six have an average of PhP300 or less, indicating a wide variation in money vote buying offers across cities.

In contrast to vote buying using money and food, there is less evidence that needs and wealth have similar effects on vote buying using other material things and help or favor. If anything, some results are opposite. Respondents who experienced hunger are less likely to receive offers of other material things. The same is true for CCT beneficiaries, although the significance of this variable disappears as more variables are controlled for. For vote buying using help or favor, respondents who experienced a calamity are less likely to receive such offers.

Interestingly, some measures of quality of public services are also significant correlates of vote buying attempts. Respondents who said that water service is good or very good are more likely to receive an offer of other material things in exchange for vote; while respondents who said that the city government performance is good or very good are more likely to be offered help or favor in exchange for vote.

Variable	Average	Average	Average	Average
	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect
employed	-0.01955	-0.02774	-0.02196	-0.02523
	(0.04532)	(0.04639)	(0.04642)	(0.04550)
income	0.00000	0.00000	0.00000	0.00001
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)**
children	-0.00121	-0.00601	-0.00417	-0.00387
	(0.01162)	(0.01260)	(0.01282)	(0.01255)
own_house	-0.06556	-0.08142	-0.08582	-0.08149
	(0.04816)	(0.04927)*	(0.04918)*	(0.04852)*
pppp	0.07822	0.09392	0.09942	0.07819
	(0.04770)	(0.04857)*	(0.04841)**	(0.04838)
assets	0.00990	0.01092	0.01052	0.01098
	(0.01276)	(0.01264)	(0.01275)	(0.01253)
hunger	0.08124	0.08973	0.09857	0.09807
	(0.05071)	(0.05104)*	(0.05082)*	(0.05024)*
calamity	0.05358	0.05534	0.06185	0.03961
	(0.04794)	(0.04788)	(0.04788)	(0.04772)
male		0.01655	0.01632	-0.00128
		(0.06016)	(0.06023)	(0.05955)

Table 3. Average marginal effects after probit on receiving a vote buying offer (money).

age		0.00268	0.00250	0.00245
-		(0.00185)	(0.00186)	(0.00184)
water_good			0.06703	0.06964
			(0.04759)	(0.04695)
localgovt_goo	d		-0.04168	-0.02534
			(0.04707)	(0.04635)
margin_victor	у			-0.00196
				(0.00059)***
N	399	399	399	399
* .01 ** .0	0 1 0 1 0 0 1 0	, 1 1 ·	11 ·	

Table 4. Average marginal effects	after probit on receiving	a vote buying offer	(food, rice,
	or grocories)		

		of groceries)		
Variable	Average	Average	Average	Average
	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect
employed	0.02251	0.03778	0.03610	0.03575
	(0.04703)	(0.04755)	(0.04757)	(0.04761)
income	-0.00000	-0.00000	-0.00000	-0.00000
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)
children	0.03992	0.04037	0.04172	0.04172
	(0.01085)***	(0.01165)***	(0.01170)***	(0.01170)***
own house	-0.00507	0.00378	0.00374	0.00393
—	(0.05008)	(0.05161)	(0.05113)	(0.05118)
рррр	-0.05514	-0.06448	-0.06914	-0.07005
	(0.05088)	(0.05190)	(0.05171)	(0.05196)
assets	-0.02178	-0.02243	-0.02183	-0.02181
	(0.01323)*	(0.01325)*	(0.01320)*	(0.01320)*
hunger	0.01697	0.01405	0.01135	0.01133
-	(0.05386)	(0.05374)	(0.05357)	(0.05354)
calamity	0.03623	0.03927	0.03351	0.03256
	(0.05083)	(0.05100)	(0.05070)	(0.05119)
male		-0.06762	-0.06680	-0.06772
		(0.06405)	(0.06433)	(0.06454)
age		-0.00152	-0.00144	-0.00144
-		(0.00191)	(0.00190)	(0.00190)
water good			-0.05155	-0.05133
			(0.04895)	(0.04890)
localgovt good			-0.04557	-0.04483
0 _0			(0.04883)	(0.04927)
margin_victory			× /	-0.00010
				(0.00063)
Ν	399	399	399	399

\* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01; Standard errors in parenthesis.

Variable	Average	Average	Average	Average
	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect
employed	-0.00984	-0.01360	-0.00716	-0.00409
	(0.04909)	(0.05043)	(0.04981)	(0.04963)
income	0.00000	0.00000	0.00000	-0.00000
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)
children	-0.01030	-0.01359	-0.01565	-0.01589
	(0.01212)	(0.01313)	(0.01313)	(0.01291)
own_house	0.01415	0.00462	0.00310	0.00095
	(0.05268)	(0.05405)	(0.05361)	(0.05367)
pppp	-0.10647	-0.09696	-0.08493	-0.07481
	(0.05177)**	(0.05302)*	(0.05278)	(0.05302)
assets	0.01093	0.01186	0.01097	0.01020
	(0.01395)	(0.01401)	(0.01397)	(0.01388)
hunger	-0.16992	-0.16414	-0.15639	-0.15845
	(0.05422)***	(0.05493)***	$(0.05444)^{***}$	(0.05394)***
calamity	-0.03531	-0.03308	-0.02078	-0.01045
	(0.05260)	(0.05282)	(0.05246)	(0.05295)
male		0.00236	-0.00003	0.00905
		(0.06680)	(0.06603)	(0.06603)
age		0.00162	0.00151	0.00149
		(0.00202)	(0.00200)	(0.00199)
water_good			0.13455	0.13299
			(0.04955)***	(0.04941)***
localgovt_good			0.07980	0.07128
			(0.04989)	(0.04996)
margin_victory				0.00108
				(0.00064)*
N	399	399	399	399

Table 5. Average marginal effects after probit on receiving a vote buying offer (other material things)

Table 6. Average marginal effects a	fter probit on	receiving a	vote buying	offer (any he	lp or
	forum				

		14,01)		
Variable	Average	Average	Average	Average
	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect	Marginal Effect
employed	0.01957	0.01560	0.01534	0.01614
	(0.03771)	(0.03938)	(0.03915)	(0.03899)
income	0.00000	0.00000	0.00000	0.00000
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)
children	0.01468	0.01600	0.01293	0.01284
	(0.00826)*	(0.00884)*	(0.00889)	(0.00891)
own_house	0.04031	0.04079	0.04855	0.04826

	(0.04162)	(0.04147)	(0.04119)	(0.04123)
pppp	0.03420	0.03334	0.03241	0.03371
	(0.04005)	(0.04061)	(0.04042)	(0.04069)
assets	-0.00632	-0.00634	-0.00614	-0.00615
	(0.01087)	(0.01089)	(0.01087)	(0.01089)
hunger	-0.04252	-0.04332	-0.05098	-0.05102
	(0.04512)	(0.04546)	(0.04532)	(0.04536)
calamity	-0.13198	-0.13308	-0.13662	-0.13510
	(0.04461)***	(0.04530)***	(0.04562)***	(0.04587)***
male		0.02365	0.02072	0.02185
		(0.04994)	(0.04978)	(0.05000)
age		-0.00014	-0.00005	-0.00006
		(0.00151)	(0.00149)	(0.00149)
water_good			-0.02859	-0.02804
			(0.04047)	(0.04016)
localgovt_good			0.07981	0.07863
			(0.03781)**	(0.03751)**
margin_victory				0.00016
				(0.00046)
N	399	399	399	399

#### C. Correlates of Accepting Vote Buying Offer

The empirical results show that indicators of need and wealth, perceptions about one's surroundings, and life expectations are among the key correlates of accepting a vote buying offer. The average Probit marginal effects of each independent variable on the likelihood of accepting the offer are reported in

Table 7. Two columns of marginal effects are shown; the second column shows the marginal effects after the vote buying types have been controlled for.

In general, indicators of wealth have negative and indicators of need have positive effect on the likelihood of accepting the offer. That is, among the poor, those with relatively less wealth and relatively more needs are more likely to accept a vote buying offer.

Respondents with lower income and those that are unemployed are more likely to accept the offer. Respondents who acquired fewer tangible assets over the last three years are also more likely to accept the offer, but the significance of this particular variable disappears as vote buying types are controlled for. Perceptions about one's surroundings and life expectations are also correlates of accepting a vote buying offer. Those who said that crime in their city is prevalent or really prevalent are less likely to accept the offer, while those who expect their lives to improve are more likely to accept it. In addition, respondents in cities where the mayoral elections were more closely contested are more likely to accept the offer.

The four vote buying type dummies all have statistically significant marginal effects and with different signs, indicating that what the offer affects whether the respondent accepted it or not. Offers of money and help or favor are relatively less likely to be accepted compared to the other two. Other material things are the offers most likely to be accepted, followed by food, rice, or groceries.

Variable	Average Marginal Effect	Average Marginal Effect
male	0.01417	0.02087
	(0.03845)	(0.03398)
age	-0.00130	-0.00113
	(0.00110)	(0.00106)
elemgrad	-0.06765	-0.03961
	(0.07146)	(0.05451)
highschool	-0.04305	-0.00915
	(0.07290)	(0.05667)
posths	-0.06392	-0.04628
	(0.07637)	(0.05930)
employed	-0.04851	-0.04977
	(0.02904)*	(0.02519)**
income	-0.00000	-0.00000
	(0.00000)*	(0.00000)*
life_improve	-0.00203	0.00630
	(0.02831)	(0.02486)
cheating	-0.00849	0.00574
	(0.03729)	(0.03127)
news	0.00164	0.00127
	(0.00179)	(0.00176)
internet	0.00096	0.00068
	(0.00157)	(0.00134)
credit	0.01653	-0.01622
	(0.03032)	(0.02559)
calamity	0.04685	0.02396
	(0.03257)	(0.02841)

Table 7. Average marginal effects after probit on accepting the vote buying offer.

believe	0.04334	0.05561
	(0.04364)	(0.04212)
assets_acquired	-0.01585	-0.00921
	(0.00842)*	(0.00781)
natlgovt_good	0.01406	0.03084
	(0.02790)	(0.02481)
localgovt_good	-0.04356	-0.03625
	(0.02533)*	(0.02275)
water_good	-0.01704	-0.03745
	(0.02913)	(0.02519)
crime	-0.05508	-0.04856
	(0.02775)**	(0.02436)**
happy	0.00707	-0.02008
	(0.02717)	(0.02545)
expect_improve	0.03173	0.04869
	(0.02780)	(0.02325)**
margin_victory	-0.00073	-0.00107
	(0.00034)**	(0.00033)***
q1ci_ofer_mony		-0.06586
		(0.02917)**
q1ciii_ofer_food		0.07002
		(0.02728)**
q1civ_ofer_mtrl		0.11391
		(0.02836)***
q1cvi_ofer_help		-0.09592
		(0.02663)***
N	399	399

#### **D.** Correlates of Voting

The average Probit marginal effects of each independent variable on the likelihood of voting for the candidate who made the offer are reported in

Table 8. Three columns of marginal effects are in the table. The second column shows the marginal effects after the vote buying types have been controlled for, while the third reports marginal effects after controlling for whether the offer was accepted or not.

In contrast to accepting the offer, the correlates of voting for the candidate who made the offer are mostly perceptions about the surroundings and life experiences. It is also affected by age, which has a positive and significant marginal effect on the likelihood of voting for the

candidate who made the offer. That is, older respondents are more likely to vote for the candidate who offered to buy their votes.

Similar to accepting the offer, those who said that crime in their city is prevalent or really prevalent are less likely to vote for the candidate who made the offer. On the other hand, respondents who rated the city government performance as good or very good are more likely to vote for the candidate; and those that are happy or very happy are less likely to vote for the candidate.

Most vote buying type dummies are insignificant, except for other material things. Those who were offered other material things are more likely to vote for the candidate who made the offer compared to other vote buying types. However, its significance disappeared once the dummy for accepting the offer has been controlled for. As expected, respondents who accepted the offer are more likely to vote for the candidate who made the offer, and it appears to be the most important determinant of voting for the candidate.

Variable	Average Marginal	Average Marginal	Average Marginal
	Effect	Effect	Effect
male	0.03146	0.03365	0.02715
	(0.06393)	(0.06315)	(0.06166)
age	0.00629	0.00621	0.00657
	(0.00194)***	(0.00195)***	(0.00193)***
elemgrad	0.03183	0.01686	0.02651
-	(0.09918)	(0.09957)	(0.09814)
highschool	-0.00540	-0.01317	-0.01079
-	(0.10219)	(0.10253)	(0.10043)
posths	0.03108	0.01334	0.02562
	(0.10970)	(0.11071)	(0.10860)
employed	-0.06595	-0.06658	-0.05367
	(0.04845)	(0.04783)	(0.04770)
income	-0.00000	-0.00000	-0.00000
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)
life_improve	-0.01180	-0.01084	-0.01592
	(0.04962)	(0.04948)	(0.04882)
cheating	0.01436	0.01244	0.01239
	(0.06195)	(0.06207)	(0.06080)
news	-0.00197	-0.00257	-0.00275
	(0.00261)	(0.00261)	(0.00252)

 Table 8. Average marginal effects after probit on voting for the candidate who made the offer.

internet	0.00202	0.00222	0.00199
	(0.00249)	(0.00247)	(0.00245)
credit	-0.03261	-0.04462	-0.04919
	(0.05215)	(0.05193)	(0.05141)
calamity	0.06126	0.06530	0.05948
2	(0.05028)	(0.05101)	(0.04992)
believe	0.00212	0.01388	-0.00170
	(0.06453)	(0.06471)	(0.06348)
assets acquired	0.00354	0.00659	0.01008
_ 1	(0.01555)	(0.01540)	(0.01532)
natlgovt good	-0.03137	-0.02840	-0.03434
0 _0	(0.04819)	(0.04805)	(0.04755)
localgovt good	0.09793	0.09199	0.10191
0 _0	(0.04953)**	(0.04959)*	(0.04910)**
water good	0.02472	0.01000	0.02006
	(0.04949)	(0.04964)	(0.04889)
crime	-0.09057	-0.08428	-0.07458
	(0.04639)*	(0.04625)*	(0.04571)
happy	-0.07824	-0.08398	-0.08033
	(0.04837)	(0.04798)*	(0.04767)*
expect improve	0.00433	0.01121	0.00132
	(0.04976)	(0.04951)	(0.04882)
margin victory	0.00075	0.00055	0.00083
	(0.00062)	(0.00062)	(0.00062)
q1ci ofer mony		-0.00616	0.01275
		(0.05290)	(0.05295)
q1ciii_ofer_food		0.04818	0.02238
		(0.05109)	(0.05133)
q1civ_ofer_mtrl		0.11591	0.07599
		(0.05207)**	(0.05382)
q1cvi_ofer_help		0.02018	0.06341
		(0.06717)	(0.06904)
q1d_accept			0.26091
·			(0.07776)***
N	399	399	399

#### 5. Conclusion

This study exposed several important patterns on vote buying, using data on low income voters in Metro Manila during the 2016 national and local elections. Although all respondents reported that they received a vote buying offer, the incidence of the different vote buying types were widely distributed. The most common form of vote buying was offering other material things,

identified mostly by respondents as shirts, umbrellas, mugs, and the like. The next most prevalent type of vote buying was offering food, rice, or groceries. The type of vote buying most of the literature identify with – offering cash in exchange for votes – was only the third most prevalent type. The least prevalent type was offering any help or favor to the potential voter.

A large majority of respondents said that they accepted the offer, but the acceptance rate also differs across vote buying types. Any help or favor has the lowest acceptance rate, followed by money. Other material things and food have the highest acceptance rates. The lower acceptance rate of money and the higher acceptance rate of the relatively benign offers (other material things and food) could indicate that there are still negative views attached to vote buying; and that accepting money in exchange for votes is still deemed socially undesirable.

Compared to those who accepted the offer, there is a smaller share of respondents who voted for the candidate who made the offer. Moreover, among those who accepted the offer, only about two out of three voted for the candidate. This indicates weak enforcement of the implicit contract between the vote buyer and the vote seller. Most (94 percent) of those who said that they voted for the candidate did so because of the candidate's qualifications and only 17 percent because of the offer; indicating that they probably would have voted for the candidate anyway. Among those who did not vote for the candidate who made the offer, 62 percent was because of the candidate's lack of qualifications, and 31 percent was because of the vote buying. Once again, this coheres with earlier research that vote buying is part of a longstanding relationship between politicians and their low income constituents. Dependency and loyalty is merely punctuated by election-related transfers, rather than an effort to completely change votes. These figures could suggest that vote buying is already an accepted practice and while it can influence a voter's decision, there could be other more important factors in selecting the candidate to be voted.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that in close elections, vote buying—and using money to buy votes in particular—could become more intensively used by campaign operators. The results provide evidence that supports this, suggesting that that the poor are more likely to be targeted for money vote buying if the election is closely contested. Moreover, the results also suggest that these vote buying offers are more likely to be accepted in close elections.

As noted earlier, the co-existence of these different vote buying approaches suggests that campaign operatives use a variety of tools to try and secure votes. Further analysis on their correlates suggests that these tools are deployed strategically across different contexts and targeted towards different voters depending on their characteristics. The significance of key variables such as ownership of tangible assets, number of children, and occurrence of a calamity also suggests that visible proxies could be used by campaign operatives to target certain communities of voters. Similar to the government's poverty targeting for social programs, campaign operators appear to strive for efficiency by targeting low income voters in ways that leverage their vulnerability and dependence, and particularly in the context of tight races.

Results show evidence that closeness of the election is the most important correlate of money vote buying. The closer the election, the more likely that money vote buying will occur. Closeness of the race, however, has different effects on vote buying depending on vote buying type. The likelihood of vote buying using food, rice, or groceries and help or favor is not affected by closeness of the race. In contrast to money vote buying, there is more vote buying using other material things when the race is not tight. This could imply that candidates consider money as the most potent type of vote buying in terms of attracting votes. This could also show that even if a candidate is confident of winning, he/she can still attempt to buy votes, but using more "benign" forms.

Aside from closeness of the race, there are also some asset and need indicators that turned to be significant correlates of vote buying, although these effects are again different across vote buying types. Candidates would be expected to target voters with greater needs and fewer assets, as they could be more likely to sell their votes. However, this effect is only observed in money and food vote buying. A possible explanation for this is that money and food could be the greater immediate necessity of those with relatively more needs and less wealth. Variations in the direction of effects, significance, and number of significant correlates across the four vote buying types indicate that there could be different schemes in targeting potential voters.

Correlates of accepting a vote buying offer are more or less in line with what earlier literature has emphasized. Higher income, unemployment, and fewer acquired tangible assets are all associated with higher probability of accepting the vote buying offer. Another interesting result is that respondents are more likely to accept the offer if the race is more tightly contested.

The type of offer also affects whether it will be accepted or not. Other material things are the most likely to be accepted, followed by food, rice, or groceries. Offer of money and help or favor are less likely to be accepted. This indicates that potential vote sellers could be selective in accepting offers, and are more likely to accept the more benign ones. This selectivity against accepting money could also be due to the attached social undesirability of accepting money in exchange for votes; such that only in certain contexts is this strategy truly effective (and therefore also used by campaign operators).

#### References

- Brusco, Valeria, Marcelo Nazareno, & Susan C. Stokes. 2004. "Vote Buying in Argentina". *Latin American Research Review* 39(2): 66-88.
- Carkoglu, Ali and S.Erdem Aytac. 2015. Who gets targeted for vote buying? Evidence from a list experiment in Turkey" *European Political Science Review* 7(4):547-566.
- Careras, Miguel and Yasemin Irepoglu. 2013. "Trust in elections, vote buying and turnout in Latin America." *Electoral Studies* 32(2013):609-619.
- Chaudhuri, Arijit & Tasos C. Christofides. 2013. *Indirect Questioning in Sample Surveys*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
- Chaves, Isiaias, Leopoldo Fergusson and James A. Robinson. 2015. "He who counts elects: Economic elites, political elites and electoral fraud." *Economics and Politics* 27(1): 124-159.
- Finan, Frederico & Laura Schechter. 2012. "Vote Buying and Reciprocity" *Econometrica* 80(2): 863-881.
- Fisher, Robert J. 1993. "Social Desirability Bias and the Validity of Indirect Questioning". Journal of Consumer Research 20(2): 303-315.
- Gonzalez-Ocantos, Ezequiel, Chad Kiewiet de Jonge, Carlos Melendez, Javier Osorio and David Nickerson. 2012. "Vote buying and social desirability bias: Experimental evidence from Nicaragua." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(1):202-217.
- Mendoza, Ronald U., Mario Antonio Lopez, David Yap II, & Tristan Canare. 2015. "The 2013 Philippine Mid-Term Election: An Empirical Analysis of Dynasties, Vote Buying, and the Correlates of Senate Votes." In Mendoza, Ronald U., Edsel L. Beja Jr., Julio C. Teehankee,

Antonio G.M. La Vina, & Maria Fe Villamejor-Mendoza (Editors) *Building Inclusive Democracies in ASEAN*. Manila: Anvil Publishing.

- Nichter, Simeon. 2008. "Vote buying or turnout buying?" American Political Science Review 102(1):19-31.
- Schaffer, Frederic Charles. 2015. "Clean elections and the great unwashed: Vote buying and voter education in the Philippines." Occasional Paper 21, MIT School of Social Science. [Available at: https://www.sss.ias.edu/files/papers/paper21.pdf].
- Vicente, Pedro and Leonard Wantchekon. 2009. "Clientelism and vote buying: Lessons from field experiments in African elections." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 25(2):292-305.
- Vicente, Pedro. 2014. "Is vote buying effective? Evidence from a field experiment in West Africa." *The Economic Journal* 124(574): 356-387.

AMDG+



# **Ateneo School of Government**