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Abstract

Why and how do class cleavages become politicized in party systems? The recent tenure of left governments in South America has seen the party system realigned along the class cleavage in Venezuela but not in Brazil or Chile. This article argues that different approaches to expanding social protection—“mobilizational” in Venezuela and “technocratic” in Brazil and Chile—explain divergent outcomes. Mobilizational policies incentivized social organization among beneficiaries and allowed for linkages between these organizations and left parties, facilitating credit claiming and recruitment by the left. Technocratic policies targeted atomized beneficiaries with no room for partisan involvement, making credit claiming and recruitment difficult. Case-based evidence illustrates these mechanisms whereas survey analysis using genetic matching confirms that mobilizational and technocratic programs exerted strikingly different effects on support for left parties. The broader contribution is to theorize a new form of class-based political mobilization in Latin America, also being implemented in other countries.

Keywords

social policy, class cleavage, party systems, Latin America

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The left has won presidential elections across much of Latin America since the late 1990s, a wave of success often interpreted in light of the region's deep socioeconomic inequalities (Castañeda, 2006; Luna & Filgueira, 2009; Roberts, 2008). Yet although scholars have framed the relationship between the "left turn" and social structure in general terms, the tenure of the left in office has seen great variation in the politicization of class cleavages in party systems. In Venezuela, Chile, and Brazil, class cleavages were largely unexpressed in party systems as the left entered government: The lower classes were not more likely than other class groups to support the major parties or blocs of the left. Great variation emerged over time. In Venezuela, the party system was realigned around the class cleavage, as the lower classes became disproportionately supportive of the parties of Hugo Chávez, first the *Movimiento Quinta República* (MVR) and subsequently the *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (PSUV).¹ In contrast, class cleavages in Brazil and Chile remained unexpressed in party systems, as the lower classes remained no more likely than other groups to support president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) or president Ricardo Lagos's *Partido Socialista and Partido por la Democracia* bloc (PS-PPD).

Exploring cross-national variation presents the opportunity to build theory about the politicization of class cleavages in party systems in the contemporary era, with particular relevance to Latin America but with application to other regions of the developing world. This article offers an explanation that centers on a distinction between "technocratic" and "mobilizational" approaches to expanding social protection. Left governments in all three countries made the expansion of social protection to the lower classes the centerpieces of their policy agendas, but designed and implemented programs in different ways. Technocratic social protection in Brazil and Chile delivered benefits to an atomized set of beneficiaries and offered left parties no ability to engage program participants. Mobilizational social protection in Venezuela, in contrast, was explicitly designed to sponsor social organization on a local level among beneficiaries and to facilitate the formation of a dense set of linkages between those organizations and parties of the left, first the MVR and subsequently the PSUV.

I argue that technocratic programs are unlikely to build support for political parties among beneficiaries, and thus tilt party systems along class cleavages, even when those policies are targeted specifically at the poor. Although presidential incumbents may be able to reap personal benefits, political parties tend to have great difficulties claiming credit for programs, and these policies offer parties no opportunity to directly recruit beneficiaries. In contrast, mobilizational programs allow parties to use their affiliation with sponsored social

organizations to better claim credit for programs and to recruit beneficiaries into electoral activism. By building support for parties among the lower classes, mobilizational policies can thus serve to tilt party systems along class cleavages and form the basis for potentially enduring electoral realignments. These programs are not clientelistic in the strict sense, in that they do not depend on a contingent direct exchange of benefits for votes (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes, 2007). Rather, they represent a conceptually distinct means of abusing state power in the design and implementation of policies to maximize political advantage.

The broader theoretical claim of the article is that mobilizational social protection represents a new mode of class-based political mobilization in the contemporary age in Latin America. Many prominent studies of the structuring of party systems around class cleavages during the age of industrialization have pointed to the critical nexus of labor unions, which grew organically among the lower classes and applied pressure “from below,” and labor-based political parties that came to affiliate unions for strategic purposes (Bartolini, 2000; Collier & Collier, 1991; Rokkan, 1977). Scholars suggesting a decline of class politics in the contemporary era have frequently noted that these labor-organizational foundations are no longer viable, having been undermined by globalization, deindustrialization, and social-structural change (Clark, Lipset, & Rempel, 1993; Roberts, 2002). I propose that the Chávez government has used state policy “from above” to actively shape and institutionalize a new organizational foundation for the class cleavage, one centered on community-based organizations created through social policy rather than formal-sector labor unions. Although the article focuses on the Venezuelan case, mobilizational social protection is a larger trend in the region, with governments in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua also beginning to experiment with variants of this strategy.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. A first section provides data to illustrate cross-national variation in the realignment of party systems around class cleavages during the tenure of the left in office. The following section discusses the limitations of extant hypotheses in explaining variation, helping contextualize the theoretical contribution of the article. A subsequent section elaborates on technocratic and mobilizational social protection, illuminating the mechanisms involved in the theory with case-based evidence. I then test the key hypotheses—that programs in Venezuela created support for the PSUV, whereas programs in Brazil and Chile did not create support for the PT and PS/PPD respectively—with public opinion data, employing genetic matching for covariate adjustment and using Rosenbaum sensitivity analysis to explore the robustness of results to sources of hidden bias. The conclusion

widens the comparative perspective within Latin America and suggests avenues for future research.

Divergent Outcomes

A first task is to illustrate divergence in the expression of class cleavages in party systems during the tenure of the left in office.² Figure 1 displays aggregate-level data, showing scatter plots of the relationship between left party vote share and community socioeconomic level over two periods.³ The first period is the legislative election immediately before or concurrent with the arrival of the left to power, whereas the latter reflects the first legislative or gubernatorial election after the left had implemented the expansions of social protection that are at the center of the argument.⁴ Loess trend lines are fitted to the data to better illustrate relationships. The data suggest a significant divergence in the alignment of party systems along class cleavages. As the left came to power in all three countries, class cleavages were not expressed in party systems. Indeed, the trend lines in each country are flat or even slope slightly upward, with the vote for left parties increasing at higher socioeconomic levels. Variation emerged over time. Class cleavages remained unexpressed in the party systems of Brazil and Chile, while coming to strongly structure the Venezuelan party system.

Another perspective can be gained through individual-level data, using public opinion surveys fielded in each country.⁵ Table 1 presents the proportion of the lower, middle, and upper classes identifying with the major left party in each country, as well as the relative risk ratio of a respondent in the lower classes identifying with the left vis-à-vis a respondent in the upper classes doing so (i.e., the lower class proportion divided by the upper-class proportion).⁶ Results are similar to those found in aggregate data. As the left came to power in each country, the lower classes were not meaningfully more likely than the upper classes to identify with the left party. This pattern stayed consistent in Brazil and Chile but changed markedly in Venezuela.

These descriptive findings are consistent with other research on each of the three countries. Torcal and Mainwaring (2003) have documented the weak expression of class cleavages in the Chilean party system after democratization. Many studies have also noted the weak expression of class cleavages in the Brazilian party system during the 1990s (Mainwaring, 1999). Although numerous scholars have shown that Lula's relative strength among the poor increased during his tenure in office, researchers have also found that such change did not translate to the PT (Hunter & Power, 2007; Samuels & Zucco,

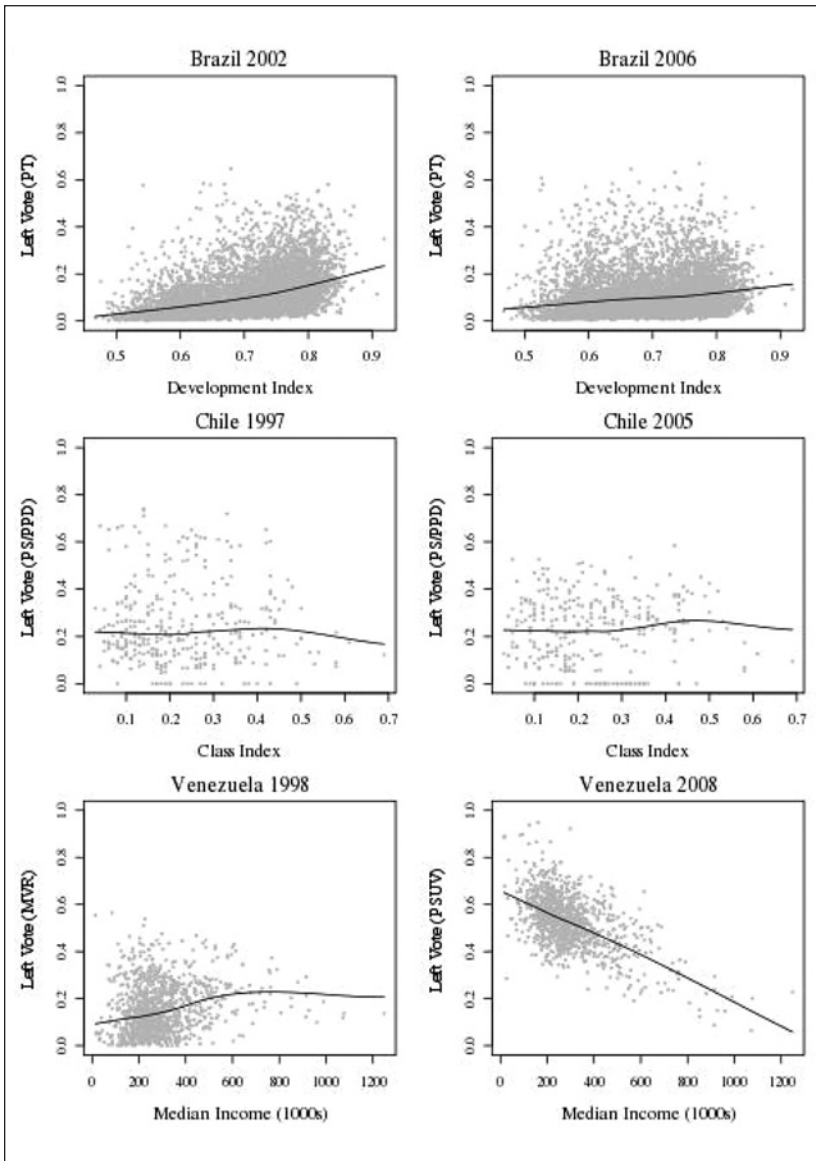


Figure I. Expression of class cleavage in party systems, aggregate-level data.

Table 1. Expression of Class Cleavage in Party Systems, Individual-Level Data.

	Lower	Middle	Upper	Relative risk (lower/upper)
Brazil (2002)	0.22	0.29	0.30	0.71
Brazil (2006)	0.16	0.20	0.18	0.87
Chile (1999)	0.20	0.22	0.28	0.71
Chile (2005)	0.23	0.22	0.27	0.84
Venezuela (2000)	0.23	0.27	0.26	0.88
Venezuela (2006)	0.48	0.41	0.30	1.59

2010). Finally, numerous studies have suggested that class cleavages eventually came to be strongly expressed in Venezuelan electoral politics during the Chávez years, albeit generally focusing on the personal support for the president rather than for the MVR or PSUV (Hellinger, 2005; López Maya & Lander, 2007).⁷ The data show that this change extended to the party system.

Limitations of Extant Theory

Prominent theories regarding the translation of class cleavages into party systems are of limited utility in explaining variation. Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) foundational work, often referred to as the social cleavage theory of party systems, suggested that party system alignment along cleavages in Europe primarily occurred in response to deep social conflicts attending modernization, with the class cleavage that emerged during industrialization particularly dominant in structuring party systems. In this formulation, social divisions are the primary independent variable, with political actors playing only secondary roles. Many scholars have subsequently critiqued this theory, especially in its applicability across space and time (Mainwaring, 1999; Torcal & Mainwaring, 2003). For the current question, the explanatory limitations of a structural theory are evident: A largely constant variable such as social structure has difficulty explaining change over a brief period in Venezuela.

Subsequent scholarship has tended to focus more heavily on political agents, reassessing the European experience and examining how and when class cleavages structure party systems in other world regions. A particularly prominent line of theorizing can be referred to as the labor-organizational hypothesis, which centers on the development and activities of class-based organizations that emerged during industrialization, especially labor unions, and the affiliation of these organizations to political parties seeking to mobilize support from the working and lower classes (Bartolini, 2000; Bartolini &

Mair, 1990; Collier & Collier, 1991; Rokkan, 1977). These studies emphasize social organization as an independent variable, specifically highlighting the largely organic growth of a powerful and semiautonomous labor movement and how pressures “from below” intersected with the actions and interests of political entrepreneurs at the elite level. Although a compelling explanation for cleavage dynamics in many industrializing societies, the labor-organizational hypothesis has limited explanatory power when applied to contemporary countries in Latin America or elsewhere in the developing world. Deindustrialization, market liberalization, and informalization have undercut the social-structural foundations of the labor movement in Latin America and led to sharp decreases in union density in most countries. Indeed, one of the reasons that scholars have questioned the viability of class politics in the contemporary era in Latin America is precisely that labor-organizational foundations no longer seem viable (Roberts, 2002).

Another set of scholarship has retained a focus on political agents, but suggested that organizational foundations are not necessary for party systems to shift, at least temporarily, along class and other social cleavages. Rather, under certain conditions, political elites may catalyze cleavage reorientation “from above” through state policy that distributes or redistributes to lower class constituencies (Chhibber, 2001; Chhibber & Torcal, 1997). This notion is particularly compelling when applied to contemporary Latin America, where many governments have expanded social protection during the past decade. Studies have shown, for example, that new social programs such as those providing conditional cash transfers have led recipients to reward presidential incumbents (Hunter & Power, 2007; Manacorda, Miguel, & Vigorito, 2009; Zucco, 2008). Yet, although facially compelling, this hypothesis cannot explain variation among the cases. Were expansions in social protection to the lower classes, by themselves, able to align party systems along class cleavages, we would expect to find cleavage realignment in Venezuela, Brazil, and Chile. Left governments in all three countries launched ambitious new programs to expand social protection to the lower classes. Yet only in Venezuela did the party system realign along the class cleavage.

The argument of the article synthesizes elements of the labor-organizational and state policy hypotheses just discussed. The realignment of party systems along class cleavages is explained not by whether or not left governments expanded social protection, but by whether social protection was used to sponsor social organizations among beneficiaries and affiliate them to political parties. Social-organizational foundations are still necessary for realigning party systems along class cleavages. In a postindustrial age when the traditional labor-organizational foundations of class politics are no longer viable and the

lower classes have increasingly embraced alternative forms of collective action, new organizational foundations can be created by political entrepreneurs through social protection.

Social Protection and Party System Realignment Along Class Cleavages

I distinguish two approaches to expanding social protection among the cases under examination, technocratic and mobilizational, and argue that this difference drove variation in the realignment of party systems along class cleavages. Social protection in Brazil and Chile was technocratic. Programs distributed benefits to an atomized set of recipients, providing no incentives for organization among those participants. Programs were also implemented solely through nonpartisan state bureaucracies. Technocratic programs of this kind are common in the developing world, reflecting best practices promoted by international institutions such as the World Bank. Social protection in Venezuela was mobilizational. Programs were explicitly designed to sponsor and incentivize social organization at the community level among beneficiary populations. Programs were also designed to facilitate extensive linkages between these sponsored social organizations and parties of the left, first the MVR and then the PSUV. Although mobilizational programs are less common overall in Latin America, they have also been implemented in recent years in several other countries.

It should be emphasized that these dimensions distinguishing technocratic and mobilizational programs are distinct from the idea of clientelism, understood to involve the contingent direct exchange of goods for votes (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes, 2007). In theory, both technocratic and mobilizational programs could be clientelistic or not clientelistic. In practice, the technocratic programs in Brazil and Chile discussed in this article have generally been viewed as exemplars of nonclientelistic policies. Mobilizational programs in Venezuela have been called clientelistic by some observers, but, as discussed further below, this term is probably misapplied if using a definition of clientelism that emphasizes contingent direct exchange.

Why would technocratic and mobilizational approaches to expanding social protection have different effects on cleavage realignment? The two strategies entail different opportunities for political parties to claim credit for policies and engage beneficiaries for electoral recruitment (see Table 2). Technocratic programs may create short-term electoral benefits for executives implementing these policies, who can easily use the bully pulpit and their close association with the policies to claim credit. But the copartisans

Table 2. Social Protection and Mechanisms for Partisan Advantage.

	Key characteristics		Mechanisms for parties to seize advantage	
	Beneficiary organization	Linkages with parties	Credit claiming	Electoral recruitment
Technocratic (Brazil, Chile)	No	No	Hard	No
Mobilizational (Venezuela)	Yes	Yes	Easy	Yes

and political parties of those executives struggle to claim credit. Furthermore, these policies, distributed purely through nonpartisan state bureaucracies, do not help parties reach out to and engage beneficiaries. Mobilizational programs, in contrast, allow parties to use linkages with the social organizations sponsored by new programs to better claim credit for those programs. The linkages also afford parties the means to engage beneficiaries and recruit them into electoral activism. A brief discussion of the cases can help better illustrate these mechanisms.

Technocratic Social Protection in Brazil and Chile

Major expansions of social protection were the signature policy achievements of left governments in Brazil and Chile. The centerpiece of the Lula administration's agenda was a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program called Bolsa Família. This program consolidated a group of smaller initiatives in noncontributory social assistance that had emerged in previous years, while also greatly expanding coverage and the size of benefits (Hall, 2006, 2008; Hunter & Power, 2007). Like other CCT programs that have spread across the developing world in recent years, Bolsa Família provides money to lower-income families as long as they comply with certain conditions, such as keeping children in school and regular use of health services. By the end of Lula's first term, in 2006, Bolsa Família reached households containing an estimated 44 million Brazilians, or nearly a quarter of the population. Bolsa Família became the domestic policy initiative for which the administration was best known.

The Lagos administration in Chile made two new social programs the centerpieces of its domestic agenda. Chile Solidario was a CCT program designed to address the persistence of extreme poverty by providing cash subsidies and support from social workers to indigent families on the condition that they

utilize health services, participate in counseling programs, and ensure school attendance by children, among other requirements (Palma & Urzúa, 2005; Raczynski, 2008). Chile Solidario was targeted toward the indigent in a country with lower poverty levels than many neighbors, and its scope was modest compared to those of other CCT programs in the region, reaching approximately 6% of households. The second major policy initiative was the Plan Acceso Universal de Garantías Explícitas (Plan AUGE), which sought to remedy inequalities in the Chilean health system that left the public health sector underfunded and difficult to access for many citizens (Dannreuther & Gideon, 2008; Pribble, 2008). The core of the program involved defining a set of conditions for which treatment would be subsidized and guaranteed and expanding infrastructure and social investment to meet those guarantees. A much broader segment of the population stood to benefit from Plan AUGE than from Chile Solidario. These two initiatives became the defining domestic policies of the Lagos administration.

Neither programs in Brazil nor those in Chile provided incentives for social organization among beneficiaries, who received benefits and dealt with program administration on an atomized basis. Bolsa Família mandated that each municipality form a local council to help with program oversight and encouraged representatives from civil society to sit on these councils. But the program did nothing to incentivize beneficiaries themselves to organize. Chile Solidario and Plan AUGE similarly incorporated some limited role for civil society in oversight, but did not provide incentives for beneficiaries to engage in collective action. A second common characteristic of technocratic programs was that, implemented purely through nonpartisan state ministries, they provided no basis for political parties to engage beneficiaries. Without sponsoring organization and collective action among the beneficiaries at the point of distribution, the programs did not create a “partner” with which left parties might form linkages.

These technocratic programs, although prominent centerpieces of left governments, provided little basis for creating support for left parties. Incumbent presidents Lula and Lagos may have been able to use the bully pulpit to associate themselves with and claim credit for programs, increasing their personal level of support among beneficiaries. Indeed, as mentioned previously, extant research has specifically documented personal gains for Lula among the poor in Brazil over the course of his tenure in office (Hunter & Power, 2007; Zucco, 2008). Yet it is not clear why these programs would have helped the PT and PS/PPD more generally. Most politicians within the parties had little or nothing to do with the creation of new programs, and nothing about the programs called attention to a particular party, making credit claiming difficult. Furthermore,

the programs spawned no special opportunities for the PT or PS/PPD to recruit among beneficiaries. Focus group research by Hunter and Sugiyama (2010) in Brazil supports the mechanisms of this argument, finding that beneficiaries of Bolsa Família do not associate the program with the PT at all and give the party little credit for the program. In sum, given that left parties reaped few advantages, technocratic approaches to expanding social protection provided little basis for shifting party systems along class cleavages.

Mobilizational Social Protection in Venezuela

The Chávez government in Venezuela also made the expansion of social protection a centerpiece of its policy agenda, but designed these programs to incentivize organization among beneficiaries. The government's first foray into social protection on a significant scale occurred in 2003, with the launch of the first and largest of the programs known as the Misiones Bolivarianas.⁸ Misión Barrio Adentro dramatically expanded local health infrastructure, primarily by creating clinics offering preventative care in underserved communities across the country (D'Elia et al., 2006). As part of the program, communities with health clinics were strongly encouraged to form a Health Committee, a neighborhood organization tasked with liaising with the clinic and performing advocacy work for the community. By 2006, more than 8,500 Health Committees had been formed. Misión Ribas was designed to provide adult education to Venezuelans lacking high school degrees, also distributing cash benefits to many enrollees. Although the program has not created new social organizations, it is run in local spaces and emphasizes community service and the formation of "working groups" through which enrollees engage in collective action (D'Elia et al., 2006; Hawkins, 2010a). In its local manifestation, the program straddles the line between state and community-based organization.

The other major policy initiative of the Chávez government in the realm of social protection was the Consejo Comunal program, which provided funds for local development projects mainly geared toward addressing basic needs, in areas such as water, electricity, housing, and infrastructure (Hawkins, 2010b; Machado, 2008). To receive funding through the program, communities were required to form a Consejo Comunal, a state-sponsored neighborhood organization for handling local governance issues, deciding on priorities, and managing projects. This program was launched in early 2006 and expanded extremely quickly across the country, such that more than 12,000 councils had been formed by the end of that year and more than 18,000 by early 2008. Together, these programs fundamentally reshaped the associational landscape in lower-income communities across Venezuela.

The second characteristic of the mobilizational approach is that programs were designed to facilitate linkages between sponsored social organizations and left parties, taking shape in informal and formal working relationships. Party officials and candidates frequently planned joint activities with the Health Committees formed as part of Barrio Adentro, with the local Ribas group, or with Consejos Comunales. Officials and candidates also came to frequently participate in events such as the installation of a health clinic, a Ribas graduation ceremony, or the completion of a Consejo Comunal project.⁹ These relationships were eventually institutionalized with the formation of official committees within the PSUV to manage them. As one high-ranking official in FUNDACOMUNAL said regarding the relationship between the Consejo Comunal program and the PSUV, "It is all part of the same process . . . CC equals PSUV" (personal interview, Caracas, May 2008). Party leaders have overtly trumpeted the linkage strategy. As PSUV power broker Freddy Bernal declared on the formation of a committee within the PSUV to oversee relationships with social organizations, "The party calls upon the Missions, the Communal Councils . . . to work full-time for the Revolution and for social mobilization."¹⁰

These relationships have allowed the MVR and, subsequently, the PSUV, to reap advantages from social protection in two ways. First, left parties and politicians within those parties have found it easy to claim credit for programs because they have been able to deeply associate themselves with the Misiones and Consejos Comunales. Second, the parties have been able to use linkages with the Misiones and Consejos for the purpose of recruiting participants and other community members into electoral politics, as party members and activists. These activities began in earnest in 2004, with the Misiones frequently serving as hubs for signing up MVR members and recruiting campaign activists in advance of the recall referendum and gubernatorial elections of that year.¹¹ The use of the Misiones and Consejos Comunales for partisan recruitment increased in subsequent years and was particularly influential in the process of forming and institutionalizing the PSUV that began in early 2007, with these linkages utilized to advertise a massive membership drive and enlist activists to join the "Socialist Patrols" that were the base-level activist groups of the new party.¹² In sum, mobilizational social protection opened up greater opportunities for left parties to build support among beneficiaries and provided the basis for shifting the party system along the class cleavage.¹³

Two additional points about mobilizational programs in Venezuela might be emphasized before moving on. The first is that these programs are not clientelistic in the strict sense of the term, in that they do not involve a contingent direct exchange of benefits for votes, at least on a widespread scale. If programs

involved such exchanges, we would expect to find large number of individuals denied benefits for political reasons. Yet evidence from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) data utilized in this article shows that the proportion of eligible nonusers who claimed to have been excluded based on political criteria is extremely low, less than 1% for each program.¹⁴ Scholars calling programs such as the Misiones clientelistic have largely pointed to evidence of political targeting (Penfold-Becerra, 2007). As scholars of clientelism stress, however, political targeting is not equivalent to contingent direct exchange (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes, 2007). Other recent research therefore has argued that programs in Venezuela do not meet the definition of clientelism and that treating them in this way obscures their political logic (Hawkins, 2010a). This does not imply that the government's programs are politically fair or normatively laudable. Rather, mobilizational social protection involves a conceptually distinct means of abusing state resources to gain political advantage and create an uneven electoral playing field.

A final note might be added regarding the role of Chávez, a highly charismatic politician who has been the dominant figure in the Bolivarian movement since its clandestine origins and is often seen as a paradigmatic example of a charismatic populist leader (Hawkins, 2010a). Could programs in Venezuela build support for the MVR and PSUV simply because of Chávez's charismatic appeal? Although we should not completely rule this out as a contributing mechanism, there is reason to be skeptical. Most important, Chávez's popularity has often not translated smoothly to parties. Antiparty sentiment within the base and, specifically, discontent with the MVR were problems that plagued the Chávez government during its early years (Hawkins, 2003). By 2004, the weakness of the MVR had become a huge concern, given that the party would have to win elections at all levels of government in a very competitive environment (Harnecker, 2004; Hellinger, 2005). Since then, the creation of a more institutionalized and popularly embraced party, capable of mobilizing support independent of Chávez's charismatic appeal, has been a major preoccupation, eventually leading to the formation of the PSUV. The huge amount of attention paid to constructing linkages between the party and the Misiones and Consejos Comunales should be understood in this context.

Hypotheses

The argument produces testable hypotheses about the effects of programs on support for left parties. Programs in Venezuela should lead to support among beneficiaries for the major left party, whereas programs in Brazil and Chile should have no effects. It is important to stress, however, that these tests

themselves are not sufficient to demonstrate that different approaches to social protection might plausibly have driven divergence in the realignment of party systems along class cleavages. In addition, two aspects of the programs just discussed should also be seen as necessary conditions. The first is that programs in all three countries reached very large populations of beneficiaries, clearly a requirement for shifting electoral behavior in the aggregate. The second is that beneficiary populations in each country were concentrated among the lower classes. Given that programs reach a broad swath of the electorate in the lower tiers of the socioeconomic hierarchy, they should carry the potential to tilt party systems along class cleavages if they exert substantial effects on support for left parties.

Data

To test hypotheses about the effects of programs in each country on political behavior, I utilize data from LAPOP's 2006-2007 wave. This data set is particularly useful because it is at the individual level, contains information on all the programs of interest, and is independent of the data already utilized to assess the politicization of class cleavages in party systems. The dependent variable is support for the left in each country, as measured through party identification with the major left party or bloc. This variable is scored 1 if the respondent reports left partisanship and 0 otherwise. The data were generated from a survey question in which respondents were asked, "With which political party do you sympathize?"¹⁵ The independent variables of interest are measures of participation in the major new social programs of left governments in each country: Bolsa Família in Brazil, Chile Solidario and Plan AUGE in Chile, and Misión Ribas, Misión Barrio Adentro, and the Consejos Comunales in Venezuela. Each of these variables is measured dichotomously, with 1 indicating being a participant in the program.

The LAPOP data provide a wide range of pretreatment control variables that are utilized in the analysis. Demographic variables include age, sex, education, formal-sector employment, religion, ethnicity, household wealth, and region of residence in each country.¹⁶ The data for Brazil and Venezuela also provide measures of pretreatment political behavior that are particularly useful (unfortunately, no such measure is available in the Chilean data). These measures differ according to available data and the sequencing with which programs were implemented. In Brazil, a measure of vote choice in the 2002 presidential election, which preceded the national implementation of Bolsa Família, is available. In Venezuela, a measure of participation in a *Círculo Bolivariano* is available. These were pro-Chávez social organizations that

were formed and proliferated on a massive scale during the regime crisis of 2001–2003 but which had largely died out prior to the spread of the Misiones and Consejos Comunales. When analyzing the Consejo Comunal program, which did not start until 2006, data on vote choice in the 2005 legislative elections can also be utilized. A final category of control variable, once again available only for the analysis of Brazil and Venezuela, is aggregate-level data on the socioeconomic level and previous vote share for the left in the communities of respondents.¹⁷

Matching Analysis: Balance, Estimation, and Sensitivity Results

To test hypotheses about the effect of programs on political behavior, I use genetic matching, a nonparametric matching method for covariate adjustment. Rather than specifying a statistical model to estimate the effects of programs, matching involves taking the “treatment group” for a given program (the beneficiaries) and finding a “control group” among the non-beneficiaries that is similar to the treatment group along a set of control variables.¹⁸ I use matching rather than regression models for two reasons. First, unlike regression, genetic matching does not require onerous assumptions to be made about functional form (Sekhon, 2009). Second, although matching will not solve the fundamental problem of working with observational data, the assumption that cases were selected into treatment and control groups based on observable variables, it does facilitate testing of the sensitivity of results to violation of this assumption.

A first step involves constructing control groups that are balanced with treatment groups on the control variables. For each program being examined, the likelihood of treatment was first modeled on the other covariates using logistic regression and a propensity score estimated for each respondent. Genetic matching was then conducted, matching (with replacement) on the propensity score and the same covariates included in the propensity score model. In each case, the default option of the GenMatch function for R was utilized, which is to search for the combination of matches that minimizes the maximum p value across all covariates from both a paired t test and a bootstrapped Kolmogorov–Smirnov test.

Table 3 presents one measure of covariate balance—the means of treatment and control groups on the control variables after the matching procedure was conducted (data for region control variables are not reported). As we can see, matching successfully eliminated meaningful differences across treatment and control groups for each program, producing comparison sets

Table 3. Means of Treatment and Control Groups After Matching.

	Barrio Adentro		Ribas		Consejo Comunal	
	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control
Age	38.8	37.9	35.2	35.1	39.6	38.5
Sex	0.56	0.55	0.64	0.63	0.56	0.59
Education	0.30	0.30	0	0	0.31	0.30
Formal	0.29	0.28	0.33	0.32	0.29	0.29
Wealth	0.60	0.60	0.57	0.56	0.59	0.60
Catholic	0.81	0.81	0.70	0.71	0.85	0.85
Union	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.12	0.12
White	0.48	0.50	0.46	0.50	0.43	0.42
Mestizo	0.37	0.36	0.41	0.40	0.39	0.41
Círculo Bolivariano	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.29	0.29
Vote 2005					0.36	0.35
Parish vote	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.65	0.65	0.65
Parish income	415,804	411,817	403,734	399,810	400,128	392,115

	Bolsa Familia		Chile Solidario		Plan AUGE	
	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control
Age	38.5	38.5	40.1	40.6	42.6	42.6
Sex	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.64	0.66	0.66
Education	0.06	0.05	0.12	0.12	0.31	0.31
Formal	0.15	0.14	0.27	0.27	0.21	0.21
Wealth	0.43	0.43	0.48	0.49	0.64	0.64
Catholic	0.66	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.69	0.70
Union	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
White	0.25	0.24	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.65
Mestizo	0.51	0.49	0.25	0.25	0.27	0.27
Vote 2002	0.47	0.48				
Muni vote	0.59	0.59				
Muni human development index	0.72	0.73				

that are nearly identical (at least on these observable variables) except for whether or not respondents were beneficiaries of programs. Balance was also evaluated through the results of paired *t* tests and Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests, which respectively examine similarity between the means and distributions of treatment and control groups. For each program and for every control variable, none of these tests produced a *p* value lower than .1, once again suggesting very good levels of covariate balance.

Table 4. Estimation Results.

Country	Program	ATT	SE	95% CI
Venezuela	Barrio Adentro	.16***	.03	[.22, .09]
Venezuela	Ribas	.12*	.06	[.24, .01]
Venezuela	Consejo Comunal	.11**	.04	[.19, .03]
Brazil	Bolsa Família	-.01	.05	[.08, -.11]
Chile	Chile Solidario	-.01	.04	[.06, -.08]
Chile	Plan AUGE	.00	.03	[.06, -.05]

Estimates of the average treatment effect among the treated (ATT), with Abadie–Imbens standard errors.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

With satisfactory balance achieved, we can easily estimate the effects of each program on party identification with the left. Assuming unconfoundedness given the observed covariates, the mean difference on the outcome variable between treatment and control groups will be an unbiased estimate of the average treatment effect among the treated (ATT). In simple terms, the ATT estimate represents the increase in the likelihood of identifying with the major left party associated with participation in a given program. Table 4 reports these estimated effects, along with Abadie–Imbens standard errors and 95% confidence intervals.

The results strongly support the theory that mobilizational social protection produces increases in support for parties whereas technocratic social protection does not. In Brazil and Chile, there is no evidence whatsoever that programs have any effect on identification with the PT or PS/PPD. The ATT estimates are not just statistically insignificant, but actually fall at or near zero in each instance. In contrast, programs in Venezuela appear to powerfully affect the likelihood of identification with the PSUV. These latter estimates are each statistically significant at conventional levels, even when using the relatively conservative Abadie–Imbens standard errors. On a substantive level, the size of estimated effects is striking. Overall levels of party identification in Latin America are relatively low compared to those in advanced democracies. For example, in the LAPOP data set, the level of total party identification in Venezuela is only 31%, that in Brazil only 30%, and that in Chile only 25%. Across all South and Central American countries, only five individual parties (including PSUV) managed to attract more than 20% of the population as identifiers. In this context, programs such as those in Venezuela that increase the likelihood of a beneficiary identifying with a specific party by .11 to .16 should be seen as exerting very strong effects.

Sensitivity Analysis

The key assumption made to estimate effects without bias is that individuals are selected into treatment groups on the basis of observed variables. We can evaluate the robustness of the findings to violations of this assumption through sensitivity analysis (Rosenbaum, 2002). If an unobserved confounder does exist, how powerful would this hidden bias have to be to change our inference regarding a treatment effect? Sensitivity analysis assesses this question by assigning different values to the sensitivity parameter τ , an odds ratio representing the most that two individuals who are identical on observed variables could differ in reality in their likelihood of being in the treatment group. If $\tau = 1$, two such seemingly identical individuals have the same likelihood of treatment; if $\tau = 2$, one individual is actually twice as likely to be assigned to treatment; and so on. We give different values to τ and conduct a hypothesis test for each value, seeing at what value—at what size of hidden confounder—the resultant p values would become large enough that we could no longer confidently reject the null hypothesis of no treatment effect.¹⁹ This procedure is conducted for the positive findings in Venezuela since these are the results we want to put under the microscope.

These results are encouraging overall. The most sensitive inference regards the Consejo Comunal estimated effect. A hidden confounder that made one Venezuelan 30% more likely to be in the treatment group than another seemingly identical Venezuelan ($\tau = 1.3$ in Table 5) might lead us to change our conclusion regarding a treatment effect. The robustness of the Ribas inference is slightly greater, whereas that for Barrio Adentro is particularly strong. At a minimum, then, hidden bias will have to be fairly substantial to jeopardize our inferences. A further point is that the p values produced by these tests represent somewhat of a worst-case scenario, corresponding to hypothetical situations in which the unobserved confounder is also a nearly perfect predictor of the outcome variable. In sum, potential confounders would need to be both strong predictors of treatment, after conditioning on observables, and extremely strong predictors of left partisanship. Although we cannot rule out this possibility, the sensitivity analysis should increase our confidence in the inference that mobilizational programs exerted effects on support for the PSUV.

Summary

The empirical analysis shows strong support for the major arguments of the article. Technocratic programs in Brazil and Chile may be capable of producing

Table 5. Sensitivity Analysis.

τ	Barrio Adentro	Ribas	Consejo Comunal
1.0	.000	.016	.007
1.1	.000	.032	.024
1.2	.000	.060	.062
1.3	.000	.097	.129
1.4	.000	.144	
1.5	.000		
1.6	.002		
1.7	.005		
1.8	.014		
1.9	.032		
2.0	.063		
2.1	.110		

personal electoral rewards for presidential incumbents, as shown by previous research on Bolsa Familia and similar programs in other countries. However, these programs appear to deliver no benefits to the parties of those politicians. Mobilizational programs in Venezuela, in contrast, have exerted very large effects on support for the PSUV. These results were obtained after controlling for individual and community demographics and previous political behavior.

Although the results are strong, several issues remain regarding their interpretation. First, could mobilizational programs in Venezuela really account for significant aggregate shifts in the electorate? As previously noted, these programs reach very large beneficiary populations. Assessing coverage through official data is somewhat difficult because of the unreliability of government statistics in Venezuela. In the LAPOP data set, however, 33.7% of respondents were participants in Misión Barrio Adentro, 20.8% in Consejos Comunales, and 9.3% in Misión Ribas. The powerful average treatment effects estimated in the article thus reached a broad swath of Venezuelans concentrated in the lower half of the socioeconomic hierarchy. In addition, the programs analyzed in the article, although the major initiatives in the country, do not represent all of the Chávez government's efforts at mobilizational social protection. Numerous smaller initiatives also exist but could not be analyzed because of data limitations and space constraints.

Programs such as the Misiones and Consejos Comunales also may have secondary effects beyond the participant population. A poor Venezuelan who does not use Misión Ribas or Misión Barrio Adentro might have family or

friends who have benefited from the program and therefore might have been more likely to offer support to the PSUV. Resources channeled to the Consejos Comunales often are used for local development projects that offer benefits beyond the immediate population of participants. The PSUV's recruitment efforts through the Misiones and Consejos Comunales are also likely to reach beyond the participant population to some degree. It seems plausible, then, that programs such as the Misiones and Consejos Comunales are the major driver of the reorientation in the Venezuelan class cleavage.

Conversely, it seems plausible that programs in Brazil and Chile, were they to exert strong effects on support for parties, might have shifted party systems along class cleavages in those countries. The comparison with Brazil is particularly useful. Previous research has argued that Bolsa Família was the major driver of a large aggregate change in Lula's electoral coalition between his first election to the presidency in 2002 and his reelection in 2006, which saw the president's personal popularity among the poor increase dramatically relative to other class groups (Hunter & Power, 2007; Zucco, 2008). In making the case for Bolsa Família as the predominant driver of this aggregate change, these studies highlight the very large number of beneficiaries, as well as the possibility for secondary effects. Were Bolsa Família to have done for the PT what it appears to have done for Lula, it seems plausible that the Brazilian party system might have shifted along class cleavages. The critical difference appears to be that the program produced no benefits for the PT.

The empirical results are thus consistent with the theory that different approaches to social protection drove variation in the realignment of party systems along class cleavages. Of course, it would be unreasonable to claim that no other variables contributed to the increase in class polarization in Venezuela. For example, the lower classes may have been somewhat more willing to look past erosions of procedural democracy and corruption scandals associated with the PSUV. When dealing with aggregate changes in the electorate, it is never realistic to think that one variable will offer a "complete" explanation. Evidence presented in this article, however, strongly suggests that mobilizational social protection was the dominant driver of this reorientation of the party system along class lines. Given the new organizational and institutional foundations that have been established through these policies, it also seems plausible that this cleavage realignment will prove durable. The nexus of Misiones, Consejos Comunales, and PSUV may help "freeze" the Venezuelan party system along the class cleavage in the same way that the nexus of labor unions and labor-based parties did so in many industrializing countries of Latin America and Western Europe during the 20th century.

Conclusion

Latin America and other developing regions are marked by the confluence of great socioeconomic inequalities and many political regimes with high levels of electoral competition. The question of how and when deep socioeconomic divides become politicized and come to structure party systems is thus particularly pertinent for understanding the politics of inequality in the developing world. The rise of the left in Latin America has seen the repoliticization of social class in some countries and offers the opportunity to build theories about new forms of class-based political mobilization that may be emerging in an age when old forms based on labor and labor-based parties are no longer viable. The primary contributions of this article were to provide an explanation for variation in party system realignment along class cleavages in three countries of the region and, in so doing, contribute to theory building regarding these new patterns of class-based political mobilization.

Future research might move in two directions. For one, it would be useful to widen the comparative lens regarding approaches to expanding social protection, their ability to build support for parties, and the implications for party system alignment along class cleavages. Technocratic approaches are common in Latin America, representing what many international institutions consider best practices for poverty alleviation. But mobilizational approaches also are trending upward, particularly in those countries where the radical left has taken power. In Nicaragua, the Ortega administration has sponsored the formation of *Consejos del Poder Ciudadanos*, a program similar to the *Consejo Comunal* initiative in Venezuela, in neighborhoods across the country and has channeled resources to them for local development. Another program, *Hambre Cero*, provides in-kind transfers to rural families to help them become sustainable farmers but is explicitly designed to incentivize local organization among beneficiaries. Observers have perceived high levels of penetration by Ortega's FSLN party, affiliating these organizations in ways similar to the PSUV in Venezuela.

Variants of the mobilizational strategy also appear to be emerging in Bolivia and Ecuador. In Bolivia, the Morales administration's most ambitious foray into social protection, a major health care reform, sponsors the formation of local-level Health Committees in similar fashion to the *Barrio Adentro* program in Venezuela. Although it is too early to tell whether the MAS party will affiliate these organizations, it seems likely, given that the party has made great efforts in general to affiliate social movements and community-based organizations, a critical plank of its strategy for building and institutionalizing

support. In Ecuador, the Correa government has also proposed an ambitious health reform that would incorporate local-level Health Committees as a major element of the program. Furthermore, one of the principal growth strategies of Correa's fledgling party, Alianza PAIS, has been to encourage the creation of local "Comités Ciudadanos Locales" as loyalist grassroots organizations. After his reelection in 2009, Correa raised the possibility of using state policy to sponsor these organizations, in ways similar to the Consejo Comunal program in Venezuela.

These other governments came to power 6 to 7 years after Chávez and the MVR in Venezuela and have only recently begun to implement their social agendas. Consequently, it is simply too early to tell how these initiatives will function in practice and how they might shape the expression of class cleavages in party systems. At a minimum, however, some variant of a mobilizational approach to social protection appears to be emerging in each case, suggesting a larger trend beyond Venezuela. Future research might compare these programs. It is possible, for example, that subtypes within the mobilizational category might be identified, perhaps differentiated by the degree of party penetration and the relative strength of state-sponsored social organizations versus extant movements. The Bolivian case, in which MAS emerged out of social movements and where extant social movements have maintained greater sway and autonomy than in Venezuela, might be particularly interesting to examine.

A second avenue of future research might examine more distal causes of the politicization of class cleavages. Why have left governments implemented technocratic policies in some countries and mobilizational policies in others? Two factors stand out. That governments commonly seen as representing a radical left have all experimented with mobilizational social protection, whereas those of the moderate left have embraced technocratic programs, suggests that an ideological dimension is critical. Another key variable may be the nature of the institutional environment and, in particular, constraints on executive authority. Mobilizational strategies involve the overt use of state resources for political advantage, which opponents are likely to block if they can. Even had left governments in countries such as Brazil and Chile wanted to pursue such strategies, they would likely have found their efforts stymied, given the robust institutional constraints these administrations faced. In contrast, the left in Venezuela, as well as in other countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, came to power amid institutional crises and enjoyed greater policy-making latitude. Although the confluence of deep socioeconomic inequalities and electoral competition may create the potential for new modes of class-based political mobilization, institutional weakness may be necessary for the realization of these strategies.

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Notes

1. The MVR was officially disbanded in December 2006 and the PSUV formed in early 2007 to unite the former MVR with several other minor parties that had supported the Bolivarian Revolution.
2. Social class is conceptualized in terms of the location of individuals within a hierarchy of socioeconomic inequality (rather than purely in terms of their relation to the means of production) and the expression of class cleavages in party systems is examined, as in many other studies, in terms of the relative support of class groups for the major party or bloc of the left (i.e., Alford, 1962; Bartolini, 2000; Bartolini & Mair, 1990; Clark, Lipset, & Rempel, 1993). The article treats class in objective rather than subjective terms, assessing whether poor individuals disproportionately support left parties but not whether those individuals understand themselves as belonging to a particular social class.
3. Data for Venezuela were obtained from the Consejo Nacional Electoral and the 2001 census. Data for Brazil were taken from a data set compiled by Cesar Zucco, who utilized information from the Tribunal Superior Eleitoral and Ipeadata. Data for Chile come from the Chilean census and the Ministerio del Interior. The geographical units are the parish in Venezuela, the municipality in Brazil, and the comuna in Chile. Measures of socioeconomic levels differ based on data availability—median household income in Venezuela (provided by the government), the human development index in Brazil (provided by the government), and a class index in Chile (constructed by the author to aggregate two types of information provided by the government, rates of high school education and the possession of household goods).
4. It is advantageous to measure the class cleavage in elections that bracket the implementation of these programs fairly closely, as we can better ascertain correlations between program implementation and aggregate electoral change. It

should be noted that the pattern of variation reflected in the data appears to have been maintained afterward in each country.

5. Priority was placed on using longitudinally comparable data sources. The Chilean data are taken from surveys by CESOP fielded in April 1999 and November 2005. The Brazilian data come from two surveys by Datafolha fielded in October 2002 and October 2006. In Venezuela, the data come from a survey by Consultores 21 fielded in July 2000 and a similar survey by IPSOS conducted in November 2006.
6. Social class is measured using a scale of socioeconomic status constructed by the author. The income and education of respondents in each survey were recoded on 1 to 4 scales. These values were added and respondents were regrouped into terciles on the combined score, so as to capture the top third of the socioeconomic hierarchy, the middle third, and the bottom third.
7. Lupu (2010) offers a dissenting opinion on class voting in Venezuela during the latter years of the Chávez era. But Handlin (2012) shows that this divergence from conventional wisdom is driven by measurement choice and that Lupu's measures fare poorly in validity and reliability assessment.
8. The term *Misiones Bolivarianas* came to be used for a variety of programs implemented by the Chávez government starting in 2003. The study focuses on programs that involved targeted expansions of social protection to the lower classes of significant scope. Some prominent programs do not meet these conditions. Misión Mercal was not examined because its reach extends well beyond the lower class (about two thirds of the respondents in the Latin American Public Opinion Project data report frequent use of Mercal). The article also does not consider programs such as Misión Robinson that reached only very small populations.
9. The frequency of these activities is difficult to estimate. But they are often cited in media coverage and official party pronouncements. For a few examples, see "PSUV anunció trabajo" (2009) and "Graduacion de Nuevos" (2008).
10. The quotation is taken from "PSUV conformó cinco" (2010).
11. The Círculos Bolivarianos, small community-based associations closely linked to the Bolivarian movement, were arguably the most important pro-Chávez organizational vehicle in advance of the 2004 elections. But Chávez also explicitly urged that the Misiones be used to mobilize voters and to increase MVR registration. See, for example, "Reclamo por la militancia" (2003).
12. Prominent party leaders openly encouraged these practices. See "Exitosas las jornadas" (2007) and "Istúriz: PSUV derrumbará" (2007).
13. These mobilizational strategies are not electoral panaceas. Indeed, facing a faltering economy after 2008, Chávez and the PSUV saw their support decline among all social classes, including the poor.
14. Of course, some political selection may occur. But there is little evidence to suggest that such practices are widespread.

15. The survey was conducted only 8 months after the MVR was disbanded and the PSUV formed as the new major party of the Bolivarian movement. Therefore, respondents who identified with either the MVR or PSUV are counted as identifying with the major left party.
16. Some of these variables were rescaled from the raw data. Education was placed on a 3-point scale, with 0 meaning less than a high school education, 0.5 indicating a high school education, and 1 indicating some level of tertiary education. To measure household wealth, I constructed a scale of consumption goods similar to that employed by Booth and Seligson (2009).
17. Unfortunately, the survey in Chile does not provide the basis for matching respondents to comunas or other relatively small geographical units for which aggregate data are available.
18. Genetic matching is a generalization of Mahanalobis matching and propensity score matching that utilizes an evolutionary search algorithm to find the set of matches that optimizes covariate balance between treatment and control groups.
19. For binary data on the outcome variable, Rosenbaum's (2002) methods employ McNemar's test of significance in 2×2 tables, estimating the upper-bound p value under the hypothesis that there is no treatment effect.

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