STRATEGIC MOBILIZATION UNDER UNCERTAINTY: THE LOGIC OF PSOE MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES IN THE 1996 SPANISH ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

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1. Introduction*

Electoral campaigns are a crucial period for any political party in which they spend huge amounts of money, craft their candidates' lists in a fashion that will appeal most to the voters, and decide places to strategically stage candidate rallies. Paradoxically, citizens perceive this frantic activity of parties as a useless and chaotic waste of resources. This view is, to a great extent, mistaken.

Mobilization efforts by political parties during campaigns are far from chaotic. Party leaders are not listed as candidates in every district, and rallies are not held in every city. Mobilization is costly, and party resources, although substantial, are limited. Even the largest parties face budget constraints. They cannot spend large amounts of money in every district, nor in every neighbourhood of every city. They also have time constraints. Campaigns extend for a fixed period, only fifteen days in Spain. In such a short period of time the candidate does not have enough time to hold rallies in every district.

Due to this scarcity of resources political parties must decide carefully how to allocate their resources. What decision rules govern their decisions? How do they decide which electoral districts to target? The literature on strategic mobilization usually stresses the importance of the closeness of the election in the district: parties concentrate their mobilization efforts in those places where the election is close. The theoretical underpinnings of this proposition, however, are surprisingly underdeveloped. Closeness is, in fact, an expectation about the anticipated result of the election. There is a body of theoretical economic work about how expectations are formed and how they influence an agent's strategies, but there is little theoretical work on the subject of strategic mobilization. How do politicians form their expectations about the closeness of the election in a district? What pieces of information do they use? How do they weigh this information? These are the questions I address in this paper.

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I address these questions theoretically, and through the empirical analysis of the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Worker Party) allocation of resources among electoral districts in the 1996 general election[1]. I begin by discussing the territorial targets of the PSOE's mobilization; I show that, contrary to what is usually argued, maximization of votes is not always equivalent to maximization of the probability of winning. Second, I present two hypotheses to explain the strategic allocation of resources: the strategies of the opposition party and the expected closeness of the election. I then apply the theoretical framework of rational expectations and bayesian learning to analyse how parties anticipate the closeness of the election. Throughout this paper I test these hypotheses using two types of empirical data: quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative analysis draws upon interviews with several of the people in charge of the PSOE electoral campaign. The quantitative analysis draws upon estimates from a non-recursive regression model.

2. The Party's Objectives

Before analyzing the mobilizational strategies that parties follow during electoral campaigns, the objectives of those strategies must be clarified. I assume, not unrealistically, that parties want to win the elections. I also assume that, at least during the campaign, parties are unitary actors with this single aim in mind[2].

In much of the literature, winning an election is thought of as equivalent to the maximization of the expected votes (Brams and Davis, 1974: 116; Erikson and Palfrey; 2000: 596-99; Kenny and Mcburnett, 1994: 699-70; Cox *et al,* 1998: 464-66). However, what "winning" means in terms of votes depends to a great extent on the electoral system, the type of representation, and the post-electoral coalitions (Aranson, Hinich and Ordeshook, 1973: 202-3; 1974: 135-38).

[1] The strategic territorial distribution of resources is not the only tactic parties can adopt. They can also concentrate their mobilizational efforts on certain groups of people. See Rosesntone and Hansen (1993).

[2] I relax this assumption in my Ph. D dissertation.

In Spain, even though the goal of the main parties – the Popular Party (PP) and the Spanish Socialist Worker Party (PSOE)- is to win elections, it is not so clear how this goal is translated into votes. Under Spain's parliamentary system, the winner of an election is the party that gains the majority of seats in the Congress. The seats are assigned by means of a proportional system and the number of electors per seat varies across districts[3]. At an aggregate level, given the disproportionality of electors per seat across districts, the maximization of the number of votes is not the same as the maximization of the number of seats and, therefore, of the probability of winning[4]. At the district level, the maximization of votes is not equivalent to the maximization of seats either. For example, suppose a small district with four seats, in which one party obtains 59 per cent of the votes, and a second party, the remaining 41 per cent. In this case, each of the parties will obtain two of the seats. The party that maximizes the number of votes does not obtain the majority of the seats.

Parties are aware of this fact. Members of the PSOE's Electoral Committee, when asked about this question, argued that the electoral targets are measured in seats, not in votes. The party's guide to the 1996 electoral campaign makes essentially the same point: "(…) the electoral target of the party in this election must be an outcome that allows the formation of a socialist government (…) in political terms this means *winning the elections; that is, being the first party in terms of votes and/or seats* (...)*"* . (Emphasis added).

This distinction between maximization of seats and maximization of votes is important for several reasons. First, electoral strategies are a function of the party's goals (Morrow, 1994; Morton, 1999). The party's main goal (whether maximization of seats or maximization of votes) will affect what is the optimal strategy[5]. To show this, consider again

[3] The number of electors per seat ranges from 26.500 in Soria, to 121.461 in Madrid.

[4] In the 1999 regional elections in Catalonia, for example, the party that obtained more votes, the PSC (Catalonian Socialist Party), lost the election because it failed to obtain the majority of the seats..

[5]However, if the goals are equivalent, strategies do not difer. For equivalent goals to exist, two assumptions are necessary. The first one is symmetric electoral competition. We consider an election symmetric if it fulfills two conditions: the strategies for both players are the same, and the interchange of strategies between players implies the interchange of the payoffs. The second assumption is that the votes of each party are distributed normally around its mean. Taking into account these assumptions, we can consider equivalent the maximization of the probability of winning (number of seats) and the maximization of the expected majority (votes). If the goals are equivalent, the strategies will be the same (Aranson, Hinich and Ordeshook 1973: 211-219; 1974: 140-3; Ordeshook, 1992: 141-143). This conclusion has been highly criticied because of its

the example of the four-seat district I mentioned earlier. The party that expects the 41 per cent of the votes will not mobilize in that district even if it thinks that mobilization will give it the majority of votes because below 59 per cent, that majority would not mean any additional seat. Second, the distinction between maximizing votes and maximizing seats conditions the proper way to measure the closeness of the election. The problem of mistakenly equating maximization of votes with maximization of seats is a common error in most indicators of closeness. The most common measure of closeness is the percentage of votes of the first party minus the percentage of votes of the second party (Cox and Munger, 1989: 225; Nagler and Leighley, 1992: 327; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993: 179-185; Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies, 1998: 466, 473; Boix and Riba, 2000: 115-119). This measure captures the difference in terms of votes between the two main parties but it may not capture how close a party is to winning or losing a seat. Hence, we need to establish precisely what a party's goal is and how best to assess the information needed to attain that goal.

3. How do Expectations about the Election affect the Party's Strategies?

What do parties do to achieve their goals? The literature on strategic mobilization argues that parties increase their efforts where outcomes are close (Cox and Munger, 1989: 223; Grier, 1989; Snyder, 1989: 643; Nagler and Leighley, 1992: 326-331; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993: 179-185; Aldrich, 1995: 103; Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies, 1998: 449; Shachar and Nalebuff, 1999: 525-529; Erikson and Palfrey, 2000; 604-6)[6]. Parties mobilize when they think that their effort can alter the final outcome. Because vote elasticity to party efforts is limited, only when the difference in votes between parties is small can mobilization have an effect on the outcome. Parties will mobilize when the probability that their effort will decide

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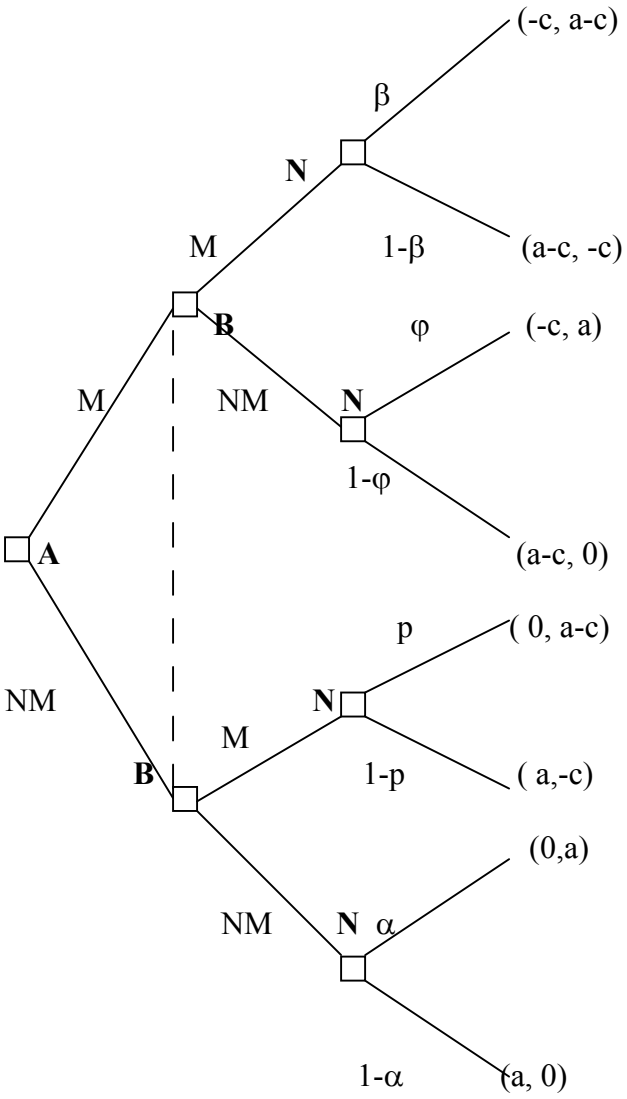
questionable assumptions. More concretely, the condition of symmetry has been questioned. For some authors, to think that when parties interchange strategies they also interchange payoffs is not very likely (Ordeshook, 1986: 158; Snyder, 1989: 638). The assumption of normal distribution of the votes demands also too much.

[6] Many articles analyze the effect of closeness not on the elites' strategies, but on the political participation of the citizens. Some of the more interesting works are: Grier (1989); Matsusaka, (1993); Kirchgässner and Schimmelpfennig, (1992); Matsusaka and Palda (1993).

the outcome of the election (p) multiplied by the payoffs of winning the election (in our case, getting a new seat) (B) is higher than the mobilization costs (C) (Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies, 1998: 451): $p*B>C$. Note, that this simple equation does not take into account the strategic component of mobilization, that is, the impact on the mobilization decision of the rival party's strategies. This strategic component must be taken into account in a game theoretic model. The shape of this mobilization game is that of figure 1.

In this game there are two players, party A and party B. Each party has two options: mobilize or not. Once they have adopted their strategies, a nature move determines which of them has won the election. If both mobilize, party B wins with probability β, and party A wins with probability $1-\beta$. If only party B mobilizes, it wins with probability p, and lose with probability 1-p. If party B does not mobilize and party A does, the first one wins with probability φ, and loses with probability $1-\varphi$. If neither of them mobilize, the probability of party B winning is α, and the probability of A winning is $1-\alpha$. It is assumed that each party decides whether to mobilize or not before the beginning of the campaign, and, therefore, neither party knows with full certainty if the other is going to mobilize. The payoff for winning the election is denoted by a. The loss of the election leads to the *status quo ante*, with a payoff of 0. The cost of mobilization

Figure 1. *The mobilization game*



is denoted by –c. Being $p(A_M)$ the probability that party A will mobilize and $p(B_M)$ the probability that party B will mobilize, the expected utilities for both players of their two strategies are as follows:

Party A:

$$EU(M) = p(B_M)*\beta*(-c) + p(B_M)(1-\beta)(a-c) + (1-p(B_M))*\varphi*(-c) + (1-p(B_M))*(1-\varphi)(a-c) \quad (1)$$

$$EU(NM) = p(B_M)(1-p)(a) + (1-p(B_M))*(1-\alpha)(a) \quad (2)$$

Party B:

$$EU(M) = p(A_M)*\beta*(a-c) + p(A_M)(1-\beta)(-c) + (1-p(A_M))*p*(a-c) + (1-p(A_M))*(1-p)(-c) \quad (3)$$

$$EU(NM) = p(A_M)*\varphi*(a-c) + p(A_M)(1-\varphi)(-c) + (1-p(A_M))*\alpha*(a-c) + (1-p(A_M))*(1-\alpha)(-c) \quad (4)$$

A joint mobilization decision is an equilibrium, given (1) and (2), when $\beta+(c/a)< p$, and, given (3) and (4), when $\beta-(c/a)> \varphi$. The beliefs of each party are the following: $p(A_M)= 1$, and $p(B_M) = 1$.

In other words, if party A thinks that party B is going to mobilize, it will mobilize if its probability of losing if both mobilize plus the ratio between the costs and the benefits of winning the election is lower than its probability of losing if only party B mobilizes. And, if party B thinks that party A will mobilize, it will mobilize if its probability of winning the election if both mobilize minus the ratio between the cost of mobilization and the benefits of winning the election is higher than its probability of winning the election if only party A mobilizes. This equilibrium shows us that if one party believes that the other is going to mobilize, this can influence its behaviour under certain circumstances. So, the first hypothesis we will test quantitatively below is:

Hypothesis 1: The party's mobilization decision is influenced by the mobilization decision of the opponent party.

Up to now, I have analyzed how electoral mobilization is affected by the strategies of the opposition party. The next step is to focus on an element already mentioned at the beginning of this section, and implicitly included in the probability of winning a new seat as the result of mobilization: the closeness of the election. The probability of getting a new seat as a result of mobilization depends on two variables: the initial predicted distance between both parties (the closeness of the election); and the vote elasticity to party mobilization[7]. The lower the predicted distance and the higher the vote elasticity to mobilization, the higher the probability of winning as a result of mobilization[8]. Therefore, in the previous game, the

[7] Cox et al. (1998) include another parameter in the model: the benefits derived from the contact with the people mobilized. The higher the networks of the mobilized person, the higher the indirect effects of the mobilization efforts. However, it is doubtful that parties had enough information to decide who has more social networks.

[8] The effect of the vote elasticity on the mobilization decision has been much less analyzed. It could be said that vote elasticity has been introduced in the models in an implicit way. Given that the threshold for an election to be considered close is just three, four or five percentage points of difference between the two parties, the indirect assumption is that vote elasticity to mobilization is limited. If we say, for example, that an election is close when there is a difference of four points, and we do not say so if the difference is eight points, we are assuming implicitly that the party can raise its vote by just four points.

closeness of the election was implicitly included in probabilities α, β, φ, and p. In equilibrium, only if the election is close are there differences between the probabilities of winning by mobilization and the probability of winning without mobilization. If the election is not close, for example, probabilities β and φ will not differ very much. Therefore, the equilibrium will be plausible only if the election is close.

The Spanish case seems to confirm the proposition that the closeness of the district affects the mobilization efforts of the parties. According to one person responsible for the PSOE's electoral campaign, the party gave priority to those districts where they might win or lose an additional seat. For instance, the PSOE included the most popular members of the party in the electoral lists of the closest districts[9]. In some cases, as for example the PP in the 1996 general election, the party also designed the candidate's scheduled rallies to take into account the districts where the election was closest[10].

In the light of this evidence the second hypothesis to test is:

Hypothesis 2: The closer the election, the greater the mobilization

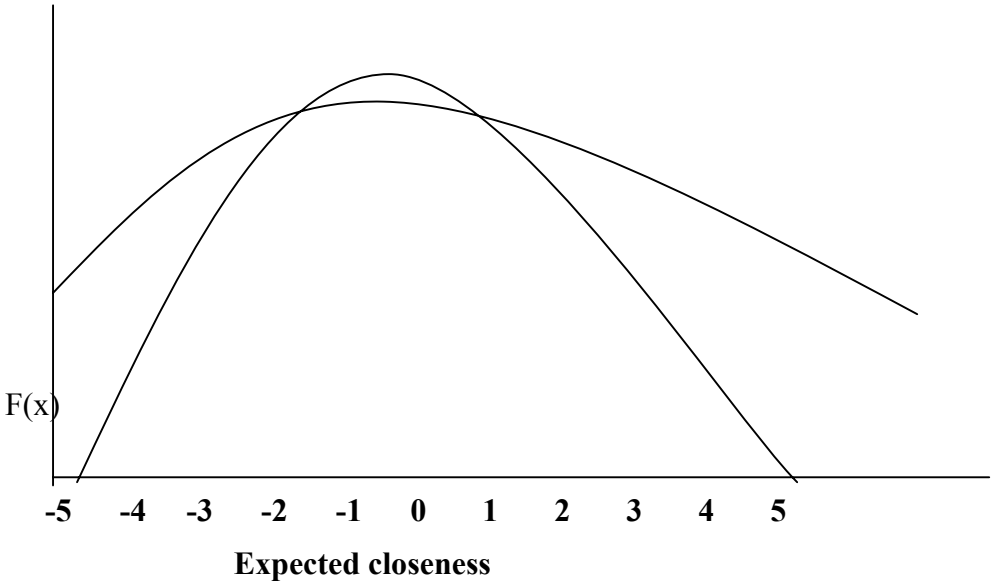
Although the closer the election, the more mobilization, it is not always clear to a party when an election is close. Electoral campaigns are filled with uncertainty. Parties make estimations -subjective beliefs- of the chances of the uncertain electoral results. Party's beliefs can be represented as a random variable (Álvarez, 1997:31 Cioffi-Revilla, 1998: 202). The mean of this variable represents the predicted closeness, and its variance, the uncertainty about that prediction. The higher the variance around the mean, the greater the uncertainty. One way of representing this variable graphically appears in figure 2. The expected closeness represented by the difference in percentage points for the last seat between the two main parties is the X axis. The Y axis represents the distribution of expected closeness. The two curves in the figure represent two uncertainty levels over electoral results. In both curves, the

[9] Interview with Ignacio Varela, October 2000.

[10] Interview with one of the members of the PP's electoral committee, October 2000.

central tendency of the closeness is the same –centered around 0. However, the variances of the distributions are different, which means different levels of uncertainty[11].

Figure 2



As figure 2 shows, parties' beliefs about the closeness of the district can be represented as a random variable. But how do parties form their beliefs?. What pieces of information do they use? Unfortunately, the literature on strategic mobilization does not offer a good answer to these questions. Little is said about the way parties form their electoral expectations. Most scholars simply use the measure of closeness that works best empirically. Most use the outcome of the previous general elections as a proxy for expected closeness (Nagler and Leighley, 1992: 326-28; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Boix and Riba, 2000; Eriksson and Palfrey, 2000: 600-2). These authors argue that parties use information about the past to predict the future. Parties have what economists call adaptative expectations (Sheffrin, 1983: 22; Minford, 1992: 6-10).

[11] The effect of the uncertainty of information in parties' perceptions and its graphic representation is taken from Álvarez, 1998: 30-3. This author analyzes the effects on voters of the uncertainty about the position of parties about issues. I have applied by analogy to my case his assumptions and hypothesis.

Parties, no doubt, use past information to form their expectations about the closeness of the current election. In the initial stages of the campaign strategists analyse the district by district results from previous elections (local, general, European)[12]. However, according to members of the PSOE's Electoral Committee, the party did not rely solely on the results of the 1993 general elections or the 1995 local elections to predict electoral closeness in 1996. Ignacio Valera, a member of the PSOE Electoral Committee, argued that using only previous electoral results was inappropriate. The electoral context changes very quickly, he argued, and using the results of the previous election to predict the next one is simply too risky. That is why the PSOE also used data from pre-electoral surveys. Actually, one of the most important activities prior to a campaign is conducting a survey large enough to produce a reliable vote estimate at the district level.

Therefore, parties do not rely on only one source of information –retrospective (the results of previous elections) or prospective (pre-electoral surveys). Rather, they, combine every piece of information they have at their disposal to obtain the most accurate expectations. But, how do they weight these pieces of information?

Bayes theorem provides a strategy for weighting old and new information. Quite simply, Bayes' theorem states that people use new information to update their prior beliefs (Alvarez, 1997, 42-3; Bartels, 1993; 268-9; Messeguer, 2002). A party's final expectations about closeness are based, first, on its initial beliefs ("priors"). These prior beliefs will come, most likely, from previous electoral results. Parties update these "priors" in the light of the new information they encounter, that is, information gathered via the preelectoral surveys, to form their posterior beliefs. According to Bayes theorem the posterior distribution of beliefs is proportional to the product of the prior distribution and the distribution of the new information. More formally:

$$P(\theta_{it} | \gamma_{it}\, \eta_{it}) \propto P(\theta_{it} | \gamma_{it}) * P(\theta_{it} | \, | \gamma_{it}\, \eta_{it}) \quad (5)$$

[12] Interview with Ludolfo Paramio, December 2001.

Where θ_{it} represents the closeness in a given district i in time t, γ_{it} the party's knowledge of that result and η_{it} is the new encountered information. The mean and the variance of that posterior distribution are:

$$\mu_3 = \mu_1\pi_1 + \mu_2\pi_2 / \pi_1+\pi_2 \quad (6)$$

$$\pi_3 = \pi_1+\pi_2 \quad (7)$$

Equations 5 and 6 tell us that the party's final beliefs about the results of the election are a weighted average of the prior predictions (from previous elections) and the prediction of the new information (from the preelectoral surveys). The weights are the precision of each piece of information, that is, their variances. Therefore, if the new information is very imprecise its impact on the final prediction of the party is lower. Note also that given (7), the precision of the new information affects the precision of the posteriors.

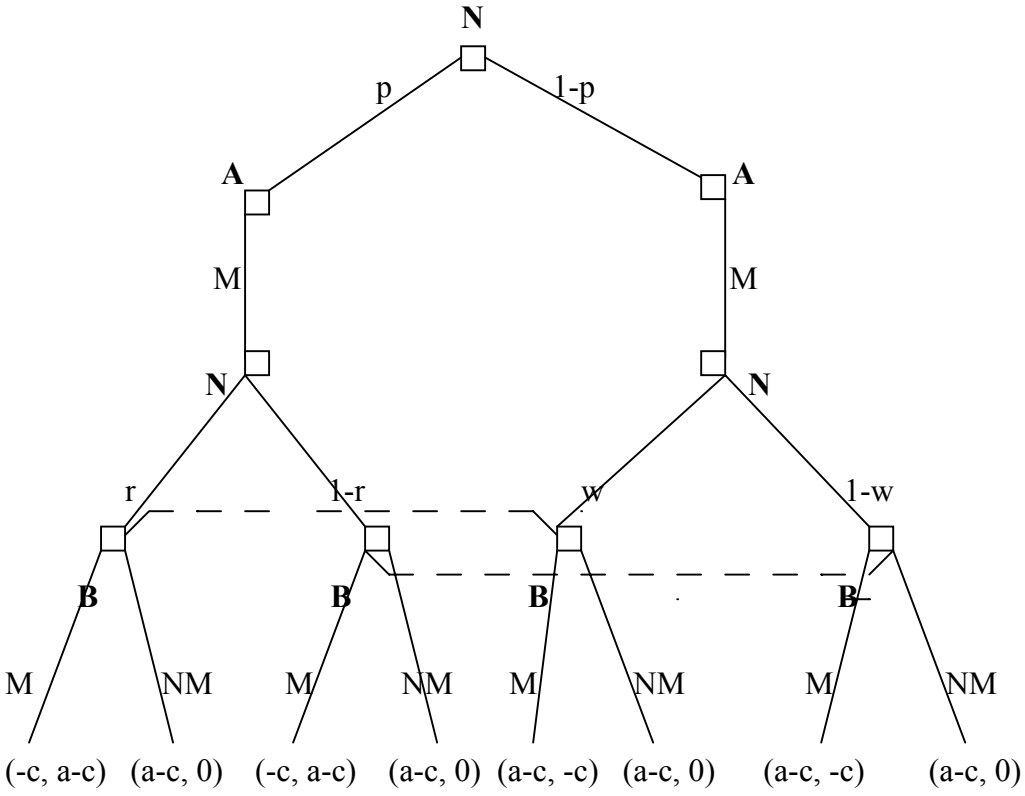
The new information parties have –the preelectoral surveys- is not fully precise. Often, these surveys do not predict accurately the results of the election[13]. Parties know this. Because the survey results are sometimes unreliable, it makes sense that the higher the uncertainty of the new information the lower the importance of the new information in the posterior expectations[14](Alvarez, 1997: 44, Bartles, 1993: 268). This follows from Bayes theorem.

So far I have illustrated how a party updates its prognosis in light of new information. I have also argued that, following Bayes theorem, if the new information is imprecise not only is its impact on the final prognosis lower, but also the precision of the prognosis will be lower. To see how the uncertainty over electoral predictions affects parties' strategies, consider the game illustrated in figure 3.

[13] The preelectoral survey conducted by the newspaper *El País*, for instance, predicted that the election was close in only 11 districts. But after the election there were 18 districts where the distance for the last seat between the two main parties was fewer than three points.

[14] Interview to Ignacio Varela, October 2000, and interview to Ludolfo Paramio, December 2001.

Figure 3. *The game of electoral mobilization with uncertainty about the predictive capacity of parties*



In this game, the first move by nature determines if the election is going to be close (p) or not (1-p). After this, party A moves. For simplicity's sake, I assume that party A always mobilizes. After this, a second nature move establishes if the predictions of party B about the closeness of the election are correct or not. The term r denotes the conditional probability that party B rightly predicts the closeness of the election when the election is close. 1-r is the conditional probability of predicting that the election is not close when it is close. The term w denotes the conditional probability that party B wrongly predicts that the election is close when it is not close, and 1-w is the conditional probability that party B predicts that the election is not close when it is certainly not close. Finally, after this prediction, party B decides to mobilize or not. It is assumed that, if the election is close and party B mobilizes, it wins. In this case, it obtains a payoff of a-c, where c denotes the cost of mobilization. If it does not mobilize and the election is close, it loses, obtaining a payoff of 0. If the election is not close, it always loses. In that case, it will obtain a payoff of 0 if it does not mobilize, and a payoff of –c if it does.

Party B has, therefore, four possible strategies:

- (M, M): always mobilize.
- (M, NM): Mobilize when it predicts that the election is going to be close, and not mobilize when it predicts that the election is not going to be close.
- (NM, M): Do not mobilize when it predicts that the election is going to be close, and mobilize when it predicts that the election is not going to be close.
- (NM, NM): Never mobilize.

The expected utility of each of these four strategies is the following:

$$EU(M, M) = p(a-c)+(1-p)-c \quad (8)$$
$$EU(M, NM) = pr(a-c)+(1-p)w(-c) \quad (9)$$
$$EU(NM, M) = p(1-r)(a-c) + (1-p)(1-w)(-c) \quad (10)$$
$$EU(NM, NM) = 0 \quad (11)$$

From these four strategies, we reject the third one, which is clearly irrational. The comparison among the other three strategies suggests when mobilization is the best strategy. From the comparison of the three strategies, we obtain the following outcome:

- NM, NM (never mobilize) is the best strategy when $((1-p)/p)*((-c)/(a-c))>r/w$ (12)
- M, NM (mobilize only when the party predicts closeness) is the best strategy when $r/w > ((1-p)/p)*((-c)/(a-c)) > (1-r)/(1-w)$ (13)
- M, M (always mobilize) is the best strategy when $(1-r)/(1-w) >((1-p)/p)*((-c)/(a-c))$ (14)

These equilibria intuitively have sense. If we suppose that r=1 and w=0, that is, that the party has full predictive capacity about the closeness of the election, then $r/w=\infty$, and, therefore, party B, given (13), will always mobilize when it predicts that the election will be close. The probability of mobilizing when the party predicts that the election will be close decreases with decreasing values of r and higher values of w. That is, the lower its predictive capacity, the lower the probability of mobilizing.

This game illustrates that a party takes into account the uncertainty about its own predictions in the mobilization decision. My second hypothesis was that the closer the

election in a given district, the higher the mobilization efforts in that district. To this I can now add a third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: the higher the predictive capacity of the party (that is, the lower the uncertainty about the preelectoral survey results), the higher the probability of mobilizing if it predicts that the election will be close.

In the following section, I test the three hypotheses. To some extent, these hypotheses have been tested with data gathered through interviews I conducted with members of the electoral committees of the PSOE and the PP. A quantitative testing of the hypotheses is designed to complement these qualitative findings.

4. The Causes of Territorial Mobilization in Spain: Empirical Analysis

For the quantitative analysis, the population consists of the fifty-two Spanish electoral districts in the 1996 general election. I have gathered the data from different sources. The secretary of organization of the PSOE has directly provided me the expenditure's figures. The data for the four Catalan districts were not available. PP's expenditure's figures have been provided by the Gerency. The data about the places where there were rallies of Felipe González and José María Aznar have been taken from newspapers.

4.1. Territorial Mobilization: the Dependent variable

To measure mobilization appropriately, it is necessary to take into account the parties' various activities during the electoral campaign. I rely on two proxies of mobilization: expenditure in the district and rallies in the district on behalf of the candidate who leads the party.

PSOE's decentralized expenditure

The first indicator of a party's mobilization efforts in a district is the money the party has invested in the district. During the 1996 campaign, the PSOE spent 2469.036.549 pesetas[15]. The expenditure can be divided into parts: the first and most important, about two thousand million pesetas, was spent in a centralized way from the party's central office. This money paid for mailings, advertisements on television, radio and in newspapers, and part of the rallies of the party's leader[16]. The second and much smaller part (430.631.696 pesetas), was distributed in a decentralized way, from the Federal Electoral Committee to the provincial committees[17]. This money was used to pay for campaign activities at district level, mainly to stage rallies, both those that featured national leaders and those that featured more local candidates[18].

To measure the distribution of expenditures of the PSOE across districts during the 1996 electoral campaign I focus on how the party allocated the 430 millions pesetas to the provincial committees. [19]. This is the only part of the expenditure desegregated at the district level. The other two thousand millions are not distributed directly to the provincial electoral committees, but retained by the central electoral committee[20].

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[15] Report of the Tribunal de Cuentas.

[16] Interview with Ignacio Varela, October 2000; Méndez (1998:283).

[17] PSOE internal document. Organization Secretary.

[18] Interview with Jose Manuel Cercas, November 2000.

[19] These decentralized expenditures do not account for all local expenditures. The most important federations of the PSOE, such as Catalonia or Andalusia, have money of their own, and use some of these funds for electoral mobilization Although this is true, the decentralized part of the expenditure signals the importance that the party attributes to each district during the electoral campaign.

[20] The central electoral committee invest this assignment in advertisements and publicity. Although this main part of the expenditure is not distributed to the provincial electoral commitees, this does not mean that it is not invested strategically across districts. The central electoral committee invests part of this assigment in advertisements in local newspapers, rallies at the district level, publicity in local radios and local televisions. I will assume that this second part of the expenditure, the centralized one, is invested partly strategically across districts, as the responsibles of the PSOE's Electoral Committee told me.

The campaign funds were distributed unevenly across the 52 electoral districts with amounts that varied from 1.500.000 pesetas in Ávila to 40.000.000 pesetas in Madrid. I have normalized the amount the party assigned to each district by dividing the amount by the number of electors. The PSOE assigned in a decentralized way a mean of 18 pesetas per elector. The standard deviation was 7,9 pesetas, more than one-third of the mean. In the light of this, it seems that the money invested by the PSOE shows a considerable variation among districts, even after controlling by the number of electors.

The districts where the party made the largest investment per elector were: Cáceres (24 pts), Guadalajara (38 pts), Soria (37 pts) and Valencia (26 pts)[21]. The districts where the party invested the least were: Álava (10 pts), Baleares (11 pts), and Pontevedra (11 pts).

Rallies of Felipe González

The second indicator of mobilization I have used is the number of rallies in which the national candidate participated. Felipe González took part in 12 rallies in Badajoz, Barcelona, Ciudad Real, A Coruña, Madrid, Murcia, Oviedo, Salamanca, Sevilla, Valencia, Vizcaya and Zaragoza. Multiple occurrence occurred in Madrid and Barcelona. I have coded this variable as a dummy with 1 indicating that the leader visited that district, and value 0 that he did not.

4.2. The causes of territorial mobilization: the independent variables

To understand the logic of party territorial mobilizing efforts, I include in the empirical model: the expected closeness, the uncertainty about the expected closeness, the mobilization strategies of the opponent, and the size of the district as control variable.

[21] Notice that two of the districts where more money was allocated –Soria and Guadalajara- are very small districts, with few electors. The reason for the comparatively high expenditure in those places is to some extent spurious. The party allocate a minimum of 4.000.000 millions to each district. Given that these districts have fewer electors than the others, once I divided the expenditure by the electors the results are bigger than for other districts.

The expected closeness

It is not an easy task to construct an indicator that accounts for the party's calculation of the expected closeness of the election. Assuming that Spanish political parties are seat, and not vote, maximizers, the measure must assess the closeness of the seat not vote results. The most commonly used indicator of closeness is the percentage of votes for the first party minus the percentage for the second. This indicator reflects the difference of votes between the two main parties, but does not necessarily reflect the likelihood of winning or losing an additional seat. In districts in which more than two parties obtain electoral representation, the battle over the last seat can be very close despite the fact that there is a great vote distance between the two main parties[22].

Besides a valid measure of an expected closeness indicator must, accurately, reflect the process by which parties form their rational expectations about the electoral results. My theory suggests that political parties use new information to update their beliefs. The posterior beliefs of parties are a function of their initial beliefs, the new information they receive, and the uncertainty about this new information. I rely on various types of data to build a measure for this process.

Data for the new information were drawn from pre-electoral surveys. Because I did not have access to the surveys conducted by each party, I have used as a proxy the CIS 1996 pre-electoral survey. Given that these results are in percentages of the votes I have calculated the closeness as approximations to the D'Hont rule[23].

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[22] This occured, for example, in Barcelona during the 1996 general elections. The distance between the two main parties, the PSC and CIU, was 10 percentage points. However, the distance for the last seat was barely a percentage point, due to the presence of other parties (in this case, ERC [Catalonian Republican Left]).

[23] Specifically, I divide the percentage of votes obtained by each party by each of the seats of the district. That is, if a district has five seats and there are three parties with possibilities of obtaining a seat, I divide the percentages votes of each of those parties by 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. I take the remainder of the party that would have won the last seat and calculate the difference in percentage with the remainder for the party that is closest. This difference between the party´s remainder that has obtained the last seat and the remainder of the closest party must be multiplied by the quotient by which I have divided the total votes. The outcome is the percentage that the opponent party would have needed to seize the last seat from the party that has obtained it. The closeness is presented in Table 1 in absolute values. The range for the variable of closeness is one to ten. The lowest values denote less distance between parties and therefore more closeness, whereas the higher values denote less distance between parties and therefore less closeness.

The uncertainty over the expected closeness

I have also built an indicator of the uncertainty of the new information. Here I followed the statements of members of the PSOE's Electoral Committee. I have calculated the uncertainty of the surveys as the difference between the mean vote to the party in the district in the last two elections (1993, 1995) and the percentage of the vote predicted in the 1996 preelectoral survey. The higher the difference, the less credible the survey's result, and the higher the uncertainty. The data for the expected closeness and for the uncertainty over the results are provided in table 1.

The opponents' strategies

Electoral campaigns are carried out in strategic context. A party takes into account its opponents' strategies when it constructs its own. If its opponent devotes a great deal of effort in a given district and it does not do so, the opponent might be greatly advantaged in that district. That is why parties design their own mobilization strategies with their opponent's strategies in mind. In the case of the PSOE, these would be the mobilization strategies of the PP, and vice versa[24]. Hence, to explain the districts that are targeted for Felipe González's rallies, I need to take into account those districts where there have been rallies featuring José María Aznar. José María Aznar visited the following districts: Baleares, Barcelona, Burgos, Cáceres, A Coruña, Huelva, Logroño, Madrid, Málaga, Murcia, Oviedo, Sevilla, Valencia, Valladolid and Vizcaya. The descriptives of PP's decentralized expenditure in 1996 are shown in table 2.

[24] The object of this work is only the analysis of the strategies of the two main Spanish parties. There are some minor parties in the Spanish political system, but they are not included in this analysis.

Table 1. *Expected closeness and uncertainty for the PSOE in 1996 general election*[*]

Districts	Preelectoral Closeness 1996	Uncertainty
Álava	6,00	11,50
Albacete	3,00	8,50
Alicante	1,00	5,45
Almería	9,00	10,95
Ávila	7,60	6,75
Badajoz	1,20	25,45
Baleares	1,60	13,65
Barcelona	,30	10,65
Burgos	6,00	3,05
Cáceres	2,00	9,40
Cádiz	2,50	9,45
Castellón	6,60	10,80
Ciudad R	1,70	25,00
Córdoba	1,00	18,10
Coruña	,50	8,10
Cuenca	,	11,50
Gerona	5,00	8,50
Granada	6,40	5,45
Guadalajara	5,10	10,95
Guipúzcoa	2,30	6,75
Huelva	1,80	25,45
Huesca	7,20	13,65
Jaén	4,80	10,65
León	2,00	3,05
Lérida	6,00	9,40
Lugo	1,70	9,45
Logroño	10,00	10,80
Madrid	1,10	25,00
Málaga	3,60	18,10
Murcia	4,00	8,10
Orense	7,00	4,00
Oviedo	7,00	17,70
Palencia	,	11,80
Las Palmas	,	13,60
Pontevedra	1,00	9,90
Salamanca	,	8,00
Santander	,	18,00
Segovia	10,00	7,60
Sevilla	,70	9,00
Soria	16,00	15,00
Tarragona	1,70	21,80
Teruel	5,50	10,45
Toledo	1,50	15,80
Valencia	3,00	4,05
Valladolid	6,00	9,55
Vizcaya	1,60	9,65
Zamora	3,30	10,65
Zaragoza	1,50	20,70

Source: Own elaboration using the *Atlas electoral de la democracia española* (1997) and CIS 2207 preelectoral Survey.

[*] For Cuenca, Salamanca, Santander, Palencia y Las Palmas data are not available in the Survey. For the rest of the districts the data are calculated in absolute values.

Table 2. *PP's standarized expenditure per district descriptives*

Mean	18,6
Standard Deviation	7,5
Maximum	44,03
Minimum	9,12
N	45

Source: PP's Gerency

Number of seats

The size of the district is measured by the number of seats. In Spain, there is a wide variation in the size of districts. The smallest districts have three seats, whereas the biggest ones -Madrid and Barcelona- have more than thirty. Many scholars suggest that the proportionality of the electoral system is one of the most important explanations of party strategies (Cox, 1997). According to the strategic voting literature parties will not mobilize in small districts, where their probability of gaining a seat is nearly null. However, this is not applicable to the mobilization efforts of large parties such as the PP and PSOE. Large parties will obtain seats in every district, whatever its proportionality. Even in districts with just three seats, both will obtain electoral representation. Therefore, they will always mobilize to a certain extent in each district. This does not necessarily mean that the electoral system does not play any role in the parties' strategic calculations. They implicitly take into account the electoral system in order to calculate the closeness of the last seat in each district. It is in this indirect way where the electoral system enters in the model.

4.3. The Model

The hypotheses developed in the theoretical section 3 are summarized in the following figure.

H_1: The party's mobilization decision is influenced by the mobilization decision of the opponent party

H_2 The higher the closeness, the higher the mobilization

H_3 The higher the predictive capacity of the party (that is, the lower the uncertainty about the preelectoral survey results), the higher the probability of mobilizing if it predicts that the election will be close.

As has been discussed in the first part of the paper, there are theoretical reasons to suspect that a simultaneous relationship exists between the PSOE's and PP's mobilization efforts: the PSOE's mobilization efforts influence PP's efforts and vice versa. The circularity in causality means that the independent estimations of the equations for the mobilization of PP and PSOE are inappropriate and would lead to incorrect estimates of the coefficients in each equation[25]. To solve the problem of simultaneity, I need to estimate a non-recursive structural model This model can be shown in two equations[26].

$$MobPSOE_i=\beta_1+\beta_{11}Seats_{1i}+\beta_{12}PSOECloseness_{2i}+\beta_{13}PSOEuncertainty_{3i}+\tau_{11}PPmobilization_i+\varepsilon_{1i} \quad (15)$$

$$MobPP_i=\beta_1+\beta_{21}Seats_{1i}+\beta_{24}PPCloseness_{4i}+\beta_{25}PPuncertainty_{5i}+\tau_{21}PPmobilization_i+\varepsilon_{2i} \quad (16)$$

Where MobPSOE is district i's PSOE mobilization effort, MobPP is district i's PPmobilization effort, $PSOEcloseness_{2i}$ is the i's district expected closeness for this party,

[25] The two error terms are likely to be correlated, and the error term of each of the equations is likely to be correlated with right-hand side variables in each equation. As a consequence of this endogeneity, the estimates of the parameters in this model are biased.

[26] The model is correctly identified and permits consistent estimates of the parameters. To be correctly identified, the model has to fulfil the order condition. It states that the number of exogenous variables excluded from each equation must be at least as great as the number of endogenous variables included in each equation (Alvarez 1997:83-88; Maruyama, 1998: 105-106). The model of figure 4 fulfils this condition.

$PPcloseness_{4i\ is}$ the i's district expected closeness for the PP, $PSOEuncertainty_{3i}$ constitutes district i's uncertainty over the electoral results for the PSOE, $PPuncertainty_{5i}$ constitutes district i's uncertainty over the electoral results for the PP, the β´s ant the τ's are parameters to be estimated, and ε's are error terms in each model.

4.4. Results

The causes of mobilization: the decentralized expenditure of the PSOE in the 1996's general elections

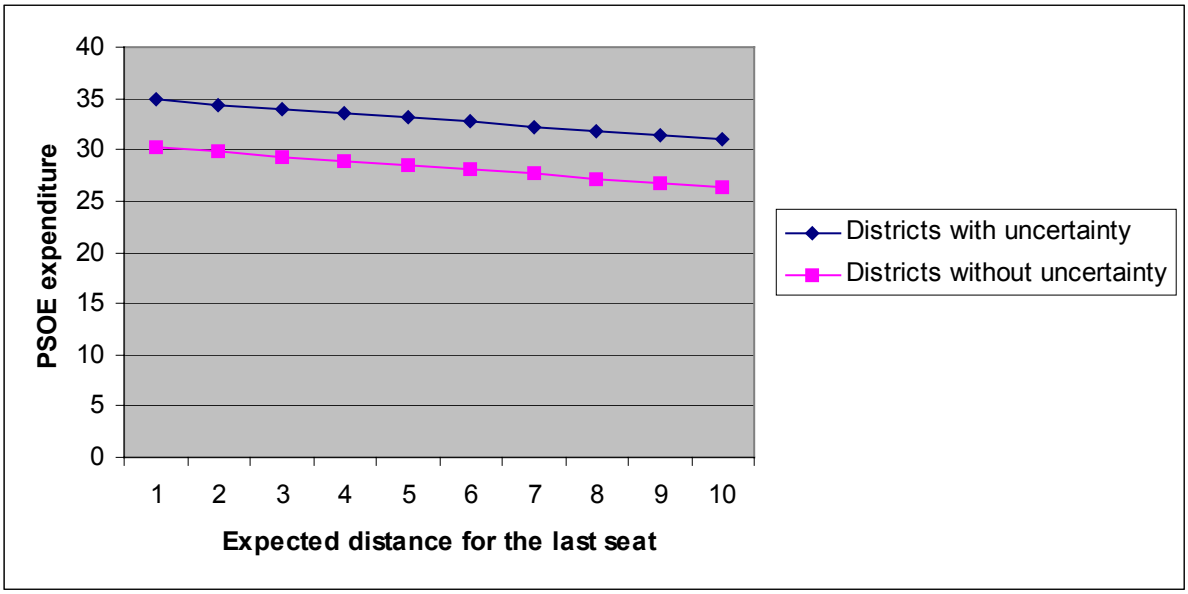
Table 3 shows the results of the structural model for the PSOE's decentralized expenditure. As expected, the variable referred to the closeness of the election affects negatively the level of expenditure: the higher the expected distance between both parties, the lower the level of expenditure in the district. The uncertainty over the electoral results affects also negatively expenditure. In those districts where there is much difference between the pre-electoral survey's predictions and the historical average of the party's results, the expenditure tends to be lower. The other strategical variable of the theoretical model –the mobilization strategies of the PP- is also significant and positive. The PSOE tends to spend more in those districts where the PP has done the same. Finally, the electoral system –the number of seats in each district- does not have a significant impact on the PSOE's mobilization efforts.

Table 3. *TWO STAGES MODEL: The decentralized expenditure of the PSOE in the 1996 general election(OLS linear regression).*

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	*COEFFICIENTS*
PP Mobilizatión: Expenditure (Instrument)	1,2*** (,06)
Number of seats	,19 (,17)
PSOE¨s Expected closeness: 1996 pre-electoral suvey results	-,17* (,07)
Uncertainty	-,21** (,03)
Constant	-,18 (1,2)
R^2	,92
N	52

***Significant at 99% **Significant at 95%..* Significant at 90%.. Sources: For expenditure: Organization Secretary, PSOE and PP's Gerency.

Figure 4. *The impact of the expectations of the electoral results on the PSOE´s expenditure.*



The causes of mobilization: Felipe González's rallies

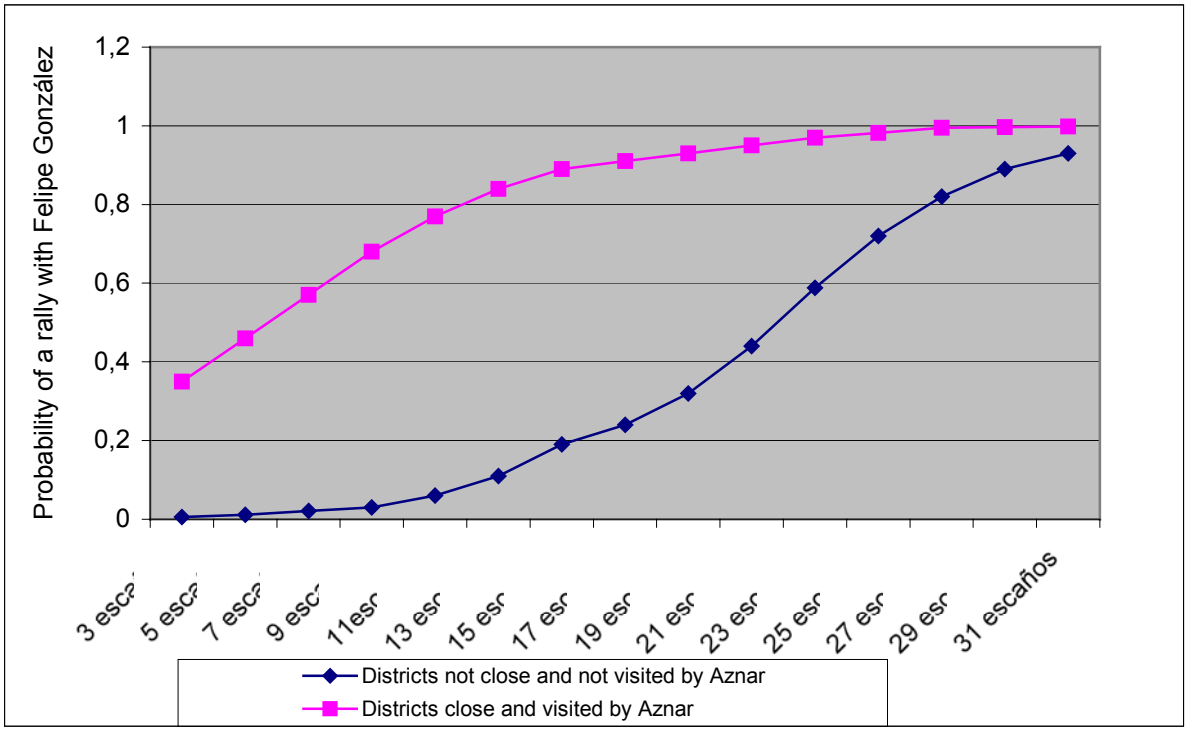
Table 4 shows the results of the model referred to Felipe González's rallies. There are two significant variables: Aznar's rallies and PSOE's expected closeness. The probability of a Felipe González rally is higher in those districts visited by Aznar, and lower in those districts where the distance for the last seat between both parties was larger. Contrary to the previous model, the uncertainty of the electoral result does has not have a significant effect on the probability of a Felipe González rally. That is, the PSOE did not take into account the difference between the predictions of the preelectoral surveys and the historical average of the party's vote in the district. The electoral system is not significant.

Table 4. *TWO STAGES MODEL: Felipe González's rallies (Logit regression)*

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	*COEFFICIENTS*
PP Mobilization: Aznar´s rallies. (Instrument)	1,3* (,71)
Number of seats	,28 (,09)
PSOE's Expected closeness: 1996 pre-electoral suvey results	-,37** (,26)
Uncertainty	-,004 (,022)
Constant	-2,8* (2,3)
Loglikelihood	231,34
N	52

Significant at 90%.** Significant at 95%..* Significant at 99%. Sources: For expenditure: PSOE Organization Secretary and PP Gerency.

Figure 5. *Predicted probabilities of Felipe Gonzalez rally.*



5. Conclusions

In the previous sections, I have analysed the logic of parties' territorial mobilization – more concretely, the PSOE- in the 1996 general elections. As expected from the literature, the closeness of the election and the opponents' strategies have an effect on the PSOE's mobilization strategies. In this work I have gone beyond the usual consideration of the closeness of the election. I have considered the closeness as an expectation formed by the party's leaders. In this sense, I have applied a bayesian model of rational formation of expectations. This has allowed me to test the importance of the new information and the uncertainty about the electoral results on the party's mobilization strategies. The empirical analysis demonstrates that, at least for decentralized expenditure, the PSOE took into account not just the expected closeness in each district, but also the uncertainty of this expectation. Regarding the candidate's rallies, the uncertainty does not have a significant impact.

However, the direction of the variable in the model referred to the candidate's rallies is in accordance with the theoretical hypothesis.

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