Analytical Narrative on Subnational Democracies in Colombia
Clientelism, Government and Public Policy in the Pacific Region
Chapter 4
Political Factions and Public Policy in the Local Democracies of the Colombian Pacific: Empirical Evidence

Andrés Cendales, Jhon James Mora and Santiago Arroyo

Abstract This chapter offers a contribution in the analysis of subnational democratic regimes in Colombia. It is recognized as a starting point that the democratization reforms that have been advanced in Colombia from the national level, as is the case of the Political Reform of 2003, do not necessarily guarantee that the democratic regime is homogeneous within the country, there being particularities specific to certain regions and territories. An empirical study of the behavior of local democracies in the Colombian Pacific region during the 2004–2014 decade as a means of characterizing and determining certain patterns which the evolution of their local political regimes has followed is proposed. In the Colombian Pacific, democratic practices and institutions have followed a trajectory in which the subnational political regime has become one in which the parties of third forces or third parties have taken control of the mayoralties and municipal councils from the traditional political parties. It is possible to observe that the competition among the third parties has been atomized. Besides that, they have designed and executed predatory public policy agendas, causing the sustained deterioration of the quality of the public policy provided by the city halls. Based on the documentary work offered by Cendales et al. (2019a), it can be established, as historical initial conditions in the analysis, that third parties are political organizations considered to have a low valuation for the public provision of goods and a high rate of fiscal voracity. Given the initial conditions that can be established from the narrative, and based on the model of public choice with clientelism and corruption proposed by Cendales et al. (2019b), the theoretical proposal that is to be tested is as follows: If the political power of the third parties over the mayoralties and municipal councils increases, then the quality of the public policy will decrease. The transmission mechanism is offered by Cendales et al. (2019b).

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