

Chapter 11

Pre-Candidates, Candidates, and Presidents: Paths to the Colombian Presidency¹

**Steven L. Taylor
Felipe Botero Jaramillo
Brian F. Crisp**

The Race for the Colombian Presidency

By backward induction the institutional procedures that would-be public officials must face to win office should exert influence over the types of pre-candidates who emerge. For example, if the process of becoming president informally entails careful public scrutiny of one's private life, individuals with morally checkered pasts will not seek the nomination. More formally, if the candidate selection process requires one to be endorsed at an elite-dominated party summit, party "black sheep" or otherwise independent-minded individuals need not apply. However, in the race for the Colombian presidency, the institutional rules adopted by parties to name candidates are not important as independent variables in the equation to explain the types of pre-candidates who emerge. Instead, the organizational looseness of Colombian parties means that pre-candidates of various types can emerge and that they will struggle to impose selection procedures that favor their own candidacies. Clearly, selection institutions matter for explaining who receives the nomination. If they were not, pre-candidates would not bother to fight over which ones are used. However, it is their unusual malleability in the context of Colombian political parties that makes them a dependent rather than independent variable.

When there is a pre-candidate without any serious challenger, any selection method will lead to his nomination – thus, no struggle over procedures. However, it is often the case that pre-candidates with very different political backgrounds and very different connections to the leaderships within their parties contest for the nomination. "Party insiders" have histories of capitalizing on machine politics and prominent family ties to control over the party and to previous presidential nominees. "Party adherents", on the other hand, are not as centrally located within the national leaderships of the party and tend to have risen to the national stage by serving at the local and state level. Party insiders espouse themes traditionally associated with their

parties while adherents frequently, though not always, talk about the need for reforms – including reforms to their own party. When a party insider (traditionally-oriented) pre-candidate faces a party adherent pre-candidate, the insider will seek to impose a centralized candidate selection procedure where his standing as a party elite and his close ties with other party elites will prevail. On the other hand, the adherent will seek more participatory procedures in order to avoid the insider's cronies and to capitalize on his broader appeal.

Historically, failure to obtain designation as the official candidate of the Liberal or Conservative ended one's prospects of achieving the presidency (at least for the immediate term). Losing pre-candidates could permanently give up their pursuit of the office, wait until the next term, or announce their intention to seek the office as an independent in the current race – and lose. For example, Galan's loss of the Liberal nomination to insider Lopez in 1982 led him to break from the party and run as the head of his own independent movement (arguably costing the Liberals the presidency). However, with the increasing urbanization of the Colombian population and the concomitant decline in importance of patron-client networks for delivering votes to presidential candidates, adherent candidates have another option when they fear that they may not receive their party's sash. They can announce their independence from the party, seek the office of the presidency with the support of their own movement, and have a real prospect of winning.

The defection of strong candidates from the traditional parties should provoke party elites to adopt candidate selection processes more to the liking of the adherents on the verge of becoming independents. However, the tension between the local patron-client networks used to earn votes for election to congress and the broader, more urban base of support sought by candidates to the executive means that parties have been constrained in their ability to adapt to the new reality of presidential politics. We show that insider candidates to the presidency are much more dependent on rural voters while adherents have relatively more urban bases of support – further distancing them from the traditions bases of power within the Conservative and Liberal parties.

Given the historic importance of patron-client ties and the ability to deliver the rural vote, which is still central for election to the Chamber of Representatives, the traditional parties themselves are declining in importance in the race for the presidency where urban voters are the key to victory. An open question is how this dynamic between increasingly nationally-oriented presidents and locally-oriented members of congress helps explain president's behavior once in

office (or interbranch relations). If these tensions are significant in the race for the nomination and eventual election, they should be reflected in how sitting presidents interact with party members – members of their own party and of opposition parties – and with congress more generally. We will examine these relations by looking at bill initiation patterns and cabinet composition.

Our chapter is structured as followed. In the next section we detail the struggles for the presidential nomination of the Liberal and Conservative parties since the end of the National Front in 1974. An examination of career paths prior to competition for the nomination helps us distinguish between party insiders and party adherents. We show how changes in legal variables, including the way in which ballots were printed and changes in the electoral calendar, interacted with party variables to determine the type of candidate selection process chosen and therefore the type of candidate to receive the official nomination. In the third section of the chapter we show that candidate type is related to campaign style and the geographic bases of support for winning and losing candidates. Traditional party insiders who achieved the nomination through centralized processes are more likely to get their support in the general election from rural areas. Conversely, party adherents and independents who achieve their party's nomination through relatively more participatory procedures focus on urban residents less likely to be bound by patron-client ties in their bids to win the general election. Finally, we examine how selection process, candidate type, and electoral base (or campaign style) influence presidential behavior. We will examine where presidents turn for their cabinet members and the balance between branches in pursuing their preferences through bill initiation to determine whether the requisites of seeking the office continue to influence behavior even after the general election. We will conclude by making the argument that the decreasing importance of being the official candidate of one of the traditional parties for actually winning the presidency is a symptom of the larger disjuncture between the Colombian party system and the reality of electoral politics.

Career Paths and Candidate Types

In Colombia, three types of candidates have aspired to the presidency: party insiders, party adherents, and free-wheeling independents. For our purposes, party insiders have enduring identification with a party that is more than their personal vehicle, and prior to seeking that

party's nomination, insiders have attained a clear leadership position among the group's elite. Party adherents too have enduring identification with a particular party, but their position among its leadership is less obvious. While clearly having a partisan identification, adherents, in the Colombian context, are often associated with efforts to reform the party from within. A free-wheeling independent, as the label implies, either has no experience within a longstanding party or after some association makes a very clear break from the party's ideology and organizational structure to seek the presidency. Looking at the nineteen major candidacies to contest the race for the presidency since the end of the power sharing National Front in 1974, we identified seven party insiders, nine party adherents, and three free-wheeling independents.

How does one arrive at these positions relative to the leadership of the major parties? We traced the political biographies of the nineteen major candidates, breaking previous experience (elected and appointed) into prior service in the national executive, in the national legislature, in sub-national executive posts, and in local legislative posts. There was one characteristic shared by all nineteen candidates: prior service in the national legislature. Some candidates had repeated terms in both houses while others had served only once, but all of them had been elected to the national legislature at some point in their careers. Even candidates bent on changing the practice of Colombian politics recognize the importance of clientelistic practices, and a seat in congress (where there are not restrictions on reelection) has always been the best perch from which to orchestrate the use of such largesse for constructing political followings. What is more, the limited powers and resources allotted to other levels of government historically meant that it was difficult to claim that experience at those levels was preparation for leading the country.

Gubernatorial posts were appointed until 1991, and mayoral races were first contested in 1988 (and the 1991 constitution mandated substantial revenue transfers to these levels). Thus, most of the candidates under study here could not use the races for sub-national executive posts as a means of honing their electoral skills and proving their suitability to lead. However, this may be changing. The two most recent presidents served as sub-national executives. Andrés Pastrana was the first elected mayor of Bogotá in 1991 and Álvaro Uribe was elected governor of Antioquia in 1995. It remains to be seen, but it is possible that sub-national executive posts may supplant or at least serve as an alternate route to the presidency beyond service in congress. Despite a process of decentralization, Colombia remains essentially a unitary state. Still, the high profile nature of gubernatorial and mayoral posts, couple with the electoral might associated

with winning such posts, may present new route to the presidency.

The candidacies of party insiders frequently shared an important informal piece of political experience. More than half the time, insider candidacies could tout the service of the candidate's father as president. In other words, these sons were virtually earmarked as likely pre-candidates at birth. Another feature shared by party insiders was their ability to receive their party's nomination a second time after having lost the race for the presidency previously (presidents cannot be reelected). This emphasizes "the lock" one can achieve on the nomination by rising to the central hierarchy of the party apparatus.

Party adherents are less likely to have fathers who served as president. Rather than having a natural entrée to presidential politics, they were more likely to have earned their base of support in local and department assemblies. While only 14% of insiders had served in a local assembly, the percentage was four times as great among adherent candidacies. Party adherent candidacies were more than twice as likely to be able to point to service in a local assembly as insider candidacies. In order to make a mark on the national stage, adherents were more likely than others to have served in (sub-cabinet) bureaucratic positions at the national level. In sum, compared to insiders, adherents seem more likely to have taken a tough and circuitous route to the nomination, having earned their way to the nomination by building bases of support through sub-national elected posts and national appointed posts.

We have fewer free-wheeling independent candidacies to observe. As noted above, like all others they had previous experience in the national legislature, but all three were Senators with no experience in the Chamber of Representatives. Given the relatively low district magnitudes for senate races in the prior to the adoption of the 1991 constitution and the use of a nationwide district after 1991, senate candidates typically had to earn more votes than representatives. The propensity that leads one to launch a candidacy for the presidency without the support of a major party may be the same propensity that encourages one to seek a seat in the senate without having served in the lower house first. In a sense, independents would like to be on a fast track to building a broad constituency and are less interested in being associated with the parochial politics of the lower house and sub-national assemblies.

Given their diverse career trajectories, the three types of pre-candidates vary in their sources of political strength, defined primarily by their relationship to the central leadership of the major parties. Thus, a pre-candidate's prior career experience will influence through which type of

candidate selection process he or she is most likely to achieve the nomination. Party insiders prefer centralized processes where their position among the party elite can work to their advantage. Party adherents, with a looser grip on the reins of the party, prefer a less centralized process where the insiders "cronies" are counter-balanced by rank-and-file members. Independents, on the other hand, as their title would imply, opt out of the party candidate selection process all together and declare themselves candidates of their own movements. In the next section, we examine the relationship between the candidate selection process and candidate type.

Candidate Types and Selection Procedures

The Siavelis and Morgenstern framework posits that the selection process is an independent variable that influences which candidate type wins the nomination. In the Colombian case, we have found that the selection process is a dependent variable. Yes, the selection process is a filter through which one type of candidate passes more easily than others, but the malleability of political party institutions in Colombia means, especially in the case of the Liberal Party (PL), pre-candidates have fought for a preferred selection process from a menu of institutional options that have evolved over the past three decades. Thus, the key turning point in the race for the nomination is not the kind of candidates who emerge given that they are favored by institutionalized selection processes but the battle that diverse types of pre-candidates wage to impose the process of their choice. The ability to force a fight depends very much of the type of aspirants seeking nomination and on the degree to which the party is fractured over whom to nominate in a given cycle. Rather than a specific process dominating the system, or even a particular party settling on a given process over time, the parties have selected from a menu of options, changing selection from election to election, often as a means of settling factional disputes (or as the results of that dispute). The PL has been more prone to selection from the menu, while the Conservatives (PC) have largely stuck to some form of internal elite consensus/convention process.

This recalcitrance on the part of the PC resulted in more serious fragmentation of and desertions from the party. With limited policy and process preferences represented within the party, the use of relatively centralized candidate selection processes has been agreed upon to settle more-or-less personalistic differences in the struggle for the nomination. Thus factions are

usually designated by the surnames of their champions, the ospinista-pastranista wing versus the laureanista-alvarista wing, for example. Betancur, an adherent not insider, was somewhat of an exception to this personalistic infighting and a stalemate among the insiders allowed him to capture the nomination in 1978 despite the use of a relatively centralized candidate selection process (national convention). His strong showing in the elections assured him a second nomination in 1982. The return to dominance of the ospinista-pastranista faction allowed them to use the national convention to make official the candidacy of Lloreda in 1990, and the re-emergence of the faction encouraged Alvaro Gomez to break from the party and run as an independent — the last time he would appear on the ballot.

While the PC has used a centralized process to select candidates (forcing disgruntled members to consider the free-wheeling independent route), the Liberal Party (PL) has employed virtually every possible process option. A clear elite consensus gave party insider Alfonso Lopez Michelsen the nomination in 1974. When two strong candidates, Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala and Carlos Lleras Restrepo, emerged prior to the 1978 elections, the party had to choose a process through which to resolve the struggle. An agreement, the *Consenso de San Carlos*, was reached to use congressional elections, held in March, to help select the party's nominee for the May presidential contest (Martz 1999:7; Votebien 2002). Party factions printed their own ballots for congressional elections and the ballot itself indicatee not only the congressional (and other) candidates on the sub-party list, but also to which intra-party faction the lists adhered. For example, a ballot in the 1978 might be marked "Liberal Llerista" at the top and state "*Esta lista respalda la candidatura presidencial de Carlos Lleras Retrepo*" elsewhere on the ballot. As such, the split electoral calendar combined with clearly marked factional lists made it possible to assess the basic strength of a candidate among the party's voters, in essence a closed primary, in advance of the presidential elections.

TABLE 1: Candidate Type and Selection Process
by Party and Election

	Selection Type	Candidate Type
1974 Alfonso Lopez (PL)	Nat'l Con.	Party Insider
Alvaro Gomez (PC)	Nat'l Con.	Party Insider
1978 Julio Cesar Turbay (PL)	Quasi-Primary	Party Insider
Belisario Betancur ("Candidato Nacional"/PC)	Nat'l Con.	Party Adherent
1982 Alfonso Lopez (PL)	Nat'l Con.	Party Insider
Belisario Betancur (Mov. Nacional/PC)	Nat'l Con.	Party Adherent
Luis Carlos Galan (NL)	Self-Nomination	Free-Wheeling Ind.
1986 Virgilio Barco (PL)	Quasi-Primary	Party Adherent
Alvaro Gomez (PC)	Nat'l. Con.	Party Insider
1990 Cesar Gaviria (PL)	Open Primary	Party Adherent
Rodrigo Lloreda(PSC)	Nat'l Con.	Party Adherent
Alvaro Gomez (MSN)	Self-Nomination	Free-Wheeling Ind.
1994 Ernesto Samper (PL)	Open Primary	Party Adherent
Andres Pastrana ("Andres Presidente"/PC)	Nat'l Con.	Party Adherent
1998 Horacio Serpa (PL)	Nat'l Con.	Party Insider
Andres Pastrana ("El Cambio es Andres"/PC)	Closed Caucus	Party Adherent
2002 Horacio Serpa (PL)	Nat'l Con.	Party Insider
Juan Camilo Restrepo (PC)	Closed Caucus	Party Adherent
Alvaro Uribe (Primero Colombia)	Self-Nomination	Free-Wheeling Ind.

Winners in bold.

In 1982 Alfonso Lopez, a party insider, returned and was able to prevent the use of the congressional elections as a sign of party voters' preferences. The son of a former president and former president himself, he struggled to impose the use of a national convention where his position as the foremost leader within the party could best be used to leverage support among other party leaders. Lopez's ability to impose a process that favored a candidate with his career path and current standing within the party led Galan, who had favored a more open process for selecting the Liberal nominee, to break from the party and run as a free-wheeling independent. This split in the party made clear the need to adopt a candidate selection process that resulted in a legitimate winner of the nomination. Thus, congressional elections as a quasi-closed primary process was used again in 1986 to select the party's nominee (McDonald and Ruhl 1989:88). Barco, a party adherent, won the nomination and went on to win the presidency. That the adherents in the party seemed to be gaining the upper hand over the insiders was evidenced by the use of an even more participatory process in 1990. An open primary, the *consulta popular*, led to the choice of party adherent Cesar Gaviria in 1990. Gaviria went on to win the election and to champion a referendum leading the election of a constituent assembly and political reforms institutionalized in a new constitution.

One of these reforms somewhat inadvertently made the use of congressional elections as a closed primary for selecting a party's presidential nominee impossible. The federal government began to produce electoral ballots, and, as a result, intra-party factions no longer printed individualized lists readily identifiable with a given presidential candidate. With this option off the table, the open primary, *consulta popular* was used again prior to the 1994 elections to choose party adherent Ernesto Samper as the Liberal's nominee. The *consulta* process was codified into law in 1994 with the passage of Law 130, which detailed, in Title III, Section 10 that the state would pay for the cost of such an event at the national, departmental, district or municipal level, as well as count the votes. But, just when it appeared that the open primary process favorable to adherents – and therefore less likely to turn them into free-wheeling independents – had become the norm within the party, party insiders were able to impose the use of acclamation at the party convention in January 1998 as the means of selecting the party's nominee. The relatively closed process privileged the party's elite, and they selected one of their own – party insider Horacio Serpa (Semana 1997, El Tiempo 1997a, 1997b, 1997c and 1998). Serpa lost to Conservative party adherent Pastrana in 1998, but his domination of the party allowed him to impose the use of an internal caucus (the National Election Council approved the use of a *consulta interna* by the PL, CNE 2001) in 2002 to select the party's candidate, thus securing his own re-nomination. This process allowed for a closed caucus type of process in which Liberal members of various elected bodies (and others approved by the party) could vote to select the party's candidate.

Serpa's ability to recentralize the candidate selection process and to foreclose the opportunities of party adherents undoubtedly helped create the Álvaro Uribe phenomenon. In addition, the 1991 adoption of majority run-off rules for the selection of presidents meant that candidates not advocated by one of the major parties could hope to gain votes in a second round if they could poll ahead of weak major party nominee in the first round. The malleability of party variables related to the selection process and the permissibility of re-nomination meant that neither insiders nor adherents could rest assured that they would consistently have the upper hand in seeking the party's nomination. With adherents apparently on the wane and Serpa leading the traditionalist insiders (and the potential of only needing to make a run-off in the initial voting), Uribe broke from the party and pursued the presidency as a free-wheeling independent. He declared himself the candidate of *Primero Colombia*, his own movement, and

disavowed several party positions and practices. Midway through his term in 2004 his supporters were trying to amend the constitution to allow for his reelection, and the battle over how the Liberal Party would choose its nominee was already heating up – with Horacio Serpa still championing traditional party insider processes and positions.

In sum, legal variables, such as majority run-off rules or privately printed ballots and nonconcurrent elections, have played a role in the dynamics among candidate types. More importantly, the inability of party structures, especially in the Liberal Party, to institutionalize a single set of candidate selection procedures has meant that candidates of various types have fought with one another to impose their preferred processes on the party. This oscillation of party processes makes rational forecasting by pre-candidates with diverse career paths and sources of strength difficult if not impossible. The persistent flip-flopping of party structures may lead to a lack of certainty on the part of possible candidates, but that uncertainty is a double-edged sword: current winners cannot use institutionalized party processes to insulate themselves from challengers and current losers are never fully convinced that the institutional “deck” is permanently “stacked against them.” As a result, likely losers in the candidate selection process always have the option to opt out for the free-wheeling independent route but to later return (if not in person, in spirit) to regain control of party procedures.

Candidate Type and Bases of Electoral Support

The internal dynamics within traditional parties show a struggle between identifiable factions, and these factions have distinct relationships to the party as an institution. That is, factions led by insiders and factions led by adherents value the party label differently. As our account of changes in candidate selection processes make clear, this struggle has been less explicitly taken up by the Conservatives (PC). The PC has been divided around powerful leaders who have worried more about their dominance of the party than about redefining it vis-à-vis the electorate. The party has failed to incorporate the splinter movements that emerge as a challenge to the party leadership and the attempts to reform the party to broaden its appeal to voters are lost when the spin-off movements disappear after a couple of elections. The Liberals (PL), instead, show an explicit schism between reformist and traditionalist factions and has been far more successful at incorporating dissidents. Party adherents who champion the reformist faction have

been more concerned with defining national policy positions for their party and with bringing about social and political reforms. As such, reformists tried to respond to the changing political dynamics in the country during the 60s, 70s, and 80s, catering to the urban electorates (with little success, in part due to the opposition of the traditionalist faction within their own party). As Archer and Shugart (1997) suggest, the urban constituents were more sophisticated than their rural counterparts in the sense that they had weaker partisan identification and were willing to vote on issues rather than on partisan cues. Conversely, insiders who represented the traditionalist faction were more attached to the rural constituents and therefore to personal exchanges of favors for votes. In contrast to the PC, the rivalry between reformists and traditionalist was not as harmful for the party because adherents were occasionally successful in imposing relatively participatory candidate selection processes and thus achieving the party's nomination. The ability to modify candidate selection processes served as a pressure valve of sorts and kept unhappy factions from deserting the party entirely (the incorporation of spin-off movements such as Lopez' MRL and Galan's Nuevo Liberalismo, for example).

If it is the case that the struggles between insider and adherent pre-candidates entail differences on the grounds on which candidates appeal for votes, then campaign styles should lead to differences in the geographical support that candidates receive. The argument suggests that PL insiders have more clientelistic campaign styles, which should be reflected in strong electoral support in rural areas. Adherents should be stronger in urban centers. For the PC, our argument implies that the geographical patterns of support should remain stable and mostly rural. It should only change for candidates of spin-off movements which cater to broader constituencies, but do so under separate labels.

This struggle took place in the context of increasing urbanization (thus, demographic trends should be on the side of Liberal adherents) We defined as urban, the votes cast in municipalities where the total number of votes cast was greater than 20.000. The Conservative Party exhibits a marked reliance on rural votes. Not once between 1974 and 2002 did its vote share that was rural dip below the national vote share that was rural.² The share of the PC vote from rural municipalities was smaller than 55% on only two occasions – both times for adherents not insiders: 54% of Lloreda's support in 1990 was from rural municipalities and 46% of Pastrana's support in 1998 came from rural municipalities.

The geographic patterns of support for the PL vary considerably from one election to the next and reflect whether an insider or adherent secured the presidential nomination at a given time. On average, party adherent candidates (Barco, Gaviria, and Samper) who are typically closer to the reformist faction of the party (with the exception of Samper) get relatively more of their votes from urban municipalities – 48% – than insider candidates (Lopez, Turbay, and Serpa) closer to the traditionalist camp – 43%. Figure 1 plots the rural-urban breakdown of the vote for these candidates one election at a time.

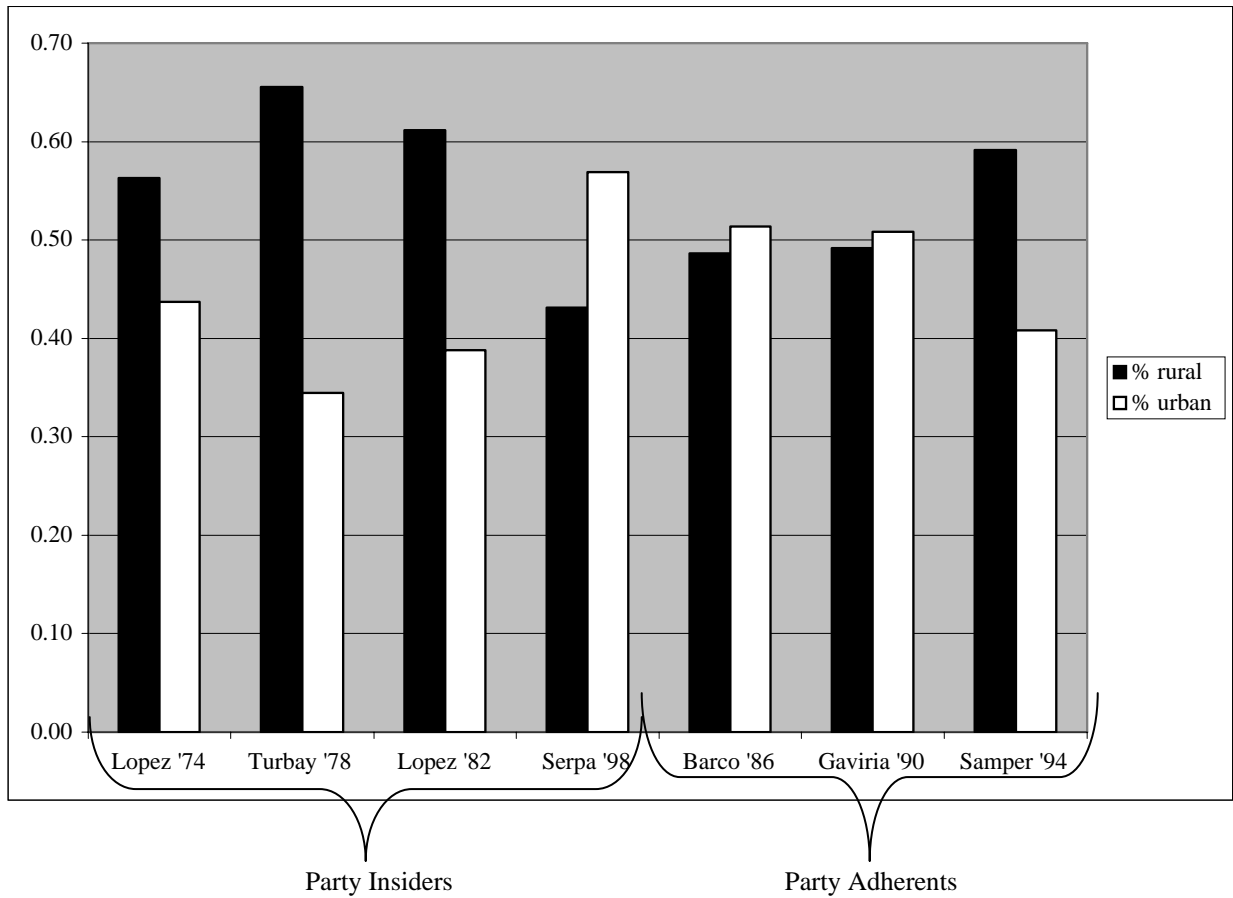


Figure 1: Liberal Insider and Adherent Bases of Support

The first three elections considered here; 1974, 1978, 1982; show the predicted pattern of support. The party fielded insiders as candidates and their machineries produced electoral support in rural areas predominantly. The 1982 election is also interesting because of the participation of a free-wheeling independent in the dispute over the presidency. Luis Carlos

Galán defected from the PL ranks, created his own movement, and launched his presidential campaign on an anti-corruption platform. He lost miserably – Galán garnered a little over 700,000 votes. Regardless of how small, Galán’s base of support was overwhelmingly – nearly 75% – urban. Had Galan’s supporters voted for the insider Liberal, Lopez, he would have overtaken the insider Conservative, Betancur, and won the election. Losses like this may explain why the Liberal Party has been more flexible in the struggle over selection processes and the prospects of choosing an adherent candidate.

The elections of 1986 and 1990 drive home the different bases of support by candidate type. The PL ran two reformists consecutively, Barco and Gaviria – both of whom obtained a greater share of their support from urban than rural municipalities. In the same two elections, the PC ran two party insiders, Gómez and Lloreda, both of whom obtained a greater share of their votes from rural municipalities. Interestingly, Gómez ran again in 1990 but this time as a free-wheeling independent with his own party. As an independent, Gómez was able to appeal to urban voters in greater proportion and he finished second in the election behind the winning Liberal adherent, Gaviria.

In 1994 adherents were nominated by both parties, Liberal Samper and Conservative Pastrana. As hypothesized, the support for Pastrana was predominantly rural; something quite remarkable considering that the majority of the population by then already lived in urban centers. Surprisingly, given our hypotheses and immediately previous patterns, Liberal Samper also had a relatively more rural base. The 1998 election also showed some puzzling results. The Samper administration suffered a severe crisis due to its links to illegal drug money that lasted almost the entire presidential term. The generalized dissatisfaction with the president and Congress (which exonerated Samper despite incriminating evidence) may have led citizens realize the importance of taking part in the political process. Levels of participation more than doubled compared to four years earlier and in excess of 8 million people voted in the presidential election, 5 million in urban areas. With such an elevated participation rate, it is not surprising to see both candidates amassed a majority of their votes in cities rather than in the countryside.

This cursory analysis of electoral data reveals interesting variations in the patterns of support that the traditional parties obtain. Traditionalist candidates of both parties, embodied mostly by party insiders, tend to get most of their support in rural areas. Reformist candidates, better characterized by party adherents, tend to obtain their support mainly in large cities. Furthermore,

reformists seem to put a premium on their political agendas even if that means defecting the party, as Gómez and Pastrana did with the PC, and Galán with the PL.

Candidate Type and Presidential Behavior

Three of the candidate types identified by Siavelis and Morgenstern have won the Colombian presidency: party insiders, party adherents, and free-wheeling independents. Does it make any difference for how the country is governed? Given the novelty of the executive political recruitment project, there is very little literature from which to glean formal hypotheses. Efforts to test hypotheses will always be made difficult by the relatively small numbers with which we are working and the ability to construct measures of behavior that can be meaningfully applied across countries (and national cases). Our intuition was that candidate type (career path, selection procedures, and base of electoral support) should continue to affect a president's relations with members of his own party and with members of other parties even after he takes office. In general, we know that party insiders are confident in their standing within their own parties. Will this give them the leeway to seek the cooperation of others or does it mean that they will remain dependent on their traditional base of support? Adherents, on the other hand, have relatively tenuous relations with the traditional power base of their parties. Does this mean that in order to govern they will need to shore up relations with their own parties or does it mean that they will be forced to look for support elsewhere? Finally, free-wheeling independents have already shown their desire to distinguish themselves from traditional parties but how does one govern without their support? Do independents surround themselves with other independents and hope to "go it alone" – perhaps through extra-constitutional means or by intimidating others with their individual popularity?

The confidence we can have in our answers to these questions will, as noted above, always be limited by the few administrations on which our observations are based. With eight presidents chosen since the end of the formal agreement to restrict participation and alternate control over the office (the National Front) in 1974, Colombia is actually one of the longer, uninterrupted time series in Latin America. But, even if eight administrations is relatively large number, we are further hampered by the lack of comparable data for the entire period. First we look at the partisan composition of cabinets. We are fortunate to have data beginning in 1974 with the

Liberal administration of Alfonso Lopez. Our data set currently ends in 2000 midway through the Coalition/Conservative administration of Andrés Pastrana. We hope to update this information to mid-2004, halfway through the term of independent Álvaro Uribe. We also examine bill initiation patterns, but our data begins in 1986 with the Liberal administration of Virgilio Barco and ends with data approximately midway through the independent administration of Álvaro Uribe (2004). The prospects of pushing the legislative record back beyond 1986 is virtually nil. With these caveats in order (and more to come), let us look at differences in political behavior across presidential administrations.

First we examine the composition of presidential cabinets. Constitutionally, Colombian presidents have the right to appoint and dismiss members of their cabinets at will. When a president has the opportunity to select a minister, does he choose a copartisan, a member of the primary opposition party, a member of some third party, or an independent? The choice of who to appoint is important for several reasons. First, it can signal the policy direction of the administration. For example, Liberal president who appoints only Liberal ministers is likely to adopt policy further to the left of center than a Liberal president whose administration contains a large proportion of ministers from the Conservative Party. Ministers can directly submit bills for legislative consideration. Second, the choice of a minister can signal a president's desire to reach out to parties in the legislature. Appointing a member of the opposition signals a desire to gain that party's support for the president's legislative agenda. Appointing an independent signals that the president desires to keep his agenda above the traditional political fray or at least not to offend one partisan bloc or the other.

Looking at cabinets between 1974 and 2000, we present data on the percentage of appointments presidents of different candidate types made. As the figures in table 2 indicate, party adherents work very hard to signal their faithfulness to the party while insiders appear more free to reach out to members of the opposition.³ This difference is magnified when we control for partisan support in congress. Party adherents who have a copartisan majority are particularly like to appoint copartisan ministers. If they can shore up the support of their own party, they will have the numbers necessary to implement their programs.

Table 2: Partisan Composition of Cabinets by Presidential Candidate Type

Candidate Type	Copartisans	Primary Opposition	Other Partisans	Independents	Others	TOTAL
Party Insiders	50.00	46.67	0.00	0.00	3.33	60
Party Adherents	65.53	24.27	2.91	3.88	3.40	206
Party Insiders With Majority Support*	50.00	46.67	0.00	0.00	3.33	60
Party Adherents with Majority Support	74.81	13.74	4.58	3.82	3.05	131

*In another instance of the small numbers problem, we have no cases of a party insider president facing a congress where his copartisans are not in the majority.

Party insiders have the luxury of being able to reach out to the opposition. They are relatively assured of the support of their copartisans in congress, given their central role in the party leadership. But, even though the congress is controlled by their copartisans, they can pick up additional support in congress by naming members of the opposition. As a result, they use their solid power base in their own party as an anchor while coopting the opposition, making it jointly responsible for the government’s program. Adherents, with their more tenuous hold on their own party, may fear that success in reaching out to the opposition would be offset from defections by the more traditional sectors of their own party.

When we look at bill initiation patterns, again, we see some evidence that candidate type is an important determinant of which branch initiates legislation (see table 3). Legislators apparently feel that bills initiated by an independent president less accurately reflect their own agendas. The proportion of bills initiated only by members of the legislature is almost 5% higher during free-wheeling independent administrations than during party adherent administrations. What the percentages in the table do not reveal is that the number of bills initiated only by members of the legislature under a free-wheeling independent jumped dramatically. If trends hold in the Uribe administration, legislators will initiate something approaching 1400 bills, or 20% more than under any other previous administration. Concomitantly, the joint initiation of legislation by branches dropped from small to zero. Only under the minority Pastrana administration was joint initiation non-existent and in some administrations it ranged as high as 50 bills. Thus, the distance between free-wheeling independents and legislators resulting from their paths to office seems to carry into the process of governing.

Table 3: Bill Initiation Patterns by Presidential Candidate Type*

Percent of bills initiated . . .	During the Administrations of Party Adherents	During the Administrations of Free-Wheeling Independents
only by members of the legislature	79.96	84.81
only by members of the executive	17.61	15.19
jointly by members of the executive and legislature	1.57	0.00
all others	0.86	1.58

*Again, we stress caution given the small number of observations for the free-wheeling independent category and the complete lack of observations in the party insider category.

The free-wheeling independent administration of Álvaro Uribe is only a little more than half over at the time of writing, and the vast majority of bills initiated are still pending a final outcome. However, the very preliminary evidence regarding which bills actually become law profoundly contradicts the expanding gap in initiation rates and previous relative rates of bill approval. Hundreds of legislators initiated far more bills than the relatively few members of the executive branch in every administration and especially so when the president is an independent, and in party adherent administrations bills initiated by members of the legislature led to between 43% and 50% of the laws adopted. Party adherent presidents with and without majority copartisan support fared equally to one another in terms of bill adoption. Two years into the free-wheeling independent administration of Álvaro Uribe only 24% of the bills that had been adopted as law were initiated solely by members of the legislature. In other words, the independent president had a relatively high percentage of his bills successfully navigate congressional shoals. His lack of partisan support was apparently more than compensated for by his popularity. If this is the explanation, interbranch relations may be particularly volatile during free-wheeling independent administrations. Independents may be able to use their personal popularity to persuade legislators to back their programs of government, but if they are unpopular, their lack of ties to either traditional party may lead to the stymieing of their legislative agendas.

In sum, candidate type helps predict behavior in office. Adherents appoint cabinet members from their own parties and fare equally to one another in bill adoption with or without a copartisan majority. Insiders appointed relatively more members of the opposition to their cabinets, but we do not have data to determine the impact of this on bill initiation and adoption. Preliminary evidence indicates that independents picked other independents to staff their cabinets and fared very well in bill adoption (when they were popular).

Persistently Impermanent Party Procedures

During the National Front when the two major parties agreed to alternate the presidency, all competition for the office was by definition intra-party. Once the party whose turn it was to occupy the presidency had made its official selection, the identity of the next president was a foregone conclusion. Alternation forced competition out of the general election stage and into the candidate selection stage. The finality of the candidate selection process meant party leaders worked very hard to contain conflict by remaining in control of candidate selection processes. Almost curiously, it is the reintroduction of competition at the general election stage in 1974 that introduces variability into the candidate selection stage. Given that deciding on the nominee was no longer tantamount to selecting the president, the need of party leaders to control the candidate selection process and of disgruntled precandidates to remain a loyal member of one of the major parties to capture the office was diminished.

Internally institutionalized parties have the ability to adopt and maintain candidate selection (and other) processes that would homogenize their members by diminishing the prospects candidates of any other type. Colombian parties have been unable to adopt such rules. The central tension driving the oscillation in internal processes seems to be the breakdown of clientelistic networks due to urbanization combined with the disjuncture between what it take to be elected a member of congress and what it takes to be elected president. When the country was largely rural, clientelistic networks were the unchallenged means of attaining both executive and legislative offices. As demographics changed, apportionment of legislative seats continued to favor relatively less populated areas and to thus promote the continued use of patron-client ties for winning a seat in congress. Another option presented itself for presidential candidates. Party adherents and potential independents could appeal directly to less easily bound urban voters. However, parties have never been able to settle on candidate selection procedures that would

favor these candidates (and their urban supporters) because they are still competing for seats in the disproportionately rural legislative races. Rules for election of congress serve to strengthen traditional, party insiders and to generate pre-candidates, predominantly from the Chamber of Representatives, who want to maintain centralized procedures that favor their career ambitions.

The Conservative Party's ability to resist the pressure to oscillate has increasingly led to weak showings in presidential races. Decline in competitiveness for the presidency may be hurting the party's prospects in the legislative races their internal procedures are designed to cater to. The variation in Liberal Party procedures has meant that they have been the source of several electorally strong candidate types: insider, adherents, and even adherents turned independents. The prospect of party institutionalization in Colombia and the choice of a single set of candidate selection procedures seems low without congressional reapportionment and the further breakdown of old patron-client networks within the Conservative and Liberal parties. Demographics seem to be on the side of reformist party adherents or independents, and the inability of adherents to permanently reform their own parties may signal the increased likelihood of Uribe-like independents.⁴ The prospects of successful governance by independents, even more so than presidents from the major parties, seems dependent on public popularity. They do not have the solid positions at the center of their own party's that insiders have. Unlike adherents, they cannot attempt to shore up their relations with their own parties by disproportionately naming copartisans to their cabinets. When they are popular, legislators of all stripes flock to be associated with their winning ways. When they are unpopular, will legislators of all stripes scatter in multiple directions? If so, the mutability of political parties in Colombia may introduce a new, even higher level of ungovernability within the national government.

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**Appendix:
Summarizing the Independent Process Variable**

The complete specifics of the independent process variable for Colombia, and broken down by party and legal variables are described in this appendix and summarized in the table below.

PARTY VARIABLES	
Selection Process	No established norm, instead a menu: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elite Selection • National Convention • Internal Consultation (closed party caucus) • Closed Quasi-Primary (Factional Success in Congressional Elections) • Poplar Consultation (A national open primary)
Party Institutionalization	Strong (but weakening over time)
Re-Nomination Norm	Illegal for winners (no re-election) Common for losers
Financing	Private-Public Mix (candidate-centric)
Influence of Functional Groups	Low
Importance of Party ID	High (but weakening over time)
LEGAL VARIABLES	
Election System	Two-Round System for President Plurality for Governors
Election Timing and Sequence	Congress: March (every four years) President: May/June (every four years) Governors: October (every three years)
Registration Barriers	Quite Low

Selection Process—No legal requirements exist which dictates the selection process to be employed. Instead, a menu of options has evolved. The Liberals have frequently shifted the process from contest to contest, while the Conservative have been more prone to conventions and elite selection.

Party Institutionalization—Using Mainwaring and Scully’s (1995:5) measures of institutionalization, it is clear that Colombia’s traditional parties should be considered well institutionalized, but as Archer (1995) notes, they have never been especially strong organizationally. And, indeed, this has been increasingly true since the establishment of the new constitution in 1991 made it increasingly easy for new parties to form. Further, the quest to capture the presidency has been one of the remaining glues that hold the institutional structure of

the parties together, and that has been eroding for some time—as exemplified by the Gomez break from the PC in 1990 with the formation of the MSN, not to mention the pluripartisan campaigns of Betancur and Pastrana. The ultimate schism, however, between the presidency and the traditional parties came in 2002 with the election of Alvaro Uribe. While he was once a Liberal, he did adopt his own label and defeated Liberal Horacio Serpa in the election rather handily⁵. Not only did the PL lose the contest, but the PC’s candidate, Juan Camilo Restrepo quit the race before the elections, and did not even appear on the ballot. It will be interesting to observe how the actors align party-wise in 2006, which may be a watershed year for the institutional structures of the two parties.

Still, during the period of 1974-2002 under consideration, it is fair to say that there were established rules of norms of inter-party competition, that the parties had stable roots in the society, that legitimacy was accorded to the party and electoral systems by major political actors, and that party organization mattered (although not as much as many other party systems. As such, the Mainwaring and Scully (1995:5) definition of “institutionalization” of both the major parties, and the party system as a whole, is met in Colombia.

The lingering question, brought on by the PC’s political anemia and the victory of Uribe is simply how much longer the party system will last in its current incarnation.

Re-Nomination Norm—While re-election to consecutive terms was illegal under the 1886 constitution (but not non-consecutive ones), and presidents limited to one term under the 1991 constitution, we do see a pattern in which losers are often given second bite at the apple. In the eight elections during the 1974-2002 period, two Liberals were nominated twice (Lopez Michelsen⁶ and Horacio Serpa) and three Conservatives ran twice (Alvaro Gomez (and he ran a third time as a member of the MSN), Belisario Betancur and Andres Pastrana).

Financing—Campaign finance in Colombia is a mix of public and private. Law 130 of 1994, in Title IV spells out the process. In presidential elections candidates are paid a sum for each valid vote received. As such the campaign finance system is largely in the hands of individual candidates who raise their own funds, and also receive some recompense from the state after the election is complete.

Influences of Functional Groups—The degree to which functional groups in Colombian society affect candidate selection is minimal. More likely the ability of a given candidate to line up support of clientele networks, especially with the more traditionally-oriented candidates, is more the issue than particular groups working to install given candidates. In other words, flow of power is from leader to group, not group to leader. Further, the issue is less specific institutionalized groups than it is regionally-based clientelism.

Party ID Importance—There was a time when partisan identification was the be all, end all of Colombian politics. However, the significance of the traditional parties has been waning in the last decade or so. For example, a 1988 survey found that 52.7% of respondents thought that the quality of the political parties was “bad” with only 15.6% thinking them good, and a 1989 survey found only 15.9% of the respondents had confidence in the parties (Dugas 2000:94). Surveys in 1994 and 1995 found similar confidence levels, 22% and 16% respectively (Pizarro 1996:208).

Of course, both parties have continued to capture the lion's share of the vote, with the notable exception of Uribe in 2002 (although since the early 1990 there has been steady evidence of the willingness of voters to go elsewhere).

Election System—From 1974 to 1991, the system was one of plurality winners. From 1991 to the present, the system has been a two-round absolute majority system. Governors (and, for that matter, mayors) use a plurality system.

Election Timing and Sequence--Since 1978 the Presidential and Congressional elections have been separate, with Congressional elections coming first. Gubernatorial elections are on a three-year cycle, and are held at the end of October.

Registration Barriers—According to Law 130 of 1994, all legally recognized parties have the right to control their labels and symbols, and to name candidates to office. The ability to form a new party, or to get onto the ballot as an independent, is not difficult, requiring the ability to acquire signatures on petitions and the ability to put up a small amount of money to prove financial capacity to run. To put in context the relative ease by which candidates can access the ballot, the National Registry listed, in a document issued on August 22, 2003, seventy-four parties, social movements and candidate groups.

¹ A version of this paper was presented at the 2004 Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, Las Vegas, Nevada, October 7-9, 2004.

² We performed comparisons of proportions of rural votes obtained by the parties with the national proportion of rural votes. All differences are statistically significant at conventional levels.

³ Early presidents, insiders and adherents alike, were "bound" by the 1968 Lleras reform to offer positions in their cabinets to members of the opposition. This agreement undoubtedly plays a part in our finding that insiders named relatively few copartisans to their cabinets. On the other hand, it is hard to know how much credit to give to this agreement and how much weight to put on candidate type. For example, the agreement held under insiders from both parties but broke down the first time an adherent was elected to office.

⁴ If adherents continue to be willing to remain in or rejoin traditional parties when they think they can control their internal procedures, the oscillation described in this analysis may continue without escalation.

⁵ Uribe was a councilman and mayor of Medellin, Senator and Governor of Antioquia, all as a Liberal. Uribe bested Serpa 5,862,655 to 3,514,779 in 2002.

⁶ Lopez Michelsen was also a candidate in 1962, under the Revolutionary Liberal Movement (MRL). When he ran in 1982 he was taking advantage of the fact that under the 1886 constitution persons could serve non-consecutive terms.