

## *Teachers, Mayors, and the Transformation of Clientelism in Colombia*

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Even for Latin America, a region widely marked by patron-client relations, Colombia stands out for the pervasiveness and extensiveness of its clientelistic networks. In part this is because clientelism requires elections, and few countries in Latin America have accrued as impressive an electoral record as Colombia. In the absence of lengthy periods or repeated cycles of direct military rule, clientelism could and did become deeply embedded in the country's political life. But clientelism became entrenched not just because elections were held mostly without interruption. Until very recently, these elections were dominated by the Conservatives and the Liberals, two traditional parties that from the mid-nineteenth century cemented their hold on power through clientelism. Though these parties initially used clientelism to reinforce the rule of landowners over peasants, they continued to use clientelistic exchanges even as patron-client ties broke down in the countryside in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere in Latin America, economic modernization, state expansion, and urban migration limited the scope for clientelism and created more programmatic forms of political exchange—but not in Colombia. In fact, the strength of clientelism helps explain the relative absence of macroeconomic populism in Colombia's history<sup>2</sup> as well as the absence of a competitive populist party in its party system.<sup>3</sup> Unlike countries such as Argentina, Peru, and Mexico, where the differing logics of clientelism (or *individual* exchange between a patron and client) and populism (or an exchange relation involving a *class* or *coalition*) have competed for predominance, in Colombia clientelism alone has remained paramount.

If clientelism is deeply entrenched as a political practice in Colombia, the coun-

try also stands out for the frequency and seriousness of institutional responses designed to limit or eliminate clientelism. In fact, the former seems to explain the latter as widespread clientelistic abuses have provoked recurrent attempts to check this political practice, both in the form of "bottom-up" civic movements that demanded an end to clientelism, and "top-down" efforts by reform-minded politicians and bureaucrats to redesign institutions. As a result, not only is Colombia an important case of entrenched clientelism, but it is also an important case of concerted efforts to attack clientelism via institutional change. As we describe below, these attempts took a number of forms. Some, in a pragmatic mode, tried not to reform clientelistic politicians but merely to limit their participation in the policy process. Others sought deeper change and attempted to transform the very incentives that politicians faced so that they would adopt new linkages with voters. Others focused on cutting the access of patrons to fiscal resources in order to limit contingent and discretionary spending by politicians. The vigorous pursuit of these various strategies over the past half century makes Colombia a critical case study of how institutional reform shapes clientelistic networks. Unfortunately for the reform cause, the Colombian case suggests that even serious and earnest efforts at institutional reform may yield limited results in terms of reducing clientelism.

In this chapter we evaluate the impact of major institutional reforms designed to disrupt and eradicate clientelistic networks in Colombia. We argue that institutional reforms yielded some important benefits: they prevented clientelism from producing macroeconomic turbulence, protected teachers from clientelistic abuses, and freed mayors from regional party bosses. However, a more striking finding in our analysis is the tendency of reforms to transform, rather than eradicate, practices of clientelism. An unintended consequence of these reforms was the empowerment of new patrons who constructed new clientelistic networks.<sup>4</sup> In response to repeated reform efforts, Colombia has shifted from a system of clientelism dominated by national party leaders, national legislators, and regional party bosses to a proliferation of new, more complex patron-client relationships. Not unlike the balloon effect or "whack-a-mole" problem that has been used to describe Colombia's other plague—drug trafficking—clientelism has been eliminated in certain institutional and organizational spaces only to pop up in new venues and among new actors. No longer primarily the purview of the two traditional parties, which have experienced a precipitous decline over the last two decades, clientelism has undergone a process of fragmentation and multiplication. As a result, not only did institutional reforms fail to eradicate clientelism, but they changed it in ways that are likely to render future reform efforts even more difficult to achieve. Disputing the view that

institutional reforms have been simply insufficient, we argue that the Colombian case must be taken as one that casts doubt on the viability of a purely institutional approach to curb clientelism.

In Colombia, institutional reforms may have failed in their efforts to eliminate clientelism, but institutional analysis of the sort we offer in this chapter provides critical insights into the remarkably protean quality of clientelism. Specifically, we show that institutional changes transformed clientelism in Colombia by focusing on change over time in how two different types of actors—teachers and mayors—are inserted into patron-client relations. Throughout the twentieth century, teachers have been central to the story of clientelism in Colombia, where the national teachers' federation (Federación Colombiana de Educadores, or FECODE) emerged as an organization that initially protested against clientelistic practices but later perpetuated these practices in new forms. Thanks to electoral reforms introduced in the 1991 constitution, leaders of the teachers' union have become patrons in their own right; teachers who had been caught in the regional clientelistic networks of party bosses are now in the clientelistic networks of union leaders who have entered political office. A similar dynamic can be discerned in the case of mayors. As politicians who used to be appointed by higher-level officials, mayors participated in a wave of civic strikes demanding decentralization in the 1970s and 1980s in an attempt to escape their subservient status as clients. Subsequent to decentralizing reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, mayors have become important patrons at the local level who are now autonomous from national and regional political actors. Our sectoral (i.e., education and teachers) and territorial (i.e., municipal governments and mayors) case studies suggest that institutional reforms in Colombia have transformed clients and/or the organizations that represent them into patrons in their own right.

In terms of theory building, our contributions in this chapter are modest. Our aim is to sketch out changes in the structure of clientelistic networks in Colombia and to demonstrate how these changes were induced by institutional reforms. Because clientelism as a practice and institutional reform as a prescriptive solution vary widely by country, caution is in order when generalizing the findings of this chapter. Still, we exhort would-be reformers—in Latin America and beyond—who view institutional design as a "solution" to clientelism to carefully consider the unintended consequences of reform in the Colombian case.

This chapter proceeds as follows. It first describes the evolution of regional clientelistic networks that operated as the organizational infrastructure of Colombia's two traditional parties—or the baseline organization of clientelism in Colombia. It then describes institutional reforms designed to either contain the negative side effects of clientelism or curb the practice altogether. The next section turns to our

sectoral and territorial cases. In the education sector, the position of teachers in clientelistic networks was transformed over time. Initially, teachers were the clients of party bosses; they then became the clients of politicians who used union and educational resources to pursue electoral office. Similarly, mayors at first were political appointees who served at the pleasure of regional party bosses. Decentralization made mayors autonomous from such bosses, assigning them their own responsibilities and resources and thereby enabling them to create their own clientele. We end with a brief discussion of how our analysis of Colombia fits within theoretical debates about the relationship between formal institutions and clientelism.

### Clientelism before Reform: Traditional Parties and Regional Brokers

To set up our analysis of institutional reforms as well as sectoral and territorial changes following reform, we describe traditional clientelistic practices. Contemporary forms of clientelism in Colombia must be traced back to their political origins. Scholars of Colombian political history have written extensively on traditional practices of clientelism,<sup>5</sup> and this overview establishes a baseline against which change and continuity can be measured.

Colombian clientelism has roots in historical forms of rural social organization. A quasi-feudal system in Colombia between rural notables and peasants dating back to the colonial period and the struggle for independence created networks of loyalty and exchange that endured well into the twentieth century. Powerful *caudillos* (political-military leaders at the command of militia forces) emerged who exercised considerable influence over regional politics. These *caudillos* lacked ties to central state actors—whose efforts to control territory faced major challenges in Colombia, given the country's mountainous geography—but instead developed connections to national party elites, and served as brokers between these elites and subnational clients.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, these *caudillos* formed networks with *gamonales* (local landowners) or *caciques* (local political bosses) that held influence at the local level and mobilized votes.<sup>7</sup> Regional elites operated through brokers, who included landowners, teachers, health workers, priests, and local officials.<sup>8</sup> Hence, social organization exhibited a hierarchical, pyramidal structure featuring clientelism as the primary mode of exchange.

The formation and evolution of Colombia's party system further reinforced clientelism as the primary mode of interest representation. Since independence, Colombia had two traditional parties that brought together various regional notables. These parties, which became known as the Liberals and Conservatives, evolved

directly from heterogeneous groupings of regional elites: both parties were non-ideological, pragmatic, and internally fragmented.<sup>9</sup> Thus, partisanship developed in large part through personal loyalties to *gamonales* and *caciques* that were cemented through land tenancy and were reinforced by multiple outbreaks of civil violence.<sup>10</sup>

Both inter- and intra-party electoral competition activated clientelistic networks. Inter-party competition produced a winner-take-all spoils system during the first half of the twentieth century. While Colombia regularly held semi-competitive elections, the competitiveness of these elections varied considerably over time. Increased electoral competition seemed to intensify patronage and clientelistic appeals. For example, before *La Violencia*, during periods of one party's dominance over the other (such as the Liberal Republic of 1930–1946), each party would pack bureaucracies with party loyalists to maintain control over patronage and state resources in order to delay the ascendance of the other party. In contrast, during periods of uncompetitive elections—most importantly the consociational National Front (1958–1974), in which both parties adhered to the principles of *party* in the division of legislative positions and *alternation* in the presidency—bureaucracies developed more technical expertise, and traditional regional bosses (at least temporarily) lost control.<sup>11</sup> To be sure, the National Front brought about only a brief and partial de-politicization of state-run services. The end of the National Front, deepening party fragmentation, and waning party discipline resulted in renewed clientelism.

In addition, intra-party competition among factions also engendered patronage and clientelism. Prohibitions on inter-party competition during the National Front led to considerable intra-party, or factional competition, based on personalistic and regional loyalties. Within parties, power lay with regional brokers. Regional directorates determined party lists for legislative elections, and regional notables nominated presidential candidates, who lacked their own independent support base.<sup>12</sup> National party leaders, who headed the major factions within the traditional parties, bargained with disparate, regional caudillos and used patronage as a tool for winning party primaries.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, electoral rules provided an institutional foundation for clientelism. Specifically, Colombia had electoral rules—the largest remainder system and the absence of vote pooling among candidates from the same party—which led parties to present multiple party lists in order to increase their representation in Congress. Electoral incentives resulted in a strategy called *Operación Avispa*, whereby parties would present multiple lists to “swarm” legislative seats like wasps, thereby winning each seat relatively cheaply.<sup>14</sup> The presentation of multiple party lists, in which typically only one candidate won from each list, created incentives for politicians to build personalistic and clientelistic loyalties.

Several points are worth drawing out from this brief discussion of clientelism prior to major institutional reform. Clientelism was organized through regional elites, who were linked to traditional parties. The dominance of the traditional parties and the reliance of party elites on regional brokers slowed the formation of a modern state. Institutions—electoral rules and patronage-ridden bureaucracies—reinforced these practices. Although clientelism was dynamic, and clientelistic networks changed over time as Colombia's economy industrialized and the state developed islands of bureaucratic capacity, clientelism was stabilized by the continuity of elections and organized around regional elites. While following *La Violencia* clientelism facilitated power sharing and peaceful coexistence between the traditional parties, it excluded multiple actors and prevented major state reform. It generated both social protest and guerrilla insurgency. It also generated a cadre of reformers who wanted to end these traditional practices and modernize the state.

### Institutional Reforms to Reduce Clientelism

Since the 1960s, Colombia has witnessed several major efforts to check or eliminate clientelism, which was associated with inefficiency and wastefulness, exclusion of citizens outside of clientelistic networks, and a weak central state that lacked a monopoly on violence and hindered economic development. These reform efforts can be grouped into four major episodes: (1) the 1968 Constitutional Reform, (2) decentralizing changes beginning in the mid-1980s, (3) the 1990 Constitutional Convention, and (4) the 2003 electoral reform. Over time, these reforms demonstrated increasing boldness and cut increasingly close to the underlying institutional incentives that encouraged legislators to depend so heavily on clientelism. Taken together, however, these reforms not only have failed to curb clientelism, but they have in fact produced the new patron-client dynamics that we discuss in the next two sections.

Unlike later more radical attempts, the 1968 constitutional reform did not seek to make legislators less clientelistic. Instead, it simply sought to limit the damage caused by concentrating fiscal and monetary policymaking powers in the executive branch.<sup>15</sup> According to Eaton, “legislators gave up substantive input in the policy design process but preserved the right to demand the patronage they continued to need to satisfy their clientelist networks”—most importantly in the form of *auxilios* (congressional funds for constituency service) placed under the exclusive control of individual members of Congress.<sup>16</sup> Though legislators could have used their *auxilios* to finance local public goods, in practice they used them to finance the individual exchanges of private goods for votes that are the hallmark of clientelism. The 1968 changes did nothing to alter legislators' incentives, but the pragmatic logic of the

reform does help explain the puzzle of how deeply entrenched clientelism in Colombia has gone hand in hand with a record of centrist macroeconomic policy making by relatively insulated technocrats.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the accommodating nature of the 1968 reform, in the mid-1980s Colombian politicians adopted a series of decentralizing changes that represented a more direct threat to established patterns of clientelism. At the top of the political system, decentralization appealed to reformers who sought, not to make legislators less clientelistic, but rather to re-assign resources and responsibilities in order to empower local officials whose proximity to local communities would presumably lead to better social policy outcomes. But decentralization and local control over service provision also emerged as a rallying cry "from below" in the 1970s and 1980s, both on the part of "outsiders" excluded from the benefits of clientelism and from "insiders" who complained about the quality of the services received from legislators to whom they had pledged their support. Rather than a one-shot deal, decentralization took place via numerous measures adopted over a seven-year period, starting with the adoption of mayoral elections in 1986, continuing with the introduction of gubernatorial elections in 1991, and culminating with 1993 legislation that transferred major social policy responsibilities to municipalities and departments (Colombia's intermediate level of government). If the recent literature on clientelism emphasized the importance of monopoly control by patrons who deliver goods and services necessary for the survival of potential clients,<sup>18</sup> then decentralization should constitute a threat to national patrons because it enables subnational governments to meet these needs instead.

Relative to the 1968 reform and to decentralization, the numerous changes introduced in the 1991 constitution can be understood as an attempt to wage a frontal assault on clientelism. Rather than trying to keep legislators out of the national policymaking process or to transfer their social policy responsibilities to subnational officials, the 1991 constitution represented a more direct attempt to make legislators less clientelistic. Most importantly, the new constitution replaced regional districts for the election of the Senate with a single nationwide district, a reform that sought to encourage senators to shift their energies from the maintenance of regional clientele networks toward the development of national policy interests and expertise. Although senators could and did continue to use clientelism to build regional voting blocs, the single national district appealed to reformers, who expected it to empower programmatic but territorially diffuse interests (which it has done, at the margin). Second, turning from the upper to the lower chamber, reformers used the 1991 constitution to undermine clientelism by eliminating the *auxilios* that had financed vote buying for over two decades. Third, the 1991 constitution mandated a new ballot

system that bars parties from printing and distributing ballots—a practice widely believed to facilitate the monitoring capacity on which clientelism depends.<sup>19</sup> Together, these bold changes can be understood as the result of a decision to use non-traditional electoral rules to select the members of the constitutional convention, who were therefore less interested in perpetuating clientelism than representatives from the traditional parties would have been.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, reformers in 2003 secured a new electoral law in an attempt to lessen the incentives for clientelism. As it became increasingly clear that the 1991 constitution failed to dislodge clientelism from the legislature, the Pastrana and Uribe administrations set their sights on electoral reform. After years of debate, and under threat of a referendum on even more sweeping political reforms and the closing of the legislature, Congress agreed to a new electoral law in 2003 that went substantially beyond the 1991 constitution by barring parties from running multiple lists in elections.<sup>21</sup> Whereas list proliferation in the past gave legislators strong incentives to establish personalistic networks in order to distinguish themselves from co-partisans, the single list requirement substantially reduces these incentives. In contrast to Uribe's argument that the single list should also be a closed list, the 2003 law in fact enables parties to choose whether to run a closed or an open list. Open lists were used in almost all electoral districts in the 2006 and 2010 elections, which still preserves incentives for candidates to use clientelism to distinguish themselves from others of the same party. One could argue as a result that institutional reforms have simply not gone far enough in Colombia—after all, open lists still reward clientelistic behavior. But the significance of the reforms described in this section casts doubt on this view, particularly when combined with evidence below that institutional reforms themselves have generated qualitatively new and vibrant forms of clientelism.

### Education: Sectoral Reforms and the Transformation of Clientelism

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the education sector in Colombia was ridden with clientelism because it lacked prestige and because it was being rapidly expanded.<sup>22</sup> Various attempts to reform education and reduce clientelism—through both top-down institutional reform and bottom-up mobilization—met with some success; since the late-1970s, clientelism in the education sector has been confined to ever more restricted spaces. Still, clientelism has persisted and has morphed into new forms in response to institutional changes. Even more troubling, the teachers' union, an actor that led the fight against clientelism, now organizes new clientelistic networks. The decentralization of education, thought to bring government closer

to citizens and break clientelistic linkages, has also engendered new clientelistic networks.<sup>23</sup>

During traditional party rule, the education sector was regulated almost entirely by particularistic exchange. Bogota, the capital and state center, could not set a coherent, national education policy at the departmental level. A patchwork of subnational, informal, and ad hoc administrative rules governed the education sector. The lack of formal administrative rules enabled regional party bosses to develop powerful political machines that exploited the education sector as a source of patronage.<sup>24</sup> Traditional party bosses wielded discretionary control over teacher hiring and firing and used teaching positions as sinecures for party activists who mobilized votes.<sup>25</sup> Teachers served as brokers who turned out the vote, since in lower-class communities teachers had considerable social status. Teachers were also the clients of party bosses; they needed a *palanca* (literally translated as a "lever," meaning a political connection) to get a teaching position. Because party bosses politicized the teaching profession, teachers faced arbitrary treatment, unequal salaries, meager or nonexistent fringe benefits, the uncertainty of the political business cycle, and high rates of turnover. Irregularities in salary payments meant that teachers could be paid in nonmonetary forms. Teachers could be compensated with bottles of *aguardiente* or tobacco products that they had to sell on their own time. Teachers, because of their low salaries and declared loyalty to party bosses, were called "political apostles."<sup>26</sup>

As working conditions deteriorated, teachers organized unions and demanded labor rights to protect themselves from clientelism. In 1959, teachers formed the Federation of Colombian Educators (FECODE). This organization emerged from regional teachers' unions organized by the traditional parties, particularly the Liberal party. Teachers' unions became increasingly autonomous from the traditional parties as leftist union leaders won power in FECODE's executive committee. After the union moved to the left, it mobilized major strikes in 1966, 1973–1974, and 1977—the "Civic Strike"—to demand a national labor code and to protest the clientelistic practices of party bosses. Through mobilization, FECODE merged multiple departmental unions. It became the overarching organizational structure that mobilized primary, secondary, technical, and university educators throughout Colombia. FECODE's centralized structure made it a potent interest organization that challenged the clientelistic practices of the traditional parties.

Ultimately, FECODE successfully negotiated policies that protected teachers from patronage. The *Teachers' Statute of 1979*—a civil service law—leveled teachers' salaries and made the national government (rather than departmental or municipal governments) responsible for hiring and paying teachers.<sup>27</sup> The *Teachers' Statute* also professionalized teachers and provided them with a "special" labor code that

afforded them benefits—a salary scale, a disciplinary code, labor stability, and a pension—that were more generous than those received by other public servants.<sup>28</sup> This statute marked a major step forward in terms of setting national administrative rules in the education sector and ending the most egregious forms of clientelism.

Yet the *Teachers' Statute* had limitations: regional bosses were loath to abandon clientelism. While this law provided protection to already-hired teachers, some new teachers continued to be subject to political discretion. For example, loopholes in the law allowed subnational politicians to hire temporary teachers to fill understaffed schools. Temporary teachers could be hired according to political criterion, and because they were paid by local or departmental governments, it was difficult for central authorities to monitor how they were hired.<sup>29</sup> In addition, teacher transfers and promotions could also follow a clientelistic logic. Teachers had to petition to be transferred from remote rural schools to more desirable urban schools, or to rise up the pay scale; authorities responded to these petitions based on clientelistic exchange. Clientelism, then, remained pervasive. In 1985, six years after the adoption of the *Teachers' Statute*, a minister of education raised controversy by noting: "One hundred percent of educators in Colombia have been named through political recommendations, and it is rare that a bureaucrat doesn't pick a teacher who doesn't have a letter of recommendation from an influential political leader."<sup>30</sup>

It was not until 2001–2002 that there was another major effort to curb clientelism in the education sector, beginning with the Law 715. Then President Álvaro Uribe was elected and appointed a technocrat to the Ministry of Education, María Cecilia Vélez White (2002–2010). The *New Teachers' Statute* was adopted for teachers hired after 2002. The primary aim of this new set of policies was to control costs and rationalize administration in the education sector. However, a secondary consequence was to introduce stronger rules governing teacher hiring and teacher transfers. A pre-service evaluation—a merit-based exam—became the basis for the hiring of all new teachers. Moreover, measures were adopted to only allow teacher transfers to schools where extra teachers were needed. The ministry claimed that before this reform was adopted clientelism enabled teachers to move to urban, and hence more desirable, schools, leading to a severe imbalance in the distribution of teachers between rural and urban schools. In general, these reforms strengthened administrative rules and closed off some of the spaces previously used for clientelism.

Several points from this section are worth reinforcing. First, during traditional party rule teachers were located near the bottom of regional clientelistic networks. However, teachers formed labor unions and began to protest poor working conditions and mismanagement. This mobilization paid off, and teachers benefited from policies that, at least on paper, protected them from clientelistic abuses. Still, politi-

icians found ways to evade these laws and continued to use patronage in the education sector. The most recent efforts to reduce clientelism occurred in 2002, when rules were adopted that regulated teacher hiring and transfers and further restricted the space for clientelism.

### The Limits of Reform: New Practices of Clientelism in the Education Sector

The persistence of clientelism in the education sector is remarkable. In the contemporary period, new forms of patronage plague the teaching profession and the education sector. The growing electoral representation of the teaching profession and efforts to decentralize education have created new spaces into which clientelism has reappeared.

The increasing electoral representation of the teaching profession has contributed to the growth of clientelism. The Constitution of 1991—which brought political reform and a change in electoral law—promised to advance the representation of the teaching profession and to weaken regional political machines. The constitution changed the arena of electoral competition for the Senate from departmental districts to a single national district. Indeed, after this shift, the traditional parties experienced a sharp decline, and the influence of traditional party bosses in the education sector receded. Meanwhile, territorially dispersed groups, such as teachers, had space to win representation.<sup>31</sup> This electoral reform allowed voters to organize across regions, and thus it positioned the teachers' union to expand its influence by winning representation in the Senate.

Yet the increasing electoral participation of the teachers' union created new clientelistic networks. Leaders of FECODE pursued—and in many cases won—seats in the Senate, the Chamber of Representatives, governorships, and municipal office. Union leaders, who once used clientelism as the basis for teacher protests, began to use clientelism as a strategy for winning votes. For example, after Jaime Dussan, a former FECODE president, was elected to the Senate (1994–2010), allegations surfaced that he used the union organization as a network for distributing benefits and mobilizing votes and that he negotiated with regional elites to use their existing networks to mobilize votes on his behalf.<sup>32</sup>

As the electoral participation of union leaders expanded, so did the usage of clientelism in political campaigns. The sequential entry of new Senate candidates who were former leaders of FECODE created competition within the union for scarce votes and electoral resources. From 1994 to 2010, nine different union leaders affiliated with FECODE had run for Senate, and all had appealed to teachers as their

core constituency. Increasing electoral competition had two consequences. First, politicians representing the teaching profession made more aggressive clientelistic appeals to teachers.<sup>33</sup> That is, because there were few programmatic differences among candidates campaigning to represent the teaching profession, clientelism became the primary strategy for out-competing rivals. Candidates with a large campaign war chest increasingly crowded out candidates with fewer campaign resources. Second, electoral coalitions began to form *within* labor organizations. That is, union leaders created their own electoral vehicles that competed for representation in the Labor Central, in the Teachers Federation, and in union locals. Patron-broker-client networks formed, involving politicians, union leaders, and rank-and-file teachers. Union leaders came to serve as brokers for politicians, and in exchange would later be nominated as candidates for public office themselves.

Politicians who represent the teaching profession in public office maintain particularistic exchange relations with their constituents. Senators linked to FECODE, for example, often pass laws and negotiate deals that benefit narrow segments of the teaching profession. Senators representing the teachers' union also offer "constituent services" that enable individual teachers to expedite bureaucratic transactions such as advancing on the salary scale and securing pensions.<sup>34</sup> Other rent-seeking activities, such as agreeing to vote on controversial legislation in exchange for side payments, also enable politicians to secure resources that help them to maintain their clientelistic networks.<sup>35</sup>

While the teachers' union has become a site of increasing clientelism, it is by no means the only actor that uses the education sector for particularistic exchange. The decentralization of education through the Laws 115 and 60 of 1993–1994 increased the role of departmental and municipal governments in education administration. Subnational governments have become a site of clientelism for a variety of actors, including local politicians, private providers, and NGOs. As improving education has become an increasingly urgent policy priority, spending on public education has often increased at the local level, creating new opportunities for clientelism. One such opportunity is packing local education bureaucracies with loyalists. While there are official procedures for hiring government workers, in practice informal referrals are still important, especially since there has been a reduction of the civil service and a growth in the hiring of temporary workers. Moreover, as the education sector has become increasingly differentiated and complex, there are more dark spaces into which clientelism can emerge. Policy experiments, pilot programs, and local initiatives, as well as the outsourcing of governmental functions through the expansion of "public-private partnerships," have all created opportunities for clientelism.

The case of Bogotá nicely illustrates these problems. Bogotá was heralded as a reformist city, where clientelism was significantly reduced during the late 1990s.<sup>36</sup> And yet, during the mayoral administrations of Lucho Garzon (2003–2007) and Samuel Moreno (2007–2011), allegations of clientelism in the education sector have resurfaced. The shifts toward hiring workers in the Secretariat with short-term contracts and outsourcing governmental functions to private providers and NGOs rather than performing functions “in house” have led to various high-profile investigations, audits, and pledges to root out clientelism.<sup>37</sup> Contracts—to both temporary consultants and private providers—can be awarded according to the same logic that governed the offering of temporary positions to teachers in the past.<sup>38</sup> The case of Bogotá illustrates how “the decentralization of the administration of national teachers to the local level has often resulted in the municipalization of clientelism in public education.”<sup>39</sup>

In sum, the old practices of blatant clientelism by regional party bosses have all but disappeared, and institutional reforms have played a significant role in disrupting them. And yet, in response to institutional change, a new set of actors have invented new, more subtle practices of clientelism that continue to plague the education sector.

### Decentralization: Territorial Reforms and the Transformation of Clientelism

In this section, we shift from sectoral to territorial reforms by exploring three related questions: (1) Why was social policy decentralized in Colombia? (2) How has decentralization changed the practice of clientelism? and (3) How did national politicians react when it became clear that mayors had used decentralization to transform themselves from clients into patrons? Most of the literature that seeks to explain why decentralization occurred in Latin America has emphasized strategic calculations by national political elites, including the decision by Colombian President Belisario Betancur to decentralize because he believed that it would disproportionately benefit his own Conservative Party<sup>40</sup> and that it would encourage insurgent groups to demobilize.<sup>41</sup> But the decision to decentralize in Colombia also reveals a strong bottom-up dynamic, because these policy changes were adopted in response to widespread (approximately 200) civic strikes (*paros cívicos*) in the 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>42</sup> These protests—which took the form of road blockades, work stoppages, hunger strikes, and building occupations—exposed deep frustration with social services that were deficient in quality and quantity, unequally distributed across regional lines, and accessible only through clientelistic networks.<sup>43</sup> Protestors de-

manded that local governments play a more prominent role in service provision, rejecting as insufficient the de-concentration of the Colombian bureaucracy that had occurred in the early 1970s when field offices were established by over 90 central governmental agencies—without surrendering national control over the bureaucrats who staffed them.<sup>44</sup>

According to Collins, the civic strikes took two forms: protests in which participation was restricted to popular sectors and lower income groups, and protests in which middle- and upper-class groups—and even municipal councilors—also participated. Both types of protests encouraged reform-minded politicians to contemplate decentralization as a response, but for different reasons. The lower class-based civic strikes of the 1970s and 1980s resonated nationally precisely because the vertical practice of clientelism had been so successful in preventing horizontal organizing. In contrast, multiclass strikes resonated because they usually articulated a sharper set of territorially based grievances against other better-served and more economically developed regions.<sup>45</sup> While the civic strikes against clientelism and in favor of local service provision played a key role in convincing national politicians to decentralize social policy, one of the great ironies of the Colombian case is that decentralization in turn generated new forms of clientelism, as described below.<sup>46</sup>

Relative to prior institutional reforms, decentralization represented a major assault on clientelism as it was then practiced. Before decentralization, the appointment of mayors and governors operated as a highly valuable unit of clientelistic exchange through which vertical networks were built and sustained. Although formally the Ministro de Gobierno (Interior Ministry) appointed governors, and governors in turn appointed mayors, in fact Congress played a leading role as presidents awarded individual legislators the right to name these officials in exchange for supporting presidential initiatives.<sup>47</sup> While appointed mayors and governors enjoyed patronage powers in their own right and could use their offices to reward their own clientele, they were expected to respect the clientelistic networks of the legislators responsible for their appointment. As an example of what happened when they did not, Eloisa Vasco reports an episode in 1976 during which seven of the department of Boyacá's ten national legislators wrote to the Ministro de Gobierno to complain that the governor's cabinet did not reflect the balance of factions in the department, after which the governor was sacked.<sup>48</sup> That mayoral and gubernatorial appointments were subject to contestation among rival brokers can be seen in the high turnover rate of these offices, with mayors often serving for no more than three months.<sup>49</sup> Appointed mayors could be fired whenever they sought to transcend their identities as clients and to act instead more like patrons. According to Jairo Blanco, who served as mayor of Mogotes in the department of Santander both before and

after the introduction of elections, "When I was an appointed mayor I only lasted six months because I refused to give positions to individuals recommended by local *gamonales*."<sup>50</sup>

In three key dimensions, decentralization rescued appointed mayors from their traditional and subordinated roles as clients. First, reformers opted to introduce direct elections for mayors and to hold these elections non-concurrently with national elections. This decision made it possible for mayors not just to win elections by establishing their own clienteles, but to ensure that these clients respond to them rather than to the higher-level politicians that are elected at a different point in the electoral calendar. Second, fiscal decentralization included a programmed schedule of generous and increasing monetary transfers to both municipal and departmental governments without specifying how exactly the governments should spend these transfers.<sup>51</sup> Patrons need their own resources to be effective, and un earmarked transfers are more useful in this respect than transfers that are conditioned on the choices of higher-up officials. Third, administrative decentralization transferred responsibilities for health and education to subnational governments that formerly played little role in social policy (other than the local *Juntas de Acción Comunal* that operated with central funds beginning in 1958). Although departments were initially favored relative to municipalities—in part due to the anti-decentralization stance of FECODE—by 2001 municipalities were completely free to petition for the transfer of services.<sup>52</sup> The key point here is that decentralization transferred to local officials authority over the very policies that lend themselves to clientelistic abuses.

In other words, as a result of Colombia's comprehensive approach to political, fiscal, and administrative decentralization, mayors now have significant revenues under their control, real responsibilities for social services that used to lie with the national government, and far less interest in delivering vote blocs to national legislators in exchange for resources that the legislator might steer toward the municipality. The cumulative effect of these measures constitutes a major rupture in clientelism.

### The Subnational Consequences of Decentralization

In the more than two decades since its adoption, decentralization has altered the practice of clientelism in Colombia. The decentralization of social policy has resulted in new forms of "subnational clientelism," according to which mayors and governors—no longer only senators—now serve as heads of clientele networks with greatly expanded patronage capabilities. Even more negatively, decentralization has also made possible the strengthening of "armed clientelism," a term that describes

the exchange of votes for material benefits distributed through local governments that are under the control of armed actors on the left and right.<sup>53</sup>

If mayors and governors previously needed to balance their dual roles as clients and patrons, decentralization has made it possible to shed their former status as clients and to more fully develop their stature as patrons. While mayors with aspirations to higher office may still see themselves as clients of regional brokers, the proliferation of party lists until 2003 meant that they could just as easily leverage their patronage powers as mayors into successful campaigns for Congress on their own lists (most of which only elected one or two legislators). According to the evidence emerging over the last fifteen years, subnational officials have used decentralization to expand two classic forms of clientelism: vote buying and patronage. Consider examples from the health sector, where the policy shift from supply-side approaches (for example, state payment to hospitals) to demand-side approaches (such as state transfers to individuals) has produced new opportunities for clientelism. Specifically, Law 100, passed in 1993, created a system of subsidies for lower-income Colombians, whose eligibility is determined by a national index (*Sistema de Selección de Beneficiarios*, or SISBEN), and who use subsidies to purchase health insurance from private insurers called *Administradoras del Régimen Subsidiado* (ARS) that are under contract with the municipality. According to Oscar Fresneda, while the National Planning Department controls SISBEN, mayors have the authority to add additional beneficiaries into the system at their discretion, which they appear to do using political criteria. Fresneda's surveys among health officials at the departmental level suggest that inclusion in SISBEN at the discretion of mayors has been used to buy votes in nearly two-thirds of all municipalities.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to exchanging votes for health subsidies, mayors can also now use clientelistic criteria to give jobs to workers in municipal health departments. Just as the expansion of the national bureaucracy in the 1960s and 1970s triggered new attempts by national politicians to secure jobs for their clients,<sup>55</sup> the expansion of the subnational bureaucracy generated new opportunities for subnational politicians. Subnational patronage has depressed health outcomes in at least two ways. First, while health coverage has improved in Colombia, the quality of care now provided at the municipal level has suffered due to a lack of technical expertise. According to Molina and Spurgeon, the problem is not that mayors do not have sufficient funds for hiring, but rather that they hire too few doctors and nurses and too many staff for non-technical administrative tasks like billing and auditing.<sup>56</sup> In some municipalities, the number of personnel who directly attend to patients has actually declined. Second, like their counterparts at the national level, mayors prefer the use of short-term contracts when they hire clients so that these contractors can be removed



from their positions as mayoral patronage needs evolve. High turnover has wreaked havoc on planning efforts in municipal health departments across Colombia. As a reflection of the political dividends they have derived from the decentralization of health, at the end of the 1990s subnational officials joined with unions and legislators in vetoing reform efforts that sought, unsuccessfully, to reduce the number of patronage employees in the health sector.<sup>57</sup>

In what can be thought of as a virulent subvariety of subnational clientelism, Colombia has also witnessed the expansion of "armed clientelism" in local governments controlled by guerrillas and paramilitaries.<sup>58</sup> On the Left, decentralization encouraged Colombia's two most powerful and tenacious guerrilla groups—the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, or National Liberation Army)—to literally come down from the mountains in the 1990s and to focus on controlling municipalities—not just militarily but politically as well. After decentralization, the size of fiscal transfers is a better indicator in predicting the FARC's territorial presence than the objective conditions (i.e., poverty, unequal access to land) that gave rise to the insurgency in the first place.<sup>59</sup> When citizens exchange their votes for social services in municipalities whose mayors are allied with the guerrillas, subnational clientelism gives these groups the opportunity to play what look like traditional governing roles in Colombia. Fiscal and administrative decentralization was particularly important in the resurrection of the ELN in the 1980s and 1990s, after its practice of forced peasant contributions proved unpopular in the 1970s. In municipalities under its control, many of which also receive oil royalties in addition to revenue transfers, the ELN no longer needs to extract local war taxes and can instead direct social services toward supporters.<sup>60</sup>

Decentralization has similarly enabled paramilitary groups on the right, like their adversaries on the left, to combine the use of force with the exercise of what look like very familiar (though now subnational) practices of clientelism. On the country's Caribbean coast, the region in Colombia where paramilitaries are strongest, only a single candidate ran for mayor in more than two hundred municipal elections in 2002.<sup>61</sup> According to Mauricio Romero, of the five candidates who ran for governor of Meta in 2002, the paramilitaries forced three to withdraw and then assassinated a fourth candidate after his defeat by the paramilitary-endorsed candidate.<sup>62</sup> Using coercive methods to prevent the election of mayors and governors whom they do not control, the paramilitaries can then selectively administer social services to supporters. In addition to their use of decentralization to build local clienteles, paramilitaries also undermine social policy outcomes through other negative practices. For example, in regions where paramilitaries dominate, investigators

have uncovered evidence of contracts between municipal governments and bogus ARS health insurance companies. In what amounts to a serious misappropriation of decentralized health funds, these companies submit bills for services they have not provided, and the municipalities then reimburse the companies in exchange for a cut of the proceeds.<sup>63</sup>

### The Center Reacts to the Consequences of Decentralization

Subnational clientelism in the wake of decentralization has created political problems for legislators and presidents alike. Mayors and governors use control over social provision to build their own clientele networks, profoundly threatening legislators who fear that their service as brokers is thereby rendered obsolete. Furthermore, every peso decentralized is one peso less in the annual appropriations process that legislators attempt to influence in Bogotá. The decentralization of social policy would have been less threatening if it were not for the more or less simultaneous failure of reform efforts that sought to make legislators less dependent on clientelism. For example, despite the shift to a single nationwide district meant to encourage more programmatic politics in the Senate, most senators still cultivate regionally concentrated vote bases that are held together through clientelism.<sup>64</sup> In the lower chamber, clientelism remained an essential practice for legislators, who continued to face intra-party competition until the 2003 electoral reform and who continue to favor clientelistic strategies due to the use of open-lists by most parties since 2003. Moreno and Escobar-Lemmon find worrisome evidence (from the standpoint of legislators) that former mayors in congressional elections fared especially well in the competitive dynamics created by list proliferation in pre-2003 Colombia.<sup>65</sup> In addition to reducing available financing for clientelistic networks headed by national legislators, decentralization was particularly challenging for Conservative and Liberal legislators because it facilitated the decline of Colombia's traditional two-party system.

If the (electoral) need for clientelism did not diminish, neither did legislators withdraw from the social policy-making process in Colombia. Despite the adoption of automatic revenue sharing to finance social services, legislators continued to appropriate additional monies that they could claim credit over as brokers—a phenomenon referred to as "double spending." When the 1991 constitution eliminated the *auxilios* that they previously used for clientelistic purposes, legislators responded by introducing "co-financing" schemes (*fondos de co-financiación*). According to Cristina Escobar, "the process is certainly much more complex than the previous system of *auxilios* and requires a great deal of maneuvering by Congressmen, [who]

have to secure the faithful support of the mayors to ensure that the latter will publicly acknowledge the Congressmen as the ones responsible for interceding on behalf of the communities.<sup>66</sup> Legislators who refused to reduce their involvement in social provisioning in response to decentralization help account for the doubling of social spending that occurred in the 1990s. Combined with the Russian and Asian financial crises, unsustainable social expenditure widened budget deficits and contributed to Colombia's worst economic crisis since the 1930s.<sup>67</sup> In the late 1990s, Fresneda reports a crisis-induced decline in access to health care by lower income groups for whom subsidies were no longer sufficient to purchase health insurance.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to threatening legislators, decentralization has also created challenges for presidents, who can no longer use the appointment of mayors and governors as a tool to build congressional support for their bills. During the term of President Samper in the mid-1990s, finance ministers consistently complained about the threat to Colombia's famed macroeconomic stability posed by fiscal transfers that amounted to 46.5% of annual revenue by 2001. Rather than rein in "double spending" by legislators, President Andres Pastrana proposed, and legislators endorsed, major cuts in the size of fiscal transfers in 2001, buoyed by the growing consensus that decentralization may have improved coverage of social services but not their quality or efficiency. Thanks to recentralization, which eliminated transfers as a percentage of current revenue and legislated instead an inflation-adjusted fixed sum to be transferred, by 2005 departments and municipalities were receiving 37.2% rather than 46.5% of current revenue—a savings for the national government that amounted to 3.7% of GDP.<sup>69</sup> Recentralization further gained steam under President Alvaro Uribe, who extended the 2001 cuts until 2016, proposed a reduction in the number of municipalities, and imposed stricter administrative controls on subnational governments through the creation of a Special Administrative Unit in 2008 to monitor the use of transfers.<sup>70</sup>

When mayors used the assets provided by decentralizing reforms to assert themselves as patrons and not just clients, they also triggered a counter-reaction by national politicians who responded by seeking to reverse the reforms that had originally made possible this decentralization of power. Two caveats are in order, however. First, though aggressive, recentralization has only been partial, and Colombia has not returned to its pre-decentralization days. Mayors are still elected rather than appointed, still have responsibility for important social services, and still receive automatic transfers (even if these are now smaller than before). Subnational clientelism is alive and well, just less generously funded.

Second, thanks to the centralization of social policy within the office of the president—which Uribe implemented—not only has the center reasserted itself

relative to subnational tiers, but within the national government the president has become increasingly dominant compared to the national legislature. In other words, if senators and representatives were displaced as power-brokers by mayors and governors when decentralization occurred, under Uribe they were crowded out by the president himself. Though the Colombian president has always effectively been the patron-in-chief, historically he served this function by focusing on appointments, for example, by appointing a senator's preferred candidate to political office in order to secure that senator's legislative support in Congress. In contrast, through the Presidential Agency for Social Action, which he created and expanded, Uribe transformed the role of the president by engaging more directly in the provision of social services.

Consider, for example, Colombia's conditional cash transfer program *Familias en Acción*. Initiated in 2000 with multilateral funding and located under the auspices of the Office of the President, enrollment in *Familias en Acción* grew rapidly to 2.5 million families by 2010.<sup>71</sup> To date, policy evaluations report that this program has contributed to positive outcomes in terms of human capital formation, including increases in school enrollment, vaccination rates, height and weight figures, and food consumption.<sup>72</sup> Yet despite positive evaluations, the political logic behind this program has been seriously questioned, emerging as a major point of controversy in the 2010 elections.<sup>73</sup> According to ex-minister of Hacienda, Juan Camilo Restrepo, the fact that the president has exclusive control of this program makes governors and mayors dependent on the president's largesse and thereby creates opportunities for clientelistic exchange.<sup>74</sup> In one city, Bucaramanga, officials allegedly pressed program beneficiaries to attend a campaign rally for presidential candidate Juan Manuel Santos.<sup>75</sup> The program's uneven expansion is also suspect: departments with the most poverty, such as Choco, have fewer participants than relatively well-off departments, such as Caldas.<sup>76</sup> Though *Familias en Acción* requires further study, the program appears to represent yet another example of the persistence of clientelism in Colombia.

### Institutional Reform and Clientelism: Lessons from the Colombian Case

Our analysis of Colombia offers insights into theoretical debates about the relationship between institutional reform and clientelism. We agree with Kitschelt and Wilkinson's assertion that "as long as socioeconomic, competitive, and political economic configurations are conducive to clientelism, politicians may come up with

tactics to implement such linkages under all sorts of formal institutional arrangements.<sup>77</sup> Formal institutional rules have repeatedly changed in Colombia over the last half century, but clientelism has remained a mainstay of the country's politics. Whether politicians make programmatic or clientelistic appeals to voters appears to be determined independently of institutions. Clientelism, then, should be understood primarily in terms of its embeddedness in social relations, party organizations, and politician-voter linkages; the right institutional reforms cannot eliminate clientelism.

While institutions do not determine whether clientelism is used, they do shape how it is practiced and how this practice changes through time. Institutional changes can disrupt established clientelistic networks, even if new ones may form in their stead. Better diagnoses of how clientelism is practiced may in turn generate better strategies for how it can be overcome—even if the Colombian case strongly suggests that these strategies will not be exclusively institutional in form. With respect to both teachers and mayors, our analysis shows that institutional changes in Colombia contributed to the weakening of regional political bosses. We do not suggest that institutional reform either (1) rendered regional political bosses completely irrelevant, or (2) was the only factor that contributed to the decline of these bosses. Still, we do see that the transformation of mayors from clients into patrons, as well as the growth of political bosses within the teachers' union, came at the expense of established party bosses and as the direct result of institutional reform.

Finally, our institutional analysis shows that, while sectoral and territorial reforms unwittingly facilitated new practices of clientelism, these reforms had different effects on teachers and mayors, and understanding these consequences requires a rather fine-grained focus on the particularities of institutional design. With respect to teachers, even as FECODE developed into a clientelistic organization, clientelism has become less prevalent in the education sector. While clientelism persists, it is now more restricted than during the period of traditional party rule, since goods—such as teaching positions and teacher transfers—can no longer be allocated on a purely discretionary basis. In contrast, if sectoral reforms partially constrained the scope for clientelism in education, the story is much less positive in the case of territorial reforms. Decentralization worsened clientelism in at least three significant ways: (1) by enabling mayors to emerge as patrons in their own right, (2) by encouraging national legislators to respond to this threat by “doubling down” on their own clientelistic appeals to voters, and (3) by prompting fundamentally new forms of presidential clientelism through which the patron-in-chief himself now seeks to negotiate direct deals with local officials in ways that appear to circumvent

national legislators. Clientelism continues to evolve in Colombia, and institutional perspectives help to illuminate its meaning and significance for political life.

## NOTES

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2. Miguel Urrutia, “On the Absence of Economic Populism in Colombia,” in *Macroeconomic Populism in Latin America*, ed. Rudiger Dornbusch and Sebastian Edwards (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 370–80.
3. David Collier and Ruth Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 459–61.
4. On the persistence of clientelism over time, and its changing forms, in Brazil as well as in Kenya, Zambia, and other African cases, see Frances Hagopian, *Traditional Politics and Regime Change in Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Nicolas Van de Walle, “Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss? The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa,” in *Patrons, Clients, and Politics: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, ed. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50–67.
5. Archer, “Transition from Traditional to Broker Clientelism”; Fernán E. González, Ingrid J. Bolívar, and Teófilo Vázquez, *Violencia Política en Colombia: De la Nación Fragmentada a la Construcción del Estado* (Bogotá: CINEP, 2002); Jonathan Hartlyn, *The Politics of Coalition Rule in Colombia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Francisco Leal Buitrago and Andrés Davila, *Clientelismo: El sistema política y su expresión regional* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1990); John Martz, *The Politics of Clientelism: Democracy and the State in Colombia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999); and Steffen W. Schmidt, “Bureaucrats as Modernizing Brokers? Clientelism in Colombia,” *Comparative Politics* 6 (1974): 425–50.
6. González, Bolívar, and Vázquez, *Violencia Política en Colombia*, 270–72.
7. Martz, *Politics of Clientelism*, 243–47.
8. Archer, “Transition from Traditional to Broker Clientelism,” 9.
9. Urrutia, “Absence of Economic Populism,” 378.
10. Fernán González and Silvia Otero, “¿Hasta que punto el clientelismo hace ilegítimo el sistema político colombiano?” in *Gobernanza y conflicto en Colombia: Interacción entre gobernantes y gobernados en un contexto violento*, ed. Claire Launay-Garna and Fernán González (Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana, 2010), 41.
11. Schmidt, “Clientelism in Colombia,” 433–35.
12. Urrutia, “Absence of Economic Populism in Colombia,” 383.
13. Martz, *Politics of Clientelism*, 654. After the National Front, national leaders, who were often ex-presidents, gained salience. In the Conservative Party, Laureano Gómez and Mariano Ospina represented the two primary factions. In the Liberal Party, Alfonso López Pumarejo, Carlos Lleras Restrepo, and Julio César Turbay Ayala led the primary factions.

14. Erika Moreno and Maria Escobar-Lemmon, "Mejor Solo Que Mal Acompañado: Political Entrepreneurs and List Proliferation in Colombia," in *Pathways to Power: Political Recruitment and Candidate Selection in Latin America*, ed. Peter Siavelis and Scott Morgenstern (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 121.
15. Ronald Archer and Matthew Shugart, "The Unrealized Potential of Presidential Dominance in Colombia," in *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Shugart (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
16. Kent Eaton, *Politicians and Economic Reforms in New Democracies* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2002), 275.
17. Urrutia, "Absence of Economic Populism in Colombia," 384.
18. Beatriz Magaloni, Alberto Díaz-Cayeros, and Federico Estévez, "Clientelism and Portfolio Diversification: A Model of Electoral Investment with Applications to Mexico," in *Patrons, Clients, and Politics*, ed. Kischelt and Wilkinson, 182-205; and Luis Fernando Medina and Susan Stokes, "Monopoly and Monitoring: An Approach to Political Clientelism," in *Patrons, Clients, and Politics*, 68-83.
19. Steven Taylor, "The Evolution of the Ballot in Colombia" (paper presented at the Southern Political Science Association Conference, New Orleans, 2008).
20. Daniel Nielson and Matthew Shugart, "Constitutional Change in Colombia: Policy Adjustment through Institutional Reform," *Comparative Political Studies* 32 (1999): 313-41.
21. Matthew Shugart, Erika Moreno, and Luis Fajardo, "Deepening Democracy by Reviving Political Practices: The Struggle for Electoral Reform in Colombia," in *Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Colombia*, ed. Christopher Welna and Gustavo Gallon (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2006), 26-33.
22. Jesús Duarte, "State Weakness and Clientelism in Colombian Education," in *Colombia: The Politics of Reforming the State*, ed. Eduardo Posada-Carbó (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); and Jesús Duarte, *Educación pública y clientelismo en Colombia* (Medellín: Editorial Universidad de Antioquia, 2005).
23. Educational outcomes in Colombia remain bleak as measured by national standardized tests such as SABER and international standardized tests such as TIMSS and LLECE (see J. Guillermo Ferrer and Patricia Arregui, "Las pruebas internacionales de aprendizaje en América Latina y su impacto en la calidad de la educación: Criterios para guiar futuras aplicaciones" [PREAL Document No. 26, Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas, 2003]: 14-17). To be sure, clientelism is one of multiple factors that explain the low quality of public education. Still, the politicization of teachers does not bode well for improved pedagogy.
24. Duarte, *Educación pública y clientelismo en Colombia*, 90.
25. According to Pamela Lowden, "teachers were hired en masse at election time, with little or no regard to the availability of funding (far less actual need)." See Pamela S. Lowden, "Education Reform in Colombia: The Elusive Quest for Effectiveness," in *Crucial Needs, Weak Incentives: Social Sector Reform, Democratization, and Globalization in Latin America*, ed. Robert R. Kaufman and Joan M. Nelson (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004), 353.
26. Carlos Pardo, *Adalberto Carvajal: una vida, muchas luchas* (Bogotá: Editorial Pijao, 1985).
27. Law 43 and the Teachers' Statute Decree 2277 of 1979 cemented these changes. See

Abel Céspedes Rodríguez, *La Educación Después de la Constitución del 91. De la Reforma a la Contrarreforma* (Bogotá: Editorial Magisterio, 2002), 25.

28. The Estatuto Docente states: "El presente Decreto establece el régimen especial para regular las condiciones de ingreso, ejercicio, estabilidad, ascenso y retiro de las personas que desempeñan la profesión docente en los distintos niveles y modalidades que integran el sistema Educativo nacional, excepto el nivel superior que se regirá por normas especiales." Decreto 2277 de 1979, Estatuto Docente, Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education), Colombia, September 14, 1979, www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articulos-103879\_archivo\_pdf.pdf.
29. Duarte, "State Weakness and Clientelism in Colombian Education," 151.
30. *La Opinión*, May 17, 1985, quoted in and translated by Duarte, "State Weakness and Clientelism in Colombian Education."
31. Brian Crisp and Rachael E. Ingall, "Institutional Engineering and the Nature of Representation: Mapping the Effects of Electoral Reform in Colombia," *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (2002): 736.
32. Christopher Chambers-Ju, "The Electoral Dilemma Revisited: The Colombian Constitution of 1991 and the Policy Influence of Colombians Teachers' Union" (working paper, University of California, Berkeley, 2011), 32-33.
33. Chambers-Ju, "Electoral Dilemma Revisited," 32-33.
34. Duarte, "State Weakness and Clientelism in Colombian Education," 141.
35. Chambers-Ju, "Electoral Dilemma Revisited," 30.
36. Lowden, "Education Reform in Colombia."
37. Carlos Malaver, "Mientras esté, ni puestos ni contratos: Secretario de Educación," *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), June 12, 2012.
38. Juan Camilo Maldonado and Laura Ardila Arrieta, "¿Qué hay detrás del intento de moción de censura al secretario de Educación?" *El Espectador* (Bogotá), June 7, 2012.
39. Duarte, "State Weakness and Clientelism in Colombian Education," 148.
40. Kathleen O'Neill, *Decentralizing the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
41. Kent Eason, "The Downside of Decentralization: Armed Clientelism in Colombia," *Security Studies* 15 (2006): 533-62.
42. John Dugas, Angelica Ocampo, Luis Javier Orjuela, and Germán Ruiz, *Los Caminos de la Descentralización* (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 1992); and Tullia G. Falletti, *Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
43. Charles Collins, "Local Government and Urban Protest in Colombia," *Public Administration and Development* 8 (1988): 424.
44. Timothy Campbell, *The Quiet Revolution: Decentralization and the Rise of Political Participation in Latin American Cities* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 45.
45. Collins, "Local Government and Urban Protest in Colombia," 425.
46. Despite the hope that decentralization would reduce clientelism, there are good reasons to expect that it would worsen the practice by making it easier for incumbents to monitor votes in (municipal) districts that are smaller and more homogeneous than in the departmental districts where national legislators have traditionally been elected in Colombia. See Medina and Stokes, "Monopoly and Monitoring," 82.

47. Buitrago and Davila, *Clientelismo*.
48. Eloisa Vasco Montoya, *Clientelism y Minifundio: Bases Socio-Economicas del Poder Politico en un Municipio Minifundista* (Bogotá: Editorial CINEP, 1978), 69.
49. Pilar Gaitán and Carlos Moreno, *Poder Local: Realidad y Utopía de la Descentralización en Colombia* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1991).
50. "Tendencia centralista del Gobierno amenaza avances de eleccion popular de alcaldes, dicen expertos," *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), June 1, 2008.
51. Departamento Nacional de Planeación (National Planning Department, Colombia), *Evaluación de la Descentralización Municipal en Colombia: Balance de una Década* (4 vols., 2002).
52. Iván Jaramillo, "La salud en el gobierno de Uribe," *Revista Foro* 52 (February 2005): 86.
53. Although we argue that mayors across Colombia have been able to transition from clients to patrons as a result of decentralization, it is important to note that this policy apparently had the opposite effect in Bogotá. According to Eleonora Pasotti, the introduction of direct elections and fiscal transfers facilitated the emergence of leaders who attacked clientelism aggressively, including Mayors Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa. More recently, however, the resurgence of clientelism under Mayor Samuel Moreno (2007–2010) has exposed the limitations of reform projects that depend so heavily on mayoral leadership. See Eleonora Pasotti, *The Decline of Machine Politics in Bogotá, Naples, and Chicago* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
54. According to Córdoba's (2003, 40) discussion of the politicization of SISBEN, people with the ability to pay for insurance often appear on the subsidized list, and some people appear more than once. See Oscar Fresneda, "El sistema de selección de beneficiarios y el regimen subsidiado de salud en Colombia," *Comercio Exterior* 53 (2003): 577, 581.
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61. Eaton, "Downside of Decentralization," 533–62.
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63. "Raponazo de los 'paras' al erario público," *El Espectador* (Bogotá), Sept. 26–Oct. 2, 2004.
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66. Cristina Escobar, "Clientelism and Citizenship: The Limits of Democratic Reform in Sucre, Colombia," *Latin American Perspectives* 29 (2002): 36.
67. Hershberg, "Technocrats, Citizens and Second-Generation Reforms."
68. Oscar Fresneda, "El sistema de selección de beneficiarios y el regimen subsidiado de salud en Colombia," *Comercio Exterior* 53 (2003): 584.
69. Fabio Velásquez, "La Descentralización en Colombia: Trayectoria, Realidades y Retos" (unpublished manuscript, Universidad Nacional, 2010).
70. Another example of recentralization in the health sector is the new (2004) FOSYGA mechanism, which retains transfers from certain municipalities and directs them toward the Finance Ministry (Jaramillo 2005).
71. Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional—Acción Social (Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation—Social Action, Colombia), "Familias en Acción: Informe de Estado y Avance Segundo Semestre de 2010" (report presented in Bogotá, February 2011).
72. Orazio Attanasio and Alice Mesnard, "The Impact of a Conditional Cash Transfer Programme on Consumption in Colombia," *Fiscal Studies* 27 (2006): 421–42; and Fábio Veras Soares, Rafael Perez Ribas, and Rafael Guerreiro Osório, "Research Notes: Evaluating the Impact of Brazil's Bolsa Familia Cash Transfer Programs in Comparative Perspective," *Latin American Research Review* 45 (2010).
73. In the election, rumors swirled that Santos's campaign threatened participants that voting for opposition candidate Antanas Mockus would result in the loss of their benefits. See "Cómo cambió la política," *Semana* (Bogotá), July 31, 2010, [www.semana.com/nacion/como-cambio-politica/142438-3.aspx](http://www.semana.com/nacion/como-cambio-politica/142438-3.aspx); "Familias en Acción ¿plataforma para la reelección?" *Cambio* (Bogotá), July 9, 2008, [www.cambio.com.co/panoramacambio/784/4369276-pag-2\\_2.html](http://www.cambio.com.co/panoramacambio/784/4369276-pag-2_2.html); and "Dudas en Acción," *Semana* (Bogotá), June 12, 2010, [www.semana.com/nacion/dudas-accion/140234-3.aspx](http://www.semana.com/nacion/dudas-accion/140234-3.aspx).
74. In 2008, the Constitutional Court also investigated the legality of giving the presidency exclusive managerial control over such large pots of money. NGOs, including Global Exchange, issued a report correlating the expansion of *Familias en Acción* and an increase in the electoral support for Alvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos in 2006 and 2010. See "Análisis del Programa Familias En Acción en el Marco de los Procesos Electorales en Colombia" (Final Report, Global Exchange), [www.globalexchange.org/countries/americas/colombia/ColombInformeFinalESP.pdf](http://www.globalexchange.org/countries/americas/colombia/ColombInformeFinalESP.pdf); and "Familias en Acción."
75. "Dudas en Acción."
76. "Dudas en Acción."
77. Kitschelt and Wilkinson, eds., *Patrons, Clients, and Policies*, 43.