Exploring the politics-civil service interface and its implications for organizational capacity

Camilo Ignacio González
Assistant Profesor
Alberto Lleras Camargo School of Government
ci.gonzalezb@uniandes.edu.co

Pablo Sanabria-Pulido
Associate Profesor
Alberto Lleras Camargo School of Government
psanabri@uniandes.edu.co

Sao Paulo, FGV, December 5, 2018
Research Problem

- Effects of the Politics-administrative dichotomy
- Model proposed by Dasandi & Esteve (2017)
  - Separation of functions
  - Autonomy (Discretionality)
  - Relationship with capacity and resources (organizational studies)
Research Questions

• Is there separation and autonomy in the politics-bureaucrats relationship in a country with a still “in progress” civil service?

• To what extent the politics-bureaucratic relationship in Colombia has an effect on the levels of capacity and resources of public organizations?
Theoretical Framework

• Autonomy and separation can be understood in terms of delegation (Majone, 2001).
  ➢ Why to delegate (separation)
    - a larger separation of functions in an organization implies that politicians expect that the delegated implementation functions will be performed better.
  ➢ How to control what is delegated (autonomy)
    - discretionality
    - pockets of effectiveness’
    - Principal agent relation
Hypotheses

✓ H1: Public Organizations in which implementation functions have been largely delegated will pose larger capacity than organizations with lower levels of delegation.

✓ H2: Public organizations with higher levels of autonomy will pose larger organizational capacity than organizations with lower levels of autonomy.

✓ H3: Public organizations with higher levels of autonomy will pose shorter organizational capacity than organizations with lower levels of autonomy.
Methodology

• Data collection
  ✓ 103 national level disaggregated agencies
  ✓ Codes:
    - Type (autonomy)
    - Governing structure (autonomy)
    - Task (separation)
    - Budget
    - Number of employees

• Quantitative Data Analyses
  ✓ ANOVA
  ✓ T-tests
Key Results

- Public organizations with some implementation functions appear to have greater organizational capacity and resources (e.g. larger budget)

- Public organizations with greater autonomy (legal) exhibit greater financial capacity and resources (e.g. larger budget)

- Public organizations with greater levels of autonomy (legal) also show greater capacity and resources (e.g. larger set of employees)
Discussion of Results

• We found there is relationship (partial) between autonomy/separation and organizational capacity/resources,

• Evident specially for budget rather than for the number of employees, path dependence is key

• Organizations involved in direct implementation appear to be more successful in the budget bargaining process. Technical missionalities allow them with greater discretionality and less political interference.

• Those organizations with greater formal autonomy tend to be greater in terms of payroll, direction of relationship still uncertain (endogeneity). Further research.

• Structural autonomy shows no statistically significant relationship. Further research needed.
Conclusions

• Bottom line:
  – There is an effect from the politics-bureaucrats relationship in the organizational capacity, even (or specially?) in developing civil services,
  
  – There is rationality in the allocation of capacity and resources but such rationality is certainly affected by the intensity and mode of the politics-bureaucrats relationship.
  
  – Key institutional arrangements affect the intensity and mode of the relationship and hence its ability to affect the organizational capacity and level of resources at hand.
Thank you! Gracias!

ci.gonzalezb@uniandes.edu.co
psanabri@uniandes.edu.co