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Constituency Building in Multimember Districts: Collusion or Conflict?

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The vast majority of what we know about building prospective electoral constituencies is confined to single-member district systems. However, most legislators are elected in multimember districts. Given that multiple incumbents represent the same voters, how do legislators decide whom they should target as prospective constituents? We build a general model of this decision and test it with travel data for 100 legislators elected in a single, nationwide district. We find that incumbents protect their existing supporters and avoid bailiwicks dominated by others. We conclude by deducing hypotheses about party system effects on incumbents' decision making and the level of electoral conflict.

For the great majority of democratically elected officials, time is short. Most political offices have fixed terms of four years or less, forcing politicians constantly to think prospectively about their professional futures. Given basic and empirically valid assumptions about ambition, this means that politicians are forced to continually focus effort on building an electoral constituency. This basic premise is central to theories of elite behavior in democracies. The implications of prospective vote-seeking undergird the majority of theories of legislative behavior. Legislators introduce legislation, seek pork projects, make speeches, solve public pension disputes, and kiss scores of babies—all with the motive of assembling a winning electoral coalition to earn another term in office.

Unfortunately, it is not clear how much of what we know about building electoral coalitions is applicable to the great majority of legislative systems worldwide, because of its narrow focus on a rather unique institutional context: the single-member district (SMD) electoral system of the United States' House of Representatives. The great majority of legislators worldwide are actually elected in multimember districts. Their calculus for allocating political resources is significantly more complex. In SMDs, incumbents only compete with challengers who often lack experience, funding, and other perks necessary to pose a real threat. In MMDs, incumbents have to face other incumbents in the same district.

These incumbents all have access to significant political resources and are well prepared to compete for votes.

In this article, we seek to build a more general model of constituency building by examining how legislators allocate their resources to subsets of voters within a multimember, proportional representation electoral system knowing that other incumbents are doing the same thing. Our argument has two central parts. First, we argue that prospective constituency development should focus on building and maintaining personal vote advantages achieved previously in one's career. Second, incumbents in multimember districts should strive to avoid costly inter-incumbent competition for votes. We interact these mechanisms with ambition, arguing that the dynamics of constituency building in MMDs will vary with career goals.

We test our model by examining the travel patterns of Colombian Senators. In 1991, Colombians adopted a new constitution making all 100 senators run for election in a single national district.[1] Technically Colombia uses closed-list proportional representation. Practically, however, the use of subparty lists means that any candidate can form his or her own list and run under the partisan banner of choice, minimizing party leaders' authority.[2] Effectively, then, Colombia's electoral system approximates single nontransferable vote rules. All 100 incumbents could in theory compete for the same voters' support. Every week, each senator must make a strategic decision about how to allocate a four-day weekend among different prospective constituencies. Using an original data set of senators' weekly travel patterns, we test the influence of career ambition, retrospective and prospective constituencies, and, for lack of a better term, destination appeal (for nonelectoral reasons). The results strongly support our hypotheses (and shed light on the reasons why Colombia's 1991 constitutional reform was less effective than reformers hoped).

Studying travel patterns provides a rare window onto an essential but elusive feature of legislative behavior. Contact between politicians and supporters is an assumed feature of many models of legislative behavior, but is rarely observed. Strategies for pursuing approval from the electorate vary with both institutions and electorates, but regardless, each requires that politicians identify voters' preferences, seek to deliver desired goods, and make potential supporters aware of their actions (credit claiming). All of these imply some form of contact and information exchange between potential voters and politicians. Politicians visit their electorates to promote their latest legislative agenda, their efforts to solve citizens' personal problems, and even to dole out tee shirts and baskets of food. They speak at high school graduations, attend religious assemblies and community meetings, and may even make wedding and birthday appearances. This kind of behavior—"home style" (Fenno 1978)—plays a central role in justifying the assumptions made in most research on legislative politics. Legislator's roll-call

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[1] Two additional seats are reserved for indigenous candidates.

[2] Only three directly elected Senators in our data set were not the heads of their own lists.

votes, committee assignments, constituency service, budget amendments, and legislative proposals have been tied to voters' preferences—leaving implicit the assumption that legislators successfully identify potential supporters and make them aware of their efforts on the hill.

But while this assumption may be an essential foundation of legislative theories, we almost never actually observe legislators' decision-making processes about how to identify prospective constituents and exchange information with them—to learn about preferences, to claim credit for delivery, or simply to self-promote as a man or woman of "the people." Instead, we correlate voters' and legislators' characteristics and simply assume that the interaction takes place. For example, scholars tie roll-call votes to the number of union members in an electoral district, or bill initiation priorities to poverty levels in the community, or committee assignments to potential voters' economic interests. In each of these examples, an interaction between voters and politicians is implied. And in each of these, that interaction is unobserved. The lack of research on home style is certainly understandable given the formidable data collection challenges associated with such work. Fenno's classic required eight years of travel with 18 legislators; few other scholars have been willing or able to dedicate as much time to similar projects. By constructing a data set of travel patterns for every member of a legislative chamber, we have a unique opportunity to study the electoral calculus of incumbents in a multimember district. While politically sensitive and logistically difficult to compile, the data offer a rare insight into the strategic choices legislators must make about prospective constituencies. Fortunately, because the tickets are purchased with public funds, there is a comprehensive, if difficult to obtain, paper record of all such trips.[3]

We proceed in four additional steps. In the next section, we propose a model of how legislators allocate resources to different constituencies. Then, in the third section, we introduce the Colombian Senate and show how it is a nearly ideal laboratory for studying home style in MMDs. We test our model on an original

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[3] The offices of Colombian legislators are housed in the New Building (*Nuevo Edificio*) across the street from the parliament itself. The Senate Travel Office (*Oficina de Viajes*) and an office of the Summa Alliance (*Alianza Summa*) airlines—three domestic airlines, Avianca, Aces, and SCM collaborate to offer services covering the entire country—are located on the ground floor. Senators must request their tickets through the Senate Travel Office. The travel office compiles these requests and submits them to the airline office next door. The travel office staff then delivers the tickets to each senator's office. They are delivered in envelopes with a ledger printed on the side. This ledger details the Senator's name, the date of travel, and the destination, and they provide a place for the recipient to sign. When the ledger on one envelope is full, a new envelope is used, but the old envelope remains in the tray containing the envelopes for all senators. Several efforts to obtain access to the data were rebuffed, primarily on security grounds. Recent revelations regarding use of the travel privilege for personal vacations was probably also a factor. In the end, however, we were permitted to sit in the travel office and hand copy the information from the ledgers. There are reasons to believe that senators might not always accurately recall or report their travel patterns, but the airline ticket delivery system allows us to overcome these difficulties.

data set and discuss results in the fourth section of the article. In the fifth and final section we offer some theoretical generalizations and comparative hypotheses regarding how the interaction between constituents and legislators in multimember districts may vary across party systems.

Home Style Revisited

Previous studies of home style have focused on how much of legislators' time is devoted to returning to the district, what kinds of interactions they have with constituents while in the district, and how much of their staff is devoted to district offices and constituency service. Variations across these indicators have been attributed to the nature of the district's population, the legislator's previous pattern of electoral support (including margin of victory), the stage of a legislator's career, party ideology, and institutional incentives to engage in personal vote seeking.

Understanding home style in multimember districts requires some recasting of the challenges that legislators face. Before they can decide how much time to spend at "home" and in what activities to engage while there, legislators must decide where "home" is in a multimember district. Which constituents should legislators focus on in such environments? Some countries, like Colombia, exaggerate the choice by using a single, national district to elect legislators. Regardless of the geographic scale, the question remains the same: where is *my* home given that other members of my chamber represent the same district I do? This question would never occur to a member of the U.S. House or a British M.P. "Ownership" of a district relative to all other incumbents is institutionally fixed—there is no choice to make. For Colombian senators, the entire nation is potentially home, and they must strategically choose with which potential supporters to exchange information. We might simply assume that in multimember districts of all sizes legislators will allocate their time, staff, and other resources proportionally to population. We argue that such an allocation of resources would be inefficient and suboptimal for most legislators.

Most fundamentally, rather than spreading their resources thinly across the entire district, legislators should concentrate their efforts on key subconstituencies (Bishin 2000). This basic observation has several important implications. First, legislators should build on their personal following. Among core constituents, legislators have promoted their party, policy, and person, and their efforts were successful in generating a seat in the legislature. Seeking votes among new constituencies would require beginning from scratch on all dimensions and would reduce resources available to maintain a core, already successful electoral coalition. Further, legislators should allocate resources to geographically specific constituencies where they exist. For example, in the case of Colombia, given the fact that many of these senators were previously elected in smaller Chamber districts or under the old state-wide district system for the

Senate (pre-1991), we would expect many senators to have concentrated vote shares similar to those they maintained prior to political reform. This leads us to our first prediction: legislators' home style will focus on existing constituencies, not necessarily on purely district-wide constituencies.

Second, in multimember districts legislators have to compete both with challengers and with fellow incumbents. In single-member district systems, the simple dichotomy of incumbent and challenger makes the basic calculus simpler. The incumbent strives to maintain and expand his or her vote share in an effort to deter and to defeat challengers in both primary and general elections (Stone and Maisel 2004). In multimember districts, incumbents should also seek to maintain their existing vote shares, but they may find themselves competing for votes with other incumbents—especially in open or subparty list systems. Incumbents are on average more competent, proven campaigners, and they have access to the spoils (government resources) of their previous victory—not the sort of competitor a politician wishes to face. Challengers, on the other hand, may be serious politicians, but typically they do not have the advantages associated with incumbency—most particularly, proven capacity under a given set of electoral rules and the specific constituency in question.

In SMD systems, legislators work hard to avoid competing with other incumbents, preferring to face, on average, less-experienced challengers in general elections. For example, when redistricting in the United States puts two incumbents in the same new district, almost inevitably, one of the two will move—sometimes halfway across a state—to avoid having to battle another experienced politician (Desposato and Petrocik 2003). In a single, nation-wide, multimember district, incumbents seeking reelection have no such option, but they should still try to avoid competing with each other to the extent possible. Katz and Mair (1995) argue that established parties form a "cartel"—colluding to avoid "expensive," in a variety of senses, electoral competition. This implies that incumbents would be directed to avoid one another's bailiwicks, content to share the spoils of access to the state. This leads us to a second hypothesis: legislators should avoid seeking votes from other incumbents' core constituencies, instead focusing their efforts on voters not already "captured" by incumbents.

Finally, these mechanisms should interact with legislators' ambition and career security. Legislators' ambition should determine the strength of incentives for continued constituency interaction. Legislators seeking reelection should have strong incentives to allocate time to preserving their core constituency as predicted in our previous two hypotheses. Legislators not planning to run again should have much weaker incentives for constituency service. Legislative security should also interact with these mechanisms. Previous work has shown how legislative behavior varies with electoral security (Ames 1995, 2001). In this case, legislators elected with sizable margins should have less pressure to respond to and interact with core constituencies. They have solid electoral bases and can safely allocate resources to hill style (or simply to recreation) without significantly damaging their chances of reelection. In contrast, legislators with marginal

electoral security should dedicate more resources to maintaining and expanding their core constituencies.[4]

Legislators' challenge is to allocate resources in a way that maximizes their career utility—and eventually their probability of reelection. Let legislator i have utility ij associated with a trip to department j. Legislators seek to maximize their overall utility U_{ij} by allocating N resources among all departments. We can then write the utility of legislator i's allocating political resources to constituency j as:

$$U_{ij} = \beta_{1a}*Vote\ Share_{ij} + \beta_{1b}*\ Security_i*Vote\ Share_{ij} + \beta_{1c}*Ambition_i$$
$$*Vote\ Share_{ij} + \beta_2*Dominated_j + \beta_3*Electorate_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Vote Share is the portion of a legislator's support that came from that destination in the previous election. *Security* is the margin by which the legislator exceeded the lowest vote getting winner in the district. *Ambition* is the intent to run for office at the end of the current term. *Dominated* is the degree to which a destination's voters are aligned to one or a small number of candidates, based on Ames (1995, 2001). *Electorate* is the number of voters in the destination department.

Home Style in Colombia

We test this model on the Colombian Senate, which provides a nearly ideal laboratory for our model. Multimember districts characterize most legislative systems, and Colombia is one of several countries using a single, nationwide district to elect legislators. This system represents the polar opposite of the single member district system in terms of the issues discussed above. Colombia covers 440,000 square miles, about twice the size of France, and has over 40 million citizens. Colombia's nationwide district system was adopted in 1991 in large part to promote national interest representation and to reduce the regionalism and parochialism that plagued the prereform, single-member district system (Botero

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[4] On the surface, this sounds similar to the literature on travel allocations by U.S. presidential candidates. Scholars have built and tested numerous models of presidential candidates' allocation of campaign resources across and within states. Much of this literature centers on the role of the electoral college in biasing campaign resources away from population proportionality. Like the analysis presented here, this literature is concerned with the behavior of politicians in the distribution of their time and other resources across different constituencies (states). However, many of the results and models from the United States are not relevant because of several key differences in application. First, the model we offer is for a system of direct elections (not the indirect elections via an electoral college). Second, the U.S. literature is based on a district magnitude of one—there is only one President. We model behavior in multimember districts. The number of actors is much greater in our case, and their competition is not a zero-sum game for a single seat. Third, we study the behavior of elected incumbents—not competitors in (effectively) an open-seat race. All these incumbents were successfully elected, and if they maintain their existing constituencies, they should be reelected in subsequent elections. In contrast, candidates in the U.S. literature are constantly competing for votes in a zero-sum game in which only one of them can win. This is not the way most legislators around the world are elected.

1998; Crisp and Ingall 2002; Nielson and Shugart 1999). Still, senators clearly face incentives strategically to concentrate their vote shares rather than trying to interact with a truly national constituency. As we will illustrate in detail later, the system allows for multiple equilibria—it is possible to get elected both with a geographically dispersed or with a geographically concentrated set of supporters. An analysis of Colombia thus provides maximum institutional variance from the relatively overstudied SMD case and helps us understand the impact of recent electoral reforms in that country. More importantly, the logic of our argument works for the behavior of all multimember districts, whether they are nationwide districts with 100 senators—or at-large municipal elections with 10 council members.

In 1990 Colombians elected a National Constituent Assembly to rewrite the constitution. The decision to draft a new constitution came only after more than a decade of attempts by Colombian presidents to bring about political reform. The electoral system encouraged excessively particularistic behavior by legislators making them responsive to narrow clientelistic, largely rural networks (Archer 1995; Nielson and Shugart 1999). Legislators typically neglected national issues, and corrupt vote-seeking practices abounded. Presidents were more attuned to programmatic concerns because of their nationwide constituency, but most executives found it very difficult to push their policy agendas (including reform attempts) through Congress. Under the previous constitution, all legislators in the bicameral Colombian Congress were elected under a closed, subparty list system from districts congruent with the country's administrative departments (akin to American states). Candidates were virtually free to use the party banner of their choice, and electoral laws did not empower party leaders to rank candidates on a particular list or to rank the multiple lists using their banner. What is more, votes were only pooled to the subparty list rather than being used to elect other members of the same party on a different list. Because multiple lists from the same party competed in each district, intraparty competition was rife. Given that candidates had to distinguish themselves from members of their own party, the electoral system enhanced the importance of candidates' personal reputations and encouraged personalistic politics (Carey and Shugart 1995).

According to Botero (1998), reformers hoped (1) to increase the political participation of regional, ethnic, and political minorities; (2) to rid the political system of clientelism and the associated corruption; and (3) to alter the nature of representation by fashioning an upper chamber for national concerns and a lower house for regional and local matters. Reformers left the electoral system for the Chamber of Representatives largely unchanged, but transformed the Senate into a 100-member body elected from a single nationwide district (previous districts ranged in district magnitude from 2 to 15 members). The Constituent Assembly had been elected from a single nationwide district, and many of its members hoped to replicate their interest in programmatic, national concerns by creating a legislative chamber elected in the same manner. It was reasoned that senators would be forced to refrain from reliance on traditional clientelistic machinery,

choosing instead to build a national reputation based on their programmatic policy priorities. Furthermore, the political arena would be opened to nontraditional candidates who, lacking a strong regional support base, would be able to pursue a "dispersed strategy" of winning smaller numbers of votes across all the country's departments that would, when totaled, be sufficient to ensure election. However, reforms did not strengthen party leaders by eliminating intraparty competition. As we will show, the lack of party-building reforms has significant and somewhat surprising implications for legislators' patterns of behavior and the ability of established parties to form a cartel containing electoral competition.

Previous research on Colombian legislators' constituency building has been limited to examining how both Representatives and Senators balance legislative and constituency work. Ingall and Crisp (2001) explored Colombian legislators' self-reported allocation of their time and staff to the capital or other parts of the country. Their work is useful for examining legislators' balance of hill and home responsibilities, but does not shed light on the broader questions posed by this article. The Ingall and Crisp piece works with a home/hill dichotomy, without addressing the unique pressures created when incumbents share a multimember district—especially a national one (most of their respondents were elected in statewide districts with magnitudes between 2 and 15). They conceive of a legislator's choice about how to allocate his time between hill and home as an individual choice. They did not examine variations in ambitions across legislators and how the support base of one legislator influences the choices of other legislators. As discussed above, legislators in multimember districts must target more discrete constituencies than those in single-member districts, and they must take into account the likely strategies of both incumbents and challengers in the same district.

We apply our vote-seeking model to Colombian senators' allocation of their most precious resource: time. Each week Colombian senators make decisions about which constituents to visit. These decisions precede the questions that consume legislators in a single-member district about in what kinds of activities to engage and how to task one's staff. Colombian law provides that senators can receive an airline ticket to any domestic destination every weekend. Given the ticket-delivery system employed by the Senate Travel Office (see footnote 4), we are able to track those travel decisions and compile a unique set of data for operationalizing the strategic choices senators regularly face. Plenary sessions and committee hearings typically run Tuesday through Thursday, leaving legislators four days to travel. Senators may also stay in the national capital (Santafé de Bogotá) and its surrounding department (Cundinamarca), neither of which require air travel. So, each senator faces the choice of staying in the Bogotá/Cundinamarca region or traveling to one of 31 other departments (see Figure 1).

In practice, the average senator traveled outside of Bogotá 39 weekends out of the 54 observed, with the least frequent traveler never leaving the capital area and the most frequent traveler never staying in it. Some senators concentrated their trips to only a single department while others traveled much more widely, visit-

FIGURE 1

Colombian Departments

ing as many as 16 different departments (with the average senator visiting five departments). Citizens of the average department could count on visits from 16 of the 100 senators elected in the nationwide district, but several departments received no visits by senators. The well-traveled department was visited by all senators.

Adapting our general model of multimember districts to Colombia requires incorporating context-specific control variables. First, we control for "destination appeal." Colombians are generally skeptical about perquisites received by public officials, and there is a sense that travel privileges may be used for purposes other than interaction with prospective constituents. Clientelistic networks and repeated corruption scandals have diminished trust in government, and access to free airline tickets smacks to many Colombians of an undue privilege of the political class. On a more somber note, many legislators have been killed or kidnapped in recent years. Armed conflict among government security forces, two leftist mil-

itary groups, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), and right-wing paramilitaries, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), is virtually continuous. We use the number of local officials kidnapped to control for destinations where legislators might feel that their security was unduly at risk. If Senators do not feel constrained in their travel patterns, it might be interpreted as a sign that they have selectively reached a tacit agreement with the armed groups to cater to their supporters. Finally, we include a dummy variable for the capital area. While it is a densely populated area and should generate attention for reasons captured by our *Electorate Size* variable, there are other reasons why senators might stay in the capital. For example, Bogotá is the home of the major media outlets, and one might stay in the capital area to contact voters indirectly through television appearances or interviews with national papers. In addition, though it is rare, some legislators might have official duties, such as committee meetings, while others are traveling.

Data and Analysis

   To test our hypotheses, we gathered data on all trips taken by Colombian senators between July 1998 and July 1999 (no other time period was available), as well as other characteristics of departments and senators. Adding the Colombia-specific variables discussed above, we write the utility of a trip to department j by legislator i as:

$$U_{ij} = \beta_{1a}*Vote\ Share_{ij} + \beta_{1b}*Security_i*Vote\ Share_{ij} + \beta_{1c}*Ambition_i$$
$$*Vote\ Share_{ij} + \beta_2*Dominated_j + \beta_3*Electorate_j + \beta_4*Beach_j$$
$$+ \beta_5*Kidnappings_j + \beta_6*Bogotá_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

   The independent variables come from the Colombian Census and electoral agencies and are defined as follows:

- *Votes$_{ij}$* is the number of votes Senator i received in department j (divided by 10,000 to produce readable coefficients).
- *Votes$_{ij}$*Security$_i$* is the interaction of votes received in department j and Senator i's electoral security. *Security$_i$* is the number of votes Senator i's list received, divided by the minimum number needed for election. "Secure" senators should have more flexibility to pursue risky vote-seeking outside their own bailiwicks, perhaps anticipating a run for higher office or getting more members of their list elected in the future. "Marginal" senators should focus their limited resources more carefully on maintaining their ties to the coalition of voters that elected them.
- *Votes$_{ij}$*Ambition$_i$* is the interaction of votes received in department j and Senator i's political ambition. *Ambition$_i$* is an indicator variable coded "1" for senators seeking reelection to the Senate, and "0" for those retiring.[5] Senators seeking

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[5] One senator ran for the presidency and was coded as "ambitious."

reelection should spend more time with their core constituency and less time on hill style, beach visits, or other errands.

• *Dominated$_j$* is the sum of all candidates' squared vote percentages in department *j*. High dominance scores indicate that the district is dominated by one or more strong candidates; low scores indicate that votes in the department were divided among numerous candidates. If a single candidate received all the department's vote, the destination would receive a 1. If two senators split the department's vote evenly, the destination would receive a Dominated score of .50 ($.50^2$ + $.50^2$ = .50) and so on.

• *Electorate Size$_j$* is the number of voters in department *j*, also divided by 10,000.

• *Beach Resort$_j$* is an indicator variable coded "1" if the department is one of the coastal resort areas (San Andrés, San Andrés; Cartagena, Bolívar; or Santa Marta, Magdalena) and "0" if it is not.

• *Kidnappings$_j$* is the number of mayoral kidnappings that took place in department *j* immediately prior to and during the period studied.[6]

We seek estimates of the underlying parameters β_1 to β_6. Estimation requires keeping in mind two key factors regarding the nature of our data. First, the dependent variable, number of trips by Senator *i* to department *j*, is left-censored. Legislators have a finite number of travel opportunities to invest in building a winning electoral following for subsequent elections. There might be some positive utility associated with a trip to one of the sparsely populated Amazon departments—but given limited travel opportunities, a Senator takes the trips that will generate the most votes. Hence the dependent variable, number of trips, is truncated at zero. Second, some legislators have more travel opportunities than others. Directly elected senators can designate substitutes (*suplentes*) from losing candidates further down on their subparty lists. Given the irregular use of substitutes and the variation it creates across senators in terms of time in office, we must account for variations in the opportunity to travel.

We can account for these factors and estimate the coefficients of interest using a Tobit model with senator fixed-effects. Tobit models are appropriate when there are latent continuous variables that are truncated below and/or above. In this case, the latent continuous dependent variable is the utility of travel to department *j* by senator *i*. While we observe trips taken, we cannot distinguish among departments that are coded "0" despite variations in how much a given senator might like to visit them, time permitting. We include a dummy variable for each legislator to control for the different characteristics of each and the fact that different legislators were in the Senate for different lengths of time. Effectively, this controls for the fact that two identical senators, one in the Senate all year, another for just one month, will have very different numbers of trips.

The dependent variable for this model is the number of trips by senator *i* to department *j*. The *Trips* variable captures the number of trips to department *j* by

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[6] Kidnapping data was published in the online version of the weekly news magazine *Semana* (http:/semana.terra.com.co/).

TABLE 1

Fixed-Effects Tobit Model of trip destination decisions[a]

Variables	Estimated Coefficient	SE	P (|b| > 0)
Ambition			
Votes*Ambition	1.50	.62	.02
Current Constituency			
Votes	13.45	.67	.00
Votes*Security	−4.38	.29	.00
Future Constituency			
Dominated	−1.95	.76	.01
Electorate Size	.21	.02	.00
Destination Appeal			
Kidnappings (mayors)	−.27	.14	.05
Beach Resort	9.43	1.18	.00
Bogota/Cundinamarca	−4.60	2.89	.11
Constant	22.89	21.29	.28
N	3744		
LL	−2542.93		

[a] Fixed effects for Senators not shown.

senator i; all values are positive integers (or zero if the senator never visited that department). The total number of trips taken by senator i during the observed period is equal to the sum of the *Trips$_{ij}$* for that senator. For each senator there are 32 possible destinations, so for each senator there are 32 observations in the dataset—one for each department. This is a standard approach for similar choice models (see McFadden 1973).

Table 1 shows the results of estimating this model on travel data from Colombia. The data strongly support all our major hypotheses. First, senators prefer maintaining their existing constituency to developing a new one. The coefficient on votes received in 1998 is positive and significant at a .001 level. In this case, for each additional 10,000 votes, a typical senator[7] would like to visit the department about 13 more times.[8] The many advantages of incumbency make maintenance of existing electoral support easier than the development of new constituencies. Senators are well known among the constituents that elected them; they have already made speeches, shaken hands, and kissed babies in these regions. Existing electoral bases proved a winning strategy—the senators were, after all, elected. Developing new electorates requires substantially more effort and risk, so strategic senators focus their resources on existing constituencies.

What the positive coefficient for votes does not make immediately obvious is the diversity of patterns of support for Colombian senators and the impact of

[7] A typical senator is one seeking reelection and elected with about 50% more votes than the minimum quotient.

[8] This ignores, for the time being, the interactions of *Safety* and *Votes* and *Ambition* and *Votes*.

those patterns on the interaction between voters and legislators (see Figure 2). For example, Luis Fernando Correa Gonzalez got 92% (or 38,724) of his 42,186 votes in a single department—Antioquia, while Luis Elmer Arenas Parra's votes were more dispersed. The largest departmental contribution to his votes was only 32% (or 12,997) from Santafé de Bogotá.[9] Correa visited only three departments and went to Antioquia for 46 of the 54 weekends available. Arenas, on the other hand, visited 14 different departments. In an interview, Arenas reported that he spends most of his time interacting one-on-one with constituents, attending community meetings, and talking to constituents about national issues—especially health and education policies (Ingall 1999). He had never served in congress previously and was elected under the banner of the Moral and Social Vanguard of Colombia (*Vanguardia Moral y Social de Colombia*). Correa, a member of the traditionally strong Conservative Party (*Partido Conservador de Colombia*), had previously served as a member of the Chamber of Deputies from Antioquia. Correa reported that he maintains an office in Antioquia's capital of Medellin, a city of more than 1.7 million people, but he considers the rural areas of the department to be his sources of greatest support. Clearly, these two elected representatives serving in the same chamber from the same (national) district have very different conceptualizations of what constitutes "home." Arenas epitomizes the "modern" senator that institutional reformers were hoping to encourage while Correa is more the prototypical clientelistic, "traditional" politician. They both behave predictably given their patterns of support, but their patterns of support could hardly vary more widely.
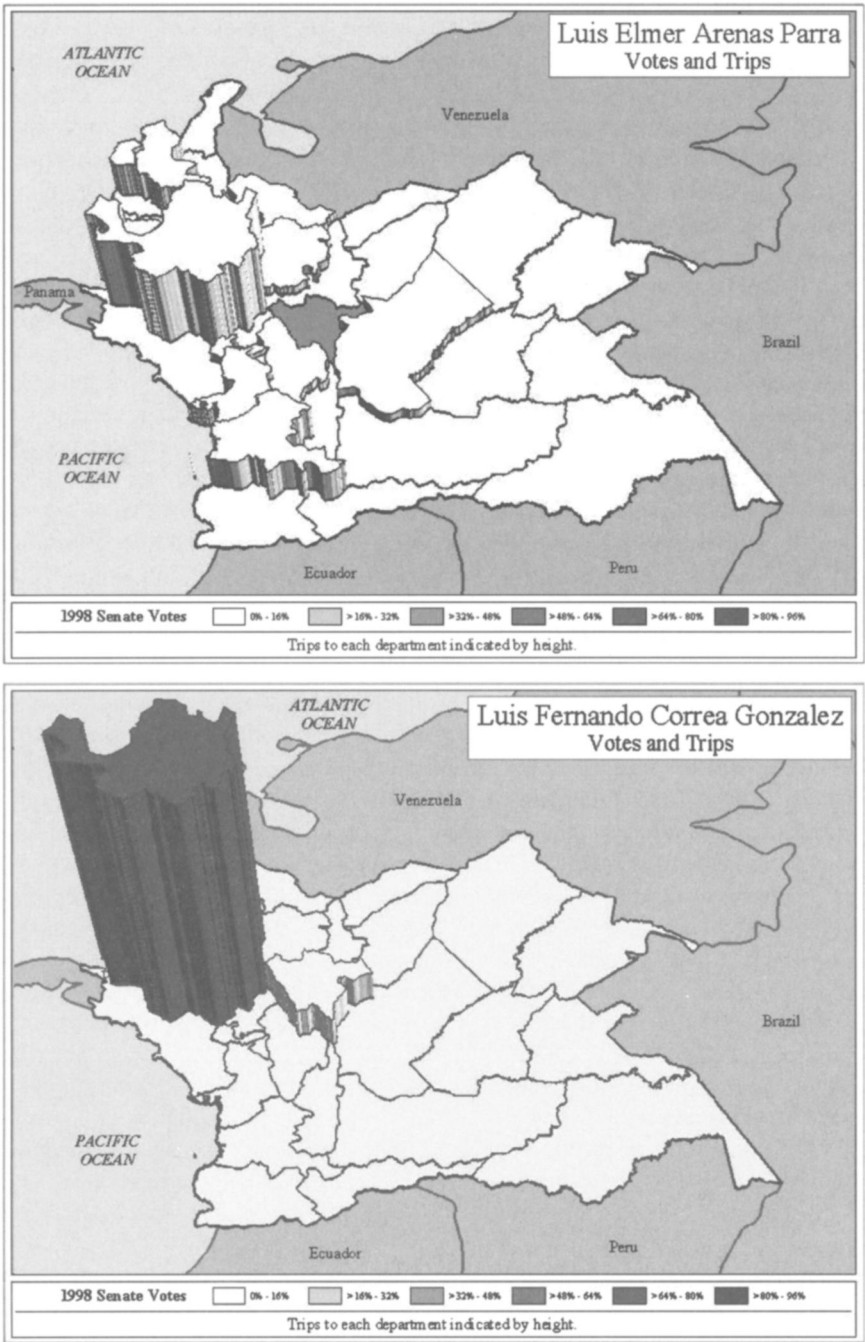
Second, where senators do branch out, they avoid seeking votes in others' bailiwicks. The sign on *Dominated* is negative and significant at the .01 level. Substantively, the model predicts that all else equal, senators would like to take eight fewer trips to the most dominated department than to the least dominated department. The implication is that senators seeking to extend their vote shares into new areas focus their efforts on regions that are "up for grabs"—that is, regions that are not dominated by a few or even just one politician. Incumbent senators do not wish to compete amongst each other for electoral support. All senators have significant access to the media, financial resources, and popular followings, especially in the departments that they dominate electorally. They are all formidable electoral opponents and risky targets for vote-poaching. The relatively undominated departments are more electorally profitable targets for vote generation. Incumbents thus cooperate or collude, minimizing the level of electoral conflict amongst themselves.

Third, senators naturally spend more time in higher population departments than sparsely populated areas. The coefficient on *Electorate$_j$* is positive and significant at the .001 level, predicting that every 100,000 voters attract five additional trips, regardless of other department characteristics. This is no surprise:

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[9] The Hirschman-Herfindahl Index (HHI), or sum of squared proportions of vote by department for Correa is .84 while for Arenas it is .14.

FIGURE 2

Trip and Vote Share Patterns for Two Senators

Luis Elmer Arenas Parra
Votes and Trips

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Venezuela

Panama

Brazil

PACIFIC OCEAN

Ecuador   Peru

1998 Senate Votes | 0% - 16% | >16% - 32% | >32% - 48% | >48% - 64% | >64% - 80% | >80% - 96%

Trips to each department indicated by height.

Luis Fernando Correa Gonzalez
Votes and Trips

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1998 Senate Votes | 0% - 16% | >16% - 32% | >32% - 48% | >48% - 64% | >64% - 80% | >80% - 96%

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politicians go where the voters are. Note that this trend is exacerbated by a strong correlation between department population and urbanization in Colombia. Low population areas are also quite rural, so not only are votes scarce, they are hard to reach. In contrast, high-population urbanized areas have masses of voters available for campaign messages and personal vote development.

Senators' behavior also interacts with their political security and ambition. Senators running for reelection are more likely to return to their electoral base than those not planning to seek office. The interaction of ambition and previous vote share is positive and significant, though relatively small. Thus while all senators may be likely to travel to their key constituencies, those running for reelection are somewhat more attentive. Specifically, for senators seeking reelection, an additional 10,000 votes attracts an additional 10 visits. For those not seeking reelection, the same 10,000 votes only inspires 8.5 visits. Why do retiring legislators continue to visit their voters at all or why is the drop-off *only* 1.5 trips? All decisions about whether or not to run again were probably not yet finalized during the time period covered by available data. Alternatively, these senators may be campaigning on behalf of their successors.

Similarly, political security reduces the pressure to return to one's constituency. The interaction of *Security* and *Votes* earns a negative coefficient, significant at the .001 level. Senators whose lists had a healthy margin in the previous election are less concerned about returning to existing bailiwicks. Substantively, the most marginal senators (*security* = 1) focus heavily on their core constituents: 10,000 votes for the typical senator inspires an additional 10 visits. On the other hand, the safest senators (*security* > 4.5) do not give special attention to core constituencies. The negative interaction of votes and rank cancels out the draw of existing bailiwicks.

Finally, other Colombia-specific considerations play a significant role in time allocation strategies. *Beach Resort* has a positive and significant impact on behavior. Resort cities (Cartagena, Bolivar; Santa Marta, Magdalena; and San Andrés, San Andrés) are favorite destinations for weekend trips. Above and beyond the predicted number of trips based on simple political predictors (vote share, dominance, and electorate size), senators were still more likely to visit sunny, sand-filled destinations than others. On a much more serious note, FARC political violence deters visits; the coefficient on mayoral kidnappings is negative and significant at the .01 level. Members of the national legislature are not immune to this violence. During the term under study more than a dozen members of congress were kidnapped or killed. Occasionally, the Colombian papers will speculate about a possible connection between and armed group and an elected official. For obvious reasons, these speculations are very difficult to substantiate.[10] Our findings would seem to indicate that if such connections exist, they are not the

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[10] It is occasionally suggested that candidates who take a particularly antiguerrilla posture or who have connections to the cattle ranching industry are associated with the paramilitaries. Given the virtual disappearance of the FARC's political wing, the *Unión Patriótica*, and the guerrillas' amorphous ideology/program, connections with elected officials are even more difficult to trace.

norm (if they were, senators would feel free to travel with impunity). Finally, the coefficient on an indicator variable for the capital and surrounding region (Bogotá/Cundinamarca) is negative and significant, suggesting that in spite of the occasional weekend legislative session and preponderance of media outlets, Bogotá/Cundinamarca is undervisited. We suspect this may reflect a more liquid—and hence competitive—market for urban voters than those in rural areas. In addition, it may be that senators seeking votes in the capital already interact with constituents on weekdays and can dedicate their weekends to seeking votes further afield.

Is This Coordination Where We Should Least Expect It?

Relationships between legislators and constituents are essential to theories of democracy. Normative models of representation rest on mechanisms of interaction between elected officials and voters, as do nearly all theories of political institutions and elite behavior. Limited previous work on the contact between representatives and those they represent has focused almost exclusively on single-member district plurality electoral systems (Fenno 1978; Cain, Ferejoin, and Fiorina 1983).[11] In this context, scholars have never needed to ask about the calculus behind *where to call home*. But in most of the world's legislative systems, where multiple members of the same chamber theoretically represent the same place, they must confront the issue of how much of the shared place is *their* home in particular. In this article, we built a model of home style in multimember districts and found that incumbents will try to carve out bailiwicks, court primarily the unaligned, and, only when the conditions are right, raid others' strongholds. We tested our model on the case of Colombia, but the model and methods could be applied to study home style and prospective constituency choices in any multimember system.

One debate on which our findings shed new light is the issue of "party cartelization." Katz and Mair (1995) have argued for the emergence of a new kind of party system—a system where parties act as a cartel. These systems are characterized by state-centered parties, as opposed to mass-based parties, and interparty collusion and cooperation that eliminate the severe electoral competition that characterizes elections in mass party systems. In Colombia, incumbent senators collude in their use of state resources to build electoral careers. In addition to airline tickets that fund contact with potential supporters, they are provided with budgets to employ professional staffs and pay for office perquisites (Ingall and Crisp 2001) and can initiate pork-barrel legislation that can serve their electoral bailiwicks in a particularistic manner (Crisp and Ingall 2002). Despite sharing a single district, rather than engaging in conflictual campaigns based on ideological differences, sitting senators avoid entering one another's bailiwicks.

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[11] Exceptions to this trend include Heitshusen, Young, and Wood 1999; Parker 1980; Studlar and McAllister 1996.

However, in critiquing the lack of a microfoundation for the cartel party argument, Kitschelt rightly points out that cartels involve a prisoner's dilemma.

> *Each* participant has an incentive to defect from the cooperative arrangement that *all* participants wish to maintain. It would take extremely powerful sanctions to keep parties in the cartel. Public party finance, by itself, is unlikely to achieve this at the present time. Moreover, since much of the spoils of the political process in addition to public finance, party patronage in the administration, etc. is allocated in proportion to the electoral success of parties, politicians would still have an overriding incentive to outperform their competitors (2000, 168).

There are no such sanctions or means of enforcing them in Colombia. Yet, we do find systematic empirical evidence of collusion in Colombian elections, and it is not collusion in the mere sense of gravitating to the middle of the political spectrum so that ideological differences cannot be used to distinguish among choices. It is much more explicit and mercenary because it entails simply dividing up the electorate into informal bailiwicks that are recognized by presumed competitors. How can we explain cartelistic behavior or the failure to defect in the absence of enforcement mechanisms?

We argue that the cooperation we observe in Colombia is not the product of a party cartel, but instead the product of the lack of strong parties. Colombian parties are notoriously weak. One national party leader equated the difficulty of getting use of the party's banner with the challenge presented by ordering french fries. Multiple subparty lists from the same party compete against one another, and the votes received by one subparty list are not pooled to other lists of the same party. The large number of lists[12] from any given party and the Hare quota[13] make it very unlikely that any individual subparty list will elect more than one candidate. This is a political context where actors should be at their most atomistic. Ironically, it is this atomism that makes cooperation possible. We are not observing political parties locked in a zero-sum competition (or prisoner's dilemma), but rather individualistic incumbents engaged in cooperation to protect their joint (electoral) survival.

This logic offers some predictions about constituency building and home style across different systems. We suggest that differences in multimember home style vary with parties' ability to demand cohesive behavior on the part of their elected officials. Given the evidence from Colombia, we would hypothesize that where parties are weak, sitting legislators from the same multimember district will seek

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[12] The number of lists competing in Senate elections was 140 in 1991, 247 in 1994, 316 in 1998, and 320 in 2002.

[13] Under the Hare system a quota is calculated by dividing the total votes cast in a district by the number of seats to be allocated there. Slates are awarded a seat for each time they fulfill the quota. The remaining seats are then distributed to the party or parties with largest remainders. No matter how large the remainder, at most it entitles the slate to one additional seat. More seats are handed out by remainders than by meeting the quota (the number of slates fulfilling the quota was 24 in 1991, 13 in 1994, and 9 in 1998), and very few win more than one seat by quota (3 slates in 1991 won multiple seats by quota, 0 in 1994, and 0 in 1998).

to avoid interincumbent electoral battles. But where parties are strong, interincumbent electoral battles should be common. The reason is that in weak party systems, principals—incumbents—achieve a win-win equilibrium by avoiding conflict, but in strong party systems, principals—parties—operate in a zero-sum game. Colombia is an extreme example not only because parties are very weak (or personal vote-seeking incentives are very high) but because all members of the chamber are elected in a single district—the recipe we would associate with the greatest incentive to collude or cooperate. It is ironic that we would predict coordination among 100 self-interested politicians. Rather than chaotically doing battle with one another for the same voters, senators in Colombia cordially respect one another's preserves precisely because they are not members of collective units engaged in zero-sum conflict.

In weak party systems, avoiding interincumbent battles is a win-win strategy. Individualistic incumbents, the principals, achieve an equilibrium of sorts. If the previous election's results could be repeated over and over again, their careers would go on indefinitely. If the fate of their party meant absolutely nothing to them (not an enormous exaggeration in the Colombian case), incumbents would have every reason to cooperate in maintaining the electoral status quo. In contrast, in strong party systems, party organizations act as agents. For parties, elections are always a zero-sum game: every seat won by another party is a seat not available to them. Consequently, we speculate that some legislators will be tasked by party leaders with the chore of invading the bailiwicks of other incumbents. This dynamic is summarized in Figure 3 below.

For example, in the case of Costa Rica—where legislators are elected in multimember districts from closed, party-level lists—because of their control over a deputy's future career prospects, leaders of the two main parties are able to assign their deputies to perform constituency service in each geographic subunit of the district. Both parties ensure that they have an incumbent serving every area. As Taylor notes, there is a ". . . de facto division by both of the major parties of each

FIGURE 3

Where Is Home?

	Multimember Districts	Single Member Districts
Weak Parties	Cartelistic Behavior by "Egoists" (win-win strategy)	No Choice / Institutionally Fixed
Strong Parties	Centrally Orchestrated Conflict (zero-sum-game)	

province into single-member districts. Each tries to make certain that one of its provincial representatives is responsible for each of the cantons in the province and will attend to the canton's needs" (1992, 1063). If an incumbent from the majority party visits an area to hear constituents' demands, explain what he or she is doing for the canton in the legislature, or commemorate the delivery of a particularistic reward (such as the opening of a new health clinic), an incumbent from the opposition party is sure to follow to explain what his or her party will do for the canton when it is in the majority (Taylor 1992, 1062). Thus, where parties are strong enough to coordinate the actions of their incumbents, conflictual home style appears to be the norm.

The interaction between party strength and district magnitude that we suggest has important implications as well for political reformers. In Colombia, the transition to a single, multimember district was in part inspired by the desire to end legislators' ties to narrow, local interests. A single-nationwide district for legislators should eliminate the narrow particularistic focus of the legislature, providing the President with an ally for addressing the broad and urgent questions of national interest that plague Colombia: ongoing guerrilla warfare, rampant drug trafficking, and precarious economic performance. What we found, however, was that collusion by legislators trumped the incentives for building national constituencies, instead maintaining an equilibrium to carve out their own bases of support. If our hypotheses are correct, the lesson for reformers is not that multimember districts do not eliminate bailiwick home styles, but that the impact of district magnitude, both in terms of seats elected and geographic size, will vary across different kinds of party systems.

Our analysis points out the need for comparative research on home style patterns in multimember systems with varying party strength. In this article we built a model of legislator-voter interaction in multimember districts, modeling legislators' allocations of time to visiting different constituencies. Time is one of legislators' most precious resources, and its proper allocation is essential to political advancement. When adapted to the Colombian Senate, our model predicted that legislators' time allocations should be focused opportunistically on "personal" subconstituencies. We hypothesize that where parties are strong, on the other hand, multimember districts may be characterized by high levels of conflict between incumbents. In Colombia, this cooperation suggests that legislators will not necessarily seek purely national constituencies. The multimember system with a district magnitude of 100 still allows for the election of senators with very geographically concentrated patterns of support, and these legislators continue to practice a version of home style characteristic of the prereform system with its department-wide electoral districts. Incumbent Senators appear willing to cooperate to keep the level of electoral volatility low and the prospects for their joint reelection relatively high. Our model and methods could easily be applied to many other legislative systems to further elaborate the interaction between party strength or centralization, district magnitude and size, and the nature of representation.

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