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Poverty Alleviation or Political Networking?
A combined Qul-Quant Analysis of the
Implementation of Safety Nets in post-crisis
Argentina

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I. INTRODUCTION

One of the largest safety net programs implemented in Argentina was launched by the transitional president - Eduardo Duhalde, of the Peronist party- during the hardest crisis ever faced by the country, at the end of 2001.

The program, named *Jefes y Jefas de Hogar (Jefes)*, is still being implemented and is aimed at providing direct income support for families with dependants for whom the head became unemployed due to the crisis. *Jefes* rapidly scaled up to cover approximately 2 million beneficiaries by May 2003. It is labelled as the most important income transfer program in Argentine history, see Gasparini (2003).

As soon as it was announced, there was considerable debate in the media, still alive today, on the misuse of *Jefes funds* for clientelistic purposes. In particular, it is claimed that *Jefes* ends up financing the Peronist party. Thus, in order to participate in the program, it seems to be more important to have political connections than to satisfy the technical criteria. Such were the kind of claims that led by then Minister of Labour Graciela Camano, to make an official announcement asserting that “the plan is not being manipulated by politicians” and to remark that “the plan is implemented in the whole territory of the nation with a strong control of the Consultative Councils which are at work and monitoring ‘the program.’” , Ministry of Labour, Official Press (January 2003, pp. 1).

Previous academic studies related to *Jefes* Program have been mainly focused on measuring the impact of the program on poverty and employment and on evaluating the targeting criteria applied, see Galasso and Ravallion (2004) and Miller (2004). The study of the technical determinants that drive the process of participation has been done by Paz and Zadicoff (2003). Yet, these studies do not explicitly include political factors or the possible existence of a particular elite who may have greater

access to public resources. When they do, they treat these factors as ‘anecdotal’. This paper goes beyond the identification of technical determinants in the probability of getting the program and incorporates political factors into the analysis.

Aim of the paper

Through the combination of quantitative and qualitative research, this study will empirically test whether political influences significantly affect the allocation of *Jefes*. Specifically, the application of multivariate regression framework, on the one hand, will allow us to isolate the effect of political variables on *Jefes* participation rates from any other effect. The results suggest that even when the program helps to alleviate poverty, the incumbent party at local level and, in particular, the Peronist political support, is a determining factor regarding access to the *Jefes* Program. The examination of qualitative research, on the other hand, will help us to understand *how* this process may be operating and *why* it seems to be significant at municipal level.

The next section will provide the readers with the general context under which the program was implemented. Section III will describe the main features with special focus on reviewing previous studies done on *Jefes*. The justification of the methodology applied and the description of data used throughout the paper will be found in section IV. The following section will present the empirical analysis, based on official household survey and administrative data. The last section will discuss quantitative findings through the lens of qualitative research, and section VI is the conclusion.

II. THE GENERAL CONTEXT

The severity of the economic, social and political conditions suffered by the vast majority of the Argentine population at the end of 2001 is kept in people's collective consciousness as one of the worst crises in memory.

The legacy of Menem's presidential period (1989-1999) was reflected on the slowdown of the main economic indicators. Attempts were made by De la Rúa's government¹ (*Alianza por el Trabajo, la Justicia y la Educación* party) to halt the country's slide into a deeper recession.

During 2001, a series of austerity measures were implemented to restart growth as a prelude to improving public finances and the debt profile, but to no avail. In November, the Ministry of Economy announced an extreme policy measure - the *corralito*² - to protect the banking system from wide-spread withdrawal of deposits, resulted in the strangling of liquidity and economic activity, generating popular discontent accompanied by massive street demonstrations. On 19th December, Argentina burst in a wave of protests ending in violent police repression.

The subsequent events were the resignation of the President and a quick succession of appointed presidents, ending in a new Government administration from the *Peronist* party, which declared default on all foreign-held Argentine government bonds. After 'much backroom negotiation', Lopez Levy, M. (2004), on January 1st 2002, Eduardo Duhalde was selected by the National Congress to finish de la Rúa's term³.

¹ Fernando De la Rúa was elected in 1999 with 48.4% of the votes, while the second party (the Peronist party) followed with 38.3%. Vote is mandatory in Argentina.

² The *corralito* policy froze all bank accounts, initially for 90 days. Only a small amount of cash was allowed for withdrawal on a monthly basis, and only in pesos.

³ His mandate concluded in December 2003. However, after two protesters were killed by the police in June 2002, Duhalde announced that he would leave office in May 2003. Then, presidential balloting was rescheduled for April 2003.

During the first half of 2002, after the Convertibility system had been abandoned, the share of the population considered poor grew by roughly 15 percentage points, while the number of extreme poor nearly doubled. The unemployment rate reached 21 percent, and formal sector employment continued to fall. As is documented by Fizbein, Giovagnoli and Aduriz (2003), the social impact of the crisis has been devastating.

In this context, Duhalde implemented the main public safety net - *Jefes*. It has been financed partly with loans from the World Bank⁴ and partly with taxes on agricultural exports. Although the program is still being implemented under the new administration of Nestor Kirchner, this paper will be entirely focused on studying the *Jefes* program under Duhalde's Administration (up to April 2003).

It is worth noting that Duhalde is not a new figure in Argentine politics. He started as a local councillor in Lomas de Zamora –one of 134 districts of Buenos Aires– becoming mayor in the mid 70s. In 1987 he became a member of National Congress. Two years later, he governed as vice-president of Argentina under Carlos Menem's administration. In 1991, after his resignation, he won the first of two terms as the governor of Buenos Aires,⁵ being in power until 1999, when he postulates in the national elections and loses to Alianza. As is contended in Levitsky and Murillo (2003), during his term as the governor of the province, “Duhalde maintained control over the PJ's powerful Buenos Aires machine, which included the mayors of many densely populated municipalities in the rust belt of Greater Buenos Aires” (*ibidem*, pp. 158). The largest provincial social program implemented during his administration

⁴ On January 28th 2003, the World Bank's Board approved a USD\$ 600 millions loan to support the *Jefes de Hogar* program.

⁵ Buenos Aires is the wealthiest, largest and most populated province of Argentina (almost 40% of the population of the country lives there).

was *Plan Vida* (Life Program). The role of the program, managed by Hilda “Chiche” Duhalde (his wife), was not only food distribution but also ‘a problem-solving network that reinforced the political position of Duhalde’, Auyero (2001). Far from resembling the primary role of the Jefes Program, both programs come along under the same political figure

The next section describes the main features of *Jefes* in detail and reviews the literature around the program.

III. THE *JEFES* PROGRAM AND RELATED LITERATURE

III.1) Main Features

Jefes program, with national coverage, aims at maintaining households' income at a minimal level, providing 150 *pesos* per month⁶. This amount is fixed with not explicit time limit and it is the same quantity for all provinces.

Jefes was announced as a universal program according to Decree 565/2 - and conceived as “a social right” of family inclusion. Thus, in its origins, the program can be characterised as a welfare program.

The Decree establishes that those who are eligible to participate are “unemployed heads of household with dependants aged less than 18 or disabled” and that “the program can be extended to young people who are unemployed or to those adults who are older than 60 years of age and are not receiving a retirement benefit or a pension from the Government⁷.” Decree 565/2 (2002 , pp. 14)

The possibility for the administrators of the program to verify these criteria is very limited. For instance, the characteristic of being unemployed can be checked by the National Government using their databases of registered (formal) workers. However, this verification is particularly narrow in Argentina's labour market, in which a highly percentage of people are working in the informal labour market⁸. In the case of being the head of a household, there is no more need than to declare that you are one. Thus, to apply for the program, the only documentation that the applicant has to provide to his/her municipality is a written statement that he/she has a child aged 18 or less.

⁶ It represents around 50 dollars. It is worth noting that the basic food basket per household per month is estimated at around 100 dollars, depending on the type of family and the region under analysis.

⁷ The Decree was very controversial and criticised, specially by legal experts, as many of the key words were not properly defined. For example, there is no specification about who are considered as 'young' people.

⁸ See Gasparini, L (2004) for an estimation of informality based on different definitions.

This is suggestive of almost no administrative barriers to enrol in the program. The World Bank points this weakness out clearly when it asserts that “[T]he initial months of operation [of Jefes] were particularly complex. There were serious difficulties in terms of registration of beneficiaries [and] controlling eligibility criteria”, Report 25860-AR (2003, pp.26). As is documented by Modolo (2004), around 4,000,000 people applied⁹ for the program during the first month in a context of limited budget and fiscal deficit.

Consequently, the Government rapidly established a *self-targeting* system, imposing a counterpart work requirement to ensure that the transfer is received only by those in the greatest need. People who are receiving the program have to work 20 hours per week in community activities organised by their municipality.

Now, the program has moved toward the classification of “work-training” rather than welfare program. The work requirement makes the program less attractive to the non-poor. In theory, however, it may also lead to increasing the cost of the program, since the poor may choose to change their behaviour. In the case of *Jefes*, for example, if the agent is working in the formal market, he/she may find it more attractive to leave his/her job and move to the informal sector in order to become eligible for the program (as he/she will not be caught by the Government through the formal registers).

As an alternative to the work requirement, *Jefes* participants can choose to finish their own primary or secondary school. Additionally, all participants have to bring their children to health centres to update their vaccination and send them to school.

⁹ To contextualize readers, according to the last Census (2001), Argentina has 36,000,000 inhabitants, among whom 26,700,000 have 14 years of ages or more. Within the latter group, around 57% are in the labor force.

In this sense, the program can be classified among those that are aimed at promoting human capital accumulation as a mean to breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty. Rawlings and Rubio (2003) presents several examples of evaluation of this kind of programs- conditional cash transfers- in Latin America and the Caribbean such as *Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación (PROGRESA¹⁰)* in 1997, *Programa Nacional de Bolsa Escola and Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil*, (PETI) in Brazil, *Familias en Acción* program (FA) in Colombia, *Programa de Asignación Familiar* (PRAF) in Honduras, *Program of Advancement through Health and Education* (PATH) in Jamaica, and in Nicaragua the *Red de Protección Social* (RPS). While they provide evidence of success in improving the welfare of poor households, two main concerns are presented related to: (i) how effective conditional cash transfers can be under specific country conditions; (ii) how long the improvement in welfare can be sustained.

In the case of *Jefes*, similar impact evaluations have been carried out by different authors, who partially presented the concerns arisen in Rawlings and Rubio (2003). Galasso and Ravallion (2004), referring to the effectiveness of the requirements, pointed out that “[...]the scaling up, and the circumstance of the crisis, may well have made it hard to enforce[...]” (*ibidem*, pp. 371). Moreover, as discussed above, the program may induce changes in behaviour (i.e shift from formal to informal labour market) so that the work counterpart become not binding, increasing the number of participants and the budgetary cost of the program. It is empirically demonstrated in Miller (2004). This author seeks to estimate the effect of *Jefes* on employment by using non-experimental data from the *Encuesta Permanente de Hogares* (EPH) from 2001 to 2003 and applying difference-in-difference methods. The results suggest that

¹⁰ Since March 2002, known as *Oportunidades*.

while *Jefes* increases employment for women, this impact is not observed for men. On the contrary, for the latter group, there is evidence of a substitution from formal jobs to part-time jobs, with potential negative consequences in the long run.

The argument about whether the program attracted people who are working in the formal market or are unemployed is also elaborated by Zadicoff and Paz (2003), who conclude that *Jefes* is pro-informal employment, and show that non-participants are more likely to be employed in the formal sector than participants.

Beyond the potential unintended effects of the program on the labour market, Galasso and Ravallion (2004) study the extent to which *Jefes* protects the living standards of Argentine families and alleviates poverty. Using matching in combination with difference-in-difference methods and the same data as for previous studies (EPH), they find that without the program, 10% of the population would have fallen under extreme poverty, with a smaller effect on the overall poverty (about 2%).

III.2) Design and implementation

Regarding the design and implementation of *Jefes*, individuals have to enrol through their Local Governments (municipalities). Each municipality has to provide the “list of potential participants” to the National Government- specifically to Ministry of Labour - in order to check their status in the formal labour force. Although it is the National Government that finally decides the number of *Jefes* programs to deliver to each municipality, National Government as well as Local Governments can withhold *Jefes* funds from potential participants if they believe people are violating the eligibility criteria. Therefore, *Jefes* has been labelled as a “decentralised” program. Furthermore, a particular feature of the design is the creation of Municipal and Provincial Consultative Councils (*CCM and CCP, respectively*) as a decentralisation initiative to check and monitor the correct implementation of the program .

The conceptual idea behind this design is that government failures are caused in part by information and transaction costs. Thus, decentralisation is a way of giving power to those at local levels, who are assumed to have better information about the program than the national level. However, as is advocated by Birde (1995) quoting Bardhan (2002), information asymmetry can work both ways, as the local government may not know *how* to do it. Refining the argument, Case (1997) notices that “[S]uch gains must be weighed against losses caused by politicians using their discretion to influence the allocation of block grants” (*ibidem*, pp. 2).

The evidences related to *Jefes* provided in Godberge (2004) are suggestive of the lack of technical and administrative capacity faced by CCs to monitor Government actions. Additionally, ERES (2004) provides some evidence of political manipulation of the program. In particular, it is argued that the good work-performance of CCs observed at the beginning of implementation was rapidly destroyed when they were captured by specific political interest groups. This fact is reflected in the public letter of resignation written out by the Civil Social Organisations (CSOs) that were part of the CC in Mendoza. The letter expressed that “we [the CSOs] were not able to effectively guarantee the transparency regarding the selection of beneficiaries of the social plans, observing traditional clientelistic practices [..]” (in *Balance de la participacion de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil en el Consejo Consultivo Provincial*, March 2003).

The emergence of difficulties around the effective control of *Jefes* allocations does not seem to be an exclusive issue for the CCs. The resignation of the Executive Secretary of the National Council of Administration, Implementation and Control (*Consejo Nacional de Administración, Ejecución y Control* - CONAEyC) in 2002 reinforces the idea of political manipulations in the execution of program funds.

Effectively, in the third official document presented to the presidential committee, the CONAEyC informed that the resignation was related to: “the difficulties of access to complete and systematic information to control the Program” and because “the process of entrance and permanence in the Program has not entirely reached the objectives of looking for universality and transparency”.

Certainly, it may be the case that even when the program reaches the poor, it happens through a mechanism driven by political purpose, with some communities having privileged access to public resources just because of their party affiliation.

There is no empirical evidence that attempts to measure the importance of this argument in the case of *Jefes*. In particular, as explained in section I this paper seeks to test it empirically and to interpret the results through the lens of qualitative studies. The justification of the methodology applied, as well as the description of data used here, is presented in the next section.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

IV.1) Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

This paper combines methodological traditions usually applied by different disciplines. It is a first attempt to do cross-disciplinary, bearing in mind that “different disciplines have different contributions to make”, Harris (2001).

Following Kanbur (2001), cross-disciplinary is “a generic term to mean any analysis that is based substantively on the analysis and methods of more than one discipline” (*ibidem*, pp.11).

Yet there are different ways of combining the analysis and methods, see Kelle (2001). The present study will apply the sequential mixing- or multidisciplinary. In Kanbur’s words this means “to let each discipline do its best in its own terms and using its own methods in the first phase, and then to use the results from each discipline to develop an overall analytical synthesis”, Kanbur (2001, pp. 11).

There is strong agreement among practitioners in supporting this kind of mixing. This is particularly reflected by contributors from different disciplines in the conference held at Cornell University, Kanbur (2001). The attention was focused on exploring how to get the best out of “Qualitative” and “Quantitative” approaches to poverty analysis. Practitioners considered that sequential mixing of quantitative and qualitative approaches may yield *new insights* that each method cannot offer separately. The new insights do not necessarily indicate that the understanding will be more accurate or more ‘objective’, but can add range and depth instead. That the mixing adds depth is also argued by Fielding and Schreier (2001) in their discussion of the advantages of combining methods.

This debate is also underpinned by Westmarland (2001) who concludes that while [quantitative] survey methods can provide the *prevalence* of the problem, they need to

be complemented with qualitative research that “can give a deeper, more complex knowledge of the issues *named* by survey” (*ibidem* pp. 8).

As it is examined later in this paper, the application of quantitative methods on survey and administrative data will reveal that *Jefes* participation rates are significantly higher in Peronist than in Non-peronist areas. In particular, regression methods allow us to isolate political variables from any other factor correlated with *Jefes* Program. However, nothing in these estimations can shed light on the understanding of *how* the mechanism operates or *why* this difference seems to be significant at a municipality level. It is there that qualitative methods, such as interviews and ethnographic research, are needed. In this respect, I did not carry out qualitative methods by myself, but instead I used second sources materials from ethnographic works, depth-interviews and focus group provided by other scholars.

IV.2) Data

The Household Survey

The first part of the empirical analysis relies on the *Encuesta Permanente de Hogares* (EPH), an official household survey regularly collected twice a year by the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC). Each round has about 80,000 observations and provides data on the labour market, income and education at an individual level as well as data on household characteristics. The survey is urban representative, covering 33 urban areas –areas with more than 100,000 inhabitants- where 71% of the Argentine urban population lives¹¹.

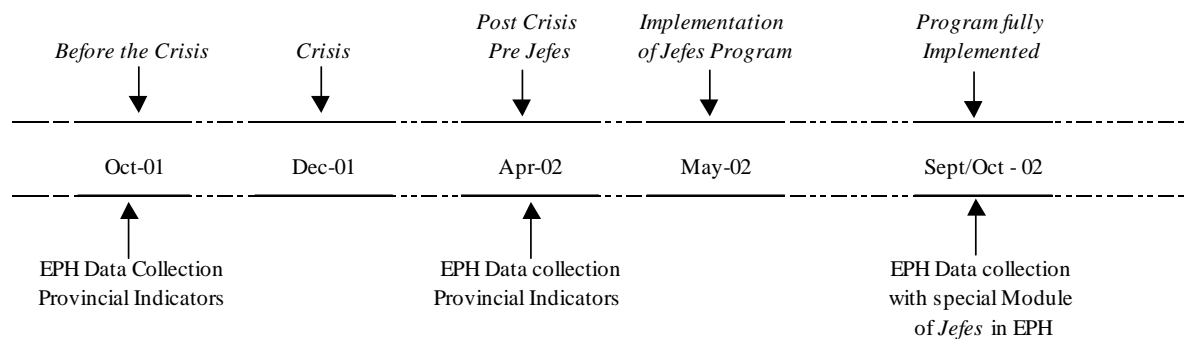
¹¹After April 2003, a methodological change was applied, and now the survey is carried out four times a year and the *Jefes* module has disappeared (only a limited number of questions are maintained). For more details, see www.indec.mecon.gov.ar. The sample of the EPH represents around 62% of the total population of the country. Some conglomerates were not included in this analysis because of lack of availability (for example conglomerates 38, 91 and 93). On the weighed sample, these conglomerates represent only 3.6% of the total sample.

This study mainly exploits the cross section round of September/October 2002. This was the first round carried out once the program was fully implemented in which special a module on participation in *Jefes* Program was introduced. This module was specifically designed for the impact evaluation carried out by the World Bank. As it has been incorporated as part of EPH, it provides the basis for comparing socio-economic characteristics of individuals who are receiving the program *vis-a-vis* individuals who are not recipients of the program.

In order to construct additional indicators at conglomerate (provincial) level, I will work with the EPH round from September/October 2001 (data before the crisis) and April/May 2002 (date when the program was launched but not fully implemented¹²).

Figure 1 summarises the chronology of the events and the availability of data.

Figure 1: The Chronology and Survey Data Availability



Political variables at provincial level were provided by the Ministry of Interior and they were attached to EPH database in order to capture whether the political affiliation of the province in which the individual lives is salient to explain participation, holding constant all other characteristics.

¹² May 2002 was the first month in which beneficiaries received the income transfer from the program. Strictly speaking, the survey was carried out during the last days of April and the whole month of May, depending on the conglomerate/province in which they were registered. However, labor market and income data refers to the previous month. I will use this survey to calculate poverty rates (based on income) and labor variables at conglomerates level, as it is unlikely that these variables include *Jefes* effects.

It is important to clarify that the maximum desegregation available in the EPH is at conglomerate (provincial) level. Thus, while it is easy to identify the place of residence where each individual belongs at conglomerate (provincial) level, it is not possible to know in which municipality the person resides.

The Administrative Data

The data used in the second part of the empirical analysis is at municipality level, and each observation represents a municipality. This is a unique dataset especially created for the purpose of this paper and it is drawn from different sources.

The Ministry of Labour provided data on the total number of adults receiving *Jefes* in each municipality¹³. A second dataset comes from INDEC and Provincial Statistics (DPE) website¹⁴ and contains socio-economic characteristics of the municipalities collected through the Census carried out in November 2001¹⁵. These data will provide us with important controls for the estimation equations in section V.4.

Finally, the *Instituto Federal de Asuntos Municipales* (IFAM) from the Ministry of Interior provided political data on voting records for Local Governments.

Despite availability of data at country level, for reasons described later, all results presented in the second part of the analysis lie on municipalities (partidos) only from Buenos Aires Province.

¹³ These data are monthly published in the Ministry of Labor official site: www.trabajo.gov.ar

¹⁴ See: www.indec.gov.ar and <http://www.ec.gba.gov.ar/Estadistica/FTP/index.htm>

¹⁵ Census 2001 is the most recent information available for municipal level data corresponding to a time period close to December 2001 crisis. This fact will limit the scope of the empirical analysis to Buenos Aires province only. The Provincial Statistic Institute provided additional indicators for this province. It is worth mentioning that INDEC carried out a survey at municipality level during 2002, but these data are not even available to be explored. As soon as this information is available for public use, I will incorporate it into future research.

V. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

V.1) Who are those receiving Jefes program?

V.1.A) Eligibility Criteria

Before looking at the *Jefes* characteristics in detail, it is instructive to explore to what extent the coverage of the program is related to the eligibility criteria imposed by the administrators. For this purpose, and along with the analysis performed in section V.1 and V.2, household data will be used.

In previous studies on *Jefes* mentioned in section II, there is no agreement regarding who should be considered eligible given the information available in the database. This is partially due to the fact that some concepts, such as being a “young” person, are not clearly defined in the program’s criterion. Additionally, the definition of being unemployed used in the survey - unemployed are those who looked for a job during the previous week and did not find one - is not necessarily the one considered by the *Jefes* Decree.

Following Galasso and Ravallion (2004), the definition used here is the closest one that could be enforced by the program administration in practice. A person is considered as eligible if he/she is 18 or more years of age, is not employed in the formal labour market¹⁶ and lives in a household with a child (under 18 years and belonging either to the head of the household or the spouse).

¹⁶ Again, there is not one unique definition of “formality”. In this paper, “formal” is defined as workers who have the right to receive pensions when they retire (as this definition is one that can be checked by authorities through formal registers). It is important to mention that EPH allows the implementation of this definition only for wage earners.

Using this criteria, Table 1¹⁷ shows the percentage of adults - ineligible and eligible - receiving *Jefes* classified by the Peronist/Non Peronist provinces. That is, province where the Government is from Peronist party.

Table 1: Errors of Inclusion/exclusion-Cross section for all adults: October 2002

	Ineligible		Elegible		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>Peronist</i>						
Not receiving Jefes	21,492	71.4%	6,870	22.8%	28,362	94.2%
Receiving Jefes	488	1.6%	1,247	4.1%	1,735	5.8%
Total	21,980	73.0%	8,117	27.0%	30,097	100.0%
<i>Non Peronist</i>						
Not receiving Jefes	13,711	78.8%	3,177	18.8%	16,888	97.0%
Receiving Jefes	175	1.0%	339	2.0%	514	3.0%
Total	13,886	79.8%	3,516	20.8%	17,402	100.0%

Source: Author's calculations based on data from EPH Oct 2002

An analysis of the eligible adults shows that while in Peronist provinces around 15% of them are receiving the program, in Non-Peronist ones only 9% of eligible individuals are in *Jefes*. This may suggest a worse target in non-Peronist provinces or political preferences on allocating more *Jefes* in Peronist areas. However, it may be the case that even when the population is eligible, it does not demonstrate an interest in participating in the program. A basic reason of why eligible individuals may not want to participate is because the costs outweigh the benefits. For some people, binding restrictions (such as the work requirement) may be too high to justify applying for the program. The literature also mentions other participation costs, especially in the case of welfare programs, such as the stigma cost, see Moffitt (1983). Nevertheless, as it is well documented by Currie (2003), there is still relatively little insight into precisely what types of costs and benefits matter most for participation.

¹⁷ Results are presented using analytical weights. See Deaton (1997). Part of this table is an update of the second panel of Table 1 which appears in Galasso and Ravallion (2004) for data on September/October 2002 using all adults instead of active adults and classifying it by Peronist, Non-Peronist. A second difference is that this table, some conglomerates are not processed in order to maintain comparability between rounds.

Shifting the focus to ineligible individuals, there is a higher percentage of non-eligible individuals receiving the program in Non-Peronist provinces than in Peronist ones (34% and 28%, respectively).

V.1.B) Characteristics of Jefes

The characterisation of those effectively receiving the program is shown on Table 2¹⁸.

The means of individual and household variables of the *Jefes* sample are compared with the means of other groups: all adults, eligible and active adults.

Table 2: *Jefes* characteristics - Comparison with Other Groups, cross section Oct 02

	<i>All Adults</i> (18 or more)		<i>Active adults</i> (18-65)		<i>Eligible (1)</i> among all adults		<i>Jefes</i> participants	
	Mean	st.dev.	Mean	st.dev.	Mean	st.dev.	Mean	st.dev.
<i>Individual demographics:</i>								
Male	0.46	0.50	0.57	0.49	0.41	0.49	0.31	0.46
Age	43	18	38	12	39	10	36	11
Marital status – single	0.27	0.44	0.30	0.46	0.02	0.15	0.18	0.38
Marital status – married	0.60	0.49	0.62	0.49	0.91	0.28	0.68	0.47
Head of household	0.43	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.43	0.50
Spouse of head	0.27	0.45	0.21	0.41	0.51	0.50	0.34	0.47
Son/daughter of head	0.21	0.41	0.24	0.43	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.37
Years of education	10.13	4.04	10.79	3.92	9.30	3.65	8.08	3.14
<i>Household characteristics:</i>								
H'hold size	4.04	2.11	4.23	2.06	4.83	1.84	5.45	2.43
No. children<18	1.18	1.52	1.35	1.56	2.33	1.51	2.69	1.88
Total h'hold income*	857.51	1064.28	934.49	1137.33	652.93	924.16	420.19	304.17
H'hold p.c. Income*	258.05	346.50	273.99	380.93	151.52	228.88	83.19	58.87
H'hold p.c. income net of Jefes*	254.10	348.59	268.94	383.54	142.96	232.11	45.86	56.05
<i>Jefes participation</i>								
<i>Eligibility criteria Jefes:</i>								
Eligible individual (1) (children of head)	0.25	0.43	0.27	0.44			0.70	0.46
Eligible individual (any children children)	0.42	0.49	0.43	0.50			0.92	0.27
Individual is formal worker	0.22	0.41	0.35	0.48			0.02	0.14
H'hold has at least one formal worker	0.45	0.50	0.53	0.50	0.28	0.45	0.15	0.35
No. observations in the sample	47,499		28,220		12,571		2,746	
Weighted population	15,753,026		9,624,799		3,954,571		802,195	

*Income figures are expressed in pesos at current level

Source: Author's calculations based on EPH – October 2002

It can be observed that the group of *Jefes* participants is more likely to be female than the group of eligible, active and all adults. On the contrary, they are less likely to be heads of households than the eligible and active groups. On average 34% of participants are spouses of the head.

Jefes beneficiaries have fewer years of schooling - 8 years on average versus 11 years for active adults and 10 years for all adults. They live in larger households, as there are more children present in them. *Jefes* participants seem to be the youngest sample, with an average of 36 years of age.

Total household income is almost 35% lower in the households where participants live compared to the eligible group. The mean of household per capita income for the adult sample is 5.5 times higher than the mean of household per capita income net of *Jefes* for the participant sample. Note that 'net income' of *Jefes* is assuming zero forgone income, as it is calculated taking the total income and subtracting from it a total fixed amount received from the program (\$150).

These results suggest that the program is being received by people who are in the greatest need.

V.2) Participation rates in peronist and non-peronist provinces

Table 3 presents the estimated population and participation rates in *Jefes* for October 2002. This illustrates a significant variation in participation between Peronist and non-Peronist provinces.

¹⁸ Figures are calculated using the correspondance weights to expand the sample to the population.

Table 3: Population and Jefes Participation

	Jefes	Non Jefes	Total	Jefes	t-test in
As a share of all economically active					
Peronist	593,85	6,395,75	6,989,61	0.08 (0.279)	**
Non-	109,31	2,525,87	2,635,18	0.04 (0.199)	
Total	703,16	8,921,63	9,624,79	0.07 (0.260)	
As a share of all adults					
Peronist	657,63	10,749,88	11,407,52	0.05 (0.233)	
Non-	128,24	4,217,26	4,345,50	0.03 (0.169)	**
Total	785,87	14,967,14	15,753,02	0.05 (0.218)	

(1) Active adults: between 18 and 65 years of age, in the labor force.

(1) Adults: between 18 or more years of age

Std. Dev. between brackets

Source: Author's calculations based on data from EPH Oct 2002

While the participation rate (as share of all economically active population) in non-Peronist provinces is around 4%, this rate doubles in the case of Peronist provinces.

The same applies for the participation rate as a share of all adults, with 3% of the population receiving the program in non-Peronist regions, and almost 6% of adults in Peronist regions.

In both cases, the difference is statistically significant¹⁹, suggesting a positive level effect of Peronist on the individual probability of getting *Jefes*.

However, these unconditional proportions may be spurious to the extent to which Peronist provinces might be poorer or have a higher concentration of eligible individuals.

In section V.2.A, using a conditional model, I will investigate whether this “Peronist” effect on the individual probability of getting *Jefes* holds once I control for other

¹⁹ To test difference in means using weights, once the relevance sample was kept, svy commands in Stata were applied. See Stata Manual svytc command for more details.

characteristics of the provinces and for individual and household characteristics of the individuals.

V.2.A) A Conditional Analysis: Determinants of Participation Rates

The main interest in this section is to empirically examine whether political variables (i.e political affiliation of the province) significantly affect the individual probability of participation in *Jefes*.

The econometric strategy suggested seeks to separate political variable effects introducing other controls, using cross section data. The basic model is as follows:

$$J_{ij}^* = X_{ij}\beta + \delta P_j + \gamma Z_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

where J_{ij} is the probability of participation in the program for individual i in province j in October 2002 as a function of X_{ij} a vector of individual and household controls, P_j a dummy with value 1 for Peronist provinces and Z_j a vector of other province characteristics in order to isolate the Peronist effect. To the extent to which the variables in Z_j are not capturing provincial effects properly, a concern remains on whether the Peronist dummy is exogenous or might be capturing the effect of omitted variables. If this were the case, the ‘Peronist’ effect on the probability of participation could be spurious.

Individual and household controls

A number of variables related to demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the individuals are included in the regression: a set of dummies referring to age groups (the base category is the oldest group: 50 years of age or more); a gender dummy (1 if the individual is a man); a set of dummies to indicate the role of the individual in the household, if he/she is a head of household, if she/he is the spouse of the head (base category: other roles such as son, daughter or grandparents); dummies

related to the marital status: 1 if married and 0 otherwise, 1 if single and 0 otherwise (base category: divorced); dummies for maximum level of education achieved (with college education or more as base category). It is assumed that all these variables are exogenous and are controlling for the heterogeneity among individuals²⁰.

The vector X also contains a detailed set of household-level controls: a dummy to indicate the location of the house: 1 whether the house is located in a slum and 0 otherwise; a binary variable to capture if individuals are free renters (squatters); variables regarding the house quality such as: a dummy with value 1 if the walls of the house are made of adobe; a dummy with value 1 if the house is a flat and 0 otherwise; a set of binary variables to indicate the number of rooms (base category, the house has 5 or more rooms) and toilet conditions: a dummy with value 1 if the house does not have sewerage; a dummy taking value 1 if toilet does not have water flush. All these variables act as income proxies.

Finally, household composition characteristics were also included: fraction of member in the household with a specific age (base category is fraction of member with 65 or more years of age) and the household size.

Conglomerate (Provincial) Controls

Different socio-economic indicators were constructed using the micro-data of EPH data from the waves of October 2001 and May 2002. These data have a particular feature. As Figure 1 has illustrated, the wave of 2001 will serve as a baseline before the crisis, while the May 2002 wave was collected exactly the month before the

²⁰ Data is cross-section, thus it is not possible to include labor market characteristics nor income variables at the individual level because they are simultaneously determined with program participation. However, many controls were introduced as proxies that are not influenced by the program. The possible impact of the program (such as increase in education level) is unlikely to occur in a short period of time. Finally, it could be expected that people will seek to migrate from one province to another with more chances of getting the program. Thus, in a first specification of the model a migration variable was constructed. However, only 0.87% (less than 1%) of total adults moved out from one province to another during 2002.

program was launched but after the crises had started, providing an overall picture of the situation in the provinces after the crisis but ‘without the effect of *Jefes*’.

The first indicators constructed at provincial level are measures of poverty and extreme poverty. The standard headcount indexes at individual and household levels were computed for each conglomerate.

As indicated in Sen (1981), these calculations involve two steps: identification and aggregation. To compute the indexes, the official moderate and extreme regional poverty lines based on the cost of a basic food bundle and the Engel ratio of food expenditures were used, see INDEC (2004). To aggregate and adjust the household income, the adult equivalent official scale was applied. Following INDEC methodology, only households with complete information about income were included in the computation.

Regarding labor market variables, unemployment rates, employment and activity rates were calculated according to ILO definitions. The percentage of workers with benefits in each province was also computed in order to have a measure of the “quality” of the labour market.

Table 4: Provincial Characteristics before and after the crisis

Provincial Indicators	Total				Non-Peronist				Peronist			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Oct-01												
Poverty Rate	39.91	14.71	9.80	66.42	41.72	17.53	9.80	66.42	38.90	13.35	11.57	58.22
Poverty Rate (HHs)	30.85	12.30	6.33	54.77	32.61	14.31	6.33	54.77	29.87	11.36	8.71	49.40
Extreme Poverty	14.93	8.44	2.15	39.14	17.15	11.27	2.15	39.14	13.70	6.43	2.25	25.82
Extreme Poverty (HHs)	11.00	6.16	1.61	29.36	12.71	8.07	1.61	29.36	10.05	4.81	2.03	19.86
Unemployment Rate	15.82	4.50	2.38	22.84	16.68	2.29	13.48	19.80	15.34	5.36	2.38	22.84
Activity Rate	39.50	4.11	31.52	50.21	39.80	4.38	34.94	50.21	39.34	4.08	31.52	46.21
Workers with benef	0.35	0.11	0.17	0.68	0.35	0.11	0.17	0.53	0.35	0.12	0.18	0.68
May-02												
Poverty Rate	54.70	14.13	19.78	78.50	54.59	16.22	19.78	72.29	54.76	13.33	27.58	78.50
HHs Poverty Rate	44.70	13.04	13.41	70.05	44.63	14.84	13.41	61.64	44.73	12.39	21.36	70.05
Extreme Poverty	26.01	10.30	6.50	46.02	26.92	11.74	6.50	45.94	25.51	9.73	7.09	46.02
HHs Extreme Poverty	19.95	8.47	4.13	40.13	20.73	9.35	4.13	36.13	19.52	8.20	5.42	40.13
Unemployment Rate	18.90	4.98	3.54	25.48	18.91	3.88	12.74	25.48	18.90	5.60	3.54	25.31
Activity Rate	39.10	4.06	31.28	49.51	39.70	4.19	33.93	49.51	38.77	4.07	31.28	45.66
Workers with benef	34.89	11.45	11.00	66.86	34.16	10.55	15.08	50.36	35.30	12.19	11.00	66.86
Observations	28				10				18			

Source: Author's calculations based on EPH -Oct 2001 and May 2002

Table 4 shows means, standard deviations and the minimum and the maximum values of the main indicators for the conglomerates (28) classified by Peronist and Non-peronist regions for October 2001 and May 2002 .

The upper panel of the table depicts more favourable indicators for Peronist than for Non-peronist before the crisis. While extreme poverty at individual level was about 13.7% on average in Peronist provinces, Non-peronist provinces had more than 17% of their population below the extreme poverty line.

The lower panel illustrates the worst conditions experienced for Peronist provinces after the crises. For instance, while in Oct 2001 the unemployment rate for Peronist was 15% and Non-peronist, almost 17%, after the crisis both reached an unemployment rate of around 19%. This behaviour is also observed for poverty indicators.

This higher increase in poverty rates in Peronist provinces during the crises is suggestive of more people who may apply for the program to protect their income. It is worth noting, however, that just before the program was fully implemented (May

2002), poverty rates were roughly similar for Peronist and non-Peronist provinces, with higher variability in the latter group.

Political Variables

The main independent variable of interest is the political affiliation of the province, whether it is with the Peronist Party - the same party that governs at national level. In that case, P is equal to 1, and 0 otherwise. Specifically, the interest is to test whether

$$\frac{\partial \text{Pr } ob(J)}{\partial P} > 0 \text{ and significant}^{21}.$$

In order to isolate the Peronist effect, variables related to the labour market and socio-economic conditions at provincial level were included. As it was reviewed in section II, unemployment or the poverty rates for October 2002 might be endogenous - they are affected by the program. Thus, the regression introduced provincial level characteristics for October 2001 and their changes between October 2001 and May 2002 as a way of capturing the effect of the crisis in each province. These variables are predetermined.

It can be expected that in a province where most jobs are of low quality (without formal benefits) and the unemployment rate is particularly high - combined with low activity rates - agents are more likely to apply for the program and thus, there are more needs for *Jefes*. The same applies in provinces with high concentration of population below the poverty line.

The Empirical Results

Table 5 reports the estimated coefficient for the model discussed above and robust standard errors (in column 2).

Note that because of the nonlinearity of the standard normal distribution function, marginal effects (partial derivative of the dependent variable with respect to independent variables) in the probit framework are not constant and depend on the values of all variables in the model. The table reports the marginal effects at the mean of the variables. In the case of binary variables, the marginal effect represents a discrete change of the variable from 0 to 1.²²

The variable of interest, living in a Peronist province, has the expected sign and is significant. Thus, there is a positive relationship between living in a Peronist province and the individual probability of getting *Jefes*, even controlling for other province characteristics. While higher levels of extreme poverty and unemployment rates at provincial level in 2001 are significantly and positively correlated with the individual chances of getting the program, the relationship between the activity rates and the percentage of workers with social security benefits with the probability of receiving the program are negative. However, the latter effect is not significant. Additionally, living in a province with a higher increase in extreme poverty after the crisis has a positive impact on the probability of getting *Jefes*.

²¹ While the new National Government from the Peronist Party assumed office at the end of 2001, provincial and local governments had been in power since 1999 and the subsequent provincial and local elections took place in September/October 2003.

²² See Wooldridge (2002). An alternative approach to interpret a non-linear model, is to compute predicted values for a meaningful profile of the independent variables to be compared. It is not shown here for the sake of space.

Table 5: Probit of Jefes Participation - Cross section Oct 2002

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	z	Clusters Std. Err.	z	Marginal Effects	Means
Provincial Characteristics							
Peronist	0.098	0.03	3.34	0.09	1.13	0.006	0.63
Ext_Poverty_Oct01	0.008	0.00	3.03	0.01	1.01	0.001	15.11
Ch_Ex_Poverty	0.250	0.05	4.71	0.11	2.20	0.015	0.93
Unempl_Oct01	0.037	0.01	6.91	0.01	2.87	0.002	16.14
Ch_Unempl	-0.056	0.09	-0.64	0.19	-0.30	-0.003	0.22
Activity_Oct01	-0.032	0.01	-5.89	0.01	-2.35	-0.002	39.33
Ch_Activity	-0.428	0.48	-0.89	0.98	-0.44	-0.026	-0.01
Quality_Work_Oct01	-0.001	0.14	-0.78	0.26	-0.41	0.000	34.62
Ch_Quality	-0.329	0.08	-4.04	0.21	-1.60	-0.020	0.01
Individual Characteristics							
Age 18-24	0.387	0.05	7.46	0.06	6.60	0.030	0.18
Age 25-29	0.537	0.05	11.29	0.07	7.49	0.049	0.12
Age 30-39	0.433	0.04	9.90	0.04	9.69	0.035	0.20
Age 40-49	0.467	0.04	11.34	0.04	12.24	0.039	0.18
Male	-0.578	0.03	-18.51	0.03	-17.61	-0.036	0.46
Head	0.008	0.04	0.19	0.04	0.18	0.000	0.43
Spouse of head	-0.387	0.05	-8.10	0.05	-7.61	-0.020	0.27
Single	-0.091	0.05	-1.89	0.06	-1.55	-0.005	0.29
Married	0.019	0.04	0.43	0.06	0.32	0.001	0.59
Incomplete primary	0.653	0.05	14.18	0.05	13.33	0.065	0.13
Complete primary	0.600	0.04	15.42	0.04	14.47	0.050	0.25
Incomplete secondary	0.533	0.04	13.99	0.05	11.76	0.046	0.19
Complete secondary	0.308	0.04	7.69	0.04	7.10	0.023	0.19
Household Characteristics							
House - villa	0.189	0.06	3.15	0.08	2.28	0.014	0.02
House - departam.	-0.093	0.04	-2.62	0.03	-2.77	-0.005	0.15
1 room house	0.284	0.05	5.63	0.05	5.22	0.022	0.08
2 rooms	0.182	0.04	4.43	0.06	3.14	0.012	0.22
3 rooms	0.026	0.04	0.66	0.05	0.48	0.002	0.35
4 rooms	-0.025	0.04	-0.60	0.05	-0.54	-0.002	0.23
Bathroom without sw.	0.215	0.03	6.22	0.03	6.65	0.016	0.06
Water - cloaca	-0.146	0.02	-6.13	0.04	-3.99	-0.009	0.67
Walls - adobe	0.128	0.08	1.56	0.07	1.88	0.009	0.01
Free renter	0.133	0.04	3.66	0.04	3.09	0.009	0.07
Share members 0-5	2.031	0.12	16.91	0.10	20.25	0.125	0.08
share members 6-17	1.615	0.11	14.99	0.09	18.50	0.100	0.17
share members 18-64	0.594	0.09	6.28	0.08	7.10	0.037	0.63
Household size	0.023	0.01	3.94	0.01	3.65	0.001	4.32
_cons	-2.860	0.25	-11.26	0.54	-5.26		
Pseudo R2	= 0.1956						
Number of obs	= 47435						
Prob > chi2	= 0.000						
Pr(jefes_any)	= 0.027						

Notes: dependent variable =1 if individual participated in Jefes in October 2002 and 0 otherwise
 (*) dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

These results lie on the assumption that observations are independent across and within provinces. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that observations within a province (cluster), are not independent. In that case, the sign and estimated coefficient will be the same, but the standard errors might be different.

Effectively, when the regression is re-run allowing for clustering of the standard errors at the provincial level, the new standard errors are greater in this case (see column 4)²³. Specifically, while the variable of interest, Peronist, still has the expected positive sign, it is not significant. Thus, living in a Peronist province, *ceteris paribus*, does not have a different effect than living in a Non-peronist province.

Turning on individual and household characteristics, most of them are significant covariates of participation. Particularly, participation increases with age and is more likely for females. Surprisingly, the effect of being the head of a household - one of the stated rules in *Jefes* - is not significantly different from zero, while being the spouse of the head is significant but affects the probability of participation negatively when compared to other roles in the house (such as being a son or daughter). Marital status seems to have no effect on participation. Finally, chances of having *Jefes* decrease with education (compared to incomplete or complete college or more).

Regarding household characteristics, participation highly increases for individuals who are living in households with a higher share of children below 18, and for those who live in houses of poor quality houses

²³ See Deaton (1997), Chapter 2 (pp. 63-78).

Some caveats about the results

There are some caveats to bear in mind regarding these results. The first one is related to provincial controls used to isolate the Peronist effect. It was argued that provincial variables for October 2002 were likely to have the effect of the program - they were endogenous variables. To deal with this issue, variables at provincial level that preceded the implementation of the program were incorporated instead, with the certainty that *Jefes* did not affect them as it had not been implemented yet. However, this strategy is unlikely to eliminate the problem of omitted variables. It might be the case that there is a third unobservable variable affecting the probability of participation in the program in October 2002 as well as the May 2002 variables. For example, suppose that provincial governments started running specific programs (it is unobservable) to help poor people, even before *Jefes* was launched²⁴, with the restriction that the individual cannot participate simultaneously in more than one provincial or national program. Even more, it is assumed that the provincial government could have altered the poverty rate in May 2002 by decreasing it. This negative correlation between the variable and the error term would result in a downwardly biased estimate of the coefficients. It is unlikely, however, that these effects will be significant, because of budget restrictions at provincial level in post-crisis period. There is a further concern regarding the explanatory variables. If these variables are measured with errors, this may also cause biased estimations. Specifically, if the measurement error is non-random, it may cause under or over estimations in the coefficients.

²⁴ Argentina is a federal country, and provinces have the autonomy to implement this type of policies. In the dataset, it is not possible to identify the participation in other programmes.

As this section made clear, the household survey data allowed us to characterise *Jefes* participants and to see that the program is well-targeted. This section also demonstrated that living in a Peronist province does not affect the chance of getting the program.

The next natural step, given the design of the program, is to look for political influences but at lower levels. That is, to study whether living in a Peronist “municipality” affects the probabilities of having *Jefes*. Unfortunately, the household survey data does not allow us to identify in which municipality the individual lives as it is designed to be representative only at conglomerates (provincial) levels. This lack of identification leads us to look for alternative dataset. In this respect, the next section explores political influences of the program using an alternative dataset already described in detail in Section IV.2.

V.3) Moving towards Municipality Levels

In order to examine participation rates of *Jefes* at municipality level, I made a first attempt at including municipalities from the whole country. Given the data availability up to date, in particular socio-economic variable only for November 2001, we need to make the assumption that the December crisis hit all the provinces/municipalities equally, just deepening the 2001 conditions. This assumption seems to be misleading according with the analysis of the Table 4, in which people living in Peronist provinces had suffered a higher impact during the crisis than Non-peronist provinces.

As a way of overcoming this limitation, I will only explore data from all the municipalities (partidos) of Buenos Aires Province. There are several reasons for which this province provides a better setting to fulfil my objectives.

Firstly, this province concentrates 38% of total population in the country and 37.4% of the voters in the country²⁵.

Secondly, it is one of the most urbanised provinces, with 96% of the population living in urban areas, thus making the province more homogenous.

Thirdly, there are some data available to check whether there was a similar impact of the crisis within different areas of the province. In particular, it is the only province in which the EPH is carried out in 4 different areas, namely Partidos del Conurbano, Gran La Plata, Mar del Plata and Bahía Blanca-Batán, which represent 81 per cent of Buenos Aires. Effectively, using these data I calculated poverty and unemployment data, and results show a similar performance of these areas before and after the crisis²⁶.

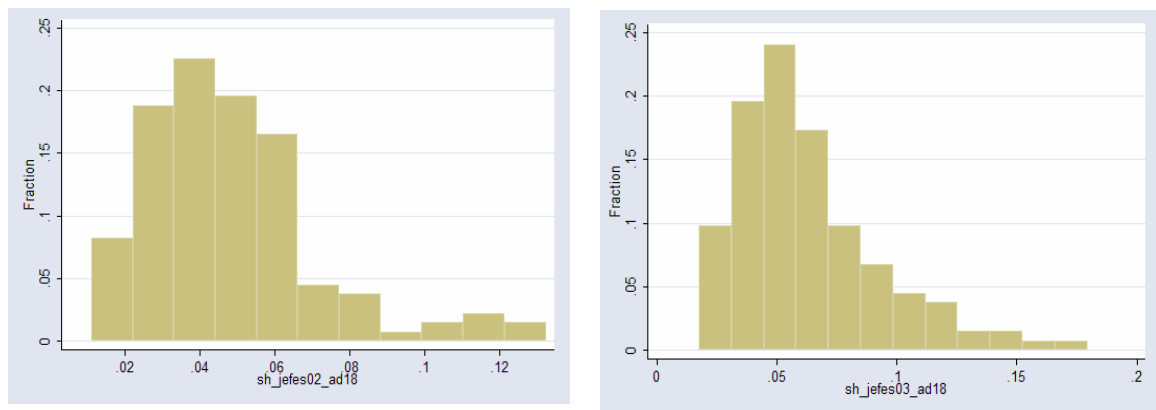
Fourthly, the Provincial Statistics (DPE) provides with more disaggregated information from the Census data 2001 than any other province.

Finally, most of ethnographic works and qualitative research available are carried out in the slum areas of Buenos Aires.

Figure 2 depicts the histograms for 2002 and 2003 administrative data on the fraction of adults receiving *Jefes* in the municipalities of Buenos Aires²⁷.

²⁵ See http://www.mininterior.gov.ar/provinfo/bd_provinfo_2/mapasituacion/BA.htm for additional information on Buenos Aires province.

Figure 2: Histograms of the fraction of adults receiving Jefes – 2002 and 2003



While the median is around 4.5% - 5.4% depending on the year under analysis, the upper tail of the figures suggests an unequal distribution, with some municipalities where more than 10% of the adults are receiving the benefit. Some of this dispersion might be due to differences in the socio-economic conditions across municipalities. However, as it is showed below, some of the difference appears to be due to political influences.

V.4) Participation rates in Peronist and Non-peronist municipalities

The examination of the data broken down by the political party of the municipality highlights some interesting features.

²⁶ Results are not shown here because of space limitation but are available upon request.

²⁷ It excludes the outlier “General Valle” – with a share of Jefes 0.09 in 2002 to 0.49 in 2003

Table 6: Adult Population and Jefes Participation Rates in Buenos Aires Province

Oct-02	Jefes	Non Jefes	Total Adults	Share Jefes
Peronist	369,300	4,535,981	4,905,281	0.075
Non-Peronist	220,400	4,322,636	4,543,036	0.049
Total	589,700	8,858,617	9,448,317	0.062

Apr-03	Jefes	Non Jefes	Total Adults	Share Jefes
Peronist	456,061	4,449,220	4,905,281	0.093
Non-Peronist	298,522	4,244,514	4,543,036	0.066
Total	754,583	8,693,734	9,448,317	0.080

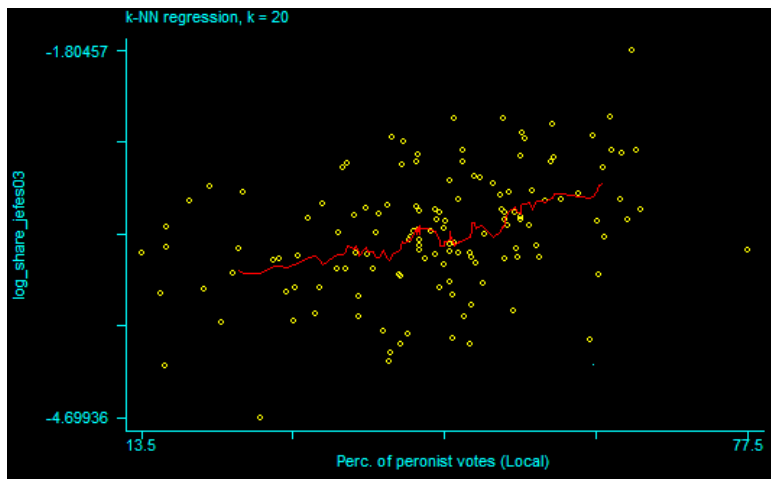
Adult population refers to 18 or more years old

Source: Author's calculations based on Administrative Data

Table 6 (upper panel) indicates that the municipalities where the mayors are from the Peronist party have a higher share of Jefes. Specifically, while in 2002 7.5% of the adults were receiving the program in Peronist municipalities, in Non-peronist municipalities this figure was around 5%. Interestingly, this difference in the share of Jefes between Peronist and Non-peronist municipalities is substantially higher in 2003 (9.3% versus 6.6%), suggesting that *Jefes* is allocated according to party affiliation.

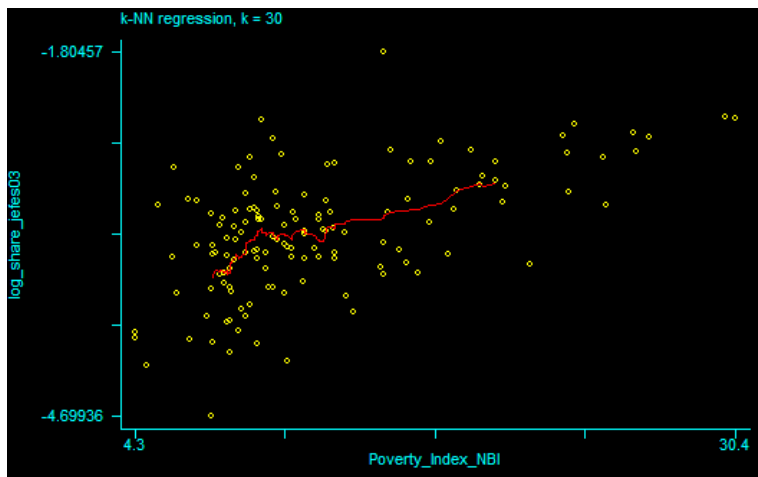
Similarly, the inspection of Figure 3 provides some evidence of a disproportionate favouritism to Peronist supporters in the allocation of Jefes. The figure presents a non-parametric kernel regression of the logarithm of the share of Jefes in 2003 as a function of the percentage of voting for the Peronist party in the 1999 local elections, as a proxy of political support in the municipality.

Figure 3: Log (*Jefes* shares) and Percentage of Peronist votes - Year 2003



There is a positive correlation between these two variables, with a clear pattern: municipalities with higher Peronist vote shares received a higher level of assistance. As it is demonstrated in Deaton (1997), the main strength of this kind of regression is the fact that it assumes no functional form for the relationship, allowing the data to choose the shape of the curve (*ibidem*, pp.193).

Figure 4: Log (*Jefes* shares) and Poverty Index - Year 2003



As it can be expected, the association between *Jefes* and an index of poverty²⁸ using the previous non-parametric technique reveals a similar pattern (see Figure 4). The

²⁸ The poverty index is the INDEC's NBI (*Necesidades Basicas Insatisfechas*).

higher the population in greater needs, the higher the share of *Jefes* in the municipality.

The next section is aimed at analysing whether the political variables are simply proxies for the level of poverty by applying multivariate techniques. In particular, we will study the relationship between *Jefes* and political variables using socio-economic controls at municipality level -such as the poverty index- to examine if the inclusion of these variables dampens the effect of political influences.

Isolating political variables

The basic equation to be estimated is as follows:

$$\log J_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_0(X)_i + \delta_0 Pol_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

log J is the logarithm of the share of *Jefes* participants in total adults of the municipality *i* at time *t* (October 2002 and April 2003).

X is a vector of controls related to characteristics of the population including the following indicators: the official poverty index constructed by INDEC, that combines economic and social characteristics of the households; the share of low quality houses²⁹ and the share of the unemployed by age-groups directly linked with the criteria set forth in the program. *Ceteris paribus*, if *Jefes* is targeted to the municipalities in greater needs, these variables should be significantly and positively associated with a greater amount of population receiving *Jefes*. Additionally, a negative sign is expected for the relationship of the population share with primary education and participation rates.

²⁹ House of low quality corresponds to the category classified as “vivienda deficitaria” for the Provincial Statistics Bureau (DPE).

Pol are different measures of political influences. The first measure is a binary variable with value 1 if Local Incumbent is Peronist (PJ) and 0 otherwise. The idea is to test whether a Peronist municipality has significantly higher access to *Jefes* than any other municipality. A positive and significant coefficient is expected. This level effect should be controlled by the strength of the incumbent's political support. Thus, an indicator of the percentage of votes obtained by the winner in previous local elections is also incorporated in the estimations. A related issue to be investigated is whether there is a difference in the effect of political support for those municipalities with a mayor from the PJ compared to non-PJ municipalities. The incorporation of an interaction term - (Local Incumbent is Peronist (PJ)*Share winner in the previous local election) – will allow us to capture this effect. Finally, the “Peronist vote shares” describes the share of Peronist vote in each Municipality, despite the political affiliation of the local incumbent. Table 7 reports descriptive statistics for the variables commented above.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics -Municipalities of Buenos Aires Province

	Means	Std.Dev	Min	Max
Political Variables				
Local Incumbent is Peronist (PJ)	0.433	0.497	0	1
Share winner in previous local election	0.538	0.072	0.317	0.775
Peronist vote shares	0.444	0.124	0.135	0.775
Control Variables				
Poverty Index (NBI)	0.109	0.044	0.043	0.267
Share pop. with Primary Education	0.945	0.008	0.925	0.981
Share House Low Quality	0.171	0.091	0.030	0.472
Share Unemployed (pop 14_25 years old)	0.341	0.027	0.295	0.418
Share Unemployed (pop 26_64 years old)	0.611	0.025	0.537	0.650
Observations	134			

Source: Author's calculation based on integrated database Buenos Aires Province

Empirical Results

Table 8 presents the results of OLS regressions for 2002 and 2003 respectively, going from the first column (1), which reports the influences of political variables only, to

the (4) column, in which the completed specification is presented. All the estimations are corrected for heteroskedasticity and use municipality adult population as weights.

Table 8: OLS estimates I - Jefes Participation Rates in 2002 and 2003

	Log(Jefes Participation Rate 2002)				Log(Jefes Participation Rate 2003)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Local Incumbent is Peronist (PJ)	0.47 (3.92)**	0.22 (2.13)*	0.21 (2.20)*	-0.81 (1.59)	0.41 (3.51)**	0.15 (1.93)+	0.14 (1.87)+	-0.94 (1.89)+
Share winner in previous local election	-2.06 (2.59)*	-1.02 (2.22)*	-0.94 (2.14)*	-1.69 (2.98)**	-2.57 (3.13)**	-1.57 (2.93)**	-1.33 (2.32)*	-2.12 (2.56)*
PJ*Share winner in previous local election				2.00 (2.07)*				2.11 (2.23)*
Share pop. with Primary Education		-28.58 (2.96)**	-27.71 (3.00)**	-28.92 (3.18)**		-21.83 (2.76)**	-19.45 (2.65)**	-20.73 (2.74)**
Share House Low Quality		1.78 (2.90)**	1.04 (1.38)	0.90 (1.23)		2.13 (4.55)**	1.27 (2.34)*	1.12 (2.19)*
Share Unemployed (pop 14_25 years old)			10.67 (2.08)*	9.01 (1.75)+			10.36 (2.26)*	8.61 (1.92)+
Share Unemployed (pop 26_64 years old)			10.72 (2.23)*	9.13 (1.77)+			15.00 (3.13)**	13.32 (2.76)**
Observations	134	134	134	134	134	134	134	134
R-squared	0.3	0.66	0.67	0.69	0.3	0.67	0.71	0.73

+ significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Note: Absolute t-statistics in parentheses, based on heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors. Constant included but not reported

WLS using municipality adult population as weights

Participation rates are calculated as the share of Jefes participants on the adult population (18 years old or more) of the municipality

As expected, there is a positive and significant effect in being a “Peronist” local incumbent. Interestingly, the higher the political support obtained by the winner in the previous local election, the fewer the share of *Jefes*. An important question is whether this effect varies for Peronist and non-Peronist. To answer this question we need to look at the coefficient of the interaction term incorporated in column (4). Effectively, this coefficient is significant at 5% in both years suggesting that there is a differential effect of the political support when the municipality is Peronist. However, note that being Peronist is not enough as it is necessary to have a support higher than 40%³⁰.

These results are suggestive of the need to take into account the relative power of local Peronism as an effective way of accessing public resources. Using Peronist votes as a *proxy* -albeit imperfect- we look for additional evidence of our argument.

The OLS estimates presented on Table 9 seem to corroborate this.

Table 9: OLS Estimates II - Jefes Participation Rates in 2002 and 2003

	Log(Jefes Participation Rate 2002)			Log(Jefes Participation Rate 2003)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Peronist vote share	1.922 (3.75)**	0.859 (2.37)*	0.894 (2.90)**	1.912 (3.75)**	0.836 (3.08)**	0.934 (3.29)**
Poverty Index (NBI)		6.745 (8.85)**	7.309 (3.18)**		6.831 (11.38)**	7.167 (3.13)**
Share pop. with Primary Education			-23.837 (2.65)**			-17.845 (2.50)*
Share House Low Quality			-1.799 (1.55)			-1.722 (1.57)
Share Unemployed (pop 14_25 years old)			7.07 (1.23)			6.816 (1.41)
Share Unemployed (pop 26_64 years old)			6.931 (1.20)			11.611 (2.24)*
Observations	134	134	134	134	134	134
R-squared	0.25	0.66	0.7	0.25	0.68	0.74

+ significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at

Note: Absolute t-statistics in parentheses, based on heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors. Constant included but not reported
WLS using municipality adult population as weights

Participation rates are calculated as the share of Jefes participants on the adult population (18 years old or more) of the municipality

Controlling by poverty, the Peronist vote share remains positive and significant. Additionally, the coefficient on the indicator of basic needs echoes the findings of section V and the studies discussed in section II. The level of the participation rates in Jefes in both years is positively correlated with a poverty index. The results are robust to the addition of controls (column 3) and to the elimination of 3 outliers (not reported here).

Before shifting our attention to qualitative works, it is worth noting that there is a vast theoretical and empirical literature focused on studying political influences on the allocation of public funds, political patronage and its capacity for getting votes³¹. See, for example, Scott (1972), Case (1997), Dixit, Avinash, and John Londregan. (1996), Schady (1999), Magaloni B., Estevez F, and Alberto Diaz-Cayeros (2000), Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2003), Murillo and Calvo (2004), Brusco, N., Nazareno and Stokes, (2004) and Pritchett (2005).

³⁰ That is: for peronist 2002: $(-0.81) + 2*(0.4) = 0$. Similarly, for peronist 2003, $(-0.94) + 2.11*(0.44) = 0$

³¹ See Hutchcroft (2000) for a survey of the major paradigms.

Most of this political economy literature, however, makes assumptions about the State and the voters' behaviours as well as their relations, and these do not seem appropriate for the case under analysis. Following Auyero "[W]e should avoid stigmatising poor people as Pavlovian agents who vote and support political candidates in exchange for favours and services, and refocus our studies on the relational matrix (the "dynamics of social interweaving," to quote Norbert Elias) that links patrons, brokers, and (some) "clients" in ongoing problem-solving networks.". We will then use qualitative research to move forward into alternative relations and interpretations.

VI. THE *JEFES* PROGRAM FROM A QUALITATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The application of *quantitative methods* in previous chapters suggested that areas with Peronist governments are more likely to have higher participation rates, significant at municipality level, even controlling for the socio-economic characteristics of the area. The incumbent party at local level and, in particular, the Peronist political support matters to access public resources- the *Jefes* Program. Furthermore, the program helps to alleviate poverty. However, these methods did not offer the possibility to examine the channels through which it may be operating. The understanding of *how* the mechanism operates and *why* it seems to be significant at municipality level requires the application of *qualitative methods*.

This section aims at exploring these issues, based on a review of secondary sources of *qualitative researches* carried out in Argentina, mainly in Buenos Aires province, by different scholars.

The ethnographic account of Levitsky (2001) provides us with an exhaustive examination of how the ‘contemporary’ Peronist Party (PJ) is internally organised. Specifically, it offers a cue in explaining why decentralised programs at municipality levels are particularly attractive for the PJ. The analysis of 112 *Unidades Básicas* (UBs -grassroot offices of the Peronist party) in La Matanza, Quilmes and the Federal Capital based on visits to the UBs and in-depth interviews with the activists who ran them, provides the basis to capture the ‘dense collection of personal networks’ (*ibidem*, pp.30) and to examine the ‘powerful local organizations’ that give the Government “an extensive channel for policy implementation, patronage distribution and local problem solving” (*ibidem*, pp. 31)

Following in the wake of Levitsky, the vast material that comes from different fieldworks conducted by Auyero in the last ten years suggests that these problem-

solving networks work as ‘webs of protection against the risks of everyday life’, Auyero (2004). His work provides an extended account on how these (patronage) networks rely on brokers of the Peronist party – *punteros*- as key actors and how ‘the clients’ perceive broker’s actions.

To supplement this material, I will draw on original interviews and documents collected in ERES I, II and III (Evaluacion Rapida de la Emergencia Social) during February 2002- February 2003; in the Monitor Social³² and in the fieldwork done by Dennis Rodgers during the half term of 2003 in Argentina.

VI. Understanding Why and How

“The ‘Jefes de Hogar’ program is the difference between eating and not eating”. (*Focus Group - ERES II Annex V*)

The vital role that *Jefes* plays for many impoverished people is reflected on this testimony. *Jefes* makes the difference, helps them cope with the *daily* uncertainty of their lives. They are “poor people who need to solve pressing survival needs” Auyero (1999).

A slightly different view on *Jefes* is found in the ERES in-depth interview to Marcelo, the lead of a community-based organisation. Marcelo considers the program as:

“A good relief scheme but very badly handled”.

On the other extreme, Toty, the leader of *Movimiento de Desocupados* (unemployed worker’s movements) MTD *La Matanza* rejects public social assistance (such as *Jefes*) because he and his followers do not want to be co-opted by the State. He effusively expresses in one of his interviews:

³² See ERES (2004) and Cesilini, John-Abraham and Martín (2004) for detail.

“[the State] has reconverted itself and shows its most perverse face as the State exists as the domination of one class over another and is reconverted, even the most perverse is that of assistance plans because help comes from the State, help between quotation marks but domination and reversion and I believe a new culture, which is the culture of survival/surviving? [Rodgers interview to Toty – August 2003]

Beyond these visions, a common idea that emerges throughout most of this qualitative material - that “the plan reached the poorest” plays a “key role in containing the most vulnerable communities” and “it is a social control mechanism”.

That the program served as a way of maintaining social rest is also highlighted in Levistky and Murillo (2003), who remarks: “Duhalde also restored a degree of governability through a combination of old-school machine politics and effective social policies that included the *distribution* of low-cost medicine and monthly subsidies to more than two million unemployed heads of households. By election day, incipient economic recovery and *a restoration of social peace* had substantially improved public approval for the government”. (*ibidem*, pp. 161) [*italics are mine*]

This brings us onto the question of how this distribution operates. Crucial in this respect is the understanding of the link between the poor and the State. Deriving from Levistky’s (2001) ethnographic account, “in many lower class areas, the state bureaucracy is so weak that party networks are a more effective means of reaching the population” (pp. 54). His fieldwork reveals that almost 60 per cent of the Greater Buenos Aires UBs surveyed participated in at least one government program and 96 per cent engaged in “some form” of social assistance (*ibidem*, pp.52). In his description he, asserts “[W]here the PJ controls the local government, activists use

their ties to public officials to act ‘as a nexus between the neighbourhood and the *city* government’ [interview with La Matanza activist Tina Blanco, 32 May 1997]” (*ibidem*, pp. 55) [*italics are mine*].

These findings are clearly a cornerstone that illuminates the quantitative results arising from the empirical section. Far from saying that the qualitative interpretation can be easily generalizable, it sheds light on the mechanism that may be operating behind the positive and significant effect of having more *Jefes* in municipalities with Peronist mayors and higher Peronist support, *ceteris paribus*.

On the same vein, Auyero (2001) notes that the Peronist party network operates both as a resource control tool to provide selective access to public resources, as well as an information intermediary, hoarding key information on social programs.

Not surprisingly, this comes out in the focus group discussion with *Jefes* beneficiaries in La Matanza, when one of them says:

"In neighbourhood centres information is kept, if you are not with someone you do not learn if you have to renew, you just get the surprise on the day you go to collect your money and your envelop is not there." (See Monitor Social, 2003)

Similarly, in the in-depth interview an CSO lead points out:

There are many beneficiaries by political connections, to get these plans you need a “godfather” and if you give them 20 or 50 Lecop they will get the plans for you. If not, they will remove to you from the plan”

As they made clear, *the godfathers* - the political brokers known as *punteros*- seem to have the exclusiveness of access to “public” resources, “*they* have discretionary power to do what they want with them. Auyero (1999, pp. 345). The brokers run the

UBs, and they connect to the party through organisations called *Agrupaciones*. In Levitsky's words, *agrupaciones* are "powerful local organisations" and "the informal rules of the game that structure the internal life of the PJ".

The power of these *agrupaciones* is strongly denounced in the Report elaborated by the Consejo Consultivo Municipal of Cruz del Eje – a small town located in Cordoba Province. At the beginning of the report, they starkly point out:

"The present report is prepared on account of the extremely grave and arbitrary handling of social plans in Cruz del Eje, Córdoba province, a situation that far exceeds Institutions, namely: Plans outside the Municipal Consultative Council (CCM). In the city of Cruz del Eje, with a population of 28,123 inhabitants, 2,813 social plans have been granted to date, among Jefes de Hogar and PEC, of which 892 were allocated through the CCM, the remaining 1,921, mainly through the group conducted by Mr. Sergio "Ralo" Avila outside the CCM"

In the third part – under the title "III Institutional Damages" They remark:

"The allocation of plans outside a legal framework, without control and with total arbitrariness give such a power to this Mr. Avila that it is beyond institutional frameworks". Seen by great part of the society as the only person capable of getting social plans. Who before the real and concrete need of people, *awakens a logical admiration* in the needy and in followers, in this way transformed in a kind of distributor whose leadership and power will be unlimited."

This last paragraph is directly related to our previous discussion about the privileged position of brokers. In particular, following Auyero (2004) the Peronist Party resembles a large banking institution exercising what Weber calls domination “by virtue of a position of monopoly.” Furthermore, the brokers emphasize the “service to poor people,” the “love [they feel] for the humble,” “the passion [they have] for social work,” and their “sacrifice.” (*ibidem*, pp.141). The idea of “exchange” for votes, assumed in most political economy models, seems to be absent in this specific case of patron-client relations. “Clients”-the dominated- do not feel as such. On the contrary, they consider the brokers as those who “will give you a hand when you need it”. In fact, the brokers are in their *daily* lives, solving their “problems”, usually condensed around the vital difference between “eating and not eating”. In this respect, the importance of looking at “the overlapping of informal networks of survival and political networks”, Auyero (2003) was demonstrated in the previous analysis.

Historical roots cannot be ignored if we wish to fully understand the mechanism underpinning these networks. How are these networks legitimised?. Two important issues have been considered in this respect. Levistky (2001), on the one hand, reminds us that the Peronist Party is historically embedded in the working and lower class. Auyero (1999), on the other hand, is able to capture “the role of memories” and “the process of the (re)invention of a tradition” (*ibidem*. pp. 347) in legitimating the clientelist networks. The Peronist tradition persists - that of Eva Perón as the "bridge of love" between Perón and the poor. It is the "good memories" of that time that today make people feel admiration for the brokers and maintain their practices *daily*.

Far from being "voters with ideological preferences" and "the product of rational calculation" - as clients are usually considered in political economy models – these people are embedded in an informal network trying to solve their daily problems. It is

in their routinized process with the brokers that they learn "what they should do and what they should not do" to achieve "what they need". Neither a "reflective action" nor a "rational calculation" guide their decisions, but instead a rooted tradition that preserves the clientelist ties in time.

The brokers, on the other side, know that the hoarding of public resources is key for their political survival. Therefore, a distinct role is played by local mayors, who provide them with that resource. As *Jefes* has a decentralised structure, in which mayors have the power to decide over potential beneficiaries and provide a stable monthly subsidy, it also becomes vital for the performance of the Peronist machine.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper attempted to broaden and extend previous academic works on *Jefes*, a safety net program implemented during the hardest crisis ever faced by Argentina. The scale of this social assistance made it an interesting case study, which offered the opportunity to empirically infer whether the program was political manipulated.

Through the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, the main findings suggest that while helping to alleviate poverty in the post-crisis period, the program may be also helping to maintain the "Peronist problem-solving network". As demonstrated, this combination allowed us to go beyond traditional political economy interpretations, and to explore new insights. The new insights did not necessarily indicate more 'objective' understanding, but they added range and depth instead.

The examination of the household survey data revealed that while 15% of the eligible adults in Peronist areas are receiving the program, this figure is only 9% in Non-peronist, suggesting a worse targeting in the latter case. On average, *Jefes* participants are more likely to be female, have fewer years of schooling, live in larger households and their household income is 35% lower compared to the eligible group. Furthermore, participation rates are almost double in Peronist provinces than in Non-peronist provinces. This difference, however, is not significant once we controlled by socio-economic characteristics and we adjusted by cluster effects.

Interestingly enough, shifting the analysis on municipal level- using administrative data- data shows that participation rates are significantly higher in Peronist than in Non-peronist municipalities. In areas where the tradition of the Peronist party is strong, the informal networks of survival, deeply embedded in poor people, overlap with political networks to fuel the Peronist machine.

Further research is needed in order to extend the analysis and improve it, as soon as the data collected during 2002 in the municipality survey carried out by INDEC becomes available for public use.

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