Keeping Authoritarianism Alive. Clientelistic and Technocratic Practices in Mexican and Chilean Transportation Reforms.

(Shortened version of the original paper)

Matias Fernandez, UCLA

Democracy in action is not the application of a set of predefined rules, but a process in which those rules are negotiated and interpreted in actual political decisions. The differences between the formal rules and actual practices that govern an institution, as well as the practical consequences of such a disparity, are a critical aspect for our empirical understanding of political processes. Not a long time ago, undemocratic politics were still attributed to the persistence of a 'traditional society' in 'modern societies.' Modern institutions would lead those 'old' practices to die a natural death. In spite of the discrediting of modernization theories since the 1970s, observers and scholars have continued to interpret a variety of forms of everyday authoritarianism as inherited cultural habits. Many were very optimistic when studying what Huntington called the "third wave" of democratization; they assumed too quickly that democratically elected governments in the South, which had replaced authoritarian regimes, would pave the way for smooth economic progress and democratic governance. The persistence and resilience of non-democratic practices in a new context of democratic institutions were thus "contrary to all expectations" (Hilgers 2011:570).

How can undemocratic practices be produced and reproduced in formally democratic societies? Although this is an empirical question that may be answered in a potentially infinite number of ways, this article presents a theoretical framework for comparatively understanding two of the most pervasive and deeply embedded schemes of political interaction that systematically violate democracy in the name of democracy: political clientelism and of the politics of expertise (or technocracy). Based on two in-depth case studies on the contentious processes of reforming public transit in Mexico City (Metrobus) and Santiago, Chile (Transantiago), this article comparatively examines clientelistic and technocratic

politics as two opposing dynamics of hidden authoritarianism. In Mexican clientelistic politics, (i) including people's interests results in the privatization of public goods; (ii) maintaining political equilibria results in the routinization of contention between citizens and authorities; and (iii) routine contention consolidates a private relation of bargained reciprocity. The design of the modernistic Transantiago in Chile illustrates, in contrast, how expertise can be used to explicitly restrict the access to political authorities. To do so, experts' main endeavor is (i) to redefine a political problem in technical terms, (ii) to construct abstract laypersons, and, as a consequence, (iii) to block access to political decisions. In this way, clientelistic politics position the principle of interest representation against universalistic politics, whereas technocratic politics appeal to universalism as a way of blocking interest representation. In both cases, 'democracy' is used to produce and (attempt) to legitimate undemocratic decision-making.

I. LIMITING DEMOCRACY. CLIENTELISM AND THE POLITICS OF EXPERTISE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

It is a well-known fact that formal democracy does not necessarily entail substantive democracy. Democratic institutions might be implemented in the context of fear of the government, high levels of economic inequality, and the of absence of economic, social and cultural rights—contexts that lack what Dhal defined as the minimal conditions for a real democracy (1989). While to some extent these limitations are present in every democracy, their magnitude is arguably more pervasive in states that have democratized in the last decades (Bogaards 2009; Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 2002; Collier and Levitsky 1997; Hilgers 2012a). For that reason, social scientists have usually focused on this last group of countries when studying the persistence of authoritarian practices. Corruption, vote-buying, lack of institutional channels of access to political institutions, as well as their co-optation, among others, have been denounced again and again. While this list is potentially infinite, this paper focuses on clientelistic and technocratic practices because, unlike the aforementioned practices, they describe not only a specific set of actions, but a deeper set of relations and understandings that can entirely configure political life.

Political clientelism and the politics of expertise do not only constitute a threat for the exercise of democracy: my argument, rooted in two case studies, is that they both might *violate democracy in the name of democracy*, following opposite strategies. Democracy is a broad enough concept to be filled in multiple ways. Drawing on Piattoni's conceptualization (2001), democracy can be understood as sustained on two orienting principles: equal and free access to interest representation, and universalistic criteria for resource distribution. Every actual democracy restricts those principles in different ways and to different degrees, either by blocking access to the government; or by distributing resources based on *ad-hoc* criteria; or both. Tacitly, the modernization approach would assume that those two principles reinforce one another through political accountability. This is, however, only one historically contingent alternative, and not necessarily realized in practice. Democratic governments can prioritize one of element rather the other one, and they can even invoke both elements *against* one another. The latter configuration is, I think, what characterizes clientelistic and technocratic relations, and what makes them at least partially authoritarian. The democratic principle of access to the state, common in clientelistic politics, can be used *against* universalistic criteria for distribution, and the universalistic criteria for distribution, characteristics of technocratic governments, can be, as in Hayek's political theory (see 2011:104), as a principle to block the access of citizens to interest representation. Clientelistic and technocratic practices, in consequence, constitute two opposite patterns of 'hidden authoritarianism.' In this way, democratically elected governments may not only tolerate violations of at least one of the democratic principles, but can use the contradictions between them to legitimize undemocratic decision-making. These two varieties of hidden authoritarianism, I will argue, are not *merely* arbitrary strategies to deal with specific problems. Although there is always space for strategic action, clientelism and the politics of expertise are sustained within well-embedded understandings of the relations between citizens, politicians and experts, and are enacted through patterned repertories of political action and interaction. Those understandings and repertories are usually taken-for-granted by the actors, preceding and thus defining the field for eventual strategies.

Research on clientelism and on the politics of expertise abound and have a long history, but have never been subject of comparative analysis. The lack of comparative studies and, more importantly, of a common framework, is surprising, considering that both clientelism and technocracy have been largely characterized as actually or potentially undemocratic. With regard to the levels of analysis, the rather trivial fact that clientelism and expertise are more easily observable (and thus studied) in different settings—in shantytowns or in the offices of a Secretary of Planning, according to the stereotype—has resulted in the consolidation of their distinctiveness. Many scholars have even defined clientelism as a face-to-face, dyadic interaction (e.g. Hilgers 2011; Landé 1977), thus *a priori* restricting the phenomenon to the local level, where those interactions can be observed. Research on the politics of expertise, on the contrary, has unequivocally focused on elites. Experts, after all, belong to an elite that validates their knowledge as "expert" knowledge. So defined, it is thus understandable that scholars who have focused on one of these two phenomenon hardly ever mentioned the other. James Scott (1972, 1998) might be the only social scientist that has studied both, but never, as far as I am aware, in a comparative perspective. But if this is understandable, it is still deeply problematic for at least two reasons. Firstly, clientelism and the politics of expertise might be counted as two of the strongest ways to limit democracy in recent democracies—but we completely lack a framework to analyze them together. Secondly, by exclusively focusing on elites and on the local level, the current literature fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of clientelistic and technocratic politics. After all, clientelistic and technocratic politics are socially relevant practices because they can configure the epistemic framework for citizen-authority relations (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Silva 2004; Stokes 2007), and as such, they transcend specific, isolated social strata.

The concept 'citizen-authority relations' is used here to tackle the reciprocal blindness between the study of clientelism and of the rule of experts. The concept is open enough to include, without predefining, the multiple agents involved in a contentious situation, as defined in their reciprocal relations when struggling for interest representation, resource distribution, and pursuing decision legitimacy. Therefore, here the concept is used not to impose a predefined stylized structure of

4

interaction, but to empirically grasp the patterns and definitions followed by actors in a contentious situation, whose structure is not taken for granted. The only predefined attribute included is 'hierarchical,' under the rather realistic assumption that, when facing the governments, some actors hold more power than others, and that official authorities have usually more power than citizens.

Political clientelism: reciprocity, interest representation, and politicization.

Political clientelism has been used to describe a wide range of *practices* (such as vote buying), trust-based dyadic *relations* (Hilgers 2011; Landé 1977), and complex hierarchical *networks* of politicians-brokers-clients (Kitschelt 2000). Due to those multiple connotations and levels of analysis, many recent studies have started with the definitional problem (e.g. Hicken 2011; Hilgers 2011; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007), oftentimes resulting in oversimplified notions that hardly correspond to actual politics. Conceptual shrinking has not necessarily resulted in a more precise understanding. Surgical distinctions between clientelism and related phenomena such as patronage, brokerage politics, or pork barrel politics, among others, are feasible in theory but not necessarily in practice. Thus, many political scientists have 'modeled' clientelistic 'exchanges,' as they were carried out by strategic politicians and accepted by the poor as "Pavlovian agents," to use Auyero's critical expression, "who vote and support political candidates *in exchange for* favors and services" (Auyero 1999:301).

Political clientelism involves a persistent system of asymmetrical relations that link patron, brokers and clients in "ongoing problem-solving networks" (Auyero 1999:327). Relations might be described as interest-maximizing, as recent political scientists have stressed, but such interests do not translate into a series of single rational-decisions. To use Weber's categories (2013), clientelistic relations might have affective, traditional and strategic components. They are not by definition strategic, nor they necessarily involve an emotional attachment, as argued by Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984). Political support, moreover, is not necessarily—and in most of cases is arguably not—a reaction to a single incentive, for it may be sincere, and take part in a broader context of reciprocal loyalties. 'Exchanges' and 'incentives,' in addition, do not work merely in terms tangible goods and services, but also in terms of future expectations, either by the client, as the most common image stresses, but also by

5

the 'patrons,' as Guy has observed in Brazilian favelas (2006). In this way, clientelistic relations do not necessarily result from the initiative of patrons, but also from people seeking for alternatives to be represented and to get access to resources. These arguments challenge recent versions of clientelism that, in an exaggerated reaction to the previously dominant 'culturalism' and 'developmentalism' in the field (Piattoni 2001), go as far as to define it simply as "the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?" (Stokes 2007:605).

Here, I use the concept as a tool to describe a structure of complex relations in which citizens and authorities reciprocally come to define one another in terms of competitive cooperation for political power and promotion of interests. Marcel Mauss (2002) demonstrated that alliances and social ties usually develop from hidden competitions. Although agonistic exchanges tolerate some degree of inequality between actors (allowing thus for exploitation), gifts and challenges were only offered to, and accepted from, actors that were perceived as having enough power or resources to reciprocate. Otherwise, reciprocity is replaced by domination and compliance. This means that reciprocity can be asymmetrical, but not *too* asymmetrical. Mauss's 'reciprocity' theory provides an important insight for political clientelism. To engage in clientelistic relations, authorities have to perceive citizens as potential challengers or valuable cooperators, which have to be considered in order to retain or increase their political power. Similarly, it means that citizens must judge that they are powerful enough to organize and challenge authorities in order to promote their particular interests, under the expectation that authorities *will* consider them.

In spite of appearances, this is radically different from democracy, because "sponsors are not elected, consumers do not have formal rights, public resources are privatized, and benefits are not universal" (Hilgers 2012b). Demands are addressed and resources are provided according to the (perceived) capacity to challenge authorities' power—a capacity unequally distributed in society. Rather than work through open, institutional channels, citizen-authority relations are particularistic and reproduce existing inequalities, for each participant is treated differently, winning access and resources

6

according to their power (Hilgers 2008). Public goods are thus privatized, and distribution of resources follows *ad hoc* criteria rather than universalistic principles.

What tends to be forgotten, however, is the fact that clientelism allows almost everyone to *potentially* ask for interest representation, generalizing access to authorities (or, according to Piattoni (2001), "access to citizenship"). This provides a key tool, especially for poor people, to demand solutions that get otherwise unaddressed or are just imposed on them. Clientelism, after all, offers multiple points of access to promote one's interests and to influence decision-making. Not surprisingly, then, with clientelism nearly "all public decision-making may become a token of exchange," and leading to the politicization of even the most trivial problem. Clientelism is thus characteristic of "fully mobilized polities" (Piattoni 2001:6). And as noted by Auyero (2007:28–29), with clientelism, citizens come to discuss their everyday problems, their sources and possible solutions, in the "language of politics."

The politics of expertise: universalism through depoliticization and exclusion.

As mentioned, expertise and clientelism have been approached as completely different phenomena, and through very different conceptual apparatuses. While in everyday language clientelism has negative connotations, the politics of expertise might have some explicit adherents among politicians (Silva 2001) and within the academy (like most neoliberals and some optimistic scholars, e.g. Domínguez, 1997), under the assumption that it serves as an antidote for populism. The contrast between these practices is sharp. Whereas clientelism grants access to the state by renouncing to universalistic distribution of resources, expertise can be used as a means to defend universalism and impersonality against particular interests. Expertise is a means governments use to protect themselves from the overflow of social demands. As such, one of its main political functions is to restrict access to the public sphere (Centeno 1993), prioritizing governability over representativeness (Garretón 2000).

In technocratic polities the distance between authorities and laypersons becomes insurmountable. This gap can be big enough to allow authorities to avoid 'trading' with laypersons—to paraphrase Mauss once again. In such technocratic contexts, authorities do not conceive that citizens

7

should or could influence their power, nor do citizens conceive that authorities would trade with them if they organized.

Technocratic politics is based on the idea that methodic and scientific knowledge, and the discipline it imposes on experts, provides policymakers with *objective bases* to solve equally *objective problems*. As a consequence, an experts political task is to "conquer the subjectivity of interests" by means of "the objectivity of scientific truth" (Centeno and Silva 1998:4). Objectivity is reached through "the application of sanctioned methods, or perhaps the mythical, unitary "scientific method," to presumably neutral facts" (Porter 1995:7). This 'purity' is regarded as the very source of expert's authority (Daston and Galison 1992). The legitimization of scientific knowledge comes, in good part, from a supposedly successful "struggle against subjectivity." For that reason, expert recommendations are regarded as impersonal and universal (Porter 1995). The result is "a unique and universal policy reality which can be analyzed through scientific methods and regarding which no debate is possible" (Centeno and Silva 1998:5).

This view is anything but innocuous: when experts' viewpoint is regarded as *the* superior perspective, and not as an argument among others, it serves to powerfully enact a division between *those who know* how to solve problems, and *those who need their problems to be solved.* By dividing the world in this way, expertise might operate as an instrument for further depoliticization and social exclusion.

The politics of expertise thus serve as a means to social exclusion because they "limit participation to those fluent in the expert languages" (Centeno 1993:318). When governing in the name of the truth, no plurality is possible. It is for this reason that opposition is usually discredited as ideological, irrational or self-interested. Decision-making is not legitimized by interest representation, but by its ability to present itself as neutral and universalistic. Since "the higher rationality of the whole is protected from the undue influence of particular interests" (Centeno 1993:313), therefore, "the good of the 'whole' must come before […] its individual parts" (Centeno and Silva 1998:4). Neutrality and universality are among the most efficient instruments for denying access to the government and to

reinforce what Mann (1986) calls the 'despotic power' of the state. Authorities govern not in the name of specific interests but 'in the name of reason' (Silva 2009). In this way, the technocratic politics works against democracy.

Many scholars have stressed that, in order to prevail, this view requires depoliticization (Centeno and Silva 1998; Centeno 1993; Porter 1993; Silva 2004). The relation between expert epistemology and depoliticization, however, is more complex than that. While their 'affinity' seems uncounterable, it is also true that depoliticization is a result of the politics of expertise. If "technocratic democracies" are only feasible in the context of depolitization (Centeno and Silva 1998), the politics of expertise also play a key role in establishing these conditions. Depoliticization, thus, is both a condition for technocratic power as well as a situation to be produced by means of expertise. The ability to use numbers and a technical rhetoric to dissolve politics and exclude subjects might be the biggest achievement of the politics of expertise (Porter 1993). As Porter argues, "quantification is a way of making decisions without seeming to decide" (Porter 1995:8). The result is "the suspension of politics from even the most sensitive political operations" (Ferguson 1994:256) in the name of universality, impartiality, and against the self-interest of politics and subjectivity in general.

II. CASE STUDIES (this section is severely cut)

These two opposed logics of political action and patterns of citizen-authority relations are explored through a comparative case study on public transportation reforms carried out in Mexico City and Santiago de Chile in the last decade. Bus public transit reforms have been chosen due to their extremely controversial character in most major cities in the Global South. Due to reasons that are only tangentially analyzed in this article, public transit industries in developing countries have been largely controlled by powerful, cartel-like organizations, comprised of hundreds or even thousands of bus owners. Even slight attempts at regulation have led to major oppositions, since they have meant reinserting the state into—or expanding the state over—a key sphere that was partially independent from its power. In addition, big public transportation reforms have been highly invasive, affecting the

9

everyday life of millions of citizens and the commercial activities of both formal and informal actors. Because of these reasons, public transit reforms in Latin America are an ideal terrain to observe the multiple relations that citizens, experts and politicians deploy to defend their interests.

The cases analyzed here do not aim to be representative. On the contrary, they represent extreme cases of the (in)ability of the state to plan and intervene, and the opposite (in)ability of organized citizen and incumbents to counterbalance and influence decisions that directly impact their lives. The Chilean *Transantiago* is internationally infamous by its modernistic ambition, the total lack of every form of public engagement, and by the dramatic consequences that followed its implementation. Mexico's *Metrobús*, on the other hand, has been promoted as a clean system that democratically includes former operators as stock owners in new companies that are democratically constituted. However, while *Transantiago* could quickly expand the state's ability to regulate a formerly powerful and anarchic industry, *Metrobús* has expanded erratically, and after few years, decision-making has followed strictly tactical, *ad hoc* criteria based on the ability of organizations to press and threaten the government and the ruling party.

The case studies have included analysis of documents, academic literature, newspapers, and interviews related with the design and implementation of *Transantiago* in Santiago de Chile and *Metrobús* in Mexico City.

III. TRANSANTIAGO, A TECHNOCRATIC 'REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE'

Transantiago is probably the most radical public transportation reform carried out in the world in the last decades. Launched in 2007, *Transantiago* aimed to redesign the entire transport system in a six million-person city, spread over 1400 sq km. Such an enterprise entailed a complete restructuring of the network of routes, integrating the operations (and the fares) through bus routes and the Metro under a trunk-feeder scheme. In this way the new system would reduce the oversupply and congestion of the main arteries of the city. *Transantiago* also introduced a smart contactless debit card valid for the entire system, and started a gradual renewal of a complete fleet of buses. The formerly atomized industry had

to be used and replaced by an open bidding process, opening the project up to a small number of supposedly competitive companies.

Due to the magnitude and simultaneity of all these changes, the strategy and the launching were called the *big-bang*. This ambitious plan, however, was a complete failure during the first years, becoming the most unpopular Chilean policy since the return of democracy in 1990. As *The Economist* stated, the possibility of total reform was a "planner's dream," but soon became "a model of how not to reform public transport" (February 7th, 2008). Currently, *Transantiago* runs on a network of 2700 km operated by 370 formal routes that move 4.5 million people per weekday, totally integrated, moreover, to a subway network of 103 km (Beltrán, Gschwender, and Palma 2013). "For its scope and components *Transantiago* is, and will continue to be, a reference for planers, practitioners and decision makers worldwide" (Hidalgo and Graftieaux 2007). For citizens, however, is still a highly unpopular system (with a 61% disapproval rating in Sept/Oct of 2012 according to the study of Collect-GfK), and has become a common expression to denote authorities' incompetence.

Historical Antecedents

i) The original scenario: atomization and politicization of the public transit industry. Transantiago aimed to expand the state control over a powerful, semi-formal, and cartel-like industry that controlled public transit in Santiago. System deregulation came from the progressive *retirement of the state's* involvement in the industry during the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-90). The premise was that the competition would force operators to offer a better service and a competitive fare, rationalizing the supply and eliminating the high costs that the publicly owned system entailed for the state (Díaz, Gómez-Lobo, and Velasco 2004). Such a premise proved to be false: the increase in the supply was accompanied by a parallel increase in the real price of fares. The consequences of the oversupply for the city included an increase in traffic, pollution, and insecurity.

Under this free-market regime of market and political deregulation, the 'transportistas' organization (hereafter, the '*gremio*') became extremely strong. While the Pinochet regime is well-

known by its success in repressing opposition, the *gremio* remained able to push back against the regime.

ii) The struggle for market oriented regulation. Democratically elected governments aimed to control the industry since their inception. Their interventions were highly contested, but they could also partially introduce some controls on the industry. Nonetheless, regulation was also partially fake. Tenders were only formally competitive; in practice they posed very slight challenges to operators, and operators were able to boycott more intrusive reforms or regulations. As Díaz et al. explain, "If during the eighties authorities were unable to break the cartel, during the nineties this flaw was only been partially corrected" (2004:25). In this way, new "bus companies were actually owner cooperatives which operated like a cartel" (Muñoz, Ortuzar, and Gschwender 2009).

Tensions reached an apex in 2002. The *gremio* refused to acknowledge the results of the Metro feeder services bidding process, and on the 12th of August, blockaded the about 45 of the major intersections of the city. For the government, this critical moment became an opportunity to finally defeat the *gremio* and to implement a major reform. Authorities refused any form of bargaining and uses the blockage as an opportunity to break the cartel. President Lagos declared, "What we observed today is absolutely unacceptable. I can say to my friends from the transportation industry that all the weight of the law will fall upon them. This is a serious country and you can't play around with Chile or with its institutions [...] As president of Chile, I owe myself to 15 million people, and I will not accept blackmail from a few." (*El Mercurio,* august 13th, 2002). Consequently, he invoked the 'Internal Security Act' (*Ley de Seguridad Interior del Estado*, an authoritarian law of exception) and incarcerated the leaders.

Contrary to the expectations of many, the move was a complete success for the government. Public opinion widely supported the decision, and the *gremio* was defeated. This can be understood because the *gremio* not only provided a poor service, but it was also extremely unpopular—bus service was the most unpopular public service in the city according to a survey of 2001 (Adimark 2001).

Demetrio Marinakis, one of the leaders of *gremio*, explained in retrospect:

The problem arose because for the first time in a South American country authorities opened up to the possibility that foreign companies came to bid; that sparked an outcry. A socialist government, rather than protecting its bus operators, tells big companies that we could not compete with them. In other words, we suffered from expropriation.

We never believed that president Lagos, to whom we always cooperated in his [political] campaigns, would apply the 'internal security act' (El Mercurio, August 11 of 2012; italics and translation are mine).

Marinakis' surprise illustrates an alternative version of the official story of Transantiago provided by experts. His quote shows that the relation of the industry with the government was explicitly political (and electoral), and took place in a context of permanent negotiations in which the government could not exclude the *gremio*. While the relations were publicly tense and disputed, the *gremio* still supported the center-left political coalition in the government, and they expected to be supported in exchange for it. The relation was thus not only of antagonism, but also of reciprocity. Whether the state aimed to introduce open tenders, efficiency and legality, it still had to accept the language of politics imposed by the *gremio*. The *gremio* defended their right over the streets ("we suffered from expropriation"), and governments could not challenge these rights before the use of violent measures. Finally, Marinakis' words explain the origin of the problem: the attempt of the government to introduce real competition in the industry, not *in* the market as in the eighties, but *for* the market, as a unique way to regulate it. The *gremio's* total defeat allowed the state to reset the terms of the problem, paving the way for a major reform. The industry would now rely on economistic assumptions that, unlike those of the eighties, would have the state as a crucial actor, but this time not against the market, but promoting a new, formalized one.

The Transantiago Era

i) Expert knowledge against politics. Transantiago was created as a public institution to redesign the entire system of public transit in Santiago, a six million-person city, spread over 1400 sq km. Since the beginning it faced many difficulties, including lack or economic and institutional resources. Transantiago had to restructure the entire network of routes, to integrate the operations (and the fares) through bus routes and the Metro under a trunk-feeder scheme (to reduce the oversupply and congestion) to modify the payment system, and renew the fleet of buses (the only gradual change in the

13

process). The formerly atomized industry had to be replaced by an open bidding process, opening the project up to a small number of supposedly competitive companies. Due to the magnitude and simultaneity of all these changes, the strategy and the launching were called the '*big-bang*.'

This ambitious plan, however, was a complete failure during the first years, becoming the most unpopular Chilean policy since the return of democracy in 1990. As The Economist stated, the possibility of total reform was a "planner's dream," but soon became "a model of how not to reform public transport" (February 7th, 2008).

The replacement of political abilities by technical skills was a troublesome process that confronted the highest authorities of the country. The switch entailed not merely the confrontation of political and technocratic discourses, but of alternative types of knowledge. The original head of the project was a famous politician who held a PhD in sociology. He was the only authority who had an active plan that included education, public engagement and negotiation with stakeholders and the community, but his approach was soon disregarded as inefficient by other authorities. Part of the problem came from the fact that the Sociologist was an influential public figure directly appointed by the President, and as such was unaccountable to the Secretary—a former university professor and PhD in engineering. This struggle took a particular discursive form. Although it was a struggle of power, the Secretary and his team adopted the position of efficient decision-making against political inefficiency. The original head of the project was criticized for being 'too political' (and inefficient, in consequence) and even because of his background as sociologist. The Secretary, instead, described himself as a technocrat. "I think he might be a good politician, but he's deficient when it comes to technical issues," maintained an interviewee. For that reason, argued another authority, "it was necessary to replace him with someone else, an engineer with managerial skills, not a sociologist with 'big ideas.'"

The Secretary won this struggle, and since then the directors of *Transantiago* would depend on the Secretary of Transit and Communications. The removal of the original Director was not merely a change in a position, but it entailed the victory of a specific perspective about planning. Authorities came to highlight their technical ability and the technical nature of their decisions as a mean of self-

legitimization. They usually defined themselves as technicians *in opposition to* politics, or political activities. Thus, the Secretary described himself as "a professional, a technician who performed political roles… many call me a technocrat, and that's fine," and positively remarked that in the project "politicians, strictly politicians, there weren't […] I never had the feeling that I was working on a project with people that did not understand technical reasons and that they were there for political reasons." Thus, to be able to "understand" technical reasons came to be defined as a criterion for participating in a meaningful debate. Another officer expressed that his job was not exempt of disagreements, "but these were technical fights, not a fight of cons [sic], you know […]. I don't know other governments, but in the government in which I worked, I fought a lot, *but always technically*."

ii) Constructing abstract laypersons. If in the past authorities were forced to consider a range of concrete political factors when taking the risky decision of intervening public transit, in the new scheme non-experts were regarded as an "undifferentiated mass" (Ferguson 1994) whose behavior could be modeled, but never as citizens with real interests. The abstraction of any particular interest through sophisticated technical devices helped to construct a problem that had to be technically solved. Depoliticization meant not only that decision-makers had to be highly qualified engineers, but that the very nature of the problem and the reality to be intervened had to be reconstructed as a technical challenge. Only then could the entire city be planned over a 'blank slate,' following a '*big bang'* strategy.

The network of services was the product of successively running 'scenarios' on an extremely sophisticated software application called "Model Design of Network of Public Transportation." Although the model was theoretical, authorities put great trust in it. The respect for the model was such that one interviewee sarcastically called it "the Delphic oracle" of the Technical Office of Transportation Planning." Aiming to clarify the 'chaotic' former system of routes, this new rational network would provide an optimal solution to the demand of public transportation in the city that minimize social costs, given some parameters. The result of this process, however, illustrates James Scott's paradox of legibility (1998): it 'rationalized' and made 'legible' an 'irrational' system of fluxes

of people and buses for decision-makers. If the former system was "irrational" for planners; the new one responded to a rational and scientifically modeled network. Non-experts, however, could not understand it. If the old system was very unpopular (as it was), people were at least able to use it—it was illegible for planners, it was legible for regular users. When *Transantiago* was launched, not only did the system fail, but people literally did not know where to go. On the morning of February 10th of 2007,

> millions of Santiaguinos woke up to find a completely new route network […] Accustomed to hailing their old bus in the corner of their houses, they discovered that now they needed to walk several blocks to find a suitable stop […]After years of only exceptionally taking more than one bus to reach their final destinations, they found that with Transantiago most trips required one or two transfers. […T]he transfer experience was a nightmare. The infrequent buses and the long queues greeting passengers at the transfer points negated any gains in travel time promised by the new trunk routes […] The public, disconcerted, strongly rejected the system. There were mobs at bus stops and at the metro, insufficient routes, areas without bus coverage, lack of buses, absence of control. (Flores 2013:318ss.)

iii) Blocking the access to political decision-making. Once public transit was defined as a technical problem, there was very little room to intervene in a design that no one knew about and only a handful of people could understand. Even qualified people that participated in the meetings because of their positions complained that the project was presented in overly technical terms. A former Director of Metro, a well-reputed officer trained in economics, insistently complained about the "arrogant" attitude of experts. Upset, he described that in the meetings, "if you did not have a Ph.D. from the U.S., you were just a plumber; you could not participate."

Authorities did not have to consciously *do* something to block citizen's access to public decisions: public engagement, local knowledge and everyday people were simply absent in their understanding of the situation. Two authorities that I interviewed considered, then, that the public perspective was indeed incorporated in the origins-destinations surveys (the surveys to estimate transportation demand). A former head of the SECTRA, personally affected by the failure of *Transantiago*, conceded to me that the lack of citizen involvement was a problem. But when I asked him how people should be involved, he was not clear, and when I suggested an alternative "like public forums," he immediately disagreed: "Nooo man! There are normal ways to do it […] You don't have to go to the streets and ask people for their opinions! There are formal and statistically valid ways to reach

the people." The authority most critical of the lack of public engagement conceived of public outreach as a poll! Along the same lines, when I asked another official about the kind of knowledge that would have been necessary to avoid the catastrophe, he bluntly replied "a politician would say, 'you need the people's knowledge,' but that's crap."

What might be more surprising, however, is that until *Transantiago* was launched in 2007, no opposition ever took place in the city. This is even more striking considering the magnitude of the plan and the extremely contested character of nearly all interventions in public transit both in the recent past and in other developing countries. Neither the thousands of the traditional informal vendors on the old buses, nor neighborhood associations, nor car drivers potentially affected by the new system ever publicly protested. Thus, while experts redesigned an entire city behind closed doors, either disinterested in or unconscious about the possibility of any form of public engagement, Santiaguinos seemed to simply accept it. Doubtless, it is hard to participate in the absence of channels for participation, and when the 'problem' was defined in technical terms by unreachable engineers. However, the relation between authorities and citizens goes beyond institutional channels. The *Transantiago* plan might be the only major transportation reform in developing countries that *never* faced any public protest before its implementation.

Transantiago and the Politics of Expertise

The history of *Transantiago* illustrates how experts, by means of technical devices and institutional rearrangements, could radically depoliticize a field that had previously been known for its highly contentious character. The consequences were twofold. On one hand, access to decision-making was blocked not only—nor mainly—by the absence of institutional channels, but especially by embedding a new technical understanding of a problem that few years before was entirely politicized. On the other hand, the government could dramatically extend its *ability* to control and rationalize the system, relying on formal definitions and according to the rule of law. Thus, authorities could design a new, entirely regulated system through a quasi-open and international bidding process—the dream of authorities in nearly every big city. Of course, there were important constraints, like the lack of

economic and institutional resources, and authorities were still afraid of possible boycotts of the *gremio*. But beyond that, Santiago is probably the only major city in any developing country that has been able to regulate its entire public transit system within a few years. As many authorities conceded to me, the system had and still has many problems, but they were still happy with it because now they were able to intervene into the system, while in the past interventions had been impossible. In other words, the main result of *Transantiago*, was not a better public transit system—as people say, the authorities had swapped a bad system for another bad system—but to expand the state capacities over an industry largely strong and refractory to state interventions.

The dramatic reconfiguration of the field cannot be solely explained by experts' agency. As shown above, a first and immediate condition for authorities and experts to conquer the public transit industry in Santiago was the defeat of the *gremio* in 2002 after a long political struggle. A crisis presents a critical opportunity for reconfiguring a problem (Somers and Block 2005). A second major element that helps to explain experts' success in redefining the problem in technical terms is the well-embedded and long-standing technocratic tradition of Chilean politics. Chilean experts have historically played a key role in political decisions (Silva 2006). Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb sustain that "Chile's unique policy path can largely be attributed to a uniquely powerful and ideologically coherent team of free-market technocrats, with a long-term vision for the Chilean economy" (2002:545-6). In this context, it is important to stress that the cartel-like and semi-informal character of the public transit industry before *Transantiago* was rather exceptional, and authorities could favorably deploy preexisting technocratic discourses and institutions to expand their domain over the informal politics of public transit. In this sense, *Transantiago's* infamous 'revolution from above' borrowed and expanded, but did not create, a technocratic logic of political action. The exceptionality of *Transantiago* comes from the radical redesign of the city by authorities, and especially from the contradiction between the technocratic character of the intervention and the politicized and the informal character of both the former industry in Santiago and in most of cities in developing countries.

IV. THE INFORMAL POLITICS OF METROBÚS

Metrobús is a BRT system launched in 2005 in Mexico City, commonly referenced as a success by authorities and international organizations. Its 'inclusive' and step-by-step strategy, incorporating incumbents into the new companies, has been widely promoted as 'democratic.' Throughout the development of the project, citizens in different affected neighborhoods, traders, as well as organized bus-owners have been able to press their concerns and negotiate with authorities to defend their interests. However, public engagement has been far from democratic. The strongest groups, able to influence or threaten the government's party, have achieved many benefits from their actions, while weaker groups have been marginalized or even directly harmed. When designing and implementing the plan, social opposition is the first concern that authorities consider. As a consequence, responses have been *ad hoc*, treating each issue differently. Consequently, the distribution of public goods—and the associated private costs—has been rather arbitrary. More problematically, the internationally awarded *Metrobús*, after 8 years of operation, handles only about three percent of Mexico City's transportation demand. It is not integrated with other modalities of transportation such as subway and trams, and the vast majority of commuters still routinely rely on the old system of *peseros*.

i) Including people or privatizing public goods? For the government to recognize the rights of *Rutas* over a corridor, corridors have to be selected not only based on their potential demand, but on the potential opposition to introducing *Metrobús*. "[T]he logic of power is quite different to the logic of demand," says Silvia, expert and former officer. As a rule, the higher the number of *Rutas* in a corridor, the lower the chances of the government to build a BRT line on it. The reason is simple: *Rutas* are independent and even antagonistic associations, so every additional *Ruta* in the planned corridor entails an additional negotiation.

Planners were completely aware about these potential problems before starting the project. For that reason, the first corridor had to be carefully selected and implemented; its success would demonstrate that it was feasible to regulate the bus transport industry. In order to do so, a mandatory

requirement was, and still is, to avoid conflicts and to affect incumbents as little as possible. "There is always the requirement to keep things calm, quiet," said a technician.

According to authorities, the process of incorporation had to be "democratic." As a democratic process, however, there were many shortcomings: the dispute over representation even involved the murder of the former leader of the *Insurgentes* branch. It was amidst all of this controversy that an unknown young leader emerged: Jesus Padilla. He would soon become the most powerful broker of bus transportation in the city. Padilla's election was only the beginning of a process of negotiation that would last a year and a half, in which Padilla and his fellows met weekly with the highest authorities of the Mexican Federal District.

Tensions, however, were not restricted to operators. Environmentalists protesting against the chopping down of old trees camped in the street, and were able to stop the work for several weeks. The government had to commit to develop a plan of minimal impact and reforestation for each tree that was chopped down. Neighborhood associations in well-off zones protested against the building of stations close to their area, and were able to get them relocated.

ii) Maintaining political 'equilibria' and the routinization of contention. System expansion has been erratic, and the government goal of keeping what a secretary of government called "social peace" by not affecting "political equilibria," has paradoxically resulted in a very contentious political process. By avoiding conflict, they have recognized nearly every form of demand that could impact either the plan or the ruling party. Authorities define their relation with affected groups in terms of potential oppositions, and give them attention in proportion to the threat the groups pose to those 'equilibria.'

Intervening in Mexico City entails permanent fighting forces. Every public work project starts late at night or early morning, when neighbors are less inclined to offer resistance. To enforce its decisions, the government acts surreptitiously, trying to make the first move in what they explicitly see as a power struggle.

Organizing and protesting are a resource not only available for previously mobilized or particularly politicized communities. On the contrary, it appears as an obvious strategy even for those

who lack any political experience. Housewives, shopkeepers, neighbors with different levels of education and with multiple political preferences—they all routinely organize, force roundtables, and sometimes negotiate their political support. Experience and political contacts certainly make a difference in terms of outcomes, but still people who lack them may succeed.

This rather disruptive strategy is closely connected with formal politics. People assume that defending their interests is not only a right, but a right that can be successfully exercised. They know that by protesting and occupying streets they will receive media attention, which translate immediately into political attention of two sorts. On the one hand, representatives of opposing parties routinely come to sponsor or co-opt the protests. Sometimes, however, minor politicians join the protests and try to make it 'their cause' as a mean to start they own political careers. On the other hand, protests start a tug of war between the city government and protestors, in which both parties threaten the other with increasing disruption and violence. People commonly camp on the streets to stop public works, chain themselves to the trees to prevent them from being chopped down, and also collect signatures, go to government offices, and demand and attend roundtables.

Conflicts and negotiations are part of everyday Mexican politics. Mexican sociologist Manuel Canto (in personal interview) described the interaction between authorities and citizens in these terms: from the government perspective, the strategy is "First, you don't listen. If they press too much, you bargain. And if they refuse every negotiation, you repress." From the citizens' point of view "the message is quite clear: […] 'if I have a problem, I won't process it through institutional channels. The alternatives are: either I throw stones [metaphorically speaking, i.e., use violent means], I find a powerful 'godfather,' or I resign.'" For authorities and citizens, that is just how society works:

> Conflict gets things done… Since institutions don't work very well, you have to occupy a street to be listened to by authorities [...] So what usually happens is that there is a public work in an area, neighbors organize and occupy the streets, then the government comes in and says: 'so, what are the problems, how could we solve them [...], so they need assemblies, or the negotiate and establish committees, and so... (former Secretary of Environment)
> Another corridor has to be built and now […] it is routine that someone protests, then mass media magnify activists' voices, then we have to establish roundtables for negotiation where doubts are dispelled, there is some agreement, neighbors obtain some benefit, and the corridor is finally built… It is a routine process; in every corridor the same thing has happened. (Undersecretary of transportation)

While authorities could eventually threaten the use of violence and discursively defend the idea of global planning, their discourse is ambiguous and contradicted by their own actions. Bargaining has meant that authorities have abandoned every form of planning, including the original master plan. While Line 2 was still part of it and could incorporate former *Rutas* as operator *companies*, real and expected oppositions, as well as the increasing costs of new lines, led authorities to follow an *ad hoc* strategy. Line 3 was not only absent in the original plan, but it runs parallel to a subway line. In addition, since negotiations with Rutas were becoming too hard, and after much opposition to the project, authorities decided to grant the Line to a large private interurban transportation company without any kind of public bidding. Line 4, however, has been the most controversial. Its two branches cross historical downtown, where many neighbors have a multi-generational family history. Studies of the demand have been the object of suspicion, since often buses run empty. The most observable effect of the line has been to "clean" downtown: to block loading operations, move street vendors, and stop the access of *peseros* to the *Zócalo*, the city's main square.

iii) Contentious reciprocity. The map of the route of Line 4 reflects the shape of the struggles of power over the project. The line passes through very narrow streets and has an uncountable number of turns that make it slow, probably inefficient, but still politically convenient. Wider parallel and more direct streets were discounted, very likely because of the massive presence of street vendors, whose organizations are extremely powerful and have clear connections with the ruling party. In other streets there were *Rutas*, and still others, neighbor organizations.

The relationship between every group and authorities is not only one of antagonism, but one of bargained cooperation. Teresa Gonzalez, neighborhood leader in downtown, provides a first example. She openly recognizes having a personal history associated with the leftist sections of the left-wing ruling coalition. Behind her desk a photo hung on the wall. She and the governor of the city appear together in a friendly pose. She talks about many high authorities as well-known interlocutors. Although

they have incarcerated her more than once, she still has a good relationship with them. They have also helped her to get out of jail.

Street vendors in the city offer a second example. Street vendors might be the most important group of supporters for the city government in recent years because of their huge number, their centralized organization, and their well-known but not transparent connections with the ruling party. Nearly every neighborhood leader that I interviewed mentioned this alliance, and assumed that building a line that directly harmed them was untenable.

But Teresa and street vendors have extensive contacts and a long experience of organization. Although this dynamic of contentious cooperation may be more clearly observable in those cases, it is by no means restricted to them. Even when 'spontaneous' organizations are reluctant to link with parties, their leaders usually come to realize that this is the most profitable strategy. A group of shopkeepers along Line 4 came to realize, too late, that their only solution was to trade with party politics. After systematically failing to obtain loading areas, they changed their strategy: "we linked to the PRD candidate, but also to his two opposing candidates… just in case." In the same cain, shopkeeper leaders in *La Merced* commercial area guiltily recognized to me: "yeah, we politicized… we were in the political campaign of [candidate X] as organization; we supported Tere [Gonzalez] with some stuff. […] In sum, we have been supporting the PRD, because at the end of the day the PRD will remain in power both in the City and in the Municipality."

The dynamics of protest, brokerage, and electoral politics are thus intimately intertwined. As mentioned, party representatives come very early in the organizing process, and so do representatives of the government team of "*concertadores*" ('bargainers'). If protestors can sustain their opposition, they progressively get access to higher representatives, the last of which is the Secretary of Government itself. In those instances, authorities systematically offer individual benefits to leaders if they demobilize, or if they support the party, or both. Although this scheme may not seem to be neatly different from contentious processes elsewhere, what seems particular in Mexico City is the ease with which citizens obtain access to authorities. Access is achieved quickly, and arriving to a Secretary of

government is feasible not only for big lobbies, but also for ordinary citizens. In this process, linking with parties, brokers and authorities is almost unavoidable.

Those dynamics of protests and bargaining have led to the abandonment of nearly every form of planning. Not only the design of recent lines, but also the way in which they have been assigned to operators, shows that political feasibility has become the single criterion of project design. The *ruta* leader of Line 1, Jesus Padilla, was given control to operate Line 4, not as a representative of a *Ruta* but as an individual owner. No form of competition took place.

Padilla has a critical function for the relation between authorities and bus operators. He not only *represents Rutas* in negotiations with the government, but also *represents the government* in negotiations with *Rutas*. As Flores argue (2013:157), in some instances he has been perceived "as "too close to government authorities" and has sarcastically been called "Padilla de Second." When representing *Rutas* and facing the government, he acts as a social leader, but when representing the government and facing *Rutas*, he acts as individual broker. This distinction, however, is analytical rather than practical. In practice, he has to perform both roles at the same time, in a fragile and ambiguous situation of "keeping political equilibria," (Angel, in interview) both with authorities and with *Rutas*.

The politics of 'Indio Tizoc:' everyday politics in Mexico City

In a big, luxurious office facing the *Zocalo* Square, the Secretary of the Government of the Federal District, somewhat annoyed, eludes all my questions and lectures me about his political wisdom. I insist on asking about how he and the team he leads deal with different types of conflicts. He suddenly replies: "have you watched "*El Indio Tizoc?*" "Starring Pedro Infante," he adds. Since I had not, he recites the story to me. In the movie, he said, a Zapoteca Indian is able to hunt and to bring animal fur to his godfather without any gunshots, receiving in exchange his praise. Envious and annoyed, the other hunters could not understand how he was always able to manage this feat. One day they approached the man and asked him about it; his answer was simple: "*la forma de pedir está en la forma de dar;*" "give and you shall receive."[12] This is the moral, the Secretary says, that he has always kept in the back of his mind in his long personal history as *concertador* (mediator, or bargainer). "Every project that the

24

government brings to the city," the Secretary continued "is accompanied by a proposal that offers a solution for the involved leaders." The strategy is to "give" in proportion to the possible negative impacts and potential conflicts, but having also a "stick" at hand—a metaphor also deployed by the Undersecretary of transportation to describe the negotiations.

That is how contemporary clientelism works: "power relations induce compliance more by the threat of the withdrawal of carrots than by the use of sticks" (Fox 1994:157). Compared with traditional clientelism, or with the power of the Mexican PRI few decades ago, this is certainly a much softer rule. If the government is invariably described as authoritarian, it is not due to the overwhelming use of violence, but because its decisions are experienced as arbitrary. This is quite paradoxical, for the very source of the government's erratic behavior lies on its lack of authority to impose its plans. The paradox is double if we consider that in Mexico City, the government hardly ever represses protestors. After all, public protests are routine in the city.

'Spontaneously' organized groups can easily access authorities—a clear sign that violent repression is not the rule. Access to representation, therefore, is quite open in Mexico City, but never through institutional mechanisms. The Government of the Federal District has developed institutions for local representation as a way to channel demands from the grassroots. Those channels, however, are innocuous and have been quickly co-opted by political parties (see Harbers 2007). Padilla, indeed, was also citizen representative in the Delegación Cuauhtémoc, the central municipality in the. The consequences of this model of representation are threefold.

First, since access to authorities can only take place through disruptive actions, and repression is rather minimal, demands can easily overflow the government's capacities. In this context, distribution of resources and negative impacts depends on the capacity of pressure—a resource that is fortunately available for many poor people. But for the same reason, less organized groups or people that follow institutional channels receive little, nothing, or receive the negative impacts. Thus, if the barriers for accessing interest representation are low, not everyone achieves the same results.

Second, and more importantly, the government has never questioned in practice the right of people to defend their particular interests. This has resulted in what van de Walle (2001) calls "partial reform syndrome." Since the government needs to maintain its clientelistic support, it "pursue reforms either at a glacial pace or highly selectively," prioritizing feasibility and postponing hard decisions (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 2002). As such, *Metrobús* only serves about 3% of the demand for transportation in the Federal District, while *peseros* are still the main means of transportation in the city.

Finally, since the only way to influence the government's decisions is through political organization, relations with authorities are either antagonistic or supportive. The consequence is that even the most trivial aspect of a BRT line, which an external observer would consider rather trivial or technical, becomes a potential political controversy. Type of buses, routes designs, location of stations, or parking locations are immediately linked with parties, corruption and elections. In my research, every interview quickly turned into a conversation about politics. The language of politics dominates the problem, serving to stop every form of general planning.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on two case studies of a highly contentious policy, I have explored two of the most pervasive practices that reproduce undemocratic policymaking in developing countries: clientelism and the politics of expertise. Clientelism and technocracy are much more than contingent strategies 'chosen' by authorities or citizens, but (opposite) political logics that determine the available course of action. In this sense, the two modalities of hidden authoritarianism considered here rest on a conceptual apparatus (Foucault 1982) rather than on alternative preferences.

This symbolic dimension of a struggle, as observed in *Transantiago* and *Metrobús*, is highly consequential for the development of policies and for the practice of politics. As O'Connor points out, "the power to establish the terms of debate—to contest, gain, and ultimately to exercise ideological hegemony over the boundaries of political discourse" (2002:17–18) can be the first and most important achievement to be conquered in order to impose a particular perspective. In Santiago, expertise was a

mean to reconstruct transportation as a technical problem, marginalizing every form of lay knowledge and depoliticizing one of the most contentious industries in Chile's recent history. In Mexico City, instead, the language of politics dominated the whole debate, enabling citizens to protest and to defend their interests against the government. Contention became routine, and public goods turned into a token of exchange.

The contrast between a technocratic *Transantiago* and a clientelistic *Metrobús* allows for better understanding the internal logic each of those two varieties of hidden authoritarianism.Technocracy and clientelism are not floating images imposed on subjects, but logics performed in, as well as enacted by, institutions that structure the relation between politicians, experts and laypersons. Technocratic and clientelistic discourses and practices, although reciprocally interrelated, are not perfectly coherent, and the distance between them can also be used for political purposes. In Santiago, public transportation until 2002 was one of the few spheres in which the central government could hardly intervene, with the transit system remaining backward and highly politicized. For the State, it was explicitly a "pending task" in Chile's celebrated recent 'progress.' But the Chilean state, traditionally very powerful and centralized, could use an already legitimized universalistic discourse to legitimate the *gremio's* repression and to redefine the problem in technical terms. While before there was a struggle over rights and interests, the government relied on economistic assumptions and equilibrium models to abstract the city and its multiple interests, designing and implementing the most ambitious public transportation plan developed in the world during the last decades. The network of routes in the city was entirely redesigned over a 'blank slate' by a handful of engineers, following a '*big bang*' strategy. In Mexico City, on the other hand, the government has naively attempted to 'technify' the problem and to adopt an authoritarian tone. But politicians and experts know that they cannot avoid bargaining, in the same way that organized groups commonly assume that the government has to trade with them. For that reason, the criterion to build a BRT Line is not the estimated demand, but the political feasibility. Authorities know that they will have to negotiate everywhere, so they construct where oppositions seem less abrasive. Studies, in contrast, are mainly a way to justify decisions already taken, as shaped by the

27

multiple negotiations between organized interests and authorities—not only regarding *Metrobús*. Citizens organize, trade their votes, and protest all over the city. As a result, every intervention is quickly politicized and the government has to progressively abandon any pre-established plan. Notably, in Mexico city poor people can still have a voice when facing the government, defending interests that would be otherwise excluded. In contrast, in Santiago, excluding interest representation was and is a clear criterion for developing *Transantiago*.

This contrast between universalism and interest representation is not only inferred through analysis, but empirically sustained by authorities. Chilean policymakers explicitly defended global planning and a *big-bang* strategy as a way to exclude particular, and in their view illegitimate, interests. Global planning was an explicit criterion for democracy, as opposed to the interests of a few. In Mexico, instead, authorities justified bargaining *because* they were a democratic government. As such, they could not just impose their decisions. From the citizen point of view, in Mexico the government was an actor subject to influences and pressures. In Chile, instead, after the defeat of the *gremio* in 2002, decision-makers became unreachable for external influences. In Mexico, a competitive reciprocity is a form to keep or increase one's political influences; in Santiago, competitive reciprocity was replaced through mathematical models and a technical redefinition of a social problem, building a distance that became impossible to cross.

Clientelism and technocracy, thus, are opposite modalities that both violate democracy in the name of democracy. Against modernization perspectives, I argue that inclusive interest representation and distributive universalism do not necessarily support one another, but can also contradict one another, as in the cases explored in this article. This tension, between what Piattoni calls access to citizenship and access to distribution, is neither necessary nor unique. It is not necessary, on the one hand, because the orienting principles of citizenship and distribution might reinforce one another, as implicitly hypothesized in modernization theories; they might work independently; but they can also work against one another, as showed in this article. It is not unique, on the other hand, because the politics of expertise and clientelism are, to different degrees, prevalent modalities for political actions in

nearly every democratic context. As such, the approach presented here can be a useful tool to analyze democracy in action. In the American context, for example, interest group politics represent the major path to influence political decisions (Clemens 1997), and the State has multiple entry points to block universalist distribution (Huber and Stephens 2010). In consequence, the "people's lobby" may have many of the characteristics that were found in the Mexican case. However, the American polity has also been characterized as the place where "market fundamentalism" has "radically transformed" the "dominant knowledge culture" (Somers and Block 2005:261). The term technocracy, in fact, was born in the U.S. amidst the crisis of 1930s with positive connotations. How do we understand those two opposite descriptions? Do they contradict one another? It is possible that they are both actual forces shaping American politics in various and potentially conflictive ways? I think that a relational, bottom up, and theoretically oriented approach, like the one deployed in this paper, might be useful for understanding the tensions between particularism and universalism in concrete democratic processes, and to analyze the political consequences of the hegemony of technical and political languages within a society.

References

Auyero, Javier. 1999. "From the Client's Point(s) of View": How Poor People Perceive and Evaluate Political Clientelism." *Theory and Society* 28(2):297–334.

Auyero, Javier. 2007. *Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina. The Gray Zone of State Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Beltrán, Pablo, Antonio Gschwender, and Carolina Palma. 2013. "The Impact of Compliance Measures on the Operation of a Bus System: The Case of Transantiago." *Research in Transportation Economics* 39:79–89.

Bogaards, Matthijs. 2009. "How to Classify Hybrid Regimes? Defective Democracy and Electoral Authoritarianism." *Democratization* 16(2):399–423.

Brinkerhoff, Derick W., and Arthur A. Goldsmith. 2002. "Clientism, Patrimonialism and Democratic Governance: An Overview and Framework for Assessment and Programming." Bethesda, Maryland.

Centeno, Miguel Ángel. 1993. "The New Leviathan: The Dynamics and Limits of Technocracy." *Theory and Society* 22(3):307–35.

Centeno, Miguel Ángel, and Patricio Silva. 1998. "The Politics of Expertise in Latin America: Introduction." Pp. 1–12 in *The Politics of Expertise in Latin America*, edited by Miguel Áangel Centeno and Patricio Silva. London and New York: MacMillian Press Ltd.

Clemens, Elisabeth S. 1997. *The People's Lobby. Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States, 1890-1925*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Collier, David, and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49(3):430–51.

Dahl, Robert A. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. 1992. "The Image of Objectivity." *Representations* Autumn(40):81–128.

Díaz, Guillermo, Andrés Gómez-Lobo, and Andrés Velasco. 2004. "Micros En Santiago: De Enemigo Público a Servicio Público." *Centro de Estudios Públicos* 96(primavera):5–48.

Domínguez, Jorge I. 1997. *Technopols: Freeing Politics and Markets in Latin America in the 1990s*. University Park: The Pennsylvantia State University Press.

Eisenstadt, Samuel, and Luis Roniger. 1984. *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ferguson, James. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Flores, Onesimo A. 2013. "Expanding Transportation Planning Capacity in Cities of the Global South: Public-Private Collaboration and Conflict in Chile and Mexico." Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Foucault, Michel. 1982. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Vintage.

Fourcade-Gourinchas, Marion, and Sarah L. Babb. 2002. "The Rebirth of the Liberal Creed: Paths to Neoliberalism in Four Countries." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(3):533–79.

Fox, Johnathan. 1994. "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Mexico." *World Politics* 46(2):151–84.

Garretón, Manuel Antonio. 2000. *La Sociedad En Que Vivi(re)mos: Introducción Sociológica Al Cambio de Siglo*. Santiago de Chile: Lom Ediciones.

Gay, Robert. 2006. "The Even More Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Brazil." Pp. 195–217 in *Out of the Shadows: Political Action and the Informal Economy in Latin America*, edited by Patricia Fernández-Kelly and Jon Shefner. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Harbers, Imke. 2007. "Democratic Deepening in Third Wave Democracies: Experiments with Participation in Mexico City." *Political Studies* 55(1):38–58.

Hayek, Friedrich. 2011. *The Constitution of Liberty: The Definitive Edition*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Hicken, Allen. 2011. "Clientelism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 14:289–310.

Hidalgo, Darío, and Pierre Graftieaux. 2007. "Planning and Implementation Issues of a Large Scale Transit Modernization Plan: The Case of Transantiago, Chile." in *Transportation Research Board 87th Annual Meeting*.

Hilgers, Tina. 2008. "Causes and Consequences of Political Clientelism: Mexico's PRD in Comparative Perspective." *Latin American Politics and Society* 50(4):123–53.

Hilgers, Tina. 2011. "Clientelism and Conceptual Stretching: Differentiating among Concepts and among Analytical Levels." *Theory and Society* 40(5):567–88.

Hilgers, Tina. 2012a. "Democratic Processes, Clientelistic Relationships, and the Material Goods Problem." Pp. 3–22 in *Clientelism in Everyday Latin American Politics*, edited by Tina Hilgers. Palgrave Macmillan.

Hilgers, Tina. 2012b. "The Complex Relationship between Clientelism and Democracy (a Framework with Evidence from the PRD in Mexico City)." 31(1):1–35.

Huber, Evelyne, and John D. Stephens. 2010. *Development and Crisis of the Welfare State. Parties and Policies in Global Markets*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kitschelt, Herbert. 2000. "Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities." *Comparative Political Studies* 33(6/7):845–79.

Kitschelt, Herbert, and SI Wilkinson. 2007. *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*. edited by Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I Wilkinson. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Landé, Carl H. 1977. "Introduction: The Dyadic Bases of Clientelism." Pp. 75–99 in *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, edited by Steffern W Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl H Landé, and James C Scott. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Mann, Michael. 1986. *The Sources of Social Power. Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mauss, Marcel. 2002. *The Gift. The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London and New York: Routledge.

Muñoz, Juan Carlos, Juan de Dios Ortuzar, and Antonio Gschwender. 2009. "Transantiago: The Fall and Rise of a Radical Public Transport Intervention." Pp. 151–72 in *Travel Demand Management and Road User Pricing: Success, Failure and Feasibility*, edited by Wafaa Saleh and Gerd Sammer. Ashgate.

O'Connor, Alice. 2002. *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Piattoni, Simona. 2001. *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation. The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Porter, Theodore M. 1993. "Statistics and the Politics of Objectivity." *Revue de synthèse* 114(1):87–101.

Porter, Theodore M. 1995. *Trust in Numbers. The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Scott, James C. 1972. "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia." *The American Political Science Review* 66(1):91–113.

Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Silva, Patricio. 2001. "Towards Technocratic Mass Politics in Chile? The 1999-2000 Elections and the 'Lavín Phenomenon.'" *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 70(Abril):25–39.

Silva, Patricio. 2004. "Doing Politics in a Depoliticised Society: Social Change and Political Deactivation in Chile." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23(1):63–78.

Silva, Patricio. 2006. "Los Tecnóoatas Y La Políitica En Chile: Presente Y Pasado." *Revista de Ciencia Políitica* 26(2):175–90.

Silva, Patricio. 2009. *In the Name of Reason Technocrats and Politics in Chile.* Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Skocpol, Theda. 1995. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers. The Political Origins of Social Policy in United States.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Somers, Margaret R., and Fred Block. 2005. "From Poverty to Perversity: Ideas, Markets, and Institutions over 200 Years of Welfare Debate." *American Sociological Review* 70(2):260–87.

Stokes, Susan C. 2007. "Political Clientelism." Pp. 604–27 in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Charles Boix and Susan Stokes. New York: Oxford University Press.

Van de Walle, Nicolas. 2001. *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Weber. 2013. *Economy and Society.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.