Abstract

The decline of clientelism has become a focal point of scholarly works, with the clientelist exchange of public employment – in short: patronage – receiving particular attention. Which political conditions incentivize the professionalization of patronage bureaucracies? Existing studies are marred by dissent. As argued in this paper, this stems in part from a common attempt to explain institutional reform without taking into account differences in the underlying institution – the patronage bureaucracy – to be reformed. Yet, such bureaucracies differ, in particular in the extent to which incumbent Presidents are institutionally empowered to control patronage. As a result, patronage bureaucracies also differ in the electoral utility they provide to incumbents. Based on this insight, a new theory of reform is posited: incumbents face greater reform incentives where institutions deprive Presidents and their allies of patronage control. A comparative study of recent reforms in Paraguay and the Dominican Republic (DR) which draws on 130 high-level interviews finds empirical support for the theory. Professionalization advanced in Paraguay’s quasi-parliamentarian system – yet not the DR’s hyper-presidentialist system – in part as Paraguay’s President is deprived of – yet the DR’s President monopolizes – control over patronage. Future studies would thus do well to consider institutional structures as causes – rather than only consequences – of clientelism and its decline.
INTRODUCTION

With recent studies linking clientelism to negative development outcomes (see, for instance, Singer, 2009), the decline of clientelism and its underlying causes have received increasing attention in scholarly works (see, among many, Stokes, Dunning, Nazarenao, & Brusco, 2013; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012). They tend to understand clientelism as the contingent exchange of targeted benefits by a political power holder in return for a client’s political support (see, for instance, Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, & Nichter, 2010).

Within this literature, a subset of studies has focused on the decline of one particular type of benefit – public employment – in return for political support. These studies typically refer to this specific exchange as patronage, and are, as studies on clientelist decline at-large, motivated principally by the development benefits of declining patronage. Statistical studies link this decline and, its flipside, the professionalization of public employment to, among others, economic growth, lower corruption, lower child mortality and poverty reduction (see, for instance, Cingolani, Thomsson, & de Crombrugghe, 2013; Dahlstroem, Lapuente, & Teorell, 2011; Evans & Rauch, 1999; Henderson, Hulme, Jalilian, & Philips, 2003).

Yet, for many developing countries, the construction of professional public employment regimes – or, in short, professional bureaucracies – has been as relevant for their development as it has been historically elusive. Latin America is no exception. In a 2005 Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) diagnostic, 10 out of 18 bureaucracies were found to be archetypical cases of patronage (Echebarria & Cortazar, 2007). The track record to professionalize such bureaucracies has been anything but stellar. To illustrate, the World Bank (2008) noted that its global $422m lending per year for civil service and administrative reform between 2000 and 2006 had no measurable impact; the prime obstacles to change were found to be political rather than technical in nature.

With this in mind, scholars and practitioners alike have taken a growing interest in the politics of reforms of patronage bureaucracies. To-date, however, scholarly works are characterized by inconsistent findings regarding the explanatory relevance and signs of causal effects of the political conditions hypothesized to incentivize reform. In this paper, I develop and test a new theory of reform which resolves part of these inconsistencies.

The theory addresses a frequent but unwarranted implicit assumption in prior work: an institutional reform – the reform of patronage bureaucracies – may be explained without taking into account differences in the underlying institution – the patronage bureaucracy – to be reformed. Contrary to this assumption, I will argue that patronage bureaucracies differ across cases and that these differences shape incumbent reform incentives. Patronage bureaucracies vary, in particular, in the extent to which Presidents are institutionally empowered to control the determination of the patronage budget, the creation of positions, recruitment, pay and dismissal – and, as such, in the extent to which incumbents and their allies control patronage. Incumbents face two institutional constraints on their patronage control. Legal norms may shift patronage control away from the Presidency towards other institutional actors – and thus potentially towards electoral challengers. Moreover, legal norms and de facto constraints – such as rigid tenure protections for patronage appointees – may shift the private goods benefits
of a patronage bureaucracy in part towards public employees – without professionalizing the bureaucracy.

As a result, patronage bureaucracies differ, ceteris paribus, in the extent to which incumbents may mobilize electoral support based on them – and, consequently, in their electoral utility to incumbents. Based on this insight, I develop a new theory of reform: incumbents face greater incentives to professionalize where institutions deprive Presidents and their allies of patronage control. This holds both when institutions shift private goods benefits to public employees and when institutions shift patronage control to institutions controlled by electoral challengers. Professionalization under limited patronage control enables incumbents, in a context of more limited patronage losses, to enhance public goods provision to the electorate through a more professional bureaucracy and to deprive challengers of their patronage access. I test and find support for this theory and its causal mechanisms via a comparative case study of recent reforms in Paraguay and the Dominican Republic. Beyond contributing to the literature on reforms of patronage bureaucracies, the findings suggest an important lesson for the broader academic debate on clientelism. Institutional structures – including those which deprive the Presidency of patronage control – are shown to act as causes of clientelism and its decline – rather than only as consequences as in most of the literature to-date.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

As noted, this paper equates patronage with what Weingrod (1968, p. 379) deems its “folk meaning:” public sector positions are discretionarily allocated. One modification is made to address an important omission in scholarly works to-date. Exchanges of public employment for political support may extend to not only appointment, but also pay, promotion and (protection from) dismissal of staff. Patronage is thus understood as the discretionary power to recruit, promote, pay and dismiss public personnel. Professionalization in turn is circumscribed, for the purpose of this paper, to replacing patronage with rule-based and merit-oriented recruitment and promotion decisions (in short: merit). Contrary to other traditional characteristics of professional bureaucracies – such as competitive salaries and tenure protections from arbitrary dismissals (see, for instance, Ingraham & Rosenbloom, 1994) – merit is statistically associated with the aforementioned development benefits (Dahlstroem, et al., 2011). Understanding its political determinants is thus of particular relevance.

Note that professionalization is the exception; patronage tends to be resilient. This is in part due to what Geddes (1996, p. 18) terms the “politician’s dilemma.” Incumbents may have a longer-run interest in public goods provision via professionalization; yet, this is superseded by an interest in immediate political survival. A patronage bureaucracy can facilitate political survival by providing incumbents with jobs, promotions and pay rises to exchange for political support. Patronage resilience also stems from the flexibility of patronage. It may be employed to not only construct clientelist machines and extract state resources but also bring in technocrats to modernize the state (Grindle, 2012). As such, patronage is an instrument of power adaptable to diverse incumbent needs. Not surprisingly, the professionalization of patronage bureaucracies is “among the most difficult of all development reform situations” (Shepherd, 2003, p. 2). At the same time, today’s developed economies have professionalized
their bureaucracies, as have more recently a range of developing countries. Which political conditions incentivize such professionalization?

This section shall review the most prominent hypotheses seeking to respond to this conundrum with a view to: underscoring common limitations in existing works which the theory presented in this paper addresses; and identifying rival explanations to be taken into account in empirical tests, including the comparative case study in this paper. For heuristic\(^1\) purposes, explanatory variables are categorized into demand and supply-side factors (table 1).

**Table 1. Prominent Explanatory Factors of Bureaucratic Professionalization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supply-Side Factors</th>
<th>Demand-Side Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electoral competition</td>
<td>Civic reform coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Organization</td>
<td>Voters’ public goods demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal-agent problems in patronage networks</td>
<td>Donor demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of party affiliates for public sector appointments</td>
<td>Reform demand from public employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author’s own elaboration

Most demand side studies focus on societal, donor or public employee demand for reform. Societal demand may stem from reform coalitions mobilizing opposition to allegedly corrupt patronage systems (see, for instance, Van Riper, 1958); or, due to collective action challenges in demanding reform (see, for instance, Heredia & Schneider, 2003), from shifts in the mix of public and private goods which citizens demand from incumbents. To illustrate, rising per capita income and education levels may bring about reform by, at the same time, increasing citizen preferences – and thus political payoffs – for public goods provision (facilitated by professional bureaucracies) while reducing citizen preferences for private goods provision – and thus patronage (Joseph D. Reid & Kurth, 1988; 1989).

Inside the state, studies focus on public employees as demand sources, usually based on the assumption that public servants prefer to enhance their autonomy from political masters (see, for instance, Hammond, 2003). Other studies look to donors and international financial institutions as sources of demand: foreign assistance is hypothesized to facilitate reform through conditionalities and policy transfers (Laking & Norman, 2007).

More prominent in the literature are supply side variables, including principal-agent problems in patronage networks, the availability of party appointees for public sector positions, the organization of parties and electoral competition. According to Johnson and Libecap (1994), principal-agent problems in patronage networks may drive reform. A growing public workforce complicates control of clients through principal-agent problems as patronage workers become further removed from presidents and other top patrons. Geddes (1996) in turn points to the inexistence of potential appointees as a driver of reform. In her account, presidents rising to power independent of a party or despite opposition of established party leaders pursue reform in part as they lack pools of potential party affiliates to appoint to public sector positions. According to Cruz and Keefer (2010), party organizations which enable collective action by politicians facilitate reform. Individual patron-politicians with small constituencies

\(^{1}\) As these variables are likely to causally interact with each other, this is but a descriptive categorization.
command neither incentives nor ability to make good on broad public goods promises – whose delivery would be facilitated by a professional bureaucracy.

Lastly, scholarly works have posited an array of competing hypotheses regarding the role of electoral competition (see, among others, Besley & Persson, 2010; Folke, Hirano, & Snyder, 2011; Geddes, 1996; Grzymańska-Busse, 2003; Lapuente & Nistotskaya, 2009; Meyer-Sahling & Veen, 2012; Mueller, 2009; O'Dwyer, 2004). A range of studies argues that reform occurs when incumbents expect to lose an election, albeit with competing causal mechanisms, including: preserving the electoral chances of future friendly challengers against a hostile future incumbent (Folke, et al., 2011); locking in the incumbent’s political agenda by preventing future incumbents from replacing politically-loyal bureaucrats (Mueller, 2009); and securing continued tenure of incumbent clients (Skowronek, 1982). Other studies, however, find the opposite effect. Lapuente and Nistotskaya (2009), for instance, posit that enhanced electoral competition prevents reform as it shortens the time horizons of incumbents and, consequently, diminishes their expectation to reap the long-term state capacity benefits of professionalization.

In sum, scholarly works have put forward a range of hypotheses to account for professionalization, yet lack consistency in the explanatory relevance attributed to distinct variables; the causal mechanisms linking these variables to professionalization; and, at times, the sign of their causal effect. Despite their diversity, existing studies share an important commonality. They explain an institutional reform – the reform of patronage bureaucracies – without taking into account cross-case differences in the institution – the patronage bureaucracy – to be reformed. This lack of consideration of the explanatory power of institutional variation mirrors an omission in the study of clientelism at-large. In the literature to-date, as Kitschelt (2011, p. 7) puts it, “clientelism typically figures as a correlate or a cause … [of institutional arrangements], but not as a consequence”. The only major exception have been studies of the effect of electoral institutions on clientelism; yet, these have, for the most part, identified few causal effects (see, for instance, Ames, 1995; Gingerich, 2013).

Note, though, that, beyond in electoral institutions, clientelist electoral systems in general and patronage bureaucracies in particular may vary with regard to institutional structures which more immediately shape incumbent reform incentives. In particular, such bureaucracies may differ in the extent to which Presidents are institutionally empowered to control patronage. Where institutions shift patronage benefits to electoral challengers or public employees – rather than incumbents and their allies – the electoral utility of patronage bureaucracies to incumbents is reduced – and their incentives to replace it with a professional bureaucracy enhanced. The next section develops this intuition into a more full-fledged theory and details how it resolves several of the inconsistencies characteristic of prior scholarly works.

**A THEORY ON PATRONAGE CONTROL AND BUREAUCRATIC PROFESSIONALIZATION**

Theory construction is undertaken from the viewpoint of an incumbent President in a democratic political system who faces an electoral challenger. The incumbent is assumed to seek continuation in office and thus re-election for himself and/or his party – as a prerequisite to achieve other objectives. To mobilize electoral support, an incumbent may utilize the state
to provide public and private goods to voters. Public goods are, for the purpose of this paper, understood as non-excludable benefits to voters; in contrast, private goods are particularistic benefits restricted and targeted to specific constituents. An incumbent will face a given demand for private and public goods respectively from voters, principally based on their level of socio-economic development. As an electoral utility-maximizer in a competitive electoral environment, an incumbent will respond to this demand by supplying, with the state resources available, the mix of private and public goods which maximizes electoral returns.

Consistent with the assumptions of most prior work, professional and non-professional (patronage) bureaucracies are assumed to facilitate the provision of distinct mixes of private and public goods. As suggested by statistical evidence (Dahlstroem, et al., 2011; Rauch & Evans, 2000), professional bureaucracies count on more bureaucratic capacity. As a result, public service delivery is strengthened, and the amount of public goods states provide to voters is enhanced.\(^2\) In contrast, non-professional bureaucracies, in which personnel decisions are based on patronage guided by political or personal considerations, enhance the private goods incumbents may supply to voters. Note that, in patronage bureaucracies, the jobs, promotions and pay rises themselves constitute the private goods supplied by incumbents to court electoral support. In contrast, in professional bureaucracies, not the personnel decisions themselves but rather the enhanced public services provided by more able and performance-oriented bureaucrats constitute the public goods incumbents may supply to mobilize electoral support.

Facing a given voter demand for public and private goods, incumbents will seek the level of bureaucratic professionalization which provides the electorally-optimal mix of public and private goods. As a result, where voter demands prioritize private goods, patronage will be the rule of the game in the bureaucracy. Professionalization then becomes incentive compatible when exogenous factors – such as socio-economic progress enhancing voters’ public goods demands – increase the electoral utility of public goods provision. It may, however, also be incentivized as a result of shifts in the amounts of private goods which incumbents and their electoral challengers are respectively able to supply through a patronage bureaucracy – an insight neglected in prior studies. As shall be argued in this paper, the amount of private goods incumbents and challengers may provide through a patronage bureaucracy will depend on the extent to which each of them controls patronage.\(^3\) Limited incumbent patronage control reduces the amount of private goods incumbents may supply, hence reduces the electoral utility of patronage bureaucracies to them, and may incentivize professionalization.

As noted, patronage is understood as the discretionary power to recruit, promote, pay and dismiss public personnel. In their control of these personnel decisions in patronage bureaucracies, incumbents face two institutional constraints (table 2). First, legal norms may

\(^2\) Note that, as a corollary, the time lag between bureaucratic professionalization and enhanced public goods provision is – contrary to the “politician’s dilemma” hypothesis (Geddes 1996) – assumed to be negligible. This is as bureaucratic professionalization – yet not other, technically more challenging state building measures such as public financial management modernization – may translate into enhanced public goods provision relatively rapidly when, for instance, predominant criteria for staffing new presidential programs shift from personal/political to professional. Case evidence lends credence to this assumption (see Schuster 2013).

\(^3\) Note that to control patronage, an incumbent need not be directly involved in each personnel decision. Rather, control is understood as the ability to ensure that those undertaking personnel decisions face incentives to orient these decisions towards enhancing the incumbent’s electoral support.
grant control over a subset of personnel decisions – and thus patronage – to institutional actors other than the President. When incumbent allies are not in control of these institutions, such legal norms thus shift patronage control to electoral challengers. Second, legal norms and *de facto* constraints may shift the private goods benefits of a patronage bureaucracy in part towards public employees – without obligating them to provide reciprocal political support to the incumbent. Note that both of these constraints deprive incumbents of patronage control while neither professionalizes the bureaucracy. Also note that the first constraint – shifting the allocation of patronage control away from the Presidency – only deprives incumbents of patronage control when challengers rather than allies control the institutions empowered to control patronage. In contrast, the second institutional constraint – shifting private goods benefits to public employees – will reduce incumbent patronage control irrespective of challenger control of non-executive institutions.

The ability of incumbents to control that recruitment favours the appointees of their choice may be institutionally constrained in two ways. First, authority over the definition of the personnel budget and the creation of new positions – and thus the determination of the total number of recruitments available – may be institutionally assigned to the legislature rather than the executive. In such institutional contexts, Presidents without parliamentary majorities will be deprived of an important part of patronage control. To illustrate, according to data from the Open Budget Survey for 97 countries, roughly two-thirds of countries count on budgets where all expenditures are presented by economic classification and, concomitantly, legislators are empowered to impinge upon personnel expenditures in budget approval (International Budget Partnership, 2013). Second, control over recruitment outside and, at times, inside the executive may be vested in non-executive institutions. Appointments to, for instance, oversight institutions, the diplomatic corps and public enterprises may be under the sway of the legislature. Moreover, the share of recruitment outside the executive may vary. To illustrate, according to the Political Constraints Index, roughly 8% of 183 countries in the Index counted on independent sub-federal units imposing substantive constraints on national spending, and over 30% of countries counted on independent judiciaries with, concomitantly, proper hiring authority (Henisz, 2010).

Similarly, institutions may constrain the incumbent’s ability to adjust wage and non-wage remuneration and promote personnel. First, power over these personnel decisions may be (partially) vested in the legislature – and thus, potentially, in electoral challengers. In five of fifteen surveyed Latin American countries, for instance, legislatures may approve pay increases beyond executive proposals; in two of the countries, legislatures are empowered to create individual positions and assign individual pay (Manning & Lafuente, 2010). Second, institutional constraints may shift private goods benefits to bureaucrats. Incumbent discretion about pay setting and promotions may be constrained *de jure* by regulations regarding, for instance, automatic salary indexation as well as *de facto* by veto actors, in particular unions, who may press for collective salary increases which limit the incumbent budget for

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4 Based on counting a dummy variable which assumes the value of one where all expenditures are presented by economic classification and the value of zero where none or only some expenditures are presented by economic classification according to the corresponding open budget survey question. Cross-country data on legislative faculties to create positions is regrettably unavailable.
discretionary pay increases. Such constraints vary across cases. To illustrate rough variation in public sector unionization, 47 of the world’s countries have signed the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 151 which provides public employees with legal guarantees to organize and bargain collectively (ILO, 2013).

Finally, institutions may constrain the discretion of incumbents to dismiss personal. To maximize patronage, incumbents would choose to dismiss appointees of preceding incumbents and replace them with appointees of their own – unless de facto (e.g. mobilized labor unions) or de jure veto actors (i.e. judicial enforcement of tenure laws and legislative opposition to undo them) preclude dismissals. As with the previously mentioned institutional constraints, tenure protections across countries differ. According to an expert survey on the structure of public administration in 106 countries, bureaucrats in roughly 73% of sampled countries enjoyed job stability (Dahlström, Lapuente, & Teorell, 2011).

Table 2. Institutional Constraints on Incumbent Patronage Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraints Allocating Patronage Control to Institutions other than Presidency</th>
<th>Constraints Shifting Private Goods Benefits to Public Employees</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determination of patronage budget</strong></td>
<td>▪ Legal norms allocate control over determination of personnel budget and/or control over the creation of public sector positions to legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment</strong></td>
<td>▪ Legal norms allocate control over recruitment in executive and/or non-executive institutions to legislature or other non-executive institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remuneration</strong></td>
<td>▪ Legal norms allocate control over individual or group pay setting to legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ De jure constraints such as automatic pay rises based on inflation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ De facto constraints such as collective bargaining for pay rises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion</strong></td>
<td>▪ Legal norms allocate control over promotions to higher ranks to legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ De jure constraints such as automatic promotions based on seniority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dismissal</strong></td>
<td>▪ De jure (courts) or de facto (union) tenure protections for employees appointed by previous incumbents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author’s own elaboration

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5 Note that, strictly speaking, this refers to salary increases in recalcitrant response to union pressure rather than discretionary salary increases granted by an incumbent to collective groups of employees – who may be organized in unions to voice concomitant demands – in exchange for their political support.

6 Strictly speaking, an incumbent’s patronage budget is also a function of the length of time beyond the incumbent’s term during which employees retain the wage and non-wage premiums allocated to them by the incumbent. For analytic simplicity, control over tenuring is not considered; the overall argument is not affected by this omission.

7 Based on counting a dummy variable which assumes the value of one where average expert responses for a country are above the mean of the scale (and zero otherwise) for the survey question “Once one is recruited as a public sector employee, one stays a public sector employee for the rest of one’s career?”

8 For analytic simplicity, institutional patronage constraints are stylized as constraints on several lesser dimensions of patronage – such as discretion over sanctions or horizontal transfers to more or less favorable positions – are excluded. The overall theoretical argument is not affected by this exclusion.
In sum, patronage bureaucracies vary in the extent to which incumbents, challengers and bureaucrats are institutionally empowered to control or derive the private goods benefits of patronage bureaucracies. Where institutions deprive incumbents and their allies of patronage control, the amount of private goods incumbents may supply to court political support is reduced; and the amount of private goods challengers may supply and/or bureaucrats receive without reciprocal political support is enhanced. As a result, the extent to which incumbents may mobilize electoral support based on the patronage bureaucracy is reduced – and, consequently, its electoral utility to incumbents. Deriving less electoral utility from the patronage bureaucracy, incumbents face greater incentives to professionalize it – both in case institutions shift patronage benefits to challengers and in case these benefits accrue to public employees.

Most obviously, where institutional constraints shift control over patronage from incumbents to challengers – such as opposition party leaders – the incumbent faces incentives to professionalize these personnel decisions when able to do so. Professionalization of personnel decisions under the control of challengers reduces the challenger’s private goods provision, while enhancing public goods provision which voters frequently associate with the incumbent (see, for instance, Mayhew, 2004). Less axiomatic, limited patronage control may also incentivize incumbents to professionalize parts of a patronage bureaucracy under their own control. Where a challenger controls most patronage (as well as private goods provision at large) and incumbents are unable to professionalize or take control of these personnel decisions, the challenger’s private goods provision exceeds, ceteris paribus, the incumbent’s private goods provision. As a result, the challenger will be able to consistently outspend an incumbent when the latter seeks to mobilize votes based on patronage. Unable to compete for votes based on patronage, incumbents may seek professionalization to shift towards public goods-based electoral mobilization. As citizens tend to identify broad public goods disproportionately with incumbents (see, for instance, Mayhew, 2004), challengers tend to not be able to outspend incumbents on public goods.9

Institutional constraints on patronage control which shift private goods benefits to public employees may similarly incentivize professionalization, albeit through different causal mechanisms. Consider the case of job stability protections (tenure).10 When incumbents are unable to reverse tenure – and thus dismiss and replace appointees of predecessors with clients of their own – their private goods provision is greatly reduced. Yet, with professionalization, they may expect to elicit performance from not only new recruits but also a fraction11 of bureaucrats inherited from preceding incumbents. Under tenure, incumbents may thus gain public goods from new recruits and a fraction of inherited bureaucrats, versus private goods only from new recruits.12 The tenure-induced inward shift in the incumbent’s private goods

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9 Having said that, this is of course not to say that the electoral utility of the incumbent’s public goods-based vote mobilization exceeds that of the challenger’s private goods-based vote mobilization – only that incumbents may derive some electoral utility from public goods provision where challengers consistently trump their efforts to mobilize votes based on private goods.

10 With a similar rationale, de jure or de facto constraints on pay may incentivize professionalization.

11 Even when patronage is the rule of the game, a fraction of public employees will count on the requisite qualifications to perform. It is performance from this fraction which may be incentivized with professionalization.

12 The professionalization of pay and promotion to elicit performance from appointees of predecessors is unlikely to be credible to these bureaucrats unless recruitment is similarly professionalized. Only absent new patronage-
provision is thus more pronounced than the tenure-induced inward shift in incumbent public goods provision should he choose to professionalize – and, as a result, public goods provision via professionalization becomes electorally more incentive compatible.

In sum, limitations on incumbent patronage control reduce the electoral utility of patronage bureaucracies to incumbents and incentivize, through the causal mechanisms laid out, professionalization. The scope conditions of these mechanisms are characterized by a common trade-off. Professionalization is utility-maximizing where electoral utility gains due to increases in incumbent public goods provision and decreases in challenger private goods provision outweigh electoral utility losses triggered by decreases in incumbent private goods provision with reform. As a corollary, professionalization will focus, first, on positions with higher incumbent public goods gains, lower incumbent private goods losses and higher challenger private goods losses.

As a caveat, note that the theory presumes that incumbents are able to professionalize when facing incentives to do so. As noted, incumbents differ in their ability to professionalize personnel decisions which are controlled by challengers. At the same time, incumbents tend to be legally empowered to professionalize those personnel decisions under their own control without authorization from other branches. All Latin American countries, for instance, count on civil service legislation which is, at a minimum, permissive of merit-based recruitment and promotion (see Grindle, 2010). In other words, incumbents share a (legal) ability to introduce professionalization, yet may differ in their ability to expand professionalization across all of the state when facing incentives to do so.

Prior to the empirical test of the theory, a clarification of its linkage with and relevance for the existing literature is due. Beyond adding an important explanatory variable for bureaucratic reform, the patronage control theory may, in particular, help resolve the explanatory role of electoral competition – a variable for which prior studies had identified competing signs of causal effects. Electoral competition is likely to incentivize reform where institutional constraints deprive incumbents of patronage control. Where incumbents monopolize control over patronage, however, electoral competition thwarts reform by incentivizing incumbents to utilize this disproportionate control to their advantage in the mobilization of votes. Incumbent patronage control will also affect the reform choices of the increasing number of political outsiders coming to power in Latin America. Whether political outsiders choose to professionalize or politicize will in part be shaped by their ability to claim the spoils of the state. Where institutional constraints deprive outsiders coming to the Presidency of control over patronage, they are more likely to seek reform.

With this in mind, the methodological approach for theory testing is outlined next.

**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION**

For the purpose of an initial test of the theory, this paper adopts a comparative case study rather than a quantitative approach. Reliable large-n data on institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control and several of the explanatory factors put forward in the literature is not available. Such data limitations could be remedied through in-depth field research for a small-based recruits will appointees of prior incumbents perceive a level playing field for merit-based pay rises and promotions.
n study, yet not for a large-n sample. Moreover, the comparative case study allows for a testing of the theorized causal mechanisms rather than only causal effects.

Cases are selected within a universe of countries headed by elected Presidents whose bureaucracies feature patronage as the rule of the game. Within this universe, case selection is purposive and follows a ‘most similar system’ research design (Lijphart, 1975, p. 164), maximizing the variance of the independent variable (institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control) and minimizing the variance of the controls – rival explanatory factors put forward in the literature. For practical purposes, controls in the case selection are circumscribed to variables which may be proxied through readily available indicators, and the selection of cases is limited to Latin America. As detailed in table 3 and annex 1, the Dominican Republic (DR) under President Fernandez (2004-12) and Paraguay under President Lugo (2008-12) are selected based on these criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>Paraguay</th>
<th>Dominican Republic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rule of the game for personnel decisions</strong> (proxied by score in Longo 2005)</td>
<td>Patronage (Merit in bureaucracy in 2005: 16/100 (Paraguay) and 19/100 (DR))</td>
<td>Presidential democracy</td>
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<td><strong>Political system</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Societal demand for public/private goods</strong> (proxied by Human Development Index (HDI))</td>
<td>Human Development: Medium (HDI 2012: 0.67 (Paraguay) and 0.70 (DR))</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Donor support</strong></td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy blueprint</strong></td>
<td>Inter-American Civil Service Charter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growth of bureaucracy</strong> (average real total government consumption expenditure growth ahead of reform in 2004-2008)</td>
<td>High (5.4% (Paraguay) and 9.7% (DR) annual growth)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Political competition</strong></td>
<td>Competitive two-party system (Two largest parties claimed 31.1% and 26.7% (Paraguay); and 41.6% and 38.4% (DR) of votes in 2008 / 2010 congressional elections)</td>
<td>Minority representation (Incumbent party holds 1 of 45 (Paraguay) and 1 of 30 (DR) Senate seats, and 1 of 80 (Paraguay) and 36 of 126 (DR) Chamber of Deputies seats)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Incumbent legislative representation</strong> (when coming to power)</td>
<td>Weak (small and loosely organized movement)</td>
<td>Medium (disciplined but relatively small party)</td>
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<td><strong>Organization of party of President</strong> (when coming to power)</td>
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<td><strong>Political time horizon</strong> (proxied by age of President’s party in 2008)</td>
<td>Short (Age of President’s party: 1 year)</td>
<td>Long (Age of President’s party: 35 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per Capita Incomes</strong> (2000 US-$ in 2008)</td>
<td>Lower Middle $1,519</td>
<td>Middle $3,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional constraints on Presidential patronage control</strong></td>
<td>Strong (Quasi-parliamentary system with strong de facto and de jure constraints)</td>
<td>Weak (Hyper-presidentalist system with weak de facto and de jure constraints)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Both Paraguay and the DR are Presidential democracies at medium levels of human development (UNDP, 2012). Ceteris paribus, voters’ preferences for public and private goods were thus likely to be comparable. In competitive two-party systems, Presidents faced electoral

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13 For the DR, data on legislative representation is from 2004, i.e. the beginning of Fernandez’ second term and, as such, the period which coincides with the reform episode under study. When initially elected in 1996, Fernandez similarly counted on legislative minority representation: the PLD held 1 of 30 Senate seats and 13 of 120 Chamber of Deputies seats (Benito Sanchez, 2010b).
incentives to respond to voters’ demands for them – or their party – to remain in power. Historically, incumbents had opted for patronage bureaucracies to respond to such demands: merit scores ranged between 16 and 19 (out of 100) in a 2005 IDB diagnostic – among the lowest in the region (Longo, 2005). Against this backdrop, reforms in both countries saw support from multiple donors – including the IDB – and followed the same policy blueprint: the Carta Iberoamericana de la Función Pública (Latin American Civil Service Charter). They did so in the context of rapid public sector growth which increased, simultaneously, the budget available for patronage and potential principal-agent problems in ever-increasing patron-client networks. Moreover, both Lugo and Fernandez came to power with legislative minority representation, with their parties in control of, for instance, 1 of 45 (Lugo) and 1 of 30 (Fernandez) Senate seats. As a result, both Presidents could, prima facie, be expected to face Geddes’ (1996, p. 18) “politician’s dilemma:” the need to dispense patronage to secure governing majorities. Similarly, with challengers in control of Congress, institutional constraints allocating patronage control to the legislature would affect the patronage control of incumbents and their allies.

Homogeneity in the properties of most controls is accompanied by variance in remnant controls as well as the independent variable of interest. Variance in remnant controls works against the theoretical prediction, with prior studies tilting incentives towards reform in the DR. President Fernandez led an initially small (compared to challengers) but highly disciplined party with a long political time horizon. In marked contrast, Lugo did, metaphorically speaking, “not have a party [but rather] a conglomerate of independent people” which had been brought together ahead of the 2008 elections (Interview Director Finance 2012). Moreover, the DR features per capita incomes more than twice those of Paraguay – enhancing the likelihood of societal reform demand.

In contrast, the patronage control theory would predict reform in Paraguay. While, as noted, both Presidents only counted on minority legislative representation when coming to power, they faced dissimilar institutional constraints on their patronage control. In Paraguay’s quasi-parliamentarian system, Lugo commanded control of but a minor share of patronage as institutional constraints on Presidential patronage control shifted sway over part of patronage to the legislature and part of the private goods benefits to public employees. In contrast, in the DR’s hyper-presidentialist system, Fernandez monopolized control over patronage with few institutional constraints. With the patronage control theory predicting reform in Paraguay, yet several other variables tilting incentives towards reform in the DR, the comparative case study serves a particularly robust test.

Data collection in each case sought triangulation. It comprised reviews of the existing literature and of legal regulations on the civil service and the allocation of patronage control; data requests to civil service agencies and human resource offices of several institutions not covered by the countries’ civil service legislation; and 130 semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Protocols of these interviews captured, first, de facto constraints on incumbent patronage control, reform processes, content choices and political rationales for reform; and second – via a partially coded, semi-structured expert survey – quantifications of patronage and professionalization.

Both official data requests and the expert survey sought to measure professionalization as conceptualized in this paper, i.e. as the replacement of patronage with meritocratic
recruitment and promotion. The rationale for triangulating official and expert survey data is three-fold: not all state institutions register the share of vacancies filled through formally competitive selection processes; formally competitive personnel selections may not translate into meritocratic personnel selections. Patronage still reigns, for instance, when terms of reference are tailored to specific qualifications, exam materials leaked or interview evaluations skewed. By inquiring about the share of vacancies filled through substantively rather than only formally competitive personnel selections, the expert survey remedied this shortcoming. Finally, professionalization may proceed informally. Reformers may discretionarily recruit and promote technocrats to modernize the state, rather than party affiliates or family members (Grindle, 2012) – and thus rely on what this paper terms meritocratic patronage.14

Adapting a method developed by Kopecky, Mair et al. (2012), the expert survey (n = 62) was conducted at the level of five policy areas: finance, education, health, economic development and justice. Interviews focused on fifteen typical state institutions within these policy areas which accounted for 74% (Paraguay) and 51% (DR) of total public employment (see annex B). Expert estimates should be understood as rough approximations. As a phenomenon of covert politics, patronage may not be measured precisely. Moreover, expert estimates may suffer from poor recall, judgment error or strategic bias. To counteract biases, respondent sampling purposively sought a variety of respondent types. These included former or current (vice-)ministers (17% of the total of 130 interviews), directors and advisors in the bureaucracy (32%), NGO analysts (18%), donor officials (8%), academics (6%), union leaders (5%), journalists (5%), legislators (4%) and judges (4%). For each policy area, experts with distinct backgrounds were surveyed. Despite this diversity in backgrounds, estimates across respondents varied little. To illustrate, the standard deviation of estimates of the share of vacancies filled through substantively competitive selections stood at 0.06 (DR) and 0.09 (Paraguay), adding confidence in estimate validity.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS AND BUREAUCRATIC PROFESSIONALIZATION IN PARAGUAY AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In their objectives, reforms to professionalize bureaucracies in Paraguay under President Lugo (2008-12) and the DR under President Fernandez (2004-12) were remarkably similar (see Schuster, 2013; Schuster, 2014 for detailed accounts of the two reform processes). Common objectives included reforms of civil service and public wage policy legislation; the development of a public personnel policy based on the same blueprint, the 2003 Latin American Civil Service Charter; the implementation of the new personnel policy, including via merit-based recruitment and promotion processes as well as tenure protections from dismissals; the development of a personnel information system; and the institutional strengthening of the civil service agency. Reformers in the DR sought, furthermore, the inclusion of merit and tenure principles in a new Constitution.

Homogeneity in reform objectives was paralleled by heterogeneity in reform outcomes. In laws and policies, the DR was characterized by a “normative revolution” (Interview Director Civil Service 2013). A 2008 public service law and a 2013 public salary law saw approval;

14 As a caveat, discretionary staff selections prioritizing professional qualifications are an imperfect substitute for transparent and competitive personnel selections to ensure meritocracy (see Schuster 2013).
moreover, a 2010 constitutional reform enshrined merit and tenure protections. At the same time, several presidential decrees for a comprehensive public personnel policy were passed, including for a new personnel information system. In contrast, legal reforms in Paraguay stalled. Neither a reform of the public service law, nor a new public wage policy law, nor presidential decrees to regulate a newly-developed personnel policy or implement a personnel information system saw approval.

In short, reforms were characterized by normative progress in the DR, yet normative standstill in Paraguay. This pattern is reversed, however, when examining substantive implementation. Implementation in the DR did bring about several important formal transformations. To name a few: the entity in charge – now the Ministry of Public Administration – was elevated to the ministerial level; a total of 259,138 performance evaluations were conducted between 2005 and 2012 (Ministerio de Administración Pública, 2013b); 59,300 public servants have been incorporated in a career from 1995 to 2012 (Ministerio de Administración Pública, 2013d); a new System for the Administration of Public Servants (SASP) registers personnel data for roughly 220,000 central government public servants (Ministerio de Administración Pública, 2013c); and Associations of Public Servants were founded in 54 state institutions (Interview Director Civil Service 2013).

Available evidence suggests, however, that these formal transformations did not substantively alter public personnel practices. To illustrate, 96.4% of performance evaluations resulted in good to excellent ratings despite weak overall public sector performance (Ministerio de Administración Pública, 2013b); public employees were, according to interview data, frequently unaware of the existence of the Association of Public Servants in their institution; career incorporations granted legal job stability protections to career civil servants in a context of weak legal enforcement; and the number of competitive personnel selections remained marginal, reaching 349 in 2012 (Ministerio de Administración Pública, 2013a).

In contrast, competitive selections were expanded to a total of 24,235 in Paraguay in 2008-2012 (Schuster, 2013). Reformers worked within existing legislation – the 2000 public service law – which enabled the civil service agency to accompany meritocratic personnel practices even while not empowering it to sanction non-compliance. The next sub-section will detail how these differential reform trajectories impinged upon bureaucratic professionalization.

Measuring Bureaucratic Professionalization in Paraguay and the Dominican Republic
As aforementioned, bureaucratic professionalization is measured in three steps. To begin with, formally competitive selections are traced across time and institutions. Then, this data is triangulated with expert estimates of, first, the share of substantively competitive selections and, second, the selection criteria prioritized in discretionary personnel selections.

As illustrated in figure 1, formally competitive selections supervised by Paraguay’s civil service agency – the Secretaría de la Función Pública (SFP) – rose from a cumulative total of 7 ahead of 2008 to between 2,321 and 11,173 per year in 2008-12, with a total of 76,885 unique applicants. Limited15 available data (2008-2011) suggests that these selections filled roughly 26% of all vacancies and focused overwhelmingly on technical (81%) rather than

15 Note that these figures are rough ballpark estimates (see Schuster 2013 for detail on data limitations).
service or managerial positions (Secretaría de la Función Pública, 2011a, 2013a, 2013b). While 50 of 113 institutions carried out competitive selections, six of them accounted for roughly 95% of competitive selections (Secretaría de la Función Pública, 2012). In other words, professionalization advanced in Paraguay, albeit focused on technical-level positions in a minority of vacancies and institutions.

In contrast, in the DR, the share of vacancies filled through formally competitive selections accompanied by the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP) remained minimal during the Fernandez Presidency. By 2012, 65 state institutions undertook such selections (Ministerio de Administración Pública, 2013a). Yet, the number of vacancies filled competitively reached an annual maximum of 475\(^{16}\) per year in 2008 (figure 1) – a minor increase from the 406 competitive selections in the last year of the preceding Mejía Administration (Ministerio de Administración Pública, 2013a; Participación Ciudadana, 2007). Over 90% of these selections were restricted to internal candidates. 4,890 unique candidates applied for these positions (2004-12) which, cumulatively, represented less than 1.2% of vacancies\(^{17}\) (2008-12).

**Figure 1. Advertised vacancies filled through formally competitive selection procedures (supervised by the SFP and the MAP)**

![Graph showing advertised vacancies filled through formally competitive selection procedures in Paraguay and the Dominican Republic.](image)

Source: author’s own elaboration, based on data provided by MAP (2013a) and SFP (2013a)

In sum then, formal professionalization advanced in technical-level positions in a minority of state institutions in Paraguay under Lugo – yet not the DR under Fernandez. Expert estimates of the share of substantively competitive personnel selections confirm this variation (figure 2). In the DR, the minor increase under Fernandez in personnel selections perceived as

\(^{16}\) As a caveat, the total number of competitive personnel selections is higher. In both Paraguay and the DR, a share of autonomous institutions and institutions with non-administrative careers undertake public examinations without SFP or MAP supervision. To illustrate with the case of the DR, the Ministry of Education recruited 21,223 teachers competitively between 2007 and 2011, or 47.4% of all teacher vacancies (data provided by the Ministry of Education); the Supreme Court recruited 248 judges between 2002 and 2011 based on competitive processes, or 100% of all vacancies for judges (data provided by the Supreme Court); and the General Directorate for Internal Taxation (DGII) recruited 1,223 technical and administrative staff based on public competitive processes between 2006 and 2012 (data provided by the DGII). As discussed below, however, these selections were, in particular in the DR, substantively competitive in only few institutions according to expert estimates.

\(^{17}\) Competitive selections represented 1.2% of public workforce growth; the number of vacancies is unavailable. Workforce growth overestimates the share of vacancies filled competitively as it does not account for vacancies arising from substitutions of existing personnel.
substantively competitive is not statistically significant. In contrast, expert estimates yield a statistically significant increase in substantively competitive selections under Lugo (at the 99% level).

**Figure 2. Expert estimates (n=62): share of vacancies filled with advertised and substantively competitive selection procedures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominican Republic</th>
<th>Paraguay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mejia</td>
<td>Fernandez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author’s expert survey

In absolute terms, the increase in the share of vacancies filled through *substantively* competitive selections in Paraguay (reaching 15%) is smaller than the aforementioned share of *formally* competitive selections (26%). This is not surprising. In part, it may stem from imperfect overlap in the sample of institutions and, potentially, judgment error or bias on the part of experts. Perhaps more important, it also reflects perceptions of vulnerabilities in a subset of formal selection processes in a country with a civil service agency without prior experience in assisting and supervising meritocratic personnel selections. The majority of formally competitive personnel selections were, however, perceived as substantively competitive.

Expert survey results also confirm that professionalization focused on a minority of institutions in Paraguay. As illustrated in figure 3, most progress was made in the Ministry of Health and, to a lesser extent, the Ministries of Education and Agriculture.

**Figure 3. Expert estimates: substantively competitive selections per institution (% of vacancies)**
The paradigm shift from patronage to merit in the Ministry of Health stemmed from a ministerial instruction to rely on competitive selections except when contingencies such as epidemics required immediate recruitment (Interview Minister Health 2012). Several smaller social service delivery institutions outside the scope of the survey mirrored this shift: virtually all selections in the Secretary of Children, for instance, relied on formally competitive procedures, as did 30% of selections in the Secretary of Social Action (Secretaría de la Función Pública, 2013a). Progress in Education stemmed from perceived improvements in competitive teacher recruitment (Interview Vice-Minister Education 2012); and, in Agriculture, from competitive selections for the staffing of a ‘family agriculture’ Presidential flagship program (Interview Vice-Minister Agriculture 2012). In short then, professionalization was focused on social service delivery.

As illustrated in figure 4, this was paralleled by professionalization through meritocratic patronage in Paraguay, yet not the DR. In discretionary (non-competitive) personnel selections, professional qualifications gained and party affiliation lost in relevance among selection criteria in Paraguay (statistically significant at the 99%-level). In contrast, professional qualifications did not see a statistically significant increase among personnel selection criteria in the DR. In both cases, however, professional qualifications remained, on average, tertiary criteria. Professional qualifications did not emerge as the primary selection criterion in any policy area in the DR, yet did so in health under Lugo (next to remaining the primary selection criterion in the finance sector).

**Figure 4. Expert estimates (n = 62): criteria prioritized in discretionary personnel selection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dominican Republic</th>
<th>Paraguay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party Affiliation</strong></td>
<td>Mejia: 71.3%</td>
<td>Mejia: 71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fernandez: 35.3%</td>
<td>Fernandez: 38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Connection</strong></td>
<td>Fernandez: 94.9%</td>
<td>Lugo: 83.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duarte: 52.8%</td>
<td>Duarte: 52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Duarte: 91.5%</td>
<td>Lugo: 56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lugo: 35.6%</td>
<td>Lugo: 35.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stylized explanandum: incremental professionalization in Paraguay yet not the DR**

In sum, despite greater normative reform progress in the DR under President Fernandez, Paraguay under President Lugo professionalized its bureaucracy. Proxy indicators confirm this incremental shift towards public goods provision in Paraguay, yet not the DR. Paraguay, for instance, improved in the World Bank’s Control of Corruption indicator from the 7th to the 25th

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16 Aggregate expert estimates are the weighted (by number of public employees in state institution) averages of responses to the survey question: “Party affiliation/personal connections/professional qualifications are required to obtain a position: always or most of the time (100%); roughly half the time (50%); for a minority of positions or, for professional qualifications, by complying with minimal formal qualification criteria (25%); never or almost never (0%).”
percentile rank until Lugo’s last full year in office – while the DR deteriorated under Fernandez from the 42nd to the 23rd percentile rank (World Bank, 2013).

Professionalization in Paraguay advanced through competitive recruitment and promotion procedures as well as meritocratic patronage, albeit only incrementally in technical-level positions in, principally, social service delivery institutions. While this reform magnitude may appear minor, it is substantive in historic comparison. In a context of no prior experience, meritocratic personnel practices were extended to roughly a quarter of vacancies within four years. In comparison, the construction of a professional civil service in the United States took over half a century (Grindle, 2010). Despite all its limitations then, professionalization in Paraguay was lauded by, for instance, a local journalist (Interview 2012) as one of the “great achievements of the Lugo administration.”

Against this backdrop, the next three sections will test whether demand-side variables, the patronage control theory or rival supply side factors may account for these reform outcomes.

THE DEMAND FOR PATRONAGE AND PROFESSIONALIZATION IN PARAGUAY AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

As shall be argued in this section, variation in demand-side variables may not account for cross-case variation in professionalization. Demand from public employees for professionalization was absent in both cases; donors supported reforms in both cases, yet their limited financial leverage precluded them from bringing about reform; at the same time, a broad civil society coalition demanded reform in the DR, yet not Paraguay. Ceteris paribus, professionalization should have thus proceeded in the DR rather than Paraguay. Yet, these reform incentives were counteracted by incentives to retain patronage in response to preferences of most voters for private rather than public goods – and thus patronage.

Societal demand for patronage and professionalization

Professionalization in the DR was fomented by pressure from a polycentric coalition formed by donors, NGOs, religious organizations, private sector associations and a reformist Minister of Public Administration (see Schuster, 2014 for a detailed account). To illustrate, the formulation of the 2008 public service law was accompanied by discussions about every single article in the National Dialogue – an entity which brought together most of the major economic and civil society actors. Civil service reform implementation in turn was the subject of one of ten working groups of the Participatory Anti-Corruption Initiative (IPAC), with participation from 260 societal stakeholders and periodic accountability workshops to measure implementation progress (World Bank, 2012a). In contrast, collective societal demand for reform was muted in Paraguay. Support from NGOs was complicated by their absorption in government: a large fraction of civil society activists joined government after Lugo’s victory (Setrini, 2011). NGOs were then uninvolved in key reform negotiations and decisions, such as the lack of approval of a Presidential decree to regulate public personnel practices (Interview Director Civil Service 2012).
In short, collective societal action for reform was forthcoming in the DR, yet not Paraguay. Variation in collective societal action may thus not account for variation in reform outcomes. This is in part as high levels of deprivation shifted preferences of most citizens towards private goods receipts.

In Paraguay, a largely impoverished labor with limited human capital meets an agrarian economic structure with constrained demand for low-skilled labor. 32.4% of Paraguay’s population lived under the national poverty line in 2011, a figure that has fallen by only 3.7% since 1998; 62.9% of the urban labor force is employed in the informal sector (World Bank, 2012b); and 35.4% of the population is either unemployed or under-employed (Dirección General de Estadística Encuestas y Censos, 2006). Not surprisingly then, the lack of employment is rated as the most pressing problem by voters (Consejo Impulsor del Sistema Nacional de Integridad, 2005). In this context, the Paraguayan government is the country’s largest employer.

Rather than collectively seeking state reform, citizens thus tended to individually demand access to public sector jobs. As a result, Lugo faced such demands despite having run on a public goods platform. To illustrate, when Lugo’s only Senator Sixto Perreira returned to communities where he had campaigned based on public goods promises, these same communities now demanded from him access to jobs, noting: “now it is our turn … it is our moment to enter [the government].” (Interview Minister Civil Service 2012)

Similarly, in the DR, most citizens demanded individually access to public employment rather than collectively reform. At 34%, the DR’s moderate poverty levels in 2009 exceeded those in 1997 (26.7%); similarly, informality in employment remains high, at 56.5% in 2010 compared to 52.9% in 2000; concurrently, unemployment averaged 15.7% in 2000-2011 (Organización Internacional del Trabajo, 2013). Against this backdrop, citizen demand for and acquiescence to discretion in public employment is large. To illustrate, over 75% of surveyed voters consider it either not corrupt or justifiable if politicians use their influence to provide public sector jobs to unemployed relatives (Morgan & Espinal, 2010). In reference to citizen demands for jobs, Fernandez himself noted that “in [the DR] the government falls if it cannot incorporate citizens in some survival mechanism. In Spain, the government falls if this is revealed, here it falls it is not done.” (cited in Benito Sanchez, 2010a)

Consequently, citizen preferences in both cases maximized the electoral utility of private goods provision; unsurprisingly then, patronage had historically been the rule of the game in the countries’ bureaucracies. As shall be argued next, support from donors and international financial institutions was unable to alter this incentive structure.

**Donor demand for bureaucratic professionalization**

Support from donors was highly comparable across the two countries. Financial assistance included a $4.2m IDB loan in Paraguay, and a $5.2m IDB loan component in the DR (Inter-American Development Bank, 2006, 2010), providing funds to recruit reform teams and to

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20 Having said that, the need to respond to pressure from the reform coalition did incentivize the aforementioned normative and formalistic reforms in the DR. As societal demands were aligned with the reform objectives of the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP), they enhanced MAP’s bargaining power to advance reforms. As the Minister of Public Administration (Interview 2013) put it rather starkly, societal alliances “are what makes that one can survive.”
(partially) lift budget constraints on implementation. Technical assistance in turn drew on the same external policy blueprint, the Latin American Civil Service Charter. Both Paraguay’s newly developed public personnel policy and the DR’s 2008 Public Service Law were modelled after the Charter.

Donor support thus facilitated reform implementation and expansion in both cases. It was not a cause for reform, however. To illustrate, in Paraguay, all of the six donor officials interviewed opined that government rather than donor action drove the introduction of reform. Other evidence substantiates this assessment. The aforementioned $4.2m IADB loan to fund civil service reform had been approved under the previous government, yet remained unexecuted prior to the Lugo administration. And, analogous to civil society, donors were uninvolved in key negotiations. In the DR, donors were comparatively more involved. The aforementioned Participatory Anti-Corruption Initiative with its working group on civil service reform, for instance, had come about at the suggestion of and with financial assistance from donors.

Yet, donor support was insufficient to bring about professionalization. This is not surprising when considering donors’ financial leverage. Net official development assistance stood at 0.6% of GDP in Paraguay and 0.3% of GDP in the DR (2008-2011) (World Bank, 2012b). As such, it was insufficient to tilt incentives towards a reform which would shift the basis of electoral mobilization. 21 In short, while donor support provided technical and financial capacity for reform implementation in both cases, it did not cause variation in reform outcomes across the two cases.

**Demand from public employees for patronage and professionalization**

Demand from organized public employees may similarly not account for variation in reform outcomes. Public sector unions exist only for few professional groups in the DR; in Paraguay, they did not demand reform.

In Paraguay, roughly 35% of public employees are unionized (Lachi, 2012). Most unions are affiliated with the Colorado Party (ANR), as the party in power for 61 years until 2008. Prima facie, ANR-affiliated unions could have been expected to demand professionalization: their members were unlikely to benefit from discretion under the Lugo administration. Yet, such demand was mute. To illustrate, when asked about their objectives, none of six union leaders interviewed mentioned meritocratic recruitment and promotion decisions or other elements of professional bureaucracies – despite a sampling bias towards progressive unions. Demands instead revolved around wages, benefits and job stability. In a context of limited professional competencies, public servants preferred automatisms such as generalized salary increases or pay for seniority which were detached from individual performance. At the same time, they continued to favor discretion. As detailed below, political patrons of Colorado appointees in the bureaucracy remained in part in power: the Colorado

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21 Two caveats to this conclusion apply. First, public finance crises which put a premium on access to funds from donors and international financial institutions have occasionally enabled donor-conditionality-induced state reforms (albeit not substantive bureaucratic professionalization) in the two countries, such as in the aftermath of the DR’s 2003-04 banking crises (Contreras, 2009). Second, and as illustrated by, for instance, European Union accession conditionality, conditionalities to bring about bureaucratic professionalization may be ineffective even in case of exceptional financial leverage (European Union and OECD, 2010).
Party retained a plurality in Congress and, concomitantly, important sway over, among others, promotions and pay rises. As a result, as one union leader (Interview 2012) concludes, “I think [professionalization] seems to unions a bit irrelevant.”

Similarly, bureaucratic demand for professionalization was not forthcoming in the DR. Except for teachers and medical personnel, public employees in the DR are mostly not collectively organized. And for teachers and medical personnel, as in the Paraguayan case, politicization precluded autonomous union demands for professionalization. To illustrate, the presidents of the teacher’s union during the Fernandez Presidency were also Congressmen from the governing Partido de la Liberación Dominicana (PLD) (El Dia, 2013b). Political capture thus forestalled bureaucratic mobilization antagonistic to the interests of the governing party.

In conclusion, demand-side factors may not explain variation in reform outcomes. Public employees did not demand reform in either of the two cases; donors supported reforms in both cases, yet their limited financial leverage precluded them from causing reform in the first place; and civil society demanded reform in the DR, yet Paraguay advanced towards professionalization. Supply side factor thus carry the explanatory burden. In this context, the next two sections will examine the explanatory power of, first, institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control and, second, supply side rival explanations put forward in the literature.

**INCUMBENT PATRONAGE CONTROL AND BUREAUCRATIC PROFESSIONALIZATION IN PARAGUAY AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Consistent with the ‘most similar system design’ case selection, Presidents Lugo and Fernandez greatly differed in their institutional control over patronage. As shall be detailed in this section, President Lugo was largely deprived of control over patronage in what the UNDP (2009, p. 39) terms a “quasi-parliamentarian system” which, at the same time, allocates important patronage powers to the legislature and shifts part of the remaining private goods benefits of the patronage bureaucracy to public employees. Against this backdrop, Lugo faced incentives to pursue reform in order to deprive his electoral challengers of their patronage control; in order to elicit cooperation from tenured bureaucrats inherited from prior ANR administrations; and in order to enhance public goods provision in a context of an inability to compete electorally based on private goods provision only.

In sharp contrast, President Fernandez as “a kind of Republican monarch” (Collado, 2005, p. 60) monopolized control over patronage in a system of “excessive presidentialism” (World Bank, 2004, p. 104) with few institutional constraints on Presidential patronage control. As a result, incentives to reform stemming from opportunities to, for instance, deprive challengers of patronage control or elicit cooperation from tenured bureaucrats were largely inexistent. To the contrary, monopolized patronage control dis-incentivized reform as it greatly advantaged the incumbent in electoral contests with challengers. Keenly aware of this electoral advantage, Fernandez did not support reform beyond normative and formalistic changes.
When the Victor Cannot Claim the Spoils: Lack of Incumbent Patronage Control and Bureaucratic Professionalization in Paraguay

When President Lugo came to power in Paraguay in 2008, it was the country’s first alternation in governing parties since 1947. Until then in power longer than any party worldwide, the Colorado Party (ANR) had ruled for 61 years: 44 years in an authoritarian and 17 years in a democratic regime. The ANR lost its grip on power when a political outsider – former bishop Fernando Lugo – formed a ‘Patriotic Alliance for Change’ with the Liberal Party (PLRA).

Note that Lugo’s election was an outcome exogenous to the patronage control theory. Lugo assumed the Presidency despite lacking control over patronage to mobilize electoral support. As of 2006, the ANR counted on 1.54 million members – a majority of registered voters – and held pluralities in Congress, the majority of subnational governments next to the Presidency (Abente Brun, 2007; Paredes, 2007). Lugo’s victory was possible thanks to support from the PLRA, the country’s second largest party in terms of both membership (0.6 million in 2006) and representation in Congress and subnational governments – and thus patronage control; thanks to support from a range of smaller left-leaning movements; thanks to his reputation as a ‘bishop of the poor’ which provided some credibility to his public goods promises (Abente Brun, 2009); and, perhaps most important, thanks to ANR divisions (Zavala Zubizarreta, 2013).

Once in power, however, the factors which had brought Lugo to the Presidency were unlikely to enable him or his political movement to secure re-election. Renewed PLRA support was not forthcoming. The ‘Patriotic Alliance for Change’ had been brought together by the goal of removing the ANR from power, not by a common policy platform. Only weeks after Lugo’s assumption, Vice-President Franco from the PLRA reportedly noted that he expected to replace Lugo as President shortly (Interview Journalist 2012). In mid-2009, he formally led the PLRA out of the ‘Patriotic Alliance’, even though two majority PLRA factions continued in government (Lambert, 2011). When losing the support of these factions in June 2012, Lugo was impeached from office (Marsteintredet, Llanos, & Nolte, 2013). At the same time, ANR divisions became more muted, with the Colorado Party unifying around a common goal to reclaim the Presidency (ABC Color, 2011a). Lastly, voters were likely to base their re-election decision on retrospective performance – that is on public and private goods receipts – rather than prospective promises.

To secure re-election for himself and/or his party22, Lugo thus depended on the mobilization of an electoral support base of his own. As shall be argued in this section, the mix of public and private goods Lugo chose to mobilize this electoral support base was decisively shaped by his limited control over patronage in a context in which patronage is central to electoral mobilization. Institutional constraints on Presidential patronage control in conjunction with minority representation in the legislature limited Lugo’s control over recruitment, pay, promotion, dismissals, the creation of positions and the determination of the patronage budget.

Lugo’s control over recruitment was constrained both inside and outside the executive. As noted, Lugo had come to power with minimal legislative representation. Lugo’s core

22 Re-election ambitions of the Lugo administration are manifest in both the unsuccessful attempt of Lugo’s supporters to seek a constitutional revision of the prohibition of Presidential re-elections, and Lugo’s successful 2013 Senate candidacy (ABC Color, 2013; Paraguay.com, 2011).
support party, the Movimiento Popular Tekojoja (MPT), had obtained only one of 45 Senate and one of 80 Chamber of Deputies seats, with other center-left parties capturing two further Senate and one further Chamber of Deputies seat. As a result, recruitment in Congress was dominated by the ANR and PLRA which had obtained 15 and 14 out of 45 Senate seats, as well as 29 and 27 out of 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Moreover, recruitment in the executive was partially conceded to the PLRA. Lugo depended on PLRA support to secure the one-third legislative minority needed to avoid impeachment – as quid pro quo, the PLRA obtained control of, among others, the Vice-Presidency, the hydro-electric dam Itaipú as well as the Ministries of Public Works, Agriculture and Industry. To construct legislative majorities, further patronage concessions to mobilize votes from the ANR and/or an ANR splinter-off, the National Union of Ethical Citizens (UNACE), were needed.

Institutional constraints added to governability concerns in limiting Lugo’s control of recruitment. Against the backdrop of excessive Presidential powers during the Stroessner dictatorship, Paraguay’s Congress became with the 1992 constitution one of the region’s most powerful (World Bank, 2005). It may, among others, appoint or approve Supreme Court Justices, the Attorney General, the Central Bank directorate, and high-level army and police officials. Lugo’s electoral challengers in the legislature relied on quotas – based on legislative representation – for these high-level appointments. This led to ANR dominance in most non-executive bodies. To illustrate, five of eight Judicial Council members and six of nine Supreme Court judges were ANR-affiliated when Lugo came to power (USAID, 2009).

Institutional constraints also deprived Lugo of control over the setting of the patronage budget, the creation of new positions as well as the determination of pay and promotions. In the annual budget, legislators may not only freely determine the ceiling for personnel expenditures; the budget’s personnel annex also empowers legislators to create positions and modify salary subcategories up to the detail of individual public servants. As salaries are linked as fixed points to hierarchical categories, promotions of public servants equaled re-categorizations into higher salary categories. In conjunction, these powers turned “every parliamentarian [into] an employment agency.” (Interview Director Health 2012)

Legislators made ample usage of these powers. When Lugo assumed the Presidency, Congress increased the number of salary subcategories from 435 in 2007 to 1,400 in 2010 (Green & Lafuente, 2010; Manning & Lafuente, 2010). Concomitantly, legislators approved rapid salary and position increases. The public wage bill rose roughly 15% annually between 2008 and 2011 and 35% in 2012 (Ministerio de Hacienda, 2012). Many of the salary subcategories and positions created lay outside Lugo’s control. To illustrate, the legislature increased its own budget by 52% and the judiciary budget by 20% in 2009 (Lambert, 2011); and a 2012 budget expansion contemplated the recruitment of 5,000 political operators in the Superior Tribunal of Electoral Justice only – compared to, roughly, 8,000 to 13,000 executive recruitments per year (2008-11) (based on Secretaría de la Función Pública, 2013b data).

Institutional constraints shifted not only patronage control to electoral challengers in the legislature, but also private goods benefits to public employees. In particular, tenure protections precluded Lugo from replacing most of the appointees of prior Colorado governments. For permanent public servants (78% of public employees), dismissals were virtually precluded even in cases of non-performance or corruption. Unions responded to dismissals with strikes – thus enhancing de facto constraints – and administrative indictments
rarely held up in appeals in the ANR-dominated Supreme Court – thus enhancing *de jure* constraints. Fluctuation of permanent public sector staff was then low, at between 1% and 3.4% per year during the Lugo Presidency (Secretaría de la Función Pública, 2013b). At the same time, Lugo did hold sway over dismissals of temporary personnel (22% of public employees). With unions and courts frequently not opposing such dismissals, fluctuation of temporary personnel was higher, at between 10% and 34.9% (2008-2011). As most public employees held permanent positions, however, aggregate public sector turnover – between 2.4% and 8% – was still limited. As a result, most public servants during the Lugo administration were appointees of prior Colorado administrations.

As noted, a share of these employees – roughly 35% – were organized into largely ANR-affiliated unions. As one of the country’s few organized collective actors, unions could effectively bargain for generalized salary increases with, in particular, ANR-affiliated legislators. As a result, real pay from 2008 to 2012 increased by 59% for medical doctors and 47% for police, for instance – thus constraining Lugo’s budget for discretionary pay increases of his own (Ultima Hora, 2012).

In sum then, strong institutional constraints on Presidential patronage control in conjunction with weak legislative support largely deprived Lugo of patronage control. Instead, electoral challengers controlled most pay and promotion decisions, the patronage budget allocation, the creation of positions and a share of recruitment. In addition, a share of private goods benefited largely ANR-affiliated public servants through tenure protections and generalized pay rises.

Lugo’s limited patronage control incentivized professionalization through all of the three hypothesized causal mechanisms. First, it implicated an inability to compete electorally based on patronage, thus incentivizing public goods-based electoral competition. As aforementioned, Lugo’s patronage control was limited in an electoral context in which patronage was central to vote mobilization. The mere jobs-for-votes exchange secured a substantial electoral base: public officials and their families represented over 20 per cent of the electorate (Casals & Associates, 2004). Moreover, public employment permitted the recruitment of political operators (*punteros*). Frequently non-attending public employees, *punteros* were key for clientelist vote mobilization. They provided pre-electoral, door-to-door social assistance and, on voting day, shuttled voters to polls. To illustrate, in 2008, ANR and PLRA *punteros* transported between one-fourth and one-third of the electorate (USAID, 2009). Moreover, *punteros* facilitate vote buying, with 27% of the electorate having sold their vote according to survey data (cited in Morínigo, 2008). Unsurprisingly, the use of *punteros* is prevalent. As a proxy indicator, surveys suggest that 15% of voters have done campaign work – the third highest share in Latin America (Morgan & Espinal, 2010). Patronage is also central in budget expenditures at-large. Personnel expenditures claimed over 75% of tax revenues in 2011 – the highest proportion in Latin America (IMF, 2012).

In other words, patronage was the central currency of clientelist exchange in a context where such exchanges were central to electoral mobilization. Within this context, Lugo was deprived of control over most patronage. Lugo and his allies then faced, according to his Minister of Civil Service (2008-2012), “the question … how do we compete with the Colorado Party if we do not have what they have which is political operators through public employment.” (Interview Minister Civil Service 2012)
Seeking electoral support through public goods provision via bureaucratic professionalization was perceived as an avenue out of this problem. In line with this logic, professionalization advanced foremost where public goods results were most visible; and private goods losses to the incumbent reduced. In other words, professionalization proceeded where the electoral utility of public goods increases exceeded the electoral cost of forsaking patronage in the context of an inability to compete based on patronage alone. Reflecting this logic, the Ministry of Civil Service received an instruction from the Presidency and ministerial authorities to accompany and supervise meritocratic personnel selections in emblematic Presidential programs. With a social policy focus, these included the primary health attention program in the Ministry of Health, the family agriculture program in the Ministry of Agriculture, child and adolescent support in the Ministry of Children and, in the latter part of Lugo’s mandate, the conditional cash transfer program in the Ministry of Social Action (Interview Director Civil Service 2012). As noted, meritocracy was also strengthened in the selection of teachers, yet not administrative personnel in the Ministry of Education. These programs and institutions shared a high visibility of results – and, thus, enhanced electoral benefits of public goods. Health and education were the most frequently used public services in the country (Congreso Nacional de la República del Paraguay & UNDP, 2009); and media exposure enhanced the electoral utility of transparent personnel selections in Presidential flagship programs (Interview Vice-Minister Agriculture 2012).

While yielding public goods benefits, the private goods losses of most competitive selections were limited. Over 80% of advertised positions were at technical levels; only 13% were at service levels with relatively higher wage premiums. And, as illustrated by the limited number of unique admitted applicants for each position – roughly three – positions frequently required educational qualifications in short supply, such as specialized medical personnel.

As a further causal mechanism, limited incumbent patronage control may, as noted, incentivize reform where incumbents are unable to control patronage, yet able to professionalize. Lugo faced this dilemma in particular with de-concentrated staff in the Ministries of Education and Health. As a Director in the Ministry of Education (Interview 2012) explains: “a decentralization process took place in 2003 … [in 2008] we found many irregularities at the local level… school directors had their candidate, unions had their candidate, parents had their candidate … there are schools everywhere, so control was impossible … therefore we established [competitive selections] at the … national level.” This reform rationale was echoed in health. As a Vice-Minister of Health (Interview 2012) put it, “the political decision to undertake competitive personnel procedures … was a central-level instruction … many of the regional directors were … liberals as it was a coalition party… and many continued to be colorados. So at the local level there were small fiefdoms.”

The ability of the Lugo administration to impose professionalization where it was unable to control patronage did not reach beyond a minority of institutions, however. To further deprive challengers of patronage control, the Secretary of Civil Service publicly filed accusations with both the Office of the General Prosecutor against institutions undertaking patronage-based personnel selections and with the Attorney General against legislators – including the President of the Chamber of Deputies – for influence trafficking. Under the sway of electoral challengers, the General Prosecutor and Attorney General did not take action. Accusations did, however, help to place patronage in the media spotlight, with news outlets
beginning to report about patronage-based recruitments (see, among many, ABC Color, 2011b). This put some professionalization pressure on non-complying institutions (Interview Minister Civil Service 2012).

As a third causal mechanism, institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control which shift private goods benefits to public employees – such as tenure protections – may incentivize professionalization. As noted, most public servants under the Lugo administration had been recruited by prior Colorado incumbents. In institutions with limited staff growth, this precluded the running of institutions by (small) reform teams only. The electoral utility of seeking cooperation from tenured public servants through professional personnel management then outweighed the utility of patronage. As a Director in the Institute for Social Provision (Interview 2012) put it: “we could not generate clientele. We needed to seek loyalty from the existing staff … I could not bring only people from my party … because fundamentally I depended on [tenured] staff so that the product would be good … I needed them to be productive so that I could be of value.”

In conclusion, institutional constraints on Presidential patronage control in conjunction with weak legislative support deprived Lugo of patronage control. In response to limited patronage control – and thus an inability to compete electorally based on patronage only – the Lugo administration professionalized Paraguay’s bureaucracy incrementally. Professionalization proceeded where it allowed the incumbent to enhance public goods provision to mobilize electoral support without great private goods losses; to deprive electoral challengers of their patronage control; and to elicit cooperation from tenured bureaucrats where such cooperation was crucial for public goods provision. As shall be argued next, monopolization of patronage control in the Presidency in the DR led to an opposite set of incentives for Fernandez.

To the Victor Belong all Spoils: Incumbent Patronage Control and Reform Resistance in the Dominican Republic

The DR’s civil service reform episode under study from 2004 to 2012 coincided with Fernandez’ second and third term in office. As in the case of Lugo, Fernandez’ initial election to the Presidency in 1996 had been a surprise to most observers. The country’s third political force, Fernandez’ Partido de la Liberación Dominicana (PLD) had never won the Presidency. In the 1994 Presidential elections, it had obtained only 13% of the vote (Duarte & Espinal, 2008). Backlash to electoral fraud in 1994 forced long-time incumbent Joaquín Balaguer of the Partido Reformista Social Cristiano (PRSC) to call for 1996 elections in which the PRSC only came in third. To forestall victory of PRSC’s then main competitor – the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD) – the PRSC forged a ‘Patriotic Front’ with the PLD in the run-off elections (Espinal, 2008).

Note that, as in the case of Lugo, factors exogenous to the patronage control theory enabled Fernandez’ rise to the Presidency – in particular, as in Paraguay, electoral support from one of the two main parties in control of patronage. Similar to Lugo, Fernandez also faced minority legislative representation, with 1 of 30 PLD Senate seats and 13 of 120 PLD Chamber of Deputies seats (Benito Sanchez, 2010b). And finally, the principal factor enabling Fernandez rise to power – PRSC support – was unlikely to recur to secure PLD re-election. In fact, in the
2000 Presidential elections, the PRSC was unwilling to support the PLD in a run-off (Diario Libre, 2011). To secure PLD re-election, Fernandez thus depended on the mobilization of an electoral support base of his own. This applied to both 1996 and 2004 when Fernandez was re-elected after a massive banking crisis had discredited the electoral campaign of PRD incumbent Hipólito Mejía. As in 1996, Fernandez faced opposition from a legislative majority in 2004, with the PLD in control of only 1 of 30 Senate and 36 of 126 Chamber of Deputies seats.

As shall be argued in this section with particular reference to 2004-2012\(^\text{23}\), the mix of public and private goods Fernandez relied on to mobilize an electoral support base was decisively shaped by the concentration of patronage control in the Presidency. Fernandez’ monopolized patronage control added to incentives to rely on private goods provision and resist demands for bureaucratic professionalization. Concentration of patronage control in the Presidency extended to the creation of positions, recruitment, pay, promotion, dismissals and the patronage budget determination.

As in the case of Lugo, Fernandez was elected to office with support from coalition parties which expected, in return for their support, control of public sector institutions. In 2004, 6 “satellite” parties – minority parties allying alternately with distinct majority parties to access state resources (Espinal, 2010a) – which jointly accounted for 8% of the vote supported Fernandez’ Presidential bid; in 2008, this number rose to 11 parties and 9% of the vote (Benito Sanchez, 2013). Power sharing appointments with these parties extended to more than 10 institutions, including smaller ministries such as Foreign Relations, Labor and Youth. Moreover and as in the case of Lugo, the construction of legislative majorities required further patronage concessions to electoral challengers.

Yet, the majority of recruitment in the executive remained under PLD control, with one rough estimate putting the share of cabinet members which are also members of the PLD central committee at 65% (Interview Director Civil Service 2013). Fernandez was institutionally empowered to firmly control recruitment in these institutions. Until a 2010 constitutional reform, the DR’s Constitution concentrated recruitment power in the Presidency, with Presidential authorization required for the appointment of every single public servant in the executive, from ministers to bottom-level service personnel. Control by the incumbent over recruitment is reflected in the party affiliation of public employees. In a 2010 survey, 65% of surveyed public employees sympathized with the PLD, and 82.9% of public employees with party memberships identified themselves as members of the PLD (Morgan & Espinal, 2010).

Outside the executive, Fernandez’ legislative minority position when coming to power forestalled – as in the case of Lugo – control over most recruitment in Congress. At the same time and in contrast to Lugo, Fernandez was, up to a 2010 constitutional reform, institutionally empowered to control appointments or shortlists of candidates for a range of non-executive positions, including the Attorney General, the General Controller and the Head of the Audit.

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\(^{23}\) Until 2000, the PLD operated as a cadre party with restricted membership which was, in particular, conditioned on the completion of a study program (Hartlyn, 1998). Even after Fernandez’ first full term in government, PLD membership thus did not come to exceed 33,000. Post-2000, party membership became unconditional, and the number of affiliates rose to 2.7m after the completion of two further terms by Fernandez in 2013 (Listin Diario, 2013). For the purpose of the testing of the patronage control theory – which assumes electoral utility maximization – the examination of Fernandez’ second and third Presidency is thus more insightful. During these terms, the PLD sought to maximize party affiliates – and may thus be more plausibly assumed to have sought to maximize electoral support irrespective of ideological or other constraints.
Chamber (World Bank, 2004). Moreover, at the decentralized level, the President was empowered to appoint the 31 provincial governors (United Nations, 2005).

In short, with the assumption of the Presidency in 2004, Fernandez was empowered to control most central government recruitment – which accounts for close to 80% of public employment (Artana et al., 2006) – and, up until 2006, partially sub-national and non-executive recruitment. Presidential control over recruitment was complemented by the vesting of institutional authority over most remaining personnel decisions in the Presidency.

To begin with, institutional constraints on the determination of personnel expenditures – and thus the patronage budget – by the incumbent were largely absent. The DR is one of the few countries in Latin America in which Congress requires a two-thirds majority to alter budget bills introduced by the executive. Even if opposition parties were able to summon this supermajority – which they held from 2004 to 2006 – incumbents counted de facto on leeway to deviate from approved budgets in budget execution. The Office of the Presidency, for instance, spent on average almost three times the approved budget amount between 1967 and 2009 (Marsteintredet, 2010).

Similarly, Fernandez was vested with authority to create new public sector positions at will. In sharp contrast to Paraguay’s budget bill – which enabled legislators to determine salaries and promotions of up to individual public servants – budget bills in the DR prescribed, in practice, only institutional ceilings for personnel expenditures. Fernandez and his ministers were thus empowered to create and eliminate positions at will.

Moreover, absent organizational charts and position structures in the budget as well as an (enforced) position classification system, Fernandez was empowered to establish, via Presidential decrees, pay rises or promotions without constraints beyond the overall budget availability. Salary setting then tended to be guided by the salary requests that came attached with party or personal recommendations, contributing to one of Latin America’s highest public sector wage premiums (68%) (Marconi, Carrillo, & Cavalieri, 2003).

In addition, Fernandez’ budget for promotions and pay rises was largely unconstrained by pressures for collective pay increases which would have shifted private goods benefits to public employees. As noted, public sector unionization was largely limited to teachers and medical personnel. As evidenced by the trajectory of teacher salaries, the PLD had been apt at demobilizing demands from these professional groups by capturing union leadership positions. 2008 teacher salaries stood, in real terms, 25% below 2000 levels (Interview union leader 2013).

Constraints on dismissals were also largely absent. De jure, the President was, up until 2010, constitutionally empowered to dismiss any public servant at will. De facto, union vetoes thwarted most dismissals for the approximately 53,000 teachers and most of the roughly 30,000 medical personnel (Observatorio de la Salud para América Latina, 2012). Most remaining public servants – of the total of 625,000 (Contraloria General de la Republica, 2013) – however, faced mass turnover with government changes – locally known as ‘steamrolling’ (aplanadora). To illustrate, in 2008, 60% of surveyed public servants had been in the public sector for four years or less – that is since Fernandez’ 2004 election (cited in Iacoviello, 2009).

In sum, despite minority legislative support, Fernandez was – in contrast to Lugo – in control of most patronage thanks to limited institutional constraints on his patronage sway. Fernandez concentrated control over most recruitment, pay and promotion decisions within a
patronage budget he could freely determine (within an overall budget constraint), and which was largely unconstrained by union pressures for collective pay rises. Moreover, the absence of tenure protections implicated that Fernandez was able to dismiss and substitute most public servants appointed by prior incumbents. In short, lack of institutional constraints implicated that Fernandez, contrary to Lugo, largely monopolized control over patronage.

At the same time, the DR resembled Paraguay’s electoral context in that this “context has, at its center, employment offers from the state” as the Director of the National Council for State Reform (Interview 2013) under Fernandez put it. Public employment accounts for 15% of total employment and over 35% of total formal employment (calculated from Contraloría General de la Republica, 2013; Organización Internacional del Trabajo, 2013). As a result, mere coveted jobs-for-votes exchanges (from beneficiaries and their families) mobilize important constituencies. Beyond votes, affiliates in public employment facilitate the targeting of other private goods provided through the bureaucracy to mobilize votes next to recurring support for electoral campaigns (Gonzalez-Acosta, 2009). To illustrate, almost 20% of survey respondents – the highest share in Latin America – affirm to have undertaken campaign work (Morgan & Espinal, 2010).

In this context, Fernandez utilized his disproportionate patronage control to his electoral advantage. To illustrate, personnel expenditures in 2008, the year of Fernandez’ second re-election, increased by 40% (Benito Sanchez, 2010a). With 13 out of 16 ministries incorporated into the PLD campaign command during the 2008 elections, public employees were obligated to continuously mobilize for campaign activities (Participación Ciudadana, 2008); public employees failing to participate faced threats of dismissals (Gonzalez-Acosta, 2009). The electoral advantage provided by incumbent patronage control is reflected in PLD election victories and PLD membership growth. With PLD representation in the Senate increasing to 22 (2006) and 31 (2010) of then 32 seats, and in the Chamber of Deputies to 96 of 178 (2006) and 105 of 183 (2010) seats, the PLD came to increasingly monopolize control over other state institutions (Espinal, 2010b). Fernandez himself was re-elected in 2008 with close to 54% of the vote. In parallel, PLD membership increased from 33,000 in 2000 to 2.7m in 2013, thus coming to represent close to 27% of the DR’s population (Listin Diario, 2013). Concentrated patronage control also enabled Fernandez to fend off internal challengers. Current President Medina, for instance, noted after losing the 2007 PLD primaries against Fernandez that “this was a competition against the state and the state defeated me” (Diario Libre, 2007).

Keenly aware of the electoral advantage monopolized patronage control provided, Fernandez and his ministers forestalled reform beyond formalistic changes. At the ministerial level, the Minister of Public Administration (Interview 2013) notes that “I am certainly not always well-received … sometimes they [my ministerial colleagues] tell me, ‘well, afterwards you go and search who will campaign for us.’” A former Vice-Minister of Public Administration (Interview 2013) put it more starkly: “many of those who opposed [reform] … said that they had the right to position their people [in the public sector] and nobody will prevent them from doing so.”

Ministerial reform resistance was accompanied by “incomplete Presidential support” (Interview Vice-Minister Civil Service 2013). As noted, Fernandez signed off normative changes, including a new public service law and several presidential decrees in support of bureaucratic professionalization. Yet, he neither enforced compliance with these norms nor
facilitated sufficient resources to the MAP to enable substantive implementation. As an Advisor in the Presidency (Interview 2013) puts it, “I am convinced that what the Ministry [MAP] needs is many more analysts, much more personnel, etc. but the President [Fernandez] did not give it that.” A PLD Senator (Interview 2013) close to Fernandez then concludes elegantly: “who makes himself strong for this reform is the Minister [of Public Administration] – not the President.” Presidential reform resistance in turn was motivated by the electoral advantages provided by monopolized incumbent patronage control. As a legislator of the government coalition party (Interview 2013) put it, “the political force which wins elections in this country considers that the state belongs to it completely, 100% … That is why it is so difficult to apply the [2008 public service] law.”

In sum then, due to lacking institutional constraints, Fernandez monopolized patronage control which in turn greatly advantaged him vis-à-vis electoral challengers in the mobilization of electoral support. To retain these advantages, Fernandez resisted professionalization despite vocal civil society demands. Concomitantly, the causal mechanisms through which limited patronage control had incentivized professionalization in Paraguay were not activated. Fernandez was able rather than unable to compete electorally based on patronage. With centralized personnel management, Fernandez also did not suffer from an inability to take control of patronage in the executive or a need to deprive electoral challengers of their patronage control. And, contrary to Lugo, Fernandez was not in need to seek cooperation from appointees of prior incumbents given that bureaucratic tenure was not protected.

In conclusion, case evidence suggests that variation in institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control contributed to variation in bureaucratic professionalization across the two cases. Furthermore, confirmatory evidence is found for the three causal mechanisms which were theorized to link limited incumbent patronage control with reform incentives. To understand whether variation in incumbent patronage control was a contributing or determining factor of variation in reform outcomes, the next section will examine the explanatory power of rival supply side explanations put forward in the literature.

SUPPLY SIDE RIVAL EXPLANATIONS

Even when contributing to variation in professionalization, institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control may not have been a substantively important explanatory factor. While demand-side explanations had previously been ruled out, other supply side factors could have been at play. To explore this contingency, this section examines the explanatory power of the supply side variables discussed in the literature review: political time horizons, party organization, the availability of patronage appointees, principal-agent problems in patronage networks and governability concerns. As evidenced below, these factors may not account for variation in incumbent reform incentives. They do, however, add to explaining incumbent ability to expand reform and, in particular, Lugo’s limits in this regard.

As argued by Lapuente and Nistotskaya (2009), shorter political time horizons diminish the expectation of incumbents to reap the long-term public goods benefits of reform and thus militate against professionalization. This hypothesis would have implicated reform in the DR rather than Paraguay, though. The implementation of the 2008 public service law coincided with Fernandez’ third term in office; the PLD had come to progressively dominate all branches
of government; and, against this backdrop, Fernandez noted that the PLD “should prepare to govern after 2016 … for the next 20 years.” (cited in El Caribe, 2013) In other words, Fernandez and the PLD at-large operated under a long political time horizon, with a clear objective of long-term control of the state. Yet, Fernandez resisted reform. In contrast, Lugo supported reform in a political context marked by high uncertainty and brief time horizons. As noted, Lugo faced constant impeachment threats starting virtually weeks into his Presidency, after Vice-President Franco’s conviction to replace Lugo was publicized.

According to Cruz and Keefer (2010), cohesive party organizations facilitate reform by enabling collective action and thus credible public goods promises by politicians. Yet, as with the previous rival explanation, this should have tilted incentives towards reform in the DR rather than Paraguay. Founded in 1973, the PLD was historically characterized by vertical leadership control and discipline among party members. A 27-member, virtually tenured political committee decided on party directives to be executed by a network which, by the end of Fernandez’ third term, had come to grow to 173,000 base committees (El Dia, 2013a; Listin Diario, 2013). In contrast, Lugo did not count on a cohesive party organization able to credibly commit to broad public goods delivery. In fact and as noted, Lugo “did not have a party [but rather] a conglomerate of independent people.” (Interview Director Finance 2012)

As a flipside to his lack of a party organization, however, Lugo also lacked a pool of party affiliates to appoint to positions. None of the (center-)left parties came to count on more than 41,000 affiliates (ABC Color, 2012). In contrast, PLD membership stood at 1.4m when Fernandez initiated his second Presidential term in 2004 (Listin Diario, 2013). With Lugo yet not Fernandez lacking appointees, professionalization should – according to Geddes (1996) – have proceeded in Paraguay, not the DR. Note, though, that the lack of a pool of party affiliates for appointments enhances the ability yet not necessarily incentives for reform. It enhanced Lugo’s ability as he did not face many demands from party affiliates expecting patronage in return for prior campaign support. This is echoed by one of Lugo’s Vice-Ministers of Agriculture (Interview 2012): “I did not respond to any party … so I did not have debts [to repay] … That gave me more possibilities [to professionalize].” The lack of patronage obligations to party affiliates, however, did not reduce patronage demands from voters – and, as such, affect whether professionalization rather than patronage was the electorally optimal choice to mobilize votes.

At the same time, the presence of a pool of party affiliates in the DR did not forestall reform. As should be expected, party members did pressure for public employment. As the Director of the National Council for State Reform (Interview 2013) put it, “you will always have the pressure of putting [into positions] people from your … committees … They expect that.” As a result, “the party crucifies you if you undertake merit-based personnel selections” (Interview Advisor Presidency 2013) – or, more specifically, “heats you [i.e. a minister] with the President” (Interview civil society 2013). Many ministers thus lacked the ability to professionalize. Fernandez, however, did retain this power. The PLD is characterized by “subordination to [Fernandez’] leadership,” not least as it had been Fernandez who had brought the PLD to the Presidency (Interview academic 2013). As a result then “if [Fernandez] says we will professionalize, it will be done. But he would have to dismiss many of his party” (Interview donor official 2013). Even though Fernandez was thus able to professionalize despite patronage demands from party affiliates, he lacked incentives to do so.
Heading a much-larger patron-client network, such reform incentives could have, according to Johnson and Libecap’s (1994) argument, been forthcoming in the DR due to principal-agent problems which complicate the control of clients. The DR’s bureaucracy is more than twice as large as Paraguay’s, and a much larger share of public employees were incumbent clients in the DR (Contraloría General de la República, 2013; Secretaría de la Función Pública, 2011b). Yet, Paraguay rather than the DR proceeded with reform.

Similarly, according to Geddes’ (1996, p. 18) “politician’s dilemma,” reform should have occurred in the DR ahead of Paraguay. As noted, the “politician’s dilemma” holds that an incumbent’s longer-run interest in public goods provision via professionalization is superseded by an immediate interest in political survival through patronage. Governability concerns may thus undermine an incumbent’s ability to reform even when facing incentives to do so. And, indeed, governability concerns loom large in explaining limited reform expansion in Paraguay. Virtually absent in the DR, however, the “politician’s dilemma” may not explain cross-case variation in reform outcomes.

In the DR’s hyper-presidentialist system, Fernandez had every ability to reform, yet chose not to do so. As an Advisor in the Presidency (Interview 2013) puts it, “we are a presidentialist country ... No Minister would say no to the President. But they felt that the [Presidential] commitment was not so great ... in practical terms, the civil service was not [his] priority.” Governability concerns outside the executive were also unlikely to forestall reform. The DR’s constitution required 75% super-majorities for Presidential impeachments. As a disciplined PLD held 29% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies when Fernandez came to power in 2004, it could thwart any impeachment attempts. Moreover and as noted, executive discretion to deviate from legislative norms – including budget bills – lessened executive dependence on legislative majorities to govern. In contrast, governability concerns did constrain Lugo’s ability to expand professionalization. As noted, to avoid impeachment, Lugo depended on PLRA support. To secure legislative majorities, Lugo required additionally support from either the ANR or UNACE. Their legislative support was conditioned on patronage concessions, reflected in cabinet appointments of not only reformers, but also “figures who epitomize traditional partisan interests.” (USAID, 2009, p. 29)

In sum, supply side factors limited Lugo’s ability to expand reform. While the lack of a pool of party affiliates did somewhat enhance this ability, governability concerns strongly constrained it. Despite reform incentives, professionalization thus expanded to only a minority of vacancies and institutions. Supply-side factors, however, may not satisfactorily account for cross-case variation of reform outcomes. They did not deprive Fernandez of his ability to reform. And they cannot explain the differential reform incentives of incumbents. Institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control thus carry the principal explanatory burden for cross-case variation in reform outcomes.

CONCLUSION: PATRONAGE, INSTITUTIONS AND THE DECLINE OF CLIENTELISM

As this paper has shown, institutional constraints on the control of patronage by incumbents shape their incentives to professionalize the bureaucracy. Several implications for policy and scholarly works follow.
On the policy side, civil service reform efforts are more likely to result in professionalization where institutional constraints deprive incumbents of control over patronage. Donors and international financial institutions may thus wish to focus their reform assistance in particular on countries where constraints on incumbent patronage control are more pronounced. As a corollary, civil service reform projects would do well to base reform efforts not only on the technical diagnosis of civil service systems, but also the political diagnosis of patronage systems. Diagnosing how institutional constraints shape who controls patronage where is particularly crucial for understanding reform incentives and resistance.

For scholarly works, the findings hold lessons for studies of both bureaucratic reform and the decline of clientelism at-large. To the literature on reforms of patronage bureaucracies, an important, hitherto omitted variable is added: institutional constraints on incumbent patronage control. As aforementioned, inclusion of this variable helps to resolve several inconsistent findings of previous studies. The effect of electoral competition, in particular, will be contingent upon incumbent patronage control, militating against (for) reform where incumbents monopolize (are deprived of) patronage control. Similarly, the increasing number of political outsiders coming to the Presidency in Latin America may be expected to face greater incentives to politicize (professionalize) the bureaucracy where institutional constraints grant (deprive them of) patronage control.

The findings also entail a broader lesson for the academic debate on clientelism and its decline. Institutional structures which allocated patronage control contributed to the decline (Paraguay) or maintenance (DR) of patronage and, hence, clientelism. As noted, in the literature to-date, “clientelism typically figures as a correlate or a cause … [of institutional arrangements], but not as a consequence” (Kitschelt, 2011, p. 7). In contrast, this study has shown that institutions which affect reform incentives un-intermediately – by allocating patronage control – may indeed contribute to cure clientelism. Future accounts would thus do well to consider institutional structures as causes – rather than only consequences – of clientelism and its decline.
### Annex A. Case Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Paraguay</th>
<th>Dominican Republic</th>
<th>Honduras</th>
<th>Ecuador</th>
<th>Peru</th>
<th>Panama</th>
<th>Nicaragua</th>
<th>Bolivia</th>
<th>El Salvador</th>
<th>Guatemala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (2012)</td>
<td>UNDP (2012)</td>
<td>Medium (0.669)</td>
<td>Medium (0.702)</td>
<td>Medium (0.632)</td>
<td>High (0.724)</td>
<td>High (0.741)</td>
<td>High (0.780)</td>
<td>Medium (0.599)</td>
<td>Medium (0.675)</td>
<td>Medium (0.680)</td>
<td>Medium (0.581)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor support</td>
<td>SICA and AECID (2012); Iacoviello (2011) &amp; Cortazar (2012)</td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
<td>No large donor support programs</td>
<td>Support from multiple donors, including the IDB</td>
<td>No large donor support programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of bureaucracy (average real total government consumption expenditure growth ahead of reform in 2004-2008)</td>
<td>World Bank (2012b)</td>
<td>High (5.4% annual growth)</td>
<td>High (9.7% annual growth)</td>
<td>High (7.7% annual growth)</td>
<td>High (6.0% annual growth)</td>
<td>High (5.8% annual growth)</td>
<td>Moderate (3.5% annual growth)</td>
<td>Moderate (1.6% annual growth)</td>
<td>Moderate (3.6% annual growth)</td>
<td>Moderate (1.1% annual growth)</td>
<td>High (6.7% annual growth)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: author’s own elaboration

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24 The universe of ten cases included in the table is a function of a circumscription of the case universe to the 18 Spanish-speaking Latin American Presidential democracies and, within those, to bureaucracies in which, according to Longo (2005), patronage is the rule of the game.

25 Based on the criteria employed, three cases are selected: Paraguay, the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Of these, Honduras was excluded for practical purposes. The country suffered from a coup d’état and a prolonged constitutional crisis in 2009; this was followed by rule by a de facto regime from 2009 to 2010. The 2012-13 field research undertaken for this paper would have thus been complicated. Any bureaucratic reform efforts by the 2010-14 Lobo Presidency would have stood at only early stages of implementation, complicating an assessment of their effect on bureaucratic professionalization; data collection on bureaucratic professionalization under the 2006-09 Zelaya Presidency in turn would have likely suffered from poor recall and challenges in respondent identification.
# Annex B. State Institutions Included in Expert Survey

## B.1 Paraguay (number of employees as of 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministries</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Education &amp; Culture</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Finance (incl. tax administration)</td>
<td>2,304</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Culture</td>
<td>81,180</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
<td>3,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Industry and Commerce</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Public Works</td>
<td>2,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-departmental agency or executive institution</td>
<td>Central Bank</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>National Universities</td>
<td>14,467</td>
<td>Institute for Social Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customs</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Administration of Electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Itaipu &amp; Yacyretá Hydroelectric Dams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supreme Court of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Electoral Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 192,305 out of 260,965 public servants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Itaipu (2013); Secretaría de la Función Pública (2011b); Torres Romero (2012)

## B.2 Dominican Republic (number of employees as of January 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministries</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Industry</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Public Works</td>
<td>11,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Bank</td>
<td>2,016</td>
<td>National University of Santo Domingo</td>
<td>8,335</td>
<td>National Health Insurance (SEN-ASA)</td>
<td>10,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs</td>
<td>5,457</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Administration (DGII)</td>
<td>2,682</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Electoral Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 245,085 out of 479,400 public servants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Contraloría General de la República (2013); Consejo del Poder Judicial (2013); UASD (2013)
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Collado, F. (2005). La Carrera Administrativa. In Oficina Nacional de Administración y Personal & Participación Ciudadana (Eds.), Mesas de búsqueda de consenso para la implementación de la ley de servicio civil y carrera administrativa (pp. 53-82). Santo Domingo: ONAP.


Ingeniería, y las organizaciones de la sociedad civil. 


