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**Campaigning With Empty Pockets
Why the Liberal Party Wins Regional Elections in Colombia**

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**Campaigning With Empty Pockets:
Why the Liberal Party Wins Regional Elections in Colombia**

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Abstract

Campaigning With Empty Pockets:

Why the Liberal Party Wins Regional Elections in Colombia

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In the past decade, party systems have collapsed in Venezuela and Peru. Scholars have suggested that Colombia may be following a similar fate. I argue it is not. Despite loosing national elections the Liberal Party still wins subnationally. Regional clientelistic networks, based on goods that do not depend upon the central state, help provide votes to those candidates who have been in politics the longest. The latter are likely to be liberal politicians, with privileged positions within the party. They get nominated, thus, they have no reason to defect. Because they distribute goods that are independent from the national state, they also have little incentive to promote national candidates. Consequently, the LP wins within the regions but is unable to attain control of national offices. As long as it keeps doing so this party is unlikely to disappear.

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Chapter 1:

The Same Party Different Electoral Outcomes

Since the 1950's, the Liberal and Conservative parties controlled the electoral arena in Colombia. For more than fifty years, they won the presidency and together held 90 percent of seats in congress. In 2002, they lost for the first time when Alvaro Uribe Vélez –running as an independent- became president. Not only was he reelected in 2006, but the newly formed Partido Social de Unidad Nacional (Partido de la U) won most of the seats in the Upper House.

Some scholars believe that these results signal the collapse of the traditional parties (Gutiérrez 2006, 2007, Pizarro 2006) and that Colombia may be joining the ranks of other cases of party system collapse, including Peru and Venezuela (Pizarro 2006). Where party systems have collapsed, outsiders have risen to political power, old party-voter linkages have withered, and political accountability has been weakened. Is Colombia suffering a similar fate?

I argue that it is not. Different from what happened in Venezuela and Peru –where the traditional parties lost national and subnational elections short after outsiders won the presidency (Tanaka 2006, CNE)¹—evidence at the subnational level suggests that, although weakened, the traditional parties in Colombia, specifically the Liberal Party (LP), still gets more votes in the elections for Regional Assemblies than any other organization. Why is the

¹ As shown by Tanaka (2006) In 1989 –when Fujimori became president in Perú—AP didn't even participate in municipal elections. Four years afterwards, neither traditional party had more than 12% of the vote share. In 1998 IU did not presented candidates, and the other parties obtained 7% tops. Before Hugo Chavez came to power, in Venezuela most governors elected were from COPEI and AD. In 1992 and 1995 each these parties controlled 12 governorships out 22 –COPEI had 12 governors elected in 1992 and AD had 12 in 1995. By 1998, the year Hugo Chavez came to power, this number had reduced by half –AD got control of 7 governorships. In 2000, these parties elected only three governors (AD elected 2 and COPEI elected 1).

LP winning a plurality of the votes at the regional level while being unable to attain control of national legislative bodies?

This question deals with key issues of Colombian politics. In a country where war and democracy coexist at the same time, the resilience of the traditional parties is intriguing. Understanding how one of them has electoral support at the regional but not the national level would deepen our understanding on how voters in Colombia relate to political parties and their members, and why they have not disappeared despite being widely discredited as means to advance citizen's demands (Hoskin 1990, Archer 1995, Pizarro 2002, 2006, Bejarano and Pizarro 2005, Gutiérrez 2002, Taylor 2009).

Answering such this question will also further our understanding of regional politics in Colombia. With few exceptions², scholars have paid little attention to the difference between national and subnational political dynamics (Archer 1995, Gutiérrez 2002, 2006, 2007, Pachón 2002, Bejarano and Pizarro 2005, Pizarro 2002, 2006, Taylor 2009). Understanding how local, regional and national politics resemble each other or differ, may help us better explain distinct voter and politicians' logics, at each of these levels, and specific characteristics of Colombia's party system that sets it apart from those in other countries.

Present studies of the traditional parties in Colombia do not explain the Liberal Party's resilience at the regional level and inaccurately argue that it has collapsed (Gutiérrez 2002, Bejarano and Pizarro 2005, Pizarro 2002, 2006). With few exceptions³, most scholarly work on the subject does not take into account regional electoral outcomes at all (Archer 1995, Pizarro 2002, 2006, Gutiérrez 2002, 2006, 2007, Taylor 2009). As a result they elucidate the reasons

³ Hoyos (2007), Dávila and Corredor (1998) and Querubín, Sánchez and Kure (1998) have cross time analyses of local and regional elections since the 1980s. Botero (1998), García (2003) and Gutiérrez (2000) have analyzed mayor and council elections in Bogotá.

behind the LP's poor performance at the national level, but fail to explain its electoral success within the regions, and inaccurately predict its collapse. .

Common approaches to party competition cannot account for the LP's resilience at the regional level either. Modernization theory suggests that economic development, higher levels of education, and urbanization might drive voters away from the traditional parties (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). In Colombia, however, regions with larger urban settings are precisely those where the traditional parties have won steadily. Social cleavages theory suggests that parties are shaped according to major divisions in society (Lippset and Rokan 1976). A new cleavage would explain the LP's poor performance at the national level, however it cannot account for its simultaneous success in regions across the country. Finally, the institutional approach could explain why a party has poor performance under given electoral rules, but it cannot account for different performances under similar institutional constraints (Cox 1999). In other words, if the LP were disappearing, existing arguments imply that it would be doing so both at the regional and at the national level. Instead, two different dynamics within the same party seem to be at play and these theories cannot account for both of them.

In this thesis, I argue that clientelist networks at the regional level explain the survival of the Liberal Party in Colombia⁴. Within the regions, old patronage networks, based on goods that do not depend upon the central state, help provide votes to those candidates who have been in politics the longest and thus know how to access such networks. Because of their long trajectory, these politicians are also those most likely to enjoy privileged positions within the LP regional hierarchies. Thus, they have little incentives to move to newer organizations. Because the goods provided are independent from the national government, these politicians do

⁴ Although the Conservative Party is still present on the political arena, its process has been quite different. It weakened throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. Even when Andrés Pastrana –from this party- won the presidency, their performance in legislative elections was very poor. Different from what has happened with the LP, Uribe's presidency has not undermined, but strengthened the CP.

not have incentives to promote national candidates. Consequently, the Liberal Party wins within the regions but is unable to attain control of national offices. As long as the party members remain in control of regional legislative bodies, the LP is unlikely to disappear.

In this first chapter, I briefly explain recent electoral events in Colombia. I then detail the arguments that have been used to explain them, and show that they remain unsatisfactory. Further on, I lay out in detail the logic behind my argument, and the empirical tests I use to support it.

THE LIBERAL PARTY'S ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE IN THE EARLY 2000S

In 2002, after having a stable two-party system for more than 50 years, the Liberal and Conservative parties lost the presidential elections against an independent candidate for the first time. Not only did Alvaro Uribe Vélez –running under the label of “Primero Colombia”⁵– win the presidency, but in 2006 he was reelected and his coalition won most of the seats in Congress⁶. For the first time in Colombia’s modern political history neither traditional party controlled one of the chambers.

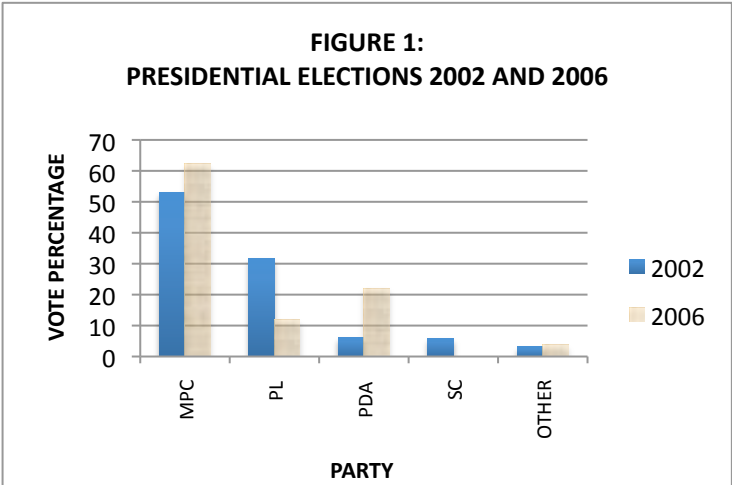
As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the elections of 2002 and 2006 signal a major turn in Colombia’s politics. Not only did an outsider⁷ win the presidency, against the candidate endorsed by the Liberal Party in 2002, but for the first time since the end of “La Violencia”

⁵ Primero Colombia was built when Uribe Vélez was unable to win the Liberal Party nomination. It was created with the only purpose of supporting his candidacy. It did not present candidates to any other organism, nor did it act in between elections. Uribe used it again to run for reelection in 2006. Today it remains dormant.

⁶ The Partido Social de Unidad Nacional (Partido de la U) won most of the seats in the Senate. Although the Liberal Party got the majority of the seats in the House it is effectively outnumbered by Uribe’s coalition represented by the Partido de la U, Cambio Radical and other minor parties.

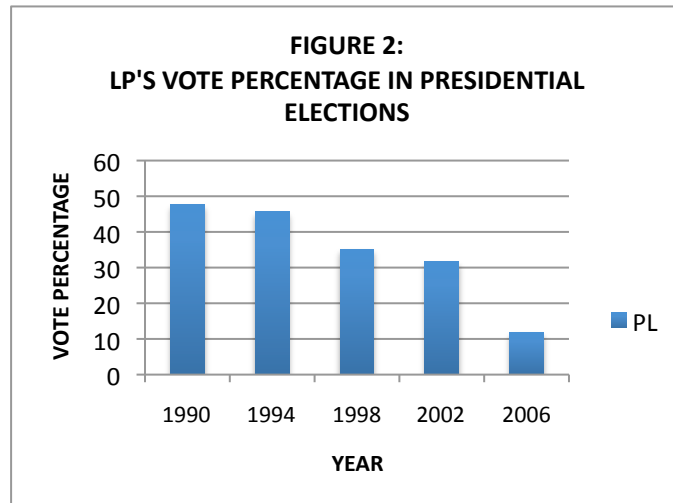
⁷ Some do not think of Alvaro Uribe as an outsider because, until his candidacy, he was a member of the Liberal Party. However he ran as an independent, with no support of any party whatsoever and has kept his distance of any party since then (even from those that declared loyal to him.)

(period between 1948 and 1958 during which, the traditional parties fought a non-declared civil war) the Conservative Party (CP) did not present a candidate⁸ (Figure 1). Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1, in 2006 the Liberal nominee placed third in the presidential election preceded by the candidate of the leftist coalition Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA). Not only did the LP lose the presidency again, it did not even figure as an important contender in it! Moreover, the traditional winner of the legislative elections, the LP, placed second in the Senate, after the recently formed Partido de la “U” (Figure 3).



SOURCE: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil Colombia
 NOTES: MPC: Movimiento Primero Colombia (Alvaro Uribe), PL: Partido Liberal (Horacio Serpa), PDA: Polo Democrático Alternativo (Luis Eduardo Garzón 2002, and Carlos Gaviria 2006), SC: Si Colombia (Noemí Sanin), Other: Every other group who obtained less than 5% of the votes.

⁸ In the 2002 presidential race, the conservative candidate, Juan Camilo Restrepo, withdrew himself from the elections. The Conservative Party supported Uribe’s candidacy instead. In 2006 they openly backed him up again, and have been part of his coalition since then.



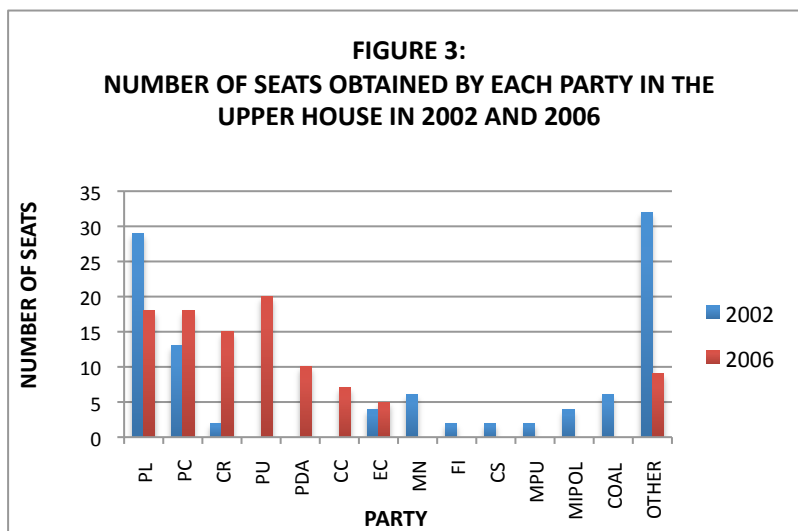
SOURCE: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil
 NOTES: For 1994 and 1998 I am showing only the first round

Before 2002, most of the literature on political parties in Colombia agreed that the party system remained intact and, although weakened, the traditional parties still controlled the political arena (Pachón: 2002, Rodríguez-Raga: 2002, Pizarro: 2002, Gutiérrez: 2002). Despite the high party system fragmentation⁹, the Liberal and Conservative parties remained mostly untouched: the LP still obtained majorities in Congress and both parties still placed their candidates in the presidency

Based on the national electoral outcomes described above, since 2002 certain political scientists, politicians, and journalists have declared the traditional parties dead (Pizarro 2006, Gutiérrez 2007). One has even suggested that Colombia is likely to have a party system collapse, similar to that of Venezuela and Peru (Pizarro 2006) where outsiders rose rendering the traditional parties electorally irrelevant at the national and subnational level (Tanaka 2006).

⁹ Represented by the increase in the number of lists presented by each party between the 1980's and 2003 (when a constitutional reform prohibited to present more than one list).

Subnational electoral outcomes, however, tell a different story. As shown in Figures 1, 3 and 4, while an independent candidate and non-traditional parties have won in the highest governing bodies of the country (the presidency and the Senate)¹⁰, the Liberal Party still controls the legislative bodies of most regions. In 2003 the LP won a plurality of the seats in 19 out of the 32 Regional Assemblies; in 2007 it won a plurality of the seats in 16 (Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil) (Figure 4).¹¹

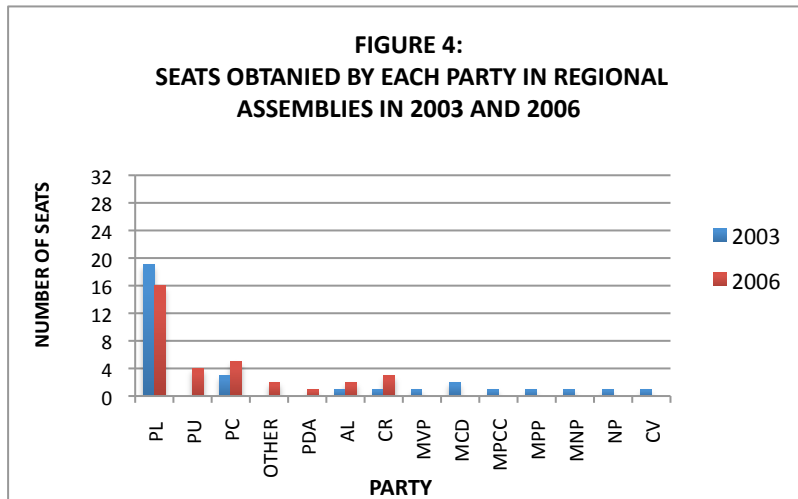


SOURCE: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil

NOTES: PU=Partido Social de Unión Nacional (Partido de la U), PL=Partido Liberal, PC=Partido Conservador, PDA=Polo Alternativo Democrático, CR=Cambio Radical, CC=Convergencia Ciudadana, EC=Equipo Colombia, FI=Fuerza Independiente, CS= Colombia Siempre, MPU= Movimiento Popular Unido, MIPOL= Movimiento de Integración Popular

¹⁰ In 2006 the LP won a plurality of the seats in the lower house. In 2009 a law (Acto Legislativo 001 of 2009) gave congressmen two months to choose a new party –if they wished to do so– without losing their seat. As a result, today, the lower chamber is also controlled by the Partido de la U, which increased by ten the number of seats it held.

¹¹ The Conservative Party also remains alive. However their process is slightly different. Through out the 1980's and 1990's they faced enormous electoral defeats both within the regions and nationwide. In 1998, they won the presidency, but the congress and subnational legislative bodies remained controlled by the LP. Since they have remained close to Uribe, his presidency has not weakened them, but strengthened their position in national and regional legislative bodies.



SOURCE: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil.

NOTES: PL= Partido Liberal, PU=Partido de la U, PC= Partido Conservador, CR = Cambio Radical, PDA = Polo Democrático Alternativo, AL = Alternativa Democrática, MVP = Movimiento de Voluntad Popular, MCD= Movimiento Colombia Democrática, MPCC= Movimiento Político Comunal Comunitario, MPP = Movimiento Partido Popular, MNP = Movimiento Nacional Progresista, NP = Nuevo Partido, CV = Colombia Viva

If the LP were disappearing and Colombia's party system were collapsing, this party would be losing elections at the national and at the subnational level. Like Venezuela and Perú, where the traditional parties lost control of governorships and municipal councils short after Hugo Chávez and Alberto Fujimori became presidents (CNE, Tanaka 2006). It is not, despite its poor performance in congressional elections, the LP remains fairly strong within the regions. Why does the LP fail to translate its regional success into a national success?

EXISTING EXPLANATION TO THE LP'S ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE

Present studies on Colombian political parties do not explain the LP's divergent performance in national and regional electoral contests. Ignoring regional electoral outcomes, they evaluate party competition only at the national level, or within single municipalities (Pizarro 2002, 2006, Bejarano and Pizarro 2005, Gutierrez 2002, 2006, 2007, Davila Ladrón de Guevara and Varela 2002). Although, scholars recognize the increasing importance of regional

party leaders (Gutiérrez 2006, 2007, Pizarro 2006, Dávila Ladrón de Guevara and Varela 2002), they do so only to show how their strength undermines the LP at the national level. In doing so, the existing approaches take the strengthening of subnational party members as evidence of party decline, even party system collapse, without explaining how or why. As a consequence, they incorrectly predict the LP's collapse (Gutiérrez 2007, Pizarro 2006).

MODERNIZATION THEORY

Existing approaches to party competition do not account for different outcomes either. Modernization theory states that economic development, increasing urbanization, broader access to education and new technologies decrease the importance of parties relative to voters. The latter are now socialized into politics in different manners, which implies an erosion of party loyalties (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). Modernization would then decrease the support for traditional parties, as new partisan and non-partisan alternatives become more attractive.

In Colombia, this approach has been commonly used to explain the slow decline in support for the traditional parties throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Pecaut 2006, Palacios and Safford 2002). The LPs regional success may evidence the remaining support for this party in areas where modernization has not taken hold yet (i.e. rural areas). However, if this were the case, we would expect such a party, or its counterpart the CP, to fare better in more rural regions, than in those with large urban settings. That is not the case. In fact, in the past three elections, the Liberal and Conservative parties have steadily won a plurality of the votes in Antioquia and Valle's regional assemblies even when these hold the second and third largest cities of the country. Moreover, the traditional parties still win a plurality of the votes in 19 out of the 32 region's capital cities' councils.

THE INSTITUTIONAL EXPLANATION TO PARTY DECLINE

Institutional approaches suggest that the laws regulating electoral competition can affect the behavior of parties and politicians (Cox 1999). Electoral formulas can disincentive politicians to disregard party's labels (Shugart and Carey 1995). According to Shugart and Carey (1995) Candidates will have incentives to build a personal rather than a party reputation if: a) parties' national leaders have no control over the ballot, b) there is no vote pooling across the party in the same district, c) voters cast a single vote below the party for a candidate or party faction, and d) there is a large district magnitude.

It has been argued that such was the case in Colombia between the early 1990s and 2003 (Pizarro 2006, Bejarano and Pizarro 1999, Cox and Shugart 1995, Archer and Shugart 1997; Shugart, Moreno and Fajardo 2007) Scholars have suggested that a series of institutional reforms in the late 1980s and early 1990s created incentives for parties to become highly personalistic and weak. Such reforms included a larger district magnitude in the Senate, a new system of congressmen substitutes that allowed different members of the list to replace the elected congressman at any point in time, and the simplification of the requisites to be recognized as a party by the National Electoral Council (NEC).

The argument goes as follows. The simplification of the requisites to be recognized as a party reduced the value of party endorsements. If a candidate did not have the support of a party he could just build a new one. He only needed to be backed up by fifty thousand signatories –including a legislator—or fifty thousand votes in order to run for public office (Article 3, Law 30, 1994). Consequently party leaders lost control over the ballot.

The new system to assign congressmen replacements also reduced the value of party endorsements (Pizarro 2002, 2006, Pizarro and Bejarano 2005). The 1991 constitution established that a congressman's replacement should come from the unelected members of his

list¹². Since senators and house representatives could ask for repeated leaves of absence, politicians in an electoral list got a representative elected only to share the seat with him. Those who did to get a seat would eventually get temporary access to Congress in order to access state resources for pork barrel and patronage, thus lowering the value of the party itself (Pizarro, 2006).

Colombia's electoral formula motivated the promotion of personal rather than party reputations. In this country seats in all legislative bodies were allocated using the Hare quota electoral remainders. The number of seats assigned to a given party equaled the number of times the "quota" (votes casted divided by the district magnitude) fitted within the number of votes casted for such a party. The seats remaining were assigned in descendent order, one per party, to those parties that got the largest remainders. Accordingly, seats won with remainders (rather than with quotients) were "cheaper" (i.e. won with less votes), and provided incentives for party leaders to promote many small electoral lists, rather than a large one¹³. This increased intraparty competition relative to the size of the district magnitude. As the number of candidates/lists of the same party that competed against each other increased, politicians had more incentives to campaign based on their personal assets rather than on party appeals (Cox and Shugart 1995, Pizarro 2002).

These new electoral rules would then explain the traditional parties' weakness and their decline. However, even if these reforms increased party system fragmentation, and created incentives to disregard parties and cultivate personal vote, such an approach does not account for different electoral outcomes at the national and regional level. These electoral rules were

¹² Before 1991, congressmen were elected along with a substitute (suplente) that was supposed to replace the head of the list whenever he was absent.

¹³ Until 2003, in Colombia, parties could present as many lists as seats available.

implemented both at the national and subnational level. Thus they cannot explain opposing performances within the same party at each of these levels.

Furthermore, the institutional approach does not explain why electoral rules implemented in the 1990s only had an effect ten years later. Why did the LP party not lose control of the national political arena until 2002? What held it in power before then? What changed in between 1990 and 2002?

SOCIAL CLEAVAGES EXPLANATION TO PARTY DECLINE

Social cleavages suggest that major conflicts in society translate into opposing political parties (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Accordingly, social cleavages theory would predict that a party's poor performance corresponds to new cleavages, which align society across a different line that the existing parties are unable or unsuited to represent.

Gutiérrez (2007) suggests that this is the case in Colombia (Gutiérrez 2007). Before the 1950s, the major cleavage in the country was the one dividing liberals and conservatives. Indeed, historians have often suggested that people defined themselves, and their relation to others, according to their political preferences. You were born liberal or conservative, the same as you are born African American or Hispanic (Pecaut 2006, Palacios and Safford 2002, Hosking 1989).

Gutierrez's argument suggests that such a cleavage was deemphasized as a consequence of the National Front (1958-1974)¹⁴. During these 16 years the LP and the CP shared every single public position equally, which made it hard for voters to distinguish which side of the cleavage each party was on. Before 1958 parties mobilized their supporters using this well entrenched hereditary partisanship –and the hatred for the other party that it implied (Safford

¹⁴ Period in which the Liberal and Conservative parties shared all public offices. The presidency was to be alternated for sixteen years, and all mayoralties and governorships and legislative bodies in the country were divided equally among the Liberal and Conservative party.

and Palacios 2002, Pecaut 2006, Gutiérrez 2007). Once parties deemphasized their differences, they began to rely more on patronage than programmatic appeals to obtain votes. Gutiérrez (2007) states that such a strategy proved successful for some time, however as society organized along a more left-right division surrounding the armed conflict (i.e. for or against negotiations with the guerrilla movements), clientelism hindered the LP's ability to readjust along the new cleavage.

Gutiérrez fails to clarify how client-patron relationships prevented the national leaders from readjusting the party along the new division. Furthermore, his argument does not explain why people who voted on clientelistic appeals throughout the second half of the 20th Century, started voting on ideological appeals after 1998. Why did patronage become less attractive all of the sudden?

Overall a change of cleavages cannot explain why the LP still wins at the subnational level. If cleavages had changed and the LP was unable to represent them, why would a person vote for its candidate for the regional assembly? Even if there were different cleavages at the national and subnational level, it does not explain how it is that different regions across the country would share the same regional cleavage. In other words it does not explain why the LP wins a plurality of the seats across regions.

AN EXPLANATION FOR THE LP'S NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE

In this thesis, I argue that the Liberal Party is not disappearing; therefore, Colombia is not undergoing a party system collapse. While weaker at the national level, the LP remains fairly strong within the regions. Old clientelistic networks at the subnational level, whose goods do not depend upon the national state, provide votes to long serving politicians. Because

of their long trajectory, these politicians also enjoy privileged positions within the LP and have no incentives to move to newer organizations. As long as the patronage networks secure their election, the LP will not disappear.

In developing this argument, I first explain the nature of the goods provided by regional politicians to their constituencies. Then I explain why long serving politicians remain within the LP, and conclude by explaining why the regional politician's success does not translate into good performance of the LP at the national level.

THE GOODS REGIONAL POLITICIANS PROVIDE

For a long time, scholars have argued that the exchange of votes for patronage is a common practice in Colombia (Archer 1990, Leal and Dávila 1990, Martz 1997, Escobar 2002, Gutiérrez 2002, Dávila and Varela 2002, García 2003). The existing analyses posit that client-patron relationships in this country have evolved from “traditional clientelism” –strong asymmetrical and affective relationship in which the patron uses his own resources to provide goods and services to their clienteles- to “broker clientelism” –where the local patron becomes a member of a larger network and depends upon national patrons to access state resources with which he feeds his clientele (Archer 1990). Some suggest that this practice has further evolved into market clientelism –in which the patron, who does not depend upon national politicians, uses resources other than those from the state, to feed clienteles within geographically restricted networks. (Gutiérrez 1998, Dávila and Varela 2002, García 2003)

Following the concept of market clientelism, I suggest that the goods provided by regional politicians to their constituencies do not necessarily depend upon the material resources of the national state. In Colombia, deputies are usually asked to supply access to jobs and speed up bureaucratic procedures, what is known in Mexico as “gestión social” and in

Brazil as “jeitinho.” More than commodities’ providers, they work as intermediaries between their clientele and the local public administration, granting effective access to state institutions. They provide “errand-boy services to solve individual constituents’ problems with government bureaucracy” (Shugart and Carey, 1995: 419)

A politician cannot provide material goods if he lacks the resources to do so. As illustrated by García (2003) in his analysis of clientelistic networks in Bogotá, popularly elected officials with little access to material resources need to work more like “tramitadores” of the basic needs of their clientele in order to attain votes. They help the citizens navigate the public system. In the absence of other resources, they cannot provide material goods, but effective access to welfare and other institutions of the state.

Such is the case of regional deputies. The process of decentralization that took place during the 1990s made mayorships and governorships popularly elected positions. It gave the regions a democratic basis and a flow of fiscal resources (O’ Neal 2006). However, access to such resources does not flow into legislative bodies. The Regional Assembly is the one that authorizes the Governor to spend the region’s resources. However the initiative on how, when and where to invest those resources, is the Governor’s only (Art. 300, Chapter II, National Constitution). The deputies of the Regional Assemblies are thus officials with little access to material resources. To citizens, these deputies matter because they have access to key members of the regional bureaucracy and the local elites and, therefore, they can provide effective access to the services they need such as health services, education and targeted programs.

As Mainwaring (1999) points out for Brazil, some state services that are formally guaranteed to all citizens, are only effectively provided through political intermediaries:

... Many people depend on the state and politicians for personal favors. Getting an opening in a public school, receiving retirement benefits, obtaining a concession to open a gasoline station, and getting a permit for a radio or

television station often require a politician's intermediation...Access to day-care centers and schools, public housing, medical services, retirement benefits, and scholarships similarly can depend on political favors...In return for the services and favors they provide, politicians hope to win the allegiance, votes, and financial contributions of those whom they help (1999: 183).

The same holds for Colombia. Regional representatives use their knowledge and access to local bureaucracy and elites in order to gain votes. They provide the citizens with jobs¹⁵ and access to welfare institutions. The latter, although available to everybody, are hard to navigate. The deputy makes such navigation faster and easier by using his network and knowledge.

If regional politicians use their experience and contacts within local bureaucracy and local elites to distribute favors to voters, it follows that those who have better access to them are likely to be more effective than those who have no contacts, even if these have access to material resources from the national government. The better the network, the more reliable this politician becomes in feeding his clientele. The trustworthier he becomes, the more likely people will vote for him, regardless of the party he represents¹⁶. Better contacts within the local bureaucracy or the elites are built with time. A long career as a politician gives him time to get to know the “right” person in the “right” institution. Moreover, the longer the political career, the more likely he will have more people who owes him enough so that he can place favors with them. This capacity will help such a politician provide their clientele with the goods they seek, and will give him votes.

¹⁵ They do not necessarily provide jobs within the state. These politicians work more like recommenders for the people who ask for their help. They move people’s resumes in the right circles and back them up with possible employers.

¹⁶ For the last two decades, partisanship in Colombia has been low (Gutiérrez, 2007). In the latest LAPOP survey of 2008, only 28% of the people surveyed said that they had preferences for a given party (LAPOP 2008).

LONG SERVING POLITICIANS ARE USUALLY AFFILIATED WITH THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES

I argue that regional politicians in Colombia move from larger and older parties into smaller and newer parties because the latter provide them with a better chance of getting nominated. It follows that those who have a higher probability of securing a nomination within the traditional parties will have less incentive to move to other organizations. The politicians with strong positions within the LP are likely to have been in politics the longest. They have had time to build networks that help them provide their constituency with the type of goods specified above and, consequently, win their votes.

By the end of the 1990s, the LP provided similar benefits to its candidates than any other party. In 1994, the Law of Political Parties (Law 30 of 1994) depreciated large parties' endorsements by reducing the requisites needed by a party to be recognized by the National Electoral Council. According to the new regulations, a person only needed to be backed up by 50,000 signatures –including one of a legislator- or 50,000 votes, in order to be recognized as a party and have access to state resources (Article 3, Law 130 of 1994). Therefore, after 1994, several mini-movements were able to present candidates to elections; the funds guaranteed by the state assured most of them at least one seat in a given legislative body (Pizarro and Bejarano 2005, Pizarro 2006). New politicians could now move into these new smaller organizations, and avoid the waiting line for nominations within the traditional parties.

In addition to that, the exclusion of other parties throughout the National Front, drug related scandals¹⁷, and the inability to solve socioeconomic and security problems discredited

¹⁷ In 1994 the newly elected president, Ernesto Samper, was accused of receiving money from the Cartel de Cali for his campaign. While the Congress declared Samper innocent, many of his campaign officials were found guilty of receiving such money. The scandal tainted him and the Liberal Party, whose candidate lose the presidential elections four years latter.

both traditional parties (Gutiérrez 2007)¹⁸. As a result, using the Liberal or the Conservative party's label did not outweigh the cost of competing for a nomination. Therefore, running as a Liberal or a Conservative did not increase the chance of getting elected, nor did it facilitate the campaign. Under the new rules, even a very small party could go far enough to get its leader elected, and spare him from having to compete for endorsements against many other candidates.

Whereas the changes mentioned above depreciated the LP endorsement, during the 1990s, the LP was still able to retain most of its politicians. Its candidate won the presidency in 1990 and 1994 and the party controlled both the Senate and the House of Representatives (Gutiérrez 2006, 2007) Until 2003, parties could present more than one list to corporative elections. Each politician within the party was then able to present himself to elections using his own list. As long as he could get enough votes for a remainder, he could have his seat. In other words, until 2003, while there were still few incentives to remain within the LP, the costs of doing so were not that high, and most politicians remained attached to it.

After 2003 this changed. Not only did the traditional parties lose control of the presidency in 2002, but an institutional reform¹⁹ prohibited parties from presenting more than one list for each legislative body. Discredited, and unable to solve its coordination problem — politicians now competed for a much more limited number of nominations within the party—it was feasible to think that politicians would now move from the LP to new parties.

¹⁸ In 1998 the conservative candidate Andrés Pastrana swore as president with the promise of ending the armed conflict. Not only was his peace process unsuccessful, but also seen as a huge concession to the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), who used the territory and the truce to strengthen militarily.

¹⁹ The Legislative Act No. 1 of 2003 changed the electoral formula from the Hare, to the d'Hondt formula, prohibited parties from presenting more than one list in each election, increased the threshold to obtain a seat in legislative bodies (2% of the votes), made it mandatory for party members to vote as a group (in "bancada"), and outlawed double affiliations.

Whereas many national politicians did move into other parties (Gutiérrez 2007) long-serving politicians within the regions did not have enough incentives to leave the LP. The latter were politicians high enough in the regional party's structure that they did not have to fight for their nomination as hard as other newer candidates. Furthermore, they had been in politics a long time, which gave them access not only to a stable clientele with whom they had built face-to-face relationships, but also connections with local bureaucracy and local elites that helped them feed their constituents even without the support of the party.

Old patron-client relationships are hard to break (Gómez-Albarello and Rodríguez Raga, 2007). As Gómez-Albarello and Rodríguez Raga (2007) show, the more entrenched the old linkages between clients and patrons, the less likely new politicians would challenge the old ones. Liberal deputies had then little reason to move into new parties. Unchallenged, these long-serving politicians would keep winning seats for the LP.

In sum, despite its history and size, relative to other parties, the LP does not provide specific benefits for a politician today. The label is not as strong as it used to be, and the party itself does not ease up the costs of campaigning any more than other party. However, the LP and the traditional parties in general do have high costs: it takes a long time for a new politician to get nominated. These costs can be avoided by moving to new and smaller organizations in which the competition for endorsements is not as hard.

A politician with a position strong enough to secure his nomination within the LP will be less likely to leave, than one that is in the bottom of the hierarchical structure who is unlikely to win a nomination. Those with stronger positions within the party are, usually, long serving politicians who have built long lasting personal relationships with their clientele, and have built enough contacts within the regional bureaucracy and the regional elites to secure votes. They do not leave the party because they have no reason to do so: the new parties are not

any more appealing than the one they are in, nor do they provide any more votes than the ones they already get.

WHY THE LP IS UNABLE TO TRANSLATE REGIONAL SUCCESS INTO NATIONAL SUCCESS

While the patronage networks outlined above are successful at the subnational level, they are not so at the national level. To begin with, market clientelism requires steady face-to-face interactions. (Dávila and Varela 2002). National politicians visit their hometown only periodically²⁰. Therefore, it is hard for them to establish close relationships with their clients. On the contrary, subnational politicians live and work close by their constituents. This helps them build steady relationships with voters, who, feel that it is easier to access deputies, than it is to access senators or congressmen. Citizens, therefore, feel more comfortable asking for the favors mentioned above from subnational, rather than national politicians, hence, they are more likely to vote based on these kind of clientelistic goods when they are choosing regional deputies and not senators.

Regional politicians have little incentive to promote national candidates. The favors they distribute do not depend upon the central state. Therefore, deputies do not necessarily have to mobilize their clientele to vote for a given national candidate in order for them to access patronage.

In sum, different logics dictate the way in which candidates are elected at the national and subnational level. Voters are unwilling to travel long distances or meet unknown hard-to-access politicians in order to file their resume or ask for a school spot for their kids. Providing these goods requires face-to-face, short distance relationships. Therefore, people are more likely

²⁰ In the case of the Senate, for example, there is a national district. Senators get their votes from regions all over the country. It is hard for them to have a steady presence in all of them.

to vote based on this type of clientelistic appeals in regional, rather than in national, elections. In the latter, elements such as charisma –or other kind of resources- have a larger weight on how people cast their vote (Dávila and Varela 2002, García 2003). In Colombia’s case, candidates from parties close to Uribe Vélez, such as Cambio Radical or Partido de la “U” might be more appealing.

This situation would be different if the same regional politicians acted as brokers and promoted a specific national candidate within their districts. However, they do not do so. As explained by García (2003), the decentralization process of the 1990’s fragmented the hierarchical structure of clientelism in Colombia (Gutiérrez 1998, Dávila and Varela 2002, García 2003). The local flow of resources provided little incentives for local brokers to mobilize their clientele to vote for national patrons. Many of the resources that were distributed via nationwide clientelistic networks, were now accessible through the departamental and municipal governments. . Furthermore, the kinds of resources distributed by the deputies do not depend upon the state. They depend upon the networks they have built within the regional bureaucracy and the regional elites, which allow regional politicians to help their clientele access state basic services. Consequently, these politicians have little incentives to promote a specific candidate to congress.

OUTLINE OF THE REST OF THE THESIS

In this chapter, I have argued that, although weakened at the national level, the LP is not disappearing. On the contrary electoral evidence shows that it remains relatively strong at the subnational level. I suggest that the goods distributed subnationally do not depend upon the central state. Instead, deputies are asked to act as intermediaries to get access to welfare institutions. Politicians with long-standing ties to regional public offices have better access to the local elites and bureaucracy, therefore, they are efficient providing such goods, and win

votes without promoting national candidates. These are also the regional politicians who have stayed within the LP because they have attained high positions within its hierarchy and have no incentives to move into new organizations.

In order to sustain these claims I propose testing two hypotheses. First, if Colombians vote for regional politicians based on the favors they provide, I would expect subnational candidates' votes to be concentrated in specific municipalities (i.e. those where they have better networks). If citizens vote for national politicians on a different basis, then I would also expect lower house congresspeople, who are elected in the same district, to have a more homogeneous vote across municipalities. Second, if long standing regional politicians do not have incentives to move into new parties, I would expect the LP's politicians to have longer political trajectories than their counterparts in new political parties.

The remaining sections of this thesis will focus on these two hypotheses. In the second chapter I use electoral data to measure vote concentration across one region. I compare the vote concentration of liberal regional deputies, against that of national liberal house representatives. I complement this test with descriptive information that uses a welfare institution to exemplify how politicians work as intermediaries between their constituents and the state, and why they need to do so.

The third chapter deals with the second hypothesis. I measure the length of the political career of all politicians in one region in years. I then measure the average political trajectory for each party, and compare them against each other. I complement this test with qualitative data – semi-structured interviews to regional deputies—that I use to explain the logic behind politicians moving from one party into a different one.

Chapter 2:

The Goods Regional Politicians Provide to Their Clienteles

Most specialists argue that the exchange of votes for goods and favors is a common practice in Colombia (Archer 1990, Leal and Dávila 1990, Martz 1997, Escobar 2002, Gutiérrez 2002, García 2003, Taylor 2009) and that parties have traditionally win elections through clientelist means (Pizarro 2006, Gutiérrez 2007, Escobar 2002, Taylor 2009, Dávila 2002). Typically, however, scholars posit that the goods that fuel modern clientelism come from public resources (Archer 1990, Martz 1997, Dávila and Varela 2002, Dávila 2002). In contrast, I argue that in Colombia the goods provided by regional politicians to their constituencies do not come from the central state. Instead, deputies are asked to supply access to jobs and speed up bureaucratic procedures within their regions. They work as intermediaries between their clientele and the local public administration or local elites.

Members of regional assemblies (i.e. deputies) in Colombia have little access to material resources. The regional assembly oversees the budget, but deputies cannot propose projects of their own. As a result, most of the time they cannot offer material patronage. At the same time, since welfare institutions are ineffective at providing basic goods and citizens have significant needs, regional politicians help fulfill these needs by working as errand-boys of their clienteles. They help citizens navigate a cumbersome bureaucracy so that the latter receive state benefits, even if those benefits are not funneled through them, as traditional conceptions of clientelism would argue. In turn, people vote for them because these deputies' favors become their best chance of attaining basic services in a timely manner.

People are less likely to ask similar favors of national politicians. The latter work faraway and are harder to access. Consequently people vote for them due to different appeals. In other words, citizens vote for national and subnational politicians on a different basis.

One implication of these differences is that regional politicians will get most of their votes from municipalities within their district where they are better known and have most of their personal connections. Their votes will be concentrated in few areas. At the same time, national politicians who do not depend upon local connections for political support will have their votes more dispersed throughout the district.

In this chapter, I develop this argument in three parts. The first section briefly defines what I understand by clientelism. It addresses it, first, as a concept on its own, and then related to Colombian politics. The second part uses the frame outlined in the previous section to advance my argument and develop a hypothesis. It uses one institution to exemplify how well entrenched bureaucracy works in Colombia, why citizens need help to navigate it, and why politicians use their knowledge and their contacts to aid people in exchange for votes. It explains why people vote on a different basis for national and subnational politicians. The third section tests the vote-concentration hypothesis. The last part wraps up the argument and connects it with the next chapter.

CLIENTELISM

I define clientelism as a relationship between voters and politicians in which the latter exchange private or club goods²¹ for political support (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). Politicians hand out selective goods (i.e. private goods), services or favors (i.e., favors that

²¹ Private goods are those that are excludable. They can be given to one individual, and not to others. Club goods are those that are non-excludable within a community, but excludable out side of it.

benefit only those individuals involved in the exchange), to specific communities or individuals with the understanding that these would vote for them in return. Rather than single encounters, these exchanges are repeated in time. Consequently, clientelistic relationships are built over several face-to-face interactions, during which client and patron become interdependent. These interactions lead to loyalty relationships based on the promise of future rewards or on the punishment to withdraw the latter (García 2003, Gutiérrez 1999).

Initially, anthropologists and sociologists assumed clientelism to be a "...durable, face-to-face, hierarchical and thus asymmetrical exchange relation between patrons and clients..." (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007: 3-4) It was supposed to be restrained to isolated, "underdeveloped" settings where modernity had not kicked in yet, and domination was based on traditional, rather than rational, values. More recent studies have suggested that clientelism has adapted to modern settings and evolved "...into a more symmetrical (rather than asymmetrical), intermittent (rather than stable and continuous), instrumental-rational (rather than normative) and broker-mediated (rather than face to face based exchange relationship." (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007: 4).

The debate on clientelism in Colombia initially identified two types of clientelism as well: traditional and broker clientelism (Archer 1990, Buitrago and Dávila 1990) The first one was characterized by close long-time patron-client relationships in which the clients' livelihood depended almost entirely from the patrons' favor and good will. Patrons did not draw their resources from the state; instead they handed out goods that depended upon their own wealth. In turn, clients did not respect them for their position within the state but for their privileged socio-economic position within the community.

Broker clientelism appeared in the 1950s, when the Colombian state apparatus extended to remote regions of the country (Archer 1990, Leal Buitrago y Dávila 1990). In it,

the patron handed out resources that depended upon the state, not his personal wealth. He worked as a broker for national politicians, on whom he depended to obtain patronage. The patron-client relationships were more horizontal than those in traditional clientelism, and based on rational values such that clients knew they were changing their vote for specific state resources. The patron was not respected for his wealth, or his position within the community, but for his position within the state apparatus and his ability to work as a broker for national politicians and distribute state's resources.

Rather than traditional or broker clientelism, the relationship that helps elect politicians to Colombia's regional assemblies today is best described as "market clientelism." Davila and Varela (2002) argue that market clientelism emerged with the decentralization of political and economic resources in the 1990s. It is characterized by fragile and dynamic networks that are geographically restricted. In these, regional politicians do not act as brokers anymore. Instead, they hand out alternative resources in order to feed their clientele. In this way, this type of clientelism mixes the traditional and broker clientelism. Whereas patron-client relationships are still more horizontal than those of traditional clientelism, they are more particularistic than those of modern clientelism. The relationship is based on face-to-face steady encounters that are essential for them to work.

The key to market clientelism is that the patron does not use state resources to feed his clientele. Instead he uses personal contacts within local bureaucracies and elites, in order to provide jobs and speed up bureaucratic procedures. Different from traditional clientelism, his socio-economic position is not as important as his political trajectory and his presence within those communities he aids.

WHY PATRONS AND CLIENTS EXCHANGE FAVORS FOR VOTES²²

Although the Colombian state is charged with providing welfare benefits for its citizens, its inability to do so encourages those in the greatest need to enter into clientelist relationships with politicians. Public and subsidized health, education, pension, clean water services, targeted social programs, and the like can only be obtained after long and cumbersome procedures. Whereas some people have the time to wait, others are in immediate need and cannot wait until the paperwork goes through. In order to attain the services in a timely manner, people ask regional politicians for help. Subnational politicians, who often lack material patronage, have contacts and knowledge that they use to aid people to navigate the state bureaucracy and obtain what they want, in exchange for their political support.

WHY CITIZENS LOOK FOR REGIONAL POLITICIANS TO ACCESS STATE WELFARE

Citizens have to go through cumbersome daily processes in order to attain state services, which push them into clientelistic relationships with politicians. The Identification System of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs (*Sistema de Identificación de Potenciales Beneficiarios de Programas Sociales - SISBEN*) is a good example of that. SISBEN is the office in charge of identifying who is entitled to use subsidized state services in Colombia. Its official and unofficial procedures constitute an excellent example of what citizens have to go through in order to attain state services in a timely manner.

The SISBEN uses neighborhood stratification and face-to-face interviews to determine the level of need of an individual or a family. Hence the institution determines whether the people should receive basic services or targeted social programs. Those entitled to receive

²² I would like to thank Andrés Gamboa, who helped me retrieve some of the data I used to write this chapter.

welfare get a membership card, which they have to show in order to get subsidized health, education, or other kind of services.

While the evaluation process seems simple, it can take up to a year between the moment a citizen applies for SISBEN membership and the moment a citizen gets the card. In the meantime, she will have access to emergency health care but she will not have access to other long-term services or targeted programs. According to the rules specified by SISBEN's Guide of Use and Support (2008), once a person applies for the card in the municipal office, it takes three days for an interviewer to visit her house. During that time, the person should not leave home. After the interview, it should take up to three months to get the card that certifies your affiliation.

In regular circumstances then, it requires at least three months to get full access to welfare services. However, non-official accounts suggest that in reality the waiting time is significantly longer (Authors Interview July 2009). SISBEN's interviewers fail to go to the applicant's house within the stipulated time. Instead, they take between eight days and a month. Since applicants cannot wait in their house for this long, they are often not at home when the interviewer finally arrives. As a consequence, the citizen has to start the process all over again and reapply for another interview.

Once the interview is done, the membership card can take more than three months to arrive. Some users relate that they had to wait between eight months to a year before they got the card (Authors Interview July 2009). In the mean time, while people are entitled to emergency healthcare, they often have no access to intensive care, or to the targeted programs they would need to survive.

A phone call by a local politician can speed up the process. The politician's favor will reduce the waiting time from three months to fifteen days (Author's interview July 13, 2009).

For this, the applicant has to know a politician with connections in the SISBEN, if she does not, then, she is not likely to access the state services in a timely manner. Consequently, most citizens obtain what is nominally their right as an individual favor from a deputy to whom they promise political support.

The fact that these exchanges of votes for favors take place is well known by the authorities. In an ill attempt to avoid the clientelistic practices described above, national directives of the SISBEN recently prohibited sectional and regional entities from delivering membership cards or granting specific aids within fifteen days before and a week after the popular elections of 2010:

Keeping in mind we need to guarantee the transparency of the actualization and identification processes within the SISBEN and the delivery of subsidies to improve households and perform health brigades, we suggest that –without undermining fundamental rights—regional, municipal and district authorities should not perform these activities fifteen days prior, and a week after any popular election (Directiva Unificada No. 003 of February 24, 2010 from the Procurador General de la Nación)²³.

Currently the SISBEN is not entirely efficient delivering the service it provides. Not only does the process take more time than it should at every step but it is extremely cumbersome. This situation undermines the ability of the state to effectively provide basic services to the people.

²³ Author's translation. The original reads as follows: "El Procurador General de la nación, en ejercicio de sus funciones constitucionales y legales...teniendo en cuenta que es necesario garantizar la transparencia en los procesos de actualización del SISBEN y de la carnetización de la población que se incorpore a ella, la entrega de subsidios para el mejoramiento de vivienda y la realización de brigadas de salud, se recomienda a las autoridades departamentales, municipales y distritales que, sin menoscabo de los derechos fundamentales se abstengan de efectuar tales actividades durante los 15 días anteriores y una semana después de cualquier elección de carácter popular" (Directiva Unificada No. 003 del 24 de febrero de 2010, de la Procuraduría General de la Nación).

The SISBEN illustrates the difficulties that Colombia's ordinary citizens—those without connections—face when accessing state bureaucracy. They have long waiting periods, many requirements to fulfill, and no assistance in doing so. They act as “supplicants of favors” rather than “bearers of a right” (O'Donnell 1999). In order to avoid cumbersome processes that hinder their basic wellbeing, these citizens ask the regional politicians they know to help them. The latter then use their contacts to go around the bureaucracy and speed up the processes.

Citizens are less likely to ask national politicians for similar favors because congressmen live faraway and are less accessible than their regional counterparts. As a result, the relationship between national politicians and citizens is different. For a common citizen, it simply does not pay off to make a long trip to try to meet a national representative that is hard to access—especially if she has a closer relationship with a regional assemblyman or woman. In other words, national and subnational officers serve a different purpose for their constituencies. Whereas people seek regional politicians to help them navigate the regional bureaucracy, they look for different assets in their national representatives.

WHY REGIONAL POLITICIANS ACT AS INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN THE CITIZENS AND THE STATE BUREAUCRACY

Regional deputies do not have access to central state material resources. In order to attain power, they use their own personal contacts to give their clientele access to welfare institutions, such as the SISBEN. The regional politicians and their contacts become helpful for citizens to attain basic state services in a timely manner.

At the same time, assembly members have no access to material resources, which increase the likelihood they will resort to the exchange of favors for votes. In the 1990s, several fiscal and political resources were decentralized in Colombia (O'Neal 2006). Governors and

mayors were popularly elected since 1988. Furthermore, they had their own resources largely independent from the national congress²⁴. Access to such resources, however, did not flow into regional legislative bodies. By law, the Regional Assembly authorizes the governor's budget, but deputies cannot propose projects themselves (Art. 300, Chapter II, National Constitution). They have to go through the governor's office, which severely restricts their ability to intervene these plans and draw material resources for patronage.

In the absence of these material resources, deputies use favors as patronage. As García (2003) and Davila and Varela (2002) point out, politicians without resources become intermediaries with the bureaucracy for their clientele. Colombia's state bureaucracy is hard to navigate (Davila and Varela 2002, García 2003), as the example of SISBEN illustrates. Local politicians can help their clientele in doing so. They can use their knowledge and their contacts within institutions and elites to aid citizens go through state institutions.

Therefore, people have a strong incentive to vote for these politicians: by doing so they will have a known representative to whom they can approach whenever they need access to state welfare services or other institutions. As long as the deputy remains an effective "intermediary", he or she is likely to retain those votes. In other words, from the citizens' perspective, regional politicians matter because of their access to key members of the regional and local administration. The better the contacts, the more reliable this politician becomes in feeding his clientele. This, along with a steady relationship within specific groups of the population, makes the regional candidate trustworthy and people are more likely to vote for him.

In sum, in the absence of material resources politicians court their clientele by using their contacts within local welfare institutions to speed up bureaucratic procedures. Citizens

²⁴ Each level of government had new ways and incentives to raise revenue (O'Neal 2006).

vote for these politicians because they can give access to state health and education services that are officially available to all Colombians. The steadier the politician's presence in the community, and the better his contacts within regional bureaucracies and elites, the more likely people are to vote for him.

WHERE DO POLITICIANS GET THEIR VOTES?

So far in this chapter, I have argued that regional politicians hand out favors rather than material resources dependent upon the central state. Politicians do so because they have no effective access to material resources. By the same token, citizens vote for subnational politicians based on their ability to hand out this type of patronage. They do so because Colombian bureaucracy is well entrenched and hard to navigate. In order to attain basic, immediate services in a timely manner people find useful to have somebody to pull strings inside. They ask their regional representatives to do this because, unlike national politicians, they are within a short distance and therefore are easier to access.

If citizens vote for national and subnational offices on a different basis, we should expect them to have different vote patterns within the same district. If connections are important when electing regional representatives, we should observe that their votes are concentrated in those areas where they have built better networks. At the same time, if these connections are not that important at the national level, national politicians should have their votes more spread out throughout the district. Thus, I hypothesize that, within the same district, national politicians will have a more homogeneous vote than their subnational counterparts.

In Colombia, lower house representatives and regional assemblymen and women are elected within a region. Each region (*departamento*) is divided into several municipalities. I suggest that regional deputies will have their votes more concentrated in few municipalities,

while lower house representatives will have their votes more homogenously distributed across municipalities.

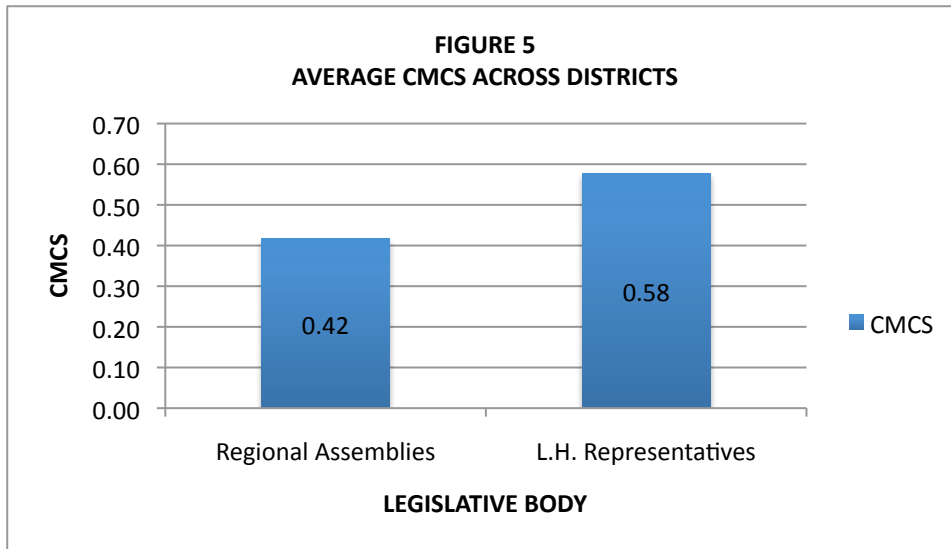
To test this hypothesis, I use electoral data from the national legislative elections of 2006 and the regional elections of 2007. I compare the concentration of votes of regional deputies and the concentration of votes of lower house representatives and show that lower house congressmen and women have a more homogenous distribution of votes than their regional counterparts.

In order to measure concentration of votes I use Mainwaring and Jones (2003) Party Nationalization Score (PNS), but instead of measuring party nationalization, I assess lower house representatives and deputies' vote shares in different municipalities across the same region. I call it Candidates Municipal Concentration Score (CMCS).

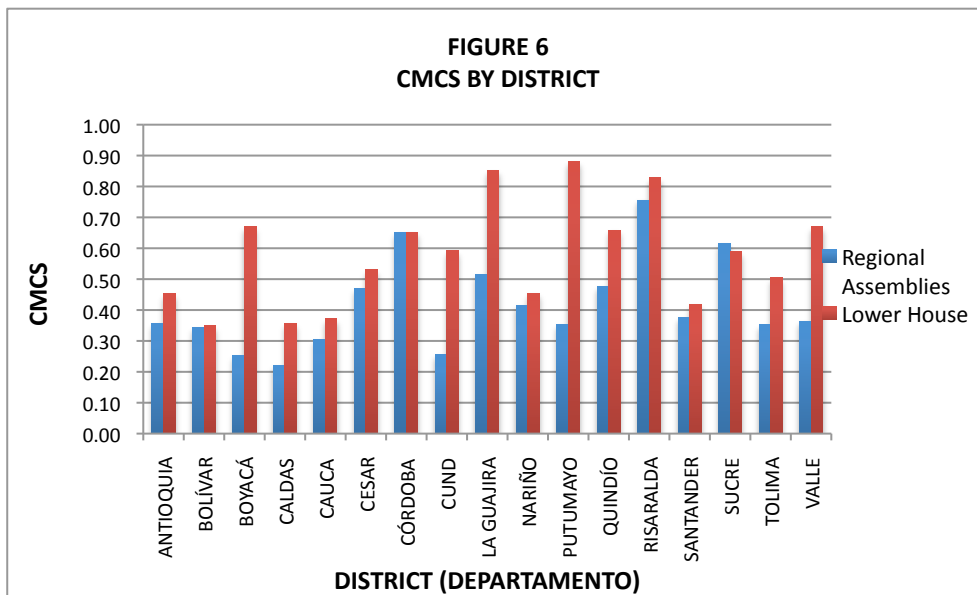
The PNS departs from the logic of the Gini coefficient as a way to measure the distribution of votes across a country. It calculates "...the extent to which a party wins equal vote shares across all the sub-national units" (Mainwaring and Jones, 2003: 4). The Gini Coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. 0 means that parties receive the same vote share in all subnational units and 1 means that they receive all of their votes from one specific subnational unit. In order to get the PNS, Mainwaring and Jones subtract the Gini coefficient from one, thus the higher the score the more nationalized a party is. (2003: 4). If the CMCS is high, then politicians' votes are spread out and homogeneous across the departamento. If the score is low, then their votes are concentrated in few municipalities.

I chose all those districts that had liberal candidates elected both in the regional assembly and the lower house (17 departamentos). I also chose to measure only liberal politicians' vote shares. I do so both for the national elections of 2006 —30 liberal representatives—and the regional elections of 2007 —64 liberal deputies. As shown below

(Figure 5), the data confirms my hypothesis. Albeit concentrated, the average CMCS for the liberal congressmen (0.58) is higher than that of the liberal deputies (0.42). Moreover, as shown in Figure 6 in every single district, but one, congressmen had a higher CMCS than assemblymen and women.



SOURCE: My own calculations based on data from the Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil.



SOURCE: My own calculations based on data from the Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil

In other words, liberal regional deputies obtained their votes from fewer municipalities than the national counterparts, despite the fact that both types of politicians represent the same geographic areas. This fact supports the idea that people vote differently for these two positions. They vote based on networks and connections for their regional representatives, but they have different appeals when choosing national officials. This strengthens the argument outlined above: regional politicians distribute favors using their knowledge and networks within local and regional bureaucracy. Citizens vote for them because they need to have a representative whom they can approach when they need access to state services.

In the absence of survey data, vote dispersion is one way to test my argument that national and subnational politicians get their votes in a different manner. The first ones distribute to clientele with whom they have steady face-to-face relationships, while the second ones have a harder time doing so. This test, however, has its limitations. Other alternative explanations might account for the phenomenon as well. For example, it might be the case that national politicians have the ability and resources to campaign throughout the region whereas their regional counterparts do not. Furthermore, national candidates might be better known on a regional basis, while the deputies might have a harder time getting themselves in municipalities other than the one they come from.

Within the specific constraints of this thesis, it is impossible to account for all these explanations. However, complementary information supports the argument outlined above. During different interviews with citizens and community leaders, it became evident that they voted for regional politicians based on how confident they felt asking them for favors. When asked why did she voted for candidates of different parties for national and subnational bodies, an interviewee answered that she wasn't going all the way to Bogotá, just to ask a congressman to get her son a place in school (Author's Interview, July 28, 2009). She implied that she had

more “flexibility” when voting for national officials. Moreover, when asked about the reasons to support a given regional candidate, a community leader in César answered that he had to “perform social activities”; work with the leader so that they can “solve their needs” (Author’s Interview July 23, 2009).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the goods provided by regional politicians do not depend upon the central state. Deputies have little access to material patronage. Therefore assemblymen and women work as mediators between the state bureaucracy and their constituency. They help citizens navigate welfare institutions in order to attain basic services. In exchange, people vote for these politicians because they represent their only chance to attain state benefits in a timely manner.

National politicians are not asked for the same favors. They work faraway and are less accessible than their regional counterparts. They get chosen based on other appeals, not explored here. In other words, people chose national and subnational representatives on a different basis

As this chapter argued, deputies get elected based on their ability to provide access to state bureaucracy. Such capacity depends upon their contacts within local institutions and elites. As a consequence they obtain most of their votes from few areas within the region. National politicians have other kinds of appeals; therefore, their votes are more homogeneous across the same district.

If local networks are important to win regional elections, then those candidates with better contacts will be the ones who have a better chance to attain office. Networks are built with time. It follows that those politicians who have been in politics the longest will be the ones with better contacts within local bureaucracies and elites. The next chapter shows that, for the

most part, the LP holds candidates with longer political trajectories than their counterparts. These politicians are better equipped to win seats in the regional assemblies, than members of other parties.

Chapter 3:

Long Standing Politicians are Liberal Politicians

Political parties can benefit politicians by solving the coordination problem presented by many candidates seeking few public offices, providing a label that helps voters identify a politician's ideological profile, and offering economic and logistic support for campaigns. At the same time, however, joining a party involves certain costs. A politician has to abide by the rules and procedures of the party and negotiate his ideological stands with other party members (Aldrich, 1995).

Despite its history and size, Colombia's Liberal Party offers its politicians few benefits. The deterioration due to several years in government (1986-1998), drug-related scandals, and ill-fated electoral institutions –that diminished party leaders' control over the ballot, and reduced the number of candidates that could present to elections for the same party— damaged its label and thwarted its ability to solve its coordination problems. (Gutiérrez 2007, Pizarro 2006). Furthermore, the way the state funding works, plus new regional –legal and illegal- resources, widened the funds available to small parties. Consequently, the LP does not provide much better economic support than other parties anymore (Gutiérrez 2007). In the eyes of a politician seeking office, the LP does not give more advantages compared to its counterparts (Gutiérrez 2006, 2007, Pizarro 2006). Its label is not as strong as it used to be and the party itself does not ease up the costs of campaigning any more than other parties.

While the benefits of the LP's party label have diminished, the costs for internal competition in the party remain high. With many well-entrenched members, it takes a long

time for a new politician to get nominated. Many candidates, therefore, choose to move into newer and smaller organizations with less competition for endorsements.

In this chapter, I argue that the candidates that remain in the LP are long-standing politicians with long political trajectories and good positions in the party's regional hierarchical structure. Because they do not have to fight for nominations as hard as their younger counterparts, they have fewer incentives to leave and join other parties. Accordingly, I hypothesize that LP will have politicians with longer political trajectories in average than other parties.

I develop my argument in four parts. First, I briefly explain what Colombian candidates want, and how they weight the benefits and costs of the parties they chose to enter. Then, I examine the institutions and historical events that thwarted the LP's ability to fulfill politician's expectations in the 1990s and early 2000s. I draw evidence from the semi-structured interviews that I conducted in June and July 2009 to show how those institutions and events encouraged newer candidates to move out of the LP. In the third section I compare politicians' public trajectories, and show that, on average, long-serving politicians stay in the LP. In the conclusion, I wrap up the argument and tie it to previous chapters.

WHAT COLOMBIAN CANDIDATES WANT

Candidates' motivations range from instrumental to programmatic. On one extreme, office-seekers see winning as their number one priority. On the other, ideologues see programmatic advancement as their top goal (Kitschelt 1989). Whereas the former are willing to yield policy proposals for the sake of attaining office, the latter would rather lose an election than negotiating their programmatic stands.

Traditionally, political scientists in Colombia have assumed that contemporary politicians are mostly office-seekers (Pizarro 2002, 2006, Pizarro and Bejarano 2005, Gutiérrez 2002, 2006, 2007, Botero 2006, Rodríguez-Raga 2006, Taylor 2009) Gutierrez (2007) suggests that during the second half of the 20th century the liberal and conservative parties were composed by a set of ideologues (the party elite) and an increasingly large group of office-seekers (party members). As office-seekers became more effective attaining office and the old party elite retired, the former were able to take control of their parties (Gutiérrez 2007).

As suggested by Gutierrez (2007) then, most Colombian candidates today are office-seekers: they are willing to yield policy positions in order to attain office. While not devoid of ideology (no liberal candidate has ever moved into the CP or viceversa), these politicians seek parties that help them advance their career (Gutiérrez 2007: 421-431). They weight first the likelihood of such a party to win and the feasibility for them to get nominated within it, and then how far it is from their preferred policy position.

Following Gutiérrez and other political scientists, this analysis assumes that Colombia's politicians are office-seekers. It departs from the basis that they will look for parties that will help them win office, with little regard for their policy position. Such an assumption is supported by the interviews conducted by the author during the Summer 2009, in which –with the exception of the PDA and ASI²⁵—most politicians showed little concern about the party they joined, as long as it gave them access to nominations and, to a lesser extent, helped them attain office.

²⁵ The PDA is a coalition of leftist parties. Its members are hardcore ideologues, who have been active in legal (i.e. Communist and Socialist parties) and illegal associations (i.e. the guerrilla movement M-19). They have been persecuted by state and non-state actors, which has made them hardcore ideologies. During the interviews conducted during the summer 2009, they identified themselves as ideologues, and were recognized as such by other politicians as well.

ASI (Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia) Built to defend indigenous communities, this party is composed mostly by indigenous leaders who remain closely attached to their ethnic groups. They believe in politics as a way to advance indigenous demands, rather than their own career.

For instance, Jorge Tafur –deputy of the regional assembly of Bolívar for Apertura Liberal—suggests that “the objective is to get the endorsement.... It is a mathematical strategy: to calculate that, once inside, you are not left out.... Parties are happy to accept you.” (Author’s interview July 21st, 2009)²⁶. In the same line Luis C. Fuentes –deputy of the regional assembly of Bolívar for the PDA—points out that: “the traditional parties have no prestige. They do not represent. They are disunited. Personal interests rule them. There is no discipline. There is no program. They became a group of negotiators.” (Author’s interview July 21st, 2009)²⁷.

It is ultimately a matter of endorsements. As suggested by Javier Alonso Durán –deputy of the Regional Assembly of Santander for Cambio Radical—politicians then chose smaller parties over larger ones, because “they have a better option to get elected with nascent parties, that open up spaces for those that cannot reach them within the traditional parties” (Authors’ interview July 30, 2009)²⁸

WHY THE LIBERAL PARTY BECAME UNATTRACTIVE FOR MANY POLITICIANS

Before the late 1990s and early 2000s the LP was an attractive choice for most politicians. It helped them advance their career. It had a strong label, and provided good economic and logistic support. Moreover, until 2003 electoral rules allowed parties to present

²⁶ The quote reads as follows: “El objetivo es capturar la credencial... Es una estrategia matemática calcular que dentro del partido no quede fuera.” “Los otros movimientos [diferentes al Polo] se mueven de manera particular. Por intereses individualistas.”

²⁷ The quote reads as follows: “Los partidos tradicionales están desprestigiados. No representan. Sin cohesión. Impera el apetito personal. No hay disciplina/sometimiento. Plataforma. Se volvieron un grupo de negociadores.”

²⁸ The quote reads as follows. “Porque hay más opción de salir elegido con partidos nacientes y que abren sus espacios para los que en los partidos tradicionales no alcanzan.”

as many lists as seats available in legislative elections. Therefore, for the most part, Liberal politicians did not have to compete for endorsements. With high benefits, and low costs, the LP was then a good strategic choice for an office-seeker.

However, in 1994 specific historical events, and new electoral laws hampered the LPs label and increased candidates' access to alternative –legal and illegal- resources. On top of that, in 2003, an electoral reform compelled parties to register only one list. These changes not only depreciated the LP's nominations, but also increased the competition for endorsements within the party. With less benefits, and higher costs, many new politicians had incentives to defect the LP, and joined newer and smaller organizations.

THE BENEFITS THE LP FAILS TO PROVIDE

The exclusion of other parties throughout the National Front (1958-1970), drug related scandals, and the inability to solve the most pressing socioeconomic and security problems in Colombia discredited the Liberal Party in the eyes of voters (Archer 1995, Gutiérrez 2006, 2007) In 1958, an agreement between the Liberal and the Conservative Party created the National Front (NF). Until 1986, public offices were divided equally between these two parties. The presidency rotated for 16 years, seats in all legislative bodies were divided equally between Liberal and Conservative candidates, all mayoralties and governorships were adjudicated to members of both parties by half, and the cabinet had six ministries from each party. While this parity served its purpose and tamed the interparty violence that had started decades before, it unintentionally detached people from the traditional parties (Hartlyn 1993, Gutiérrez 2006, 2007). Once politicians from the LP presented themselves as equal to those representing the CP, people could never perceive them as different again. The Liberal and the Conservative labels became unable to provide information on the ideological position of their members.

The lack of clear ideological distinctions between the Conservative and the Liberal party, plus the restriction to register for elections under any other party during the NF, splintered the LP and the CP into successful – although non-representative— patronage networks (Archer 1995). Electoral competition moved inside the parties where different currents fought for offices using clientelism (Pizarro 2002). The exchange of goods for votes was so successful, that even after the Constitution of 1991 changed the rules and opened up the gates for new parties, the LP was able to keep its majorities both in national and sub- national legislative bodies (Archer 1995).

The LP's ability to win elections using clientelism, however, coexisted with an increasing discontent among citizens (Gutiérrez 2006). Because they kept winning elections, this party had no need to reform itself, or resort to programmatic appeals. Therefore, by the mid 1990s the LP was already perceived as corrupt and old-fashioned (Gutierrez 2006).

The discontent reached its highest point in 1994 when the authorities found that the new president Ernesto Samper, and other liberal politicians had received money from Cali's drug cartel to fund their campaigns (Gutiérrez 2006). In the midst of this scandal Samper's administration was unable to govern. During his period the guerrilla movement multiplied its military power and increased their leverage vis-à-vis the government (Pardo 2004). At the end of his term, the LP was seen not only as corrupt, and related to the drug business, but also as incompetent and ineffective.

During the 1990s politicians also gained access to new legal and illegal resources that gave them economic independence vis-à-vis the party's authorities. In 1991 the new Constitution allowed recently elected mayors and governors to have direct access to regional resources (O'Neill 2006) Moreover, the 1980s saw an expansion of the drug business in Colombia. Drug lords became an alternative source of funds for politicians (Thoumi 2002).

They funded campaigns and gave candidates patronage to distribute, regardless of their party (Gutiérrez 2007). Economically speaking, politicians did not need to be affiliated to a large party anymore in order to campaign, distribute patronage, or pork barrel.

On top of that, new electoral rules made it easier for politicians to build or move into new parties. The Law 30 of 1994 on political parties depreciated large parties' endorsements. It reduced the requisites needed by a party to be recognized by the National Electoral Council. Accordingly, a person only needed to be backed by fifty thousand signatories – including a legislator—or fifty thousand votes in order to be recognized as a party and have access to state resources (Article 3, Law 130 of 1994). Therefore, after 1994, several mini-movements were able to present candidates to elections. The funds guaranteed by the state assured most of them at least one seat in a legislative body (Pizarro and Bejarano 1999, Pizarro 2006).

Furthermore, in Colombia, legislative seats were distributed using the Hare electoral formula, also known as single quota largest remainders. Since a party could win seats with remainders, small parties could attain representation with a relatively small amount of votes. This also prompted candidates to build their own party, or join small parties, rather than competing for endorsements inside the LP (Pizarro 2006).

In sum by the end of the 1990s the LP had no more benefits to offer than any other party. Not only was its label widely discredited, but liberal candidates had access to resources other than those funneled through the party. Moreover, a series of institutional reforms had lowered down the costs of moving from a large party into a smaller one. As evidenced by Alvaro Uribe in 2002, by the end of the 1990s presenting yourself to elections under the LP did not provide much more advantages than presenting under other labels.

WHY MOST POLITICIANS DEFECTED FROM THE LIBERAL PARTY ONLY AFTER 2003

Whereas the LP lost its attractiveness during the 1990s, most liberal politicians did not defect from it until 2003. While the LP offered few benefits, until then, there was little competition for endorsements as well. The Hare electoral formula rewarded candidates who won seats with reminders and Colombia's law allowed parties to present as many lists as seats available. Therefore, parties had incentives to present many lists, instead of a big one. Several lists gave them more seats through the remainders than a single large list (Shugart, Moreno & Fajardo 2007). This, in turn, allowed the LP to endorse a large number of candidates. In 1994 and 1998, the LP presented 134 and 148 lists to the Senate, winning 56% and 49% of the seats respectively, despite having only 52,8% and 47.3% of the votes (Vélez, Ossa & Montes 2006).

Although, the Hare electoral formula depreciated party endorsements, and hindered party discipline (Pizarro 2006), it allowed the LP to solve its coordination problem. Because the law permitted every party to present many lists, and the electoral formula granted seats with reminders, most politicians in the party were able to present themselves to elections. As long as they obtained a remainder large enough, they could assure their seat. Even if there were few incentives to stay inside the LP, the costs of being affiliated to it were not particularly high. As a consequence, politicians remained attached to the LP.

In 2003, however, being affiliated to the LP became costly for many politicians. An institutional reform prohibited parties from presenting more than one list for each legislative body. The LP could not endorse as many candidates as it used to, which rendered it unable to solve its coordination problem (e.g. many candidates seeking few nominations). With a steep competition for endorsements, and given that the LP did not offer much more benefits than other parties, it became costly for politicians to remain attached to it, and many of them defected.

In sum, after 2003 many politicians left the LP to join newer and smaller parties. By the late 1990s, the LP's label was widely discredited, candidates had access to resources other than those funneled through the party, and a series of institutional reforms had lowered down the costs of moving out of the party. Moreover, in 2003 an electoral reform reduced the number of endorsements a party could give. With high costs and little benefits, it then became more attractive for many candidates to join other smaller parties.

WHY DO REGIONAL POLITICIANS JOIN SMALLER AND NEWER PARTIES

If the LP provides little benefits to its politicians (relative to other parties), the decision to remain attached to it or not, depends upon how good is the opportunity to get endorsed. In fact, regional politicians move into new and smaller parties because they provide them a better opportunity to get nominated. When asked why they or their colleagues leaved the Liberal or the Conservative Party, 25 out of 34 deputies referred to the candidate's ability to win a nomination. In their words: "people just go to [the party] that hands out endorsements. They don't look for large parties, because they want associations with less names." (Author interview, July 15, 2009.)²⁹ It "... is an issue of how much would it cost me to escalate... The Liberal and Conservative parties are 'streets' with too much traffic."(Author interview, July 16, 2009)³⁰

Two seemingly opposite notions support this attitude. Most of the politicians interviewed believe that parties play an important role: they provide a structure and a label that reduce

²⁹ The quote reads as follows: "La gente simplemente se mueve a donde dan avlaes. No buscan partidos grandes porque buscan agrupaciones con menos nombres..."

³⁰ The quote reads as follows. "La gente cambia de partidos por los avales y conveniencias políticas... Es un tema de cuánto me cuesta escalar. El Partido Liberal y el Partido Conservador son 'calles' con mucho tráfico."

costs and gain votes. However, most of them also agree that the label behind a candidate does not outweigh his personal attributes.

According to Colombia's legislation a candidate can register to elections without an endorsement if he is backed up by, at least, 50,000 signatures (Article 9, Law 30 of 1994). When asked about the advantages of registering for elections using an endorsement instead of signatures, most of the interviewees (24 deputies) highlighted that parties provide logistic support and reduce costs of information. Guillermo Cuartas, deputy of Antioquia's regional assembly for the Conservative Party, for example, observed that:

People who register with signatures are 'lost souls'. They don't fit. The signatures are costly; you have to have a different type of platform. There is the risk that during revisions some signatures are going to be ruled out. Besides, nobody denies a signature, but there is no compromise. (Author interview, July 16, 2009)³¹

In other words, in Colombia, a regional politician is unlikely to run without a party because it is costly and risky. Furthermore, getting an endorsement is not a complicated endeavor: as observed by a deputy from Risaralda's regional assembly "...nobody denies an endorsement. If a party denies me an endorsement, then I can go to another one." (Author Interview, July 13, 2009)³². Therefore there is no reason for a candidate to undertake the costs of running without it.

³¹ The quote reads as follow "La gente que se inscribe por firmas son como 'almas en pena'. No encajan. Las firmas son más costosas, tienes que tener una plataforma diferente. Existen muchos riesgos de que en las revisions se quemen las firmas. Además un afirma no se le niega a nadie, pero no hay compromisos."

³² The quote reads as follows "Conseguir un aval no es difícil. Un aval no se le niega a nadie. Si me lo niegan me voy a otro partido."

Despite their agreement on the importance of parties to run for elections, when asked how to win an electoral contest, politicians fared parties low in their priorities. Most deputies (20) highlighted the importance of the individual's assets vis-à-vis those of the party they belonged to³³. For example, for Gilberto Bustamante, deputy of Antioquia's regional assembly, "...endorsements are just a requisite [and] people do not pay attention to the party. One can grab and own the party's platform when one builds one's own path" (Author interview, July 15, 2009)³⁴. Even long standing members of the traditional parties suggested that "...the community is the most important and running without a party is viable." (Author Interview, July 15, 2009)³⁵

At the end, parties do have important assets for most politicians interviewed. They provide economic and logistic support and their label can help a candidate win votes. No regional deputy ran using firms and most of the interviewees dismissed this system as cumbersome, costly, and risky. However, when asked about a successful campaign, most politicians emphasized personal traits. Some openly suggested that the party did not contribute to their campaign and that it was possible to win without being affiliated to one.

In sum, regional politicians value parties, as organisms that help them get elected. Most of them consider these important to run for public offices. At the same time, however, they disregard party labels because they are not considered to be strong enough to outweigh personal assets. Consequently regional politicians are likely to change from a large party into a small one, based mostly on the costs that party entails. If it takes a long time to get endorsed in

³³ The exceptions were candidates of indigenous parties (ASI) and the leftist coalition PDA, whose members were characterized by the deputies as more attached to their ideologies, and less concerned with winning office.

³⁴ The quote reads as follows: "...el aval es un requisito, la gente no le para bolas al partido. Las banderas se arrebatan cuando uno labra su propio camino."

³⁵ The quote reads as follows: "La politica no es de partidos sino de amigos, porque los partidos se han ido desdibujando lo que importa es un buen proyecto, una hoja de vida clara."

a large party, a candidate is likely to consider moving into a smaller party in which he will be nominated.

WHY LONG-SERVING POLITICIANS REMAIN IN THE LIBERAL PARTY

The sections above show that regional politicians chose to move from the LP party into smaller and newer parties, after weighting the possibility of winning a nomination.

Accordingly, I argue that the politicians who remain in the LP are long-serving politicians with a high position in the regional party structure. They do not have to fight for their nomination as hard as newer candidates and therefore, they have fewer incentives to leave. Consequently, I expect the LP to have members with a longer political trajectory than members of other parties.

Gutierrez (2007) states that the LP is an “old party”. Based on the personal files of the candidates the LP endorsed, he shows that the age of those who receive endorsements, on average, is high and few young people run for public offices with the party (Gutiérrez 2007: 424). I further examine this assessment by measuring the length of Liberals’ political career and comparing it with that of the members of other parties.

The data for my analysis comes from three different regional assemblies (Antioquia, Santander and Cesar). It was collected through interviews to their deputies in the summer of 2009, and complemented with biographical information online, articles in newspapers and magazines. Unfortunately the information available for other regions was insufficient and it was impossible to include other deputies in the analysis.

I measured political trajectory using the years that each deputy has spent in a public office (local councils, mayoralties, regional assembly, congress and other non-elective offices). Using these, I calculated an average of years in office for each party.

TABLE 1 TOTAL YEARS OF SERVICE PER PARTY FOR ANTIOQUIA SANTANDER AND CESAR		
PARTY	No. DEPUTIES	YEARS OF SERVICE IN AVERAGE
LP	14	11.1
CR	6	9
CP	9	6.9
P de la U	5	6.8
Alas	9	5.2
C.C.	5	4.4
PDA	2	1
C.D.	1	0
ASI	1	0

SOURCE: www.asambleadeantioquia.gov.co, www.asambleadesantander.gov.co, www.asambleadecesar.gov.co, www.congresovisible.org, www.eltiempo.com, www.semana.com and interviews by the author (July 2009).

NOTES:

CR=Cambio Radical, C.C.=Convergencia Ciudadana, PDA=Polo Democrático Alternativo, CD=Colombia Democrática, ASI=Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia

As shown in Table 1, the LP's average is the greatest. Albeit closely followed by Cambio Radical's, it has a three years difference with the average age of Partido de la U's members. This supports my hypothesis: the members of the LP are those with the longest political careers. However, only in Antioquia and Santander, (Table 2) the LP's deputies are, in average, the oldest politicians. In César, the only deputy from the Partido de la U has 18 years of political trajectory, which surpass the average of 4.33 of the LP in that region.

	ANTIOQUIA		SANTANDER		CESAR	
	No. DEPUTIES	YEARS IN SERVICE (AVERAGE)	No. DEPUTIES	YEARS IN SERVICE (AVERAGE)	No. DEPUTIES	YEARS IN SERVICE (AVERAGE)
LP	7	12.8	5	13.5	3	4.3
CR	4	9.5	1	7	No Deputy	
P. De la U	3	1		12	1	18
CP	3	7.3	3	9.6	3	3.6
Alas	6	5.8	No Deputy		3	4
PDA	1	2	1	0	No Deputy	
CD	1	0	No Deputy		No Deputy	
ASI	1	0	No Deputy		No Deputy	
CC	No Deputies		5	4.75	1	3

SOURCE: www.asambleadeantioquia.gov.co, www.asambleadesantander.gov.co, www.asambleadecesar.gov.co, www.congresovisible.org, www.eltiempo.com, www.semana.com and interviews by the author (July 2009).

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This fact suggests that the party's intraparty struggles are important as well. Even before the National Front, the LP was internally divided into currents that fought to control it, both at the national and subnational level (Pizarro 2002). Whether a politician is at the top of the LP's regional hierarchy or not, can depend on these interparty struggles, as well. Even long-standing politicians may see their ability to get endorsed hampered by the fact that they belong to the "wrong" current. If so, they might look for other alternatives that increase their opportunities of nomination.

Alberto Castro (the Partido de la U's deputy for Cesar), for example, was a former member of the Liberal Party. Until 2007 he presented himself under such a label. However, in 2007 internal struggles within the party gave control of the regional hierarchical structure to the current he did not belong to. He then moved into Partido de la U, because it provided him with a better chance to get nominated. In his own words he remains Liberal, but he runs with

Partido de la U because “...it provides him with an alternative” (Author’s interview July 23, 2009)

Such is also the case of Jorge Iván Montoya. Former member of the Liberal Party in Antioquia, Montoya explains that he moved into Cambio Radical because of “his friends” (i.e. political allies). Within the LP, he built the group “Dirección Liberal Popular” with Federico Estrada Vélez, and then he moved into the “Liberalismo Oficial” –another current—with Bernardo Guerra. He ended up in the “Nueva Forma de Hacer Política”, which latter became Cambio Radical. For him, politics is not about parties but about “friends” (Author Interview July 15, 2009).

Overall then, long-standing politicians remain inside the LP. For the most part they have no incentives to leave the party because they are well positioned within the party’s regional structure, and therefore, have a good chance to get an endorsement. However, as Montoya and Castro’s trajectories show, long-standing politicians are willing to leave the LP if things go south for them. They will stay in the party as long as they are able to get endorsed and win elections.

CONCLUSION

Despite its history and size, the LP does not provide special benefits for politicians today. Specific historical developments and institutions thwarted the party’s label and lowered down the barriers to new parties. As a consequence, the LP does not ease up the costs of campaigning much more than the other parties.

At the same time, because it has many well-entrenched members, being affiliated to the LP does imply high costs for a candidate. It takes a long time for new members to get nominated. New politicians, therefore, move into new and smaller organizations where they are more likely to get endorsed. While they recognize the importance of parties as an essential

mechanism to attain power, they disregard specific parties appeals and believe these do not outweigh their personal assets as candidates.

The politicians who remain in the LP, therefore, are those with a position strong enough to secure their nomination. As shown above they are usually long serving politicians who are well positioned in the party's regional hierarchical structure. They do not leave the party because they have no reason to do so: the new parties are not any more appealing than the one they are in, nor do they provide any more votes than the ones they already get.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, people vote different for national and sub-national candidates. Within the regions, citizens support known politicians with good connections. As shown in this section, these candidates are likely to be those politicians who have been in politics the longest, who also happen to be the ones more likely to remain in the LP. As long as they have no incentives to leave, the LP will keep winning seats in subnational legislative bodies, even if it loses national elections.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

The Liberal Party in Colombia has opposing simultaneous electoral performances: whereas they have lost control of the national political arena, they have remained fairly strong at the regional level. Since 2002 this party has lost the presidency and most of the seats in congress against new parties and independent candidates. Simultaneously it still wins a plurality of the seats in most regional assemblies.

Current studies of the traditional parties in Colombia do not explain the LP's different electoral outcomes at the national and subnational level. They elucidate the reasons behind its poor performance at the national level, but fail to explain its regional electoral success. Existing approaches to party competition do not account for the LP's divergent performances either. They are able to explain one, or the other, but not why do these take place simultaneously. Consequently they wrongly predict the LP's, and even Colombia's party system, collapse.

In this thesis I have argued that strong clientelistic networks at the subnational level account for the LP's success across different regions. The patronage provided by regional politicians to their constituency does not depend upon the state. Deputies lack access to material resources. Consequently, they use their contacts within the regional and local bureaucracy and provide access to state services in exchange for votes.

Although officially available to all citizens, state services are rarely effectively provided to all of them. People rely on regional politicians in order to gain access to welfare and other institutions. Therefore, they support well-connected candidates at the subnational level. National politicians are harder to access, thus, citizens vote on a different basis for them. Because regional candidates do not rely on material patronage in order to attain votes, they have no incentives to promote national candidates from their party either. Consequently, it is

not surprising that the same person votes for different, and even opposing parties, in national and subnational elections.

Networks require time. Accordingly, well-connected politicians are likely to be those who have been in politics the longest. Due to their political trajectory, they are also likely to be the ones with few incentives to move out of the LP. In Colombia office-seekers move from larger and older parties into smaller and newer ones because the latter provide them with a better chance of getting nominated. Long-standing politicians are more likely to enjoy from good positions within the LP's regional structures, therefore, they do not have to fight for nominations as hard as other members, and they do not need to move.

In conclusion, the LP wins at the subnational level because its candidates are well connected long standing politicians, who are very good distributing favors. People support them, because they need intermediaries in order to access state services. National politicians live far away and are harder to access. They cannot provide favors in the same steady way as their regional counterparts. Therefore, citizens vote for them on a different basis.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOODS PROVIDED

Traditionally, scholars have paid little attention to the type of goods exchanged in clientelistic transactions. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the study of patron-client relationships has focused on material resources drawn from the state. Whereas academics acknowledge that services are exchanged as well, there has been no serious attempt to understand the effects of this type of patronage on the dynamics of clientelistic relationships. The argument developed in this thesis is an effort to do so. It focuses on the particularity of services in order to explain why

some politicians are successful providing patronage, even when they have little access state material resources.

As shown above, patrons who rely on services for patronage, build a different type of relationship with their clientele. They need face-to-face interactions in geographically restricted spaces. Whereas broker clientelism, as traditionally described, has nationwide more impersonal networks, patron-client relationships that rely on the exchange of favors for votes are more personal and have a reduced scope. People will go to the politician they trust and the one they have easy access to.

This very nature makes this type of exchanges more pervasive than those that rely on goods. Laws and institutional mechanisms can reduce the unsurveilled access of politicians to state resources. Moreover, as technology improves it becomes somehow harder, albeit not impossible, to distribute state resources to specific clienteles.

The exchange of votes for services, however, is part of a series of informal institutions that are hard to trim down. Impenetrable bureaucracies have long been a serious problem in Latin America (O'Donnell 1999). The way people go around them is using politicians' favors. This is not only seen as an acceptable practice, but also seen as the only way to access what is, in theory, a right. It is hard to convince citizens that they can attain these services otherwise.

COLOMBIA AND ITS TRADITIONAL PARTIES

Although this thesis analyzes the LP, its main question is part of a broader debate about Colombia's traditional parties. For long now, political scientists have wondered about the Liberal and Conservative Party's resilience. As a consequence of acute economic crises, traditional parties, and party systems, have collapsed in neighbor countries such as Venezuela

and Peru (Weyland 2002). In face of an equally serious security crisis, it bears the question: why has not happened the same in Colombia?

This thesis contributes to such a question. Both the Liberal and the Conservative Party lost prestige during the 1990s. Uribe Vélez took advantage of that situation and credibly promised to defeat the FARC. So did the parties that supported him. As a consequence the Liberal Party lost presidential and national legislative elections. The security crisis gave way to an independent candidate and other parties to attain national offices.

However, the same did not happen at the subnational level. Whereas patron client relationships that depend upon material resources should change as soon as new parties attain power at the national level, the exchange of favors for votes does not. Politicians better suited to work, as intermediaries between the citizens and the state, are not necessarily those who belong to the party in control of national offices. Instead, they are long-standing politicians who, for the reasons mentioned above, are more likely to be members of parties with a longer trajectory such as the Liberal Party.

In other words, due to the nature of the goods provided at the subnational level, the LP remains fairly strong in the regions despite losing national offices. Whether they will remain like that or not, is still to be seen. Recent electoral contests have shown that Colombia's electoral arena is changing at a fast rate. The Liberals seem to have lost too much support. Whatever the outcome, this thesis indicates that it will certainly take some time before we can see the LP disappear from the electoral arena, if we ever do.

SUBNATIONAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN COLOMBIA

The argument in this thesis, contributes to the understanding of Colombia's politics at the subnational level as well. Parties' electoral performance within the regions is a discussion

that has been largely abandoned by academics in this country. Whereas some studies have focused on local elections, almost none has paid attention to regional authorities, or subnational electoral outcomes at all. Neither have scholars compared national and subnational parties' electoral performances. Consequently, they have assumed national, regional and local political dynamics to be the same.

This thesis revises that assumption. I compare the LP's national and regional electoral performances, and try to explain how, and why they differ. Not only does the argument explore voters behavior, and how do they weight differently national and regional elections, but it also underlines how politicians use different sets of strategies in order to attain national and regional offices. By doing so, this thesis makes inroads to better understand how do Colombian voters relate with, parties and politicians, at different geographical levels.

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