→ The daughters of Tomás Calderón, 84 years old and Abigail Solano, 71, take turns taking care of their sick parents on a farm in Simijaca.

→ Teobaldo Betancourt received aid from the State. Thanks to this and to the help of his son, he was able to put in a floor and build a kitchen in his house in Montería.

Chapter 6
Colombian politics in the light of elca: Between disinterest and clientelism

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Juan Felipe Riaño*

→ In addition to being a director in the remaking of Gramalote, Mildred Leal works in her micro-enterprise of pickled foods.

6.1. Introduction

→ This chapter presents some characteristics of the ways in which Colombians relate to politics, based on the information gathered in the elca for the first time in 2013. Even when there are differences in accordance with the characteristics of the households, which cannot be avoided, Colombians demonstrate a general pattern of disinterest for political topics. Additionally, the distance between citizens and political parties is notorious. Colombian politics, as pointed out by many political commentators and experts, is strongly self-oriented.

An important symptom (and maybe also a cause) of these phenomena of disinterest and weakness of the political institutions is the prevalence of clientelism, which can be measured in the elca based on one of its most extreme manifestations: vote buying. Beyond simply being a type of electoral fraud that worries authorities, vote buying exemplifies a style of "accountability" —if we can call it this— whereby citizens give their vote in exchange for some kind of particular, immediate and private benefit. Thus, politicians dedicate their efforts to winning over specific groups of citizens with these

benefits instead of designing programs, which impact a broad range of individuals in society. Priority is given to private transference over the public good, and to the interpersonal connection over liking and identifying with programs or ideologies.

This chapter documents these patterns and takes advantage of the richness of information provided in the survey to propose initial hypotheses regarding the factors that either aggravate or mitigate the problem of clientelism manifested through vote buying.[2] Section 6.2 studies the (dis)interest of Colombians for politics and some aspects of their political positions and their relationship with politicians. Section 6.3 discusses vote buying as an example of clientelism showing both its prevalence as well as the factors that seem to aggravate or mitigate it. The chapter concludes with some final reflections on the implications of this reality.

6.2. (Dis)interest in politics

The set of questions related with Colombians' interest in politics included in the ELCA obtain some important conclusions.[3]

In the first place, citizens, on average, have little interest in politics. This can be seen not only in their electoral behavior, but also in other manifestations such as the little frequency with which Colombians discuss politics with other individuals in their surroundings and how seldom they actually remember candidates and representatives. A second message frequently cited as a worrying aspect of Colombian politics is that it is more self-oriented than it is geared towards parties. Furthermore, the majority of citizens do not identify ideologically on the left-right spectrum. Finally, even though this is the general panorama, there are some differences according to gender and region. In general, women and the urban population seem to be less interested in politics and less in tune with the political parties than males and residents of the rural areas. The information that supports these conclusions is summarized below in order to briefly discuss its implications.

Figure 6.1 shows that participation is greater in the rural area than in the urban area and, even though the difference is small, men also participate more tha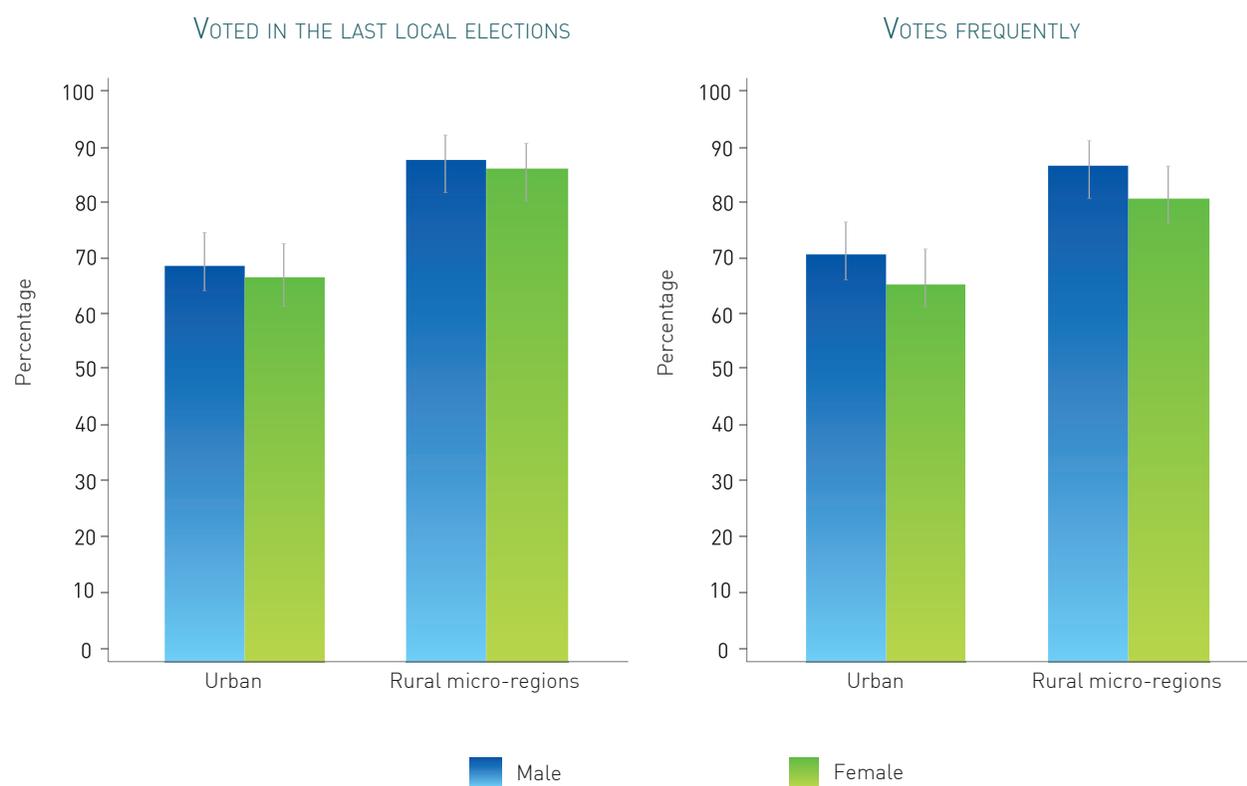n women. The figure on the left shows the per-centage of people who reported having participated in the last local elections, discriminating by gender and by urban or rural region. There is a notable and statistically significant difference between the urban area, where around 68% of the citizens participate, and the rural, where the proportion is higher, reaching approximately 87%. In contrast, the difference between men and women is not significant, but men report a slightly higher percentage of participation (69% against 67% in the urban area, and 87% against 86% in the rural). The figure on the right shows the proportion of individuals that say they participate "always" or "usually" in the elections with a very similar pattern. In contrast, the citizens seem to report a percentage of participation, which is greater than it really is. According to data taken from the National Registry of Civil Status, in the local elections of 2011, participation reached 56.78% and this figure is calculated with respect to the electoral census (a sub-group of individuals of age, who are registered to vote). Thus, more than a precise indicator of the participation of the Colombians, this variable is useful to mark the difference between the rural and urban areas in the degree of political participation.

Figure 6.1.
Participation in the local elections of 2011 and self-reported voting frequency by area and gender (percentage of individuals).

Voted in the last local elections

Votes frequently

Male

Female

The figure on the left indicates the percentage of people who affirm having voted in the local elections of 2011. The figure on the right indicates the percentage of participants who claim to "always" or "almost always" vote in elections. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

Figure 6.2.
Do you remember the name of your Mayor? The cases of Bogotá and Medellín.

The figure shows the responses for the city of Bogotá (upper-part) and Medellín (lower part) when asked the question: What is the name of the mayor of your city or municipality? The size of the name is proportional to the frequency with which it was mentioned by the participants. Thus, the larger names are associated with frequent responses.

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

Participation in the voting process is not the only form by which citizens can show their interest in politics. One way to analyze citizen interest is by verifying whether they are aware of current political affairs. With this focus, the module includes a question (open) enquiring the name of the mayor of the municipality where the person lives. The responses affirm the lack of interest of a large proportion of the participants in various Colombian cities and municipalities. The responses for the cities of Bogotá and Medellín (Figure 6.2) are an example of this. In the figure, the frequency by which a name appears is proportional to the size of the name in the image. In Bogotá, for example, even though the majority of the participants get it right at indicating that Gustavo Petro is the mayor of the city, there are still incorrect or outdated responses such as Noel Petro or Samuel Moreno. Likewise, in the case of Medellín, the name of the current mayor, Aníbal Gaviria, and the ex-mayor and governor of the department, Sergio Fajardo tend to get mixed up.

FIGURE 6.3.
PEOPLE WHO HAVE TRIED TO CONVINCE OTHERS TO VOTE FOR A CERTAIN CANDIDATE BY AREA AND GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).
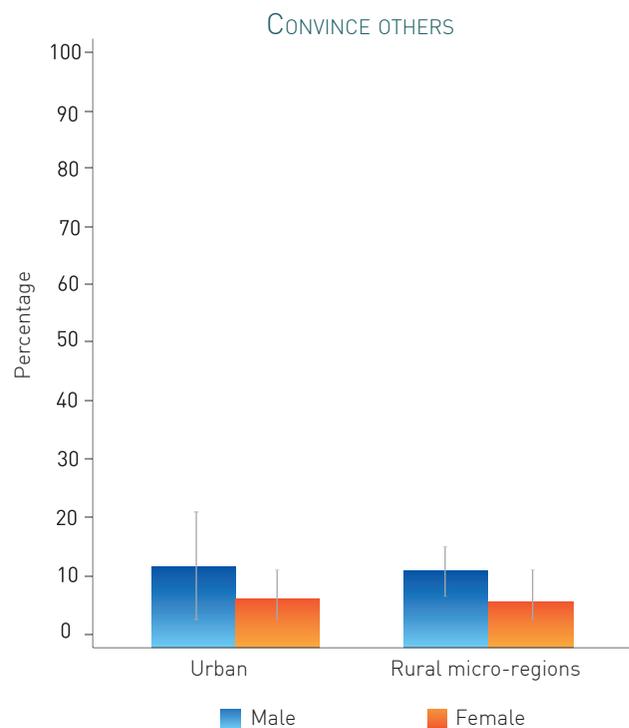
CONVINCE OTHERS

The figure shows the percentage of people that respond "frequently" or "sometimes" to the question: How often have you tried to convince other people to vote for a certain candidate or political party? The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

*Source:* Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

Another way of estimating the population's level of interest in politics is by examining the frequency with which they engage other individuals with the intention of convincing them to vote for a candidate of their liking.

This implies a more committed participation than the simple act of going to the voting booth or knowing the name of the current mayor. The results shown in Figure 6.3 suggest that citizens do not get deeply involved in politics. Very few people (a little over 10% of men and between 5% and 7% of women) "frequently" or "sometimes" try to convince other people that they should vote for a particular party or candidate.

FIGURE 6.4.

PARTICIPANTS THAT REMEMBER HAVING VOTED IN THE LOCAL ELECTIONS OF 2011 BY AREA AND GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).

REMEMBER THE PARTY

REMEMBER THE CANDIDATE
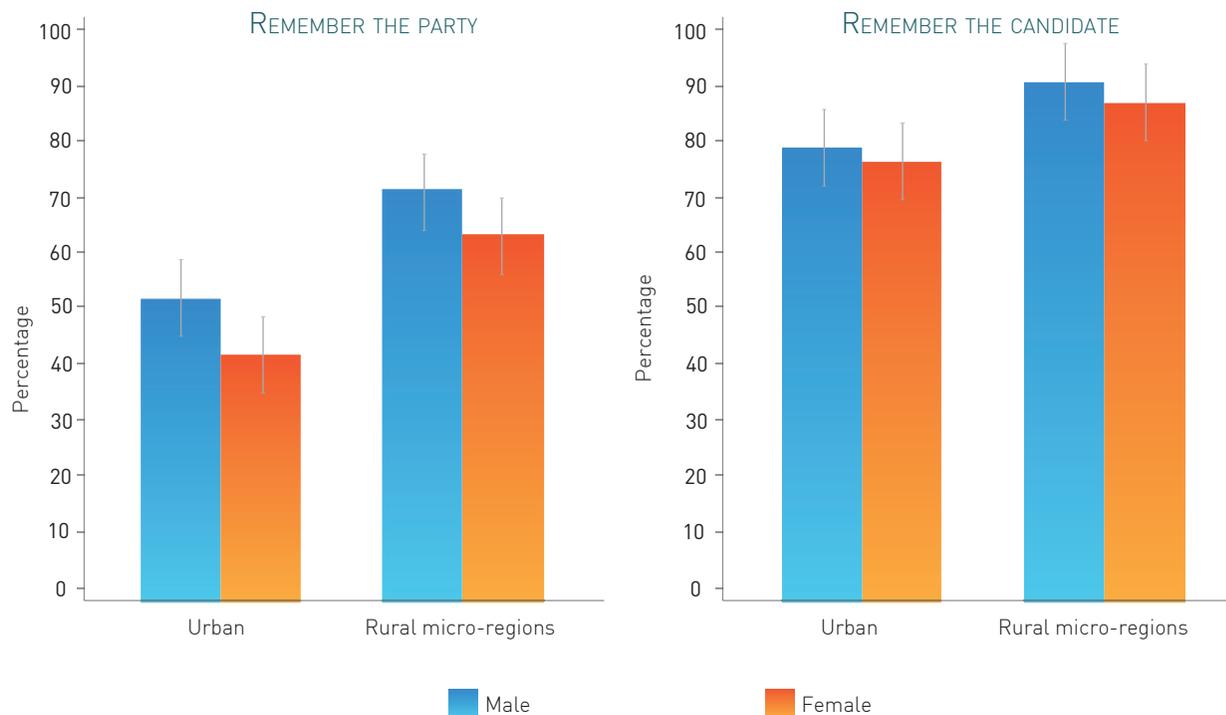
The figures show the percentage of participants that remembered the name of the political party or candidate that they voted for in the 2011 local elections. The figure on the left indicates the percentage of participants who remember the name of the political party, and the figure on the right shows the percentage of the population that remembered the name of the candidate. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

■ Male   ■ Female

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

Figure 6.4 shows an important aspect of Colombians' relationship with politics, which may influence the apparently low rates of interest: Colombians' relationship with the candidates and their parties. The parties' weakness is evident as well as the prevalence of a more self-oriented sense of poli-

tics. For all of the groups and regions, the proportion of voters who remembered the name of the candidate (nearly 80%) is greater than the number of voters who remembered the political party they voted for (varies from 40% to 70%). In addition to this, a greater number of people remembered the

political party or the name of the candidate they voted for in the rural area, which coincides with the greater electoral participation reported by the individuals in this area. The contrast is particularly strong in the case of the question about candidates' political parties. In the rural area, people remem-

FIGURE 6.5.

LOYAL VOTING PATTERNS AND IDENTIFYING WITH A POLITICAL PARTY BY AREA AND GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).

VOTE FOR THE SAME PARTY

IDENTIFY WITH A POLITICAL PARTY

Male

Female

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

The figure on the left shows the percentage of participants that report "always" or "usually" voting for the same political party in the elections while the figure on the right summarizes the percentage of the participants who claim to identify with a particular political party. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

bered the candidate's party, on average, in 65% to 75% of the cases (women and men, respectively), while in the cities, these figures fell to 45% and 55%. It can be confirmed then, that, in the rural area, there is greater interest in politics in accordance with these estimates. Furthermore, it is evident that there is a greater weakness of the parties in the urban area as well as among women.

Figure 6.5 confirms the lack of identification between the parties and the citizens. The left panel shows that, in the cities, approximately only one in every four citizens say they "always" or "usually" vote for the same party. In the rural area, the proportion is greater, but still only reaches 50%. It is interesting that this difference between the rural and urban areas in terms of loyalty in voting with

regards to parties is not so great upon analyzing identification with regards to a particular political party, as can be seen in the panel on the right. Simply put, a greater proportion of men than women claim to identify with a particular party and the identification is also greater in the rural area than in the urban area. Nevertheless, among all the differences, the latter is of a smaller magnitude. Ad-

ditionally, in any case, the frequency with which the individuals claim to identify with a particular political party is very low. The highest, for men in the rural area, does not even reach 25%.

One last aspect which is consistent both with the low number of Colombians appearing to identify with a political party as well as the little inter-

est displayed by Colombians in politics is that the great majority affirm that they do not know their own political orientation (left or right) (Figure 6.6). Also, in line with what has been described up to this point, this tendency is especially clear among women, whereby approximately two of three, expressed themselves this way in rural and urban areas. Likewise, even though the proportion is lower

among men, the number of those who claimed not to know their political orientation is also greater. This reaches nearly 54% in the two areas. Among the minority that does express a preference, most are found leaning to the right, followed by center, left and center-right. Therefore, there is a bias for the right which, although present in both men and women, seems to be more notable in men.

FIGURE 6.6.
IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION REPORTED BY AREA AND GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).
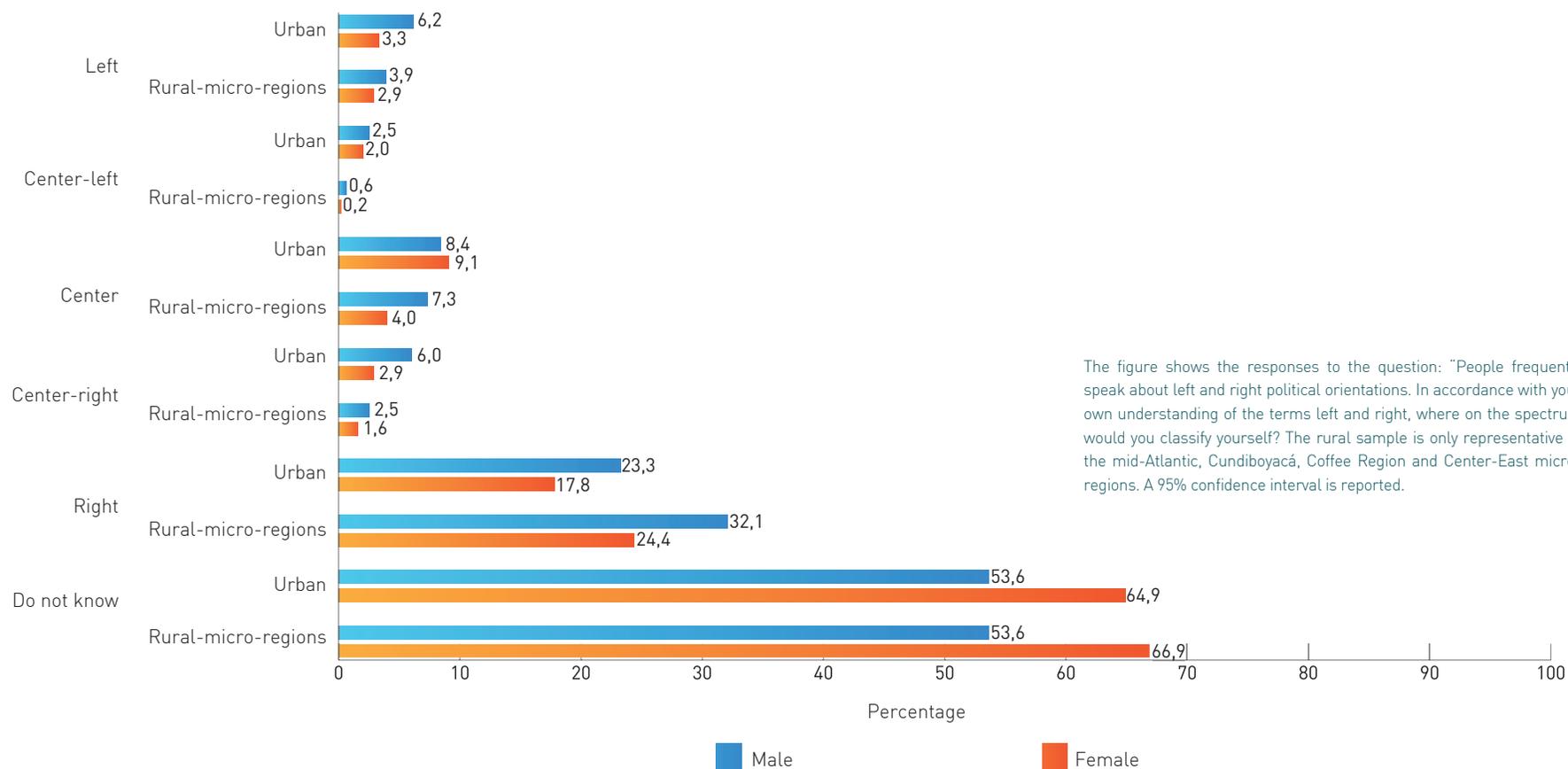
The figure shows the responses to the question: "People frequently speak about left and right political orientations. In accordance with your own understanding of the terms left and right, where on the spectrum would you classify yourself? The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions. A 95% confidence interval is reported.

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

→ Helped by his eldest son, Antonio Franco Seña built a new house in Ciénaga de Oro (Córdoba)

disillusioned with politics, precisely for being better informed. In terms of identifying with and feeling loyal to political parties, this could be another symptom of the lack of interest in politics. But it could also be one of the causes: if the parties are not able to channel the concerns and needs of the voters, these same people can lose interest in the political process. Maybe of greater importance is that this lack of interest can be related with a style of politics where an exchange of personal favors for votes prevails rather than an exchange of electoral support for identification with the parties' ideologies and programs. Following is an exploration of the problem of clientelism and one of its clearest manifestations.

6.3. CLIENTELISM: THE CASE OF VOTE BUYING

This section presents an initial analysis of one of the most innovative questions of the political module, which allows us to study the phenomenon of vote buying in Colombian society. The question is inspired by the contingent valuation method (CVM) widely used in environmental economics and economic policy to value environmental resources and public goods.[3]

A better understanding of vote buying is important because its prevalence puts the correct functioning of democracy at risk. More concretely, vote buying is a manifestation of clientelism, understood as the practice of exchanging one's vote for personal benefits such as money, employment and others.

Even though it is difficult to offer a comparative description for many countries, the figures for the Mexican case —another scenario where clientelism is rife— denotes that the lack of interest in identifying with a particular political party or ideology is particularly notable in Colombia. According to the study by Lawson et al. (2012), 57.5% of men and 60.8% of women in Mexican cities identify with some political party and, in the rural areas, the percentages are 59.6% and 63%. Furthermore, the percentage of individuals, by gender and area, who do not know how to respond to the question regarding their ideological orientation (left or right) does not go over 30%.

In sum, Colombians' disinterest in politics is generalized as is the lack of ideological identity and identification with and loyalty to political parties.

Despite this general phenomenon, the situation is even more pronounced for women and for the urban areas. In a society where the political environment is still heavily dominated by men, this is not so surprising. On the other hand, that the urban population expresses less interest than the rural, can be interesting given that people in cities have greater incomes and are more highly educated and, at least in the international milieu, a higher level of education is generally related with an increased interest in politics (or at least a greater probability of participating in elections and being informed about basic aspects of politics).

An interpretation which is a bit pessimistic of this reality despite being somewhat plausible, is that the most well-educated individuals are particularly

3. CVM has received important critiques. For example, one worrying factor relates to whether the individuals have sufficient information to answer hypothetical questions regarding the price of non-tradable goods or that the situation of paying for a non-tradable good is too hypothetical to be taken seriously by the participants. Despite these preoccupations, there are multiple applications in the valuation of environmental goods and in other fields such as health. However, there is no CVM application, as far as we have been able to verify, for the estimation of the price of a vote even though critiques, such as those mentioned, even if very important in the valuation of environmental resources, are less relevant in the case of vote valuation. In this case, the markets for votes do exist, individuals possibly have some information regarding this, and the situation proposed by the survey taker is, therefore, more credible.

Clientelism is usually considered harmful due to the fact that this kind of political accountability is seen as detrimental to the programmatic linkages between citizens and the people who govern them. Simply put, clientelism means that citizens exchange electoral support for personal gains such as employment in a public entity, help in procuring medication, a few bags of cement, groceries and even 'whiskey and cash' (Ardila, 2014). When this happens, rather than designing public policies, which result in general benefits for the masses, the politicians spend their time and energy in arranging these specific benefits at the expense of State resources.

Thus, a wide-ranging tradition in political science proposes that under clientelism, private benefits prevail for a minority of the relevant electorate above the delivery of more general goods and services of public interest (Stokes, 2005, 2007). Furthermore, in the Colombian case, the influence of clientelism in its distinct manifestations has been widely documented and studied (see, for example, Leal and Dávila (1990).

6.3.1. THE OFFER CURVE OF VOTES IN COLOMBIA

The question regarding the willingness to accept money in exchange for votes is formulated as follows:

"As you know, some politicians offer money to citizens in exchange for their vote. Do you believe that a person similar to you, from your community or neighborhood, would accept $X amount of pesos for their vote?"

It is important to point out two aspects regarding the formulation of this question: First, the existence of a "social desirability bias" may lead the participants to not answer the question honestly but rather resort to what they believe would be the correct answer. To minimize this risk, the question is formulated indirectly. Instead of asking about the participants' own willingness to accept money in exchange for their vote, a hypothetical situation is proposed in which "a person who is similar to you, who is part of your community or neighborhood" receives an offer of money in exchange for their vote. This reduces the risk that the

participants may seek to hide their own true preferences out of fear of being judged. This method has been employed in different surveys, including those related to the prevalence of clientelism and vote buying, as for example, the study by Lawson *et al.* (2007) for Mexico. Nevertheless, one possible cost of this method, important in the interpretation of all the results, is that the response may include not only the evaluation that an individual makes regarding his typical behavior, but it could also reveal the level of skepticism with which he judges his peers. This exception is especially important when comparing the responses between different groups of individuals.[4]

Second, each individual is asked the question using a specific sum of money ($X) offered hypothetically in exchange for the vote. This sum is randomly varied from participant to participant. The assigned values are 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand Colombian pesos. As pointed out by Hoyos and Mariel (2013), the use of this format is one of the most important in the contingent valuation method. This dichotomous format (also known as "referendum" or "close-ended") can show the compatibility of incentives; that is, it compels the participants to reveal their true preferences. Additionally, it enormously simplifies the cognitive effort required of the participants.[5]

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4. For example, if women answer "no" to this question less frequently than men do, they may be mixing their view of men and women in such a way that the result can be due to the consequence of the fact that women think that it is less probable that citizens sell their votes and not just that women tend to sell their votes less than men do.
5. In fact, an important benchmark in the history of CVM occurred in 1992 when, upon request of the State of Alaska, Carson (1992) carried out a contingent valuation to estimate the value of the losses due to an oil spill by Exxon Valdez. After the study, there was a controversy surrounding the use of the method (Portney, 1994), which led to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to commission a group of experts to report on the validity of the method. Arrow *et al.* (1993) concluded that the CVM produced sufficiently reliable estimations to be used in a legal process and made a series of recommendations for the application of CVM, including the preference for the referendum method over open-ended questions.

Varying the figure or "vote price" randomly between the participants allows for obtaining the proportion of people who would sell their vote for each of the prices. In sum, the curve of the offer of votes in Colombia can be designed and is presented in Figure 6.7 by gender and area.[6] In accordance with these calculations, approximately 40 and 50% of Colombians in urban areas would sell their vote for 10 thousand pesos. The proportion increases alongside the price, reaching a majority of citizens —nearly 52% among women and 57% among men— who were willing to sell their vote for 50 thousand pesos. Beyond this, each additional peso offered seems to generate fewer votes. For example, with COP$ 150.000, the proportion of individuals willing to sell their vote grows timidly. With a more generous offer, the curve flattens out and even falls slightly. This final result was obtained for various groups of the population as will be seen further on. One hypothesis is that these values begin to operate in factors of excessive 'commercialization': the people would be reluctant to sell their vote for such a high offer, as they feel that such an excessive monetary offer for their vote erodes moral values (Sandel, 2013). Another hypothesis is that these values would be so unrealistic that the people do not cognitively consider them viable.[7] The dispersion of responses at higher values seems greater which would be in line with this possibility.

FIGURE 6.7.
THE OFFER CURVE FOR VOTE BUYING BY GENDER AND AREA (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).
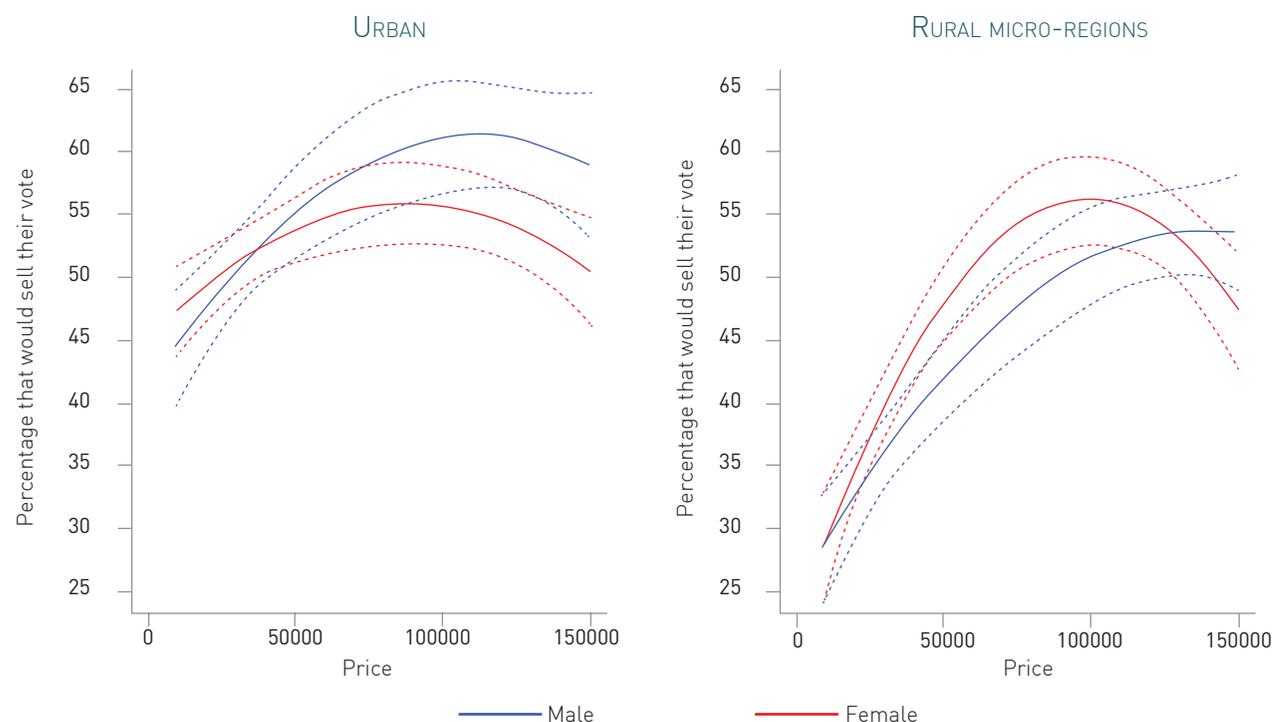
Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos for each area and gender. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

6. To simplify the presentation, we summarize the results based on these offer curves by different surveyed groups. The figures show a quadratic approximation of the vote curve with a 95% confidence interval. Nevertheless, further on in the paper, the main results with a simple multivariate regression analysis will be carried out in order to more directly examine the impact of various factors on the probability of selling votes. For a description of these methods, see López-Feldman (2012).
7. Basically, in accordance with some journalistic reports, in Colombia, votes are bought for around 25 to 50 thousand pesos. In addition to the report broadcast by La Silla Vacía mentioned earlier, please see Ardila (2014b).

In the ELCA rural areas, the offer curve for selling votes also has a positive slope and this increment in the proportion of people willing to sell their vote is more pronounced in the degree that the price increases. When the monetary offer was low —of 10, 30 or 50 thousand pesos— the proportion of people willing to sell their vote was lower than in the cities, starting at nearly 30% at 10 thousand pesos and bordering on 40-45% at 50 thousand pesos. In contrast, when considering the fastest rise in the proportion according to the increase in the price in the rural area, the proportion of people that would sell their vote at 100 to 150 thousand pesos is similar in the two areas.

Figure 6.7 seems to suggest some slight differences between men and women in the willingness to sell their votes. Despite the difference not appearing to be significant at any of the possible values of the vote, in the urban area, there was a clear tendency that as the price rose, men expressed greater willingness to sell their vote. This result is interesting given that men show greater interest in politics so one might suppose that they would value the possibility of expressing their political preferences more. However, in contrast, some papers have suggested that the incidence of corruption varies in accordance with gender (for example, for the case of Brazil, Brollo and Troiano (2013) found that the incidence of corruption was lower in municipalities with female mayors than in those with male mayors), so women's lesser likelihood to sell their votes could be a reflection of gender differences inso-

far as attitudes toward illegality. In the rural area, however, the most notable difference between men and women has to do, not so much with the level of willingness to sell votes, but rather with the fact that for men, the proportion increases linearly with the offer, whereas with women, it reaches a point where it flattened out and, in fact, fell when the offer reached the highest amount possible. Therefore, the excessive commercialization effect may be particularly important for women.

Next, we take a closer look at the variation in the vote offer curve in accordance with other characteristics in an effort to find some explications to the prevalence of this form of clientelism.

6.3.2. THE MITIGATING AND EXASPERATING FACTORS OF VOTE SELLING: IN SEARCH OF EXPLICATIONS TO THE PREVALENCE OF CLIENTELISM

Figure 6.8 differentiates the vote offer curves in accordance with the levels of wealth. In the case of the urban area, an intuitive result stands out. The wealthiest individuals seemed to be less willing, in accordance with these calculations, to sell their vote. Furthermore, for each additional peso offered in exchange for votes, the increase in the proportion of individuals that would sell their vote reduces. In the case of the rural area, there are

two observable results. First, as was pointed out earlier, individuals seemed to be less willing to sell their votes for any of the prices. This is consistent with the previous section, whereby it appears that in the rural area people are more interested in politics and would prefer to freely and liberally exercise the right to vote than receive money in exchange for losing this autonomy. City-dwellers seem more skeptical and consider that the proportion of people who would sell their vote for money is greater. Second, there appears to be a contrasting and counterintuitive result to this in the urban area, whereby wealthy individuals were willing to sell their votes. Even though this gap is smaller than the one seen in urban areas, it still shows a statistically significant difference to that of the other levels. This result is difficult to interpret and requires more in-depth study but it is worth pointing out two exceptions. First, in the rural area, there is less income dispersion than in the urban areas in such a way that a high level of income is not that much higher than other levels of income. Second, and this applies as a caveat in the interpretation of all the results, readers must remember that to avoid the social desirability bias, we do not ask the individuals directly whether they are willing to sell their vote, but rather how they feel that people similar to them, in their communities and neighborhoods, might act. By doing this, we hope to obtain their own possible responses in similar circumstances. However, this method can also combine a level of skepticism by which they judge their peers despite being similar to themselves.

FIGURE 6.8.
THE VOTE OFFER CURVE BY WEALTH AND AREA (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).
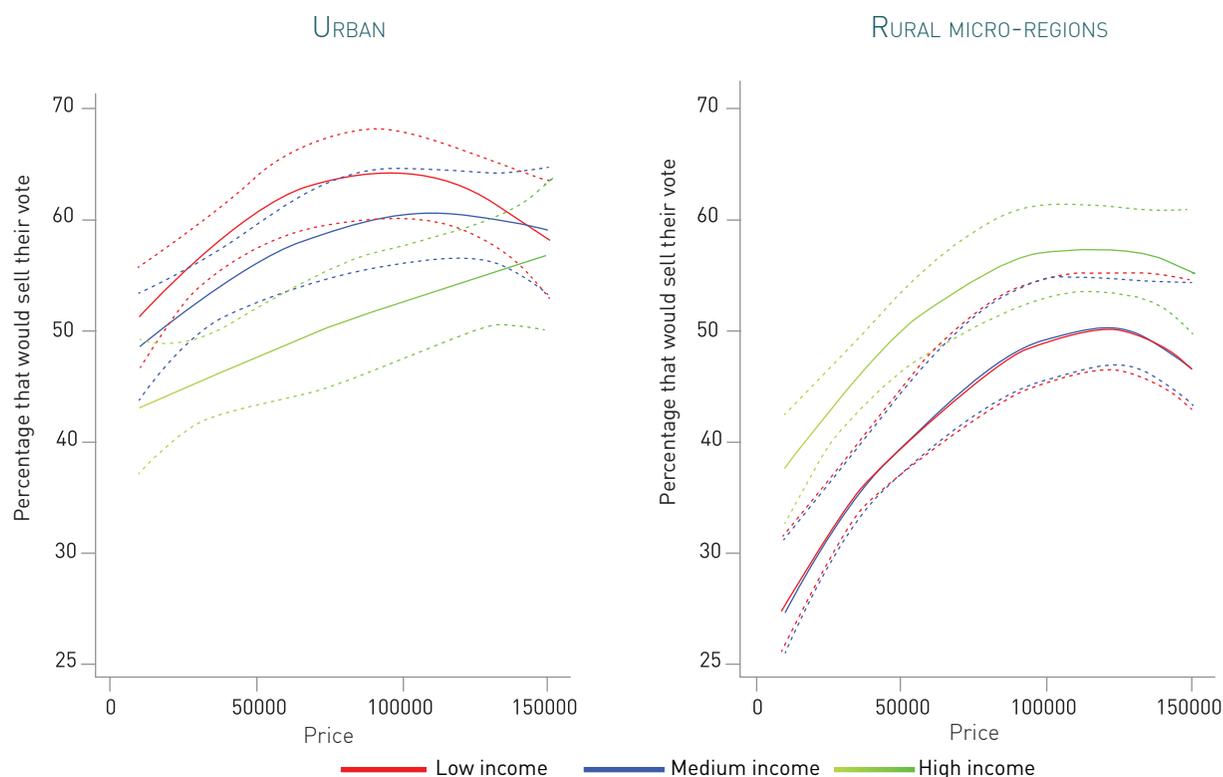
URBAN   RURAL MICRO-REGIONS

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos in accordance with the households' level of wealth. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. The level of wealth corresponds to a continuous index designed based on durable goods and the households' access to services. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

The previous result for the urban area creates a potentially perverse logic, a sort of 'poverty trap' for politics. The lowest and flattest offer curve for relatively wealthy individuals is consistent with the idea that in situations of greater vulnerability, the price of the vote or the minimum value for which a person would sell the free exercise of his vote falls. In other words, for citizens in desperate situations, 10 thousand pesos are worth more than the free right to vote. For politicians, it becomes more attractive to buy votes from individuals who have the least resources. As a result, their support is bought in exchange for private and immediate benefits, in detriment of public goods and programs with longer-term benefits and greater implications for public welfare. However, wealthier individuals whose vote is more difficult to buy are the ones that need to be convinced and seduced by programs and good management.

In line with the possibility that individuals who find themselves in vulnerable situations may be more willing to sell their votes, falling into this perverse logic, Figure 6.9 investigates whether individuals who have experienced medium to high impact shocks are also more willing to sell their vote. In this case, we consider those affected by shocks as all those in the household who reported having suffered an adverse event, in the three years, that had a medium to high impact on their economic stability. These events are studied in greater detail by Ximena Cadena and Claudia Quintero in Chapter 3 of this book. In effect, the vote offer curve for those af-

fected by shocks is greater than that for those who have not been affected, even though in the case of the rural area, the difference is less.

When individuals believe in the secret ballot, the rate of vote buying at any of the prices is lower. This provides a ray of hope to authorities in that it manifests that if the electoral institutions are strengthened to the point that they build trust in terms of voter confidentiality, the incidence of vote buying may fall.

FIGURE 6.9.
THE VOTE OFFER CURVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SHOCKS BY AREA (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).
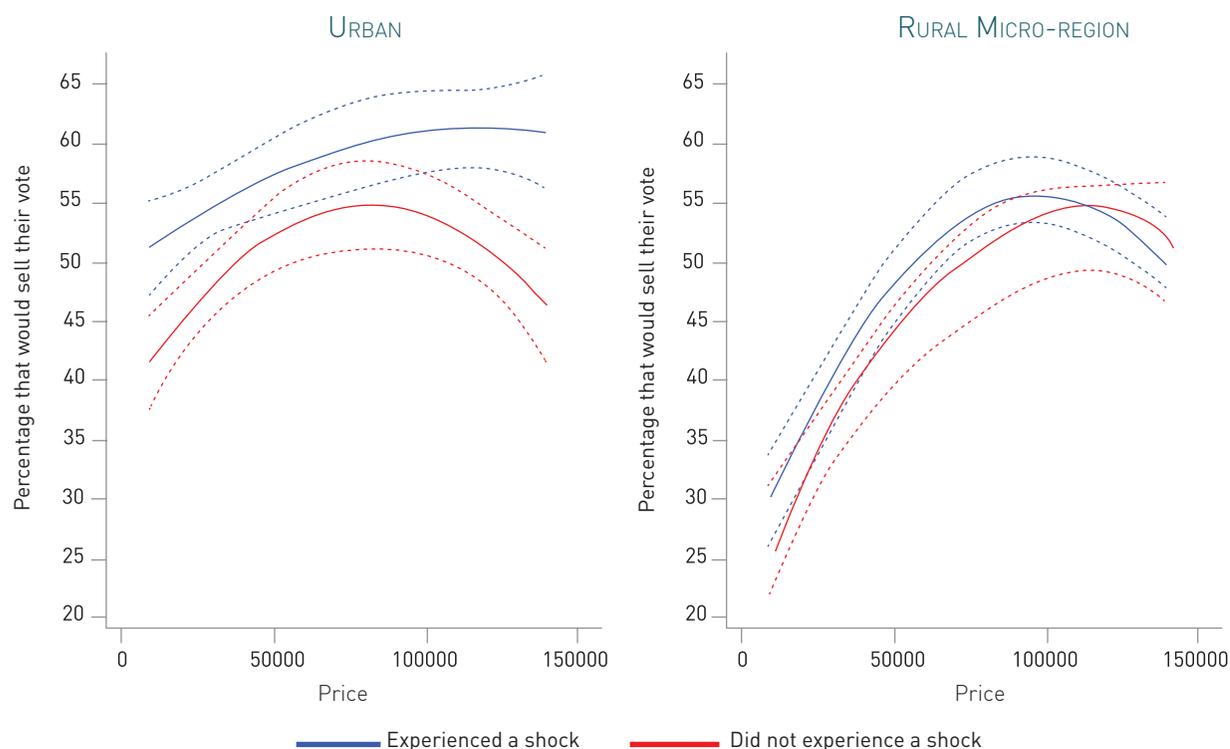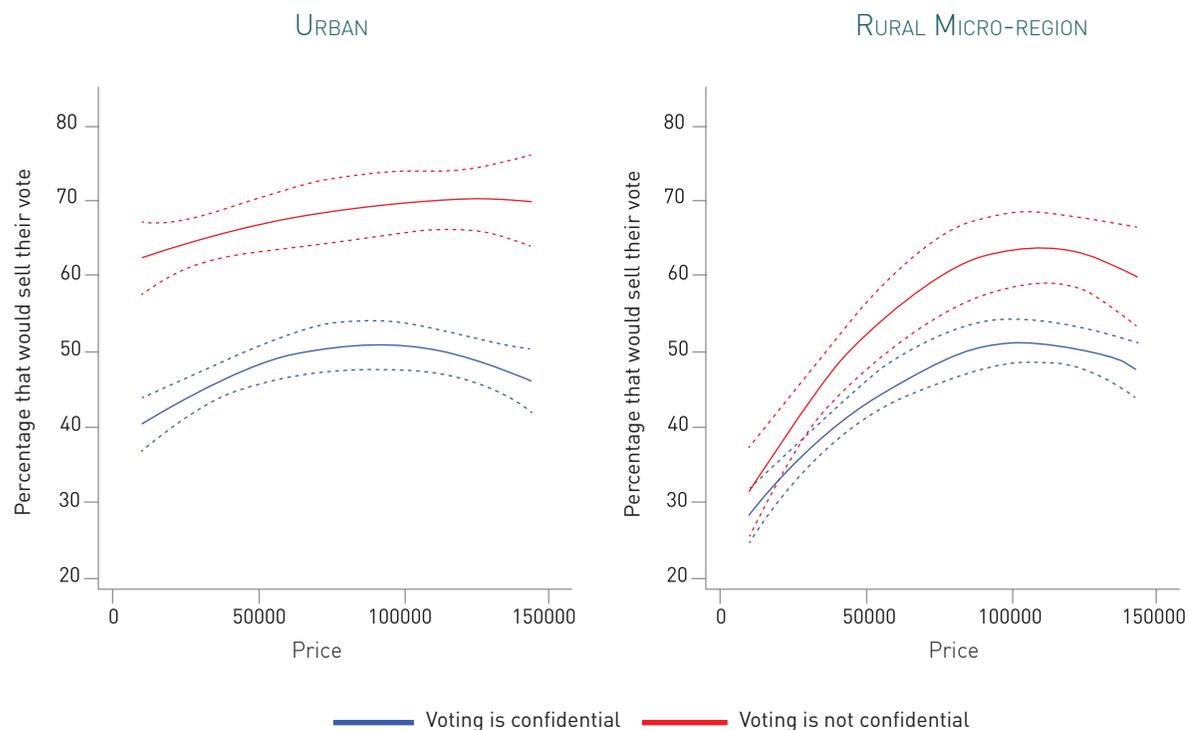

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos in accordance with their exposure to shocks in the household. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. We consider those affected by shocks as those who reported having suffered an adverse event that had a medium to high impact on their economic stability over the three years of the study. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

A secret ballot makes vote buying more difficult, at least in theory. This is why ballots issued by the electoral authorities were introduced to replace the versions handed out by the parties and there has been a general strengthening of controls in order to reduce the influence of corruption in the elections. But, even with official ballots and measures of control, the institutional weakness, the politicians' and their intermediaries' dealings or citizens' simple lack of trust can lead to individuals arriving at the conclusion that the voting process is not secret. This is why ELCA includes this question and Figure 6.10 verifies whether the sale of votes varies depending on whether the individual believes that the vote is secret or not. The results are quite clear in both areas and with special contrast in the urban area. When individuals believe in the secret ballot, the rate of vote buying at any of the prices is lower. This provides a ray of hope to authorities in that it manifests that if the electoral institutions are strengthened to the point that they build trust in terms of voter confidentiality, the incidence of vote buying may fall.

Figure 6.10.
THE VOTE OFFER CURVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PERCEPTION OF VOTE CONFIDENTIALITY BY AREA (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).

Voting is confidential — Voting is not confidential

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. The adjusted difference is shown for people that respond 'it is confidential' to the question: Do you believe the voting process is confidential or not confidential? The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

Nevertheless, it is clear that even when voting is confidential and it is public knowledge, the buying and selling of votes can still go on. In this case, the level of reciprocity that the individuals exhibit can be decisive for defining whether the individuals are or not willing to sell their vote easily and whether the politicians are willing to buy them. Finan and Schechter (2012) suggest that politicians seek out individuals of common interests when buying votes, in particular when they hope the vote is secret. They need to trust that their contribution will be reciprocated.[8] These ideas are examined in Figure 6.11, which finds that, effectively, in the urban area the frequency with which votes are sold by individuals that show they are in agreement with negative reciprocity (this refers to those who 'totally agree' or 'agree' with the affirmation "what goes around comes around") is greater than for those who reject this type of reciprocity (the 'totally disagree' or 'disagree'). In the rural area, the distance between these two curves is much less and there does not appear to be a notable difference. In the case of positive reciprocity (the degree of agreement with the affirmation: "you must always help those who help you"), no decisive conclusions can be drawn. This is because there are very few individuals in the non-reciprocity group in accordance with this measurement so the estimation of the vote offer curve has a lot of uncertainty associated with it.


→ From 3:30 a.m., Cecilia Quiroga is up. She prepares food for her family of nine and goes out to work on a farm in Puente Nacional.

8. Intimately linked to this idea is that of social capital having a 'perverse side' that can foster corruption (an example of a study on the case of vote buying is Callahan, (2005). The exercise presented here is only a first look at this relation, but as will be made clear in the next chapter of this book, ELCA includes a selection of questions on social capital, some present in the politics module, which will allow further study of the issue.

FIGURE 6.11.
THE VOTE OFFER CURVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LEVEL OF NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE RECIPROCITY BY AREA (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).

URBAN

RURAL MICRO-REGIONS

——— (Negative) Reciprocity ——— (Negative) Non-reciprocity

URBAN

RURAL MICRO-REGIONS

——— (Positive) Reciprocity ——— (Positive) Non-reciprocity

The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. The upper panel shows the differentiated adjustment if the households report being beneficiaries of some of the following governmental programs in the last twelve months prior to the survey: Familias en Acción, programs for senior citizens, SENA, Red Unidos, ICBF, aid for displaced people, wasteland and farmland allocation, the Ley de Víctimas, Agro Ingreso Seguro, Desarrollo Rural con Equidad, Oportunidades Rurales and Familias Guardabosques. The lower panel differentiates between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of Familias en Acción in the last twelve months. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.
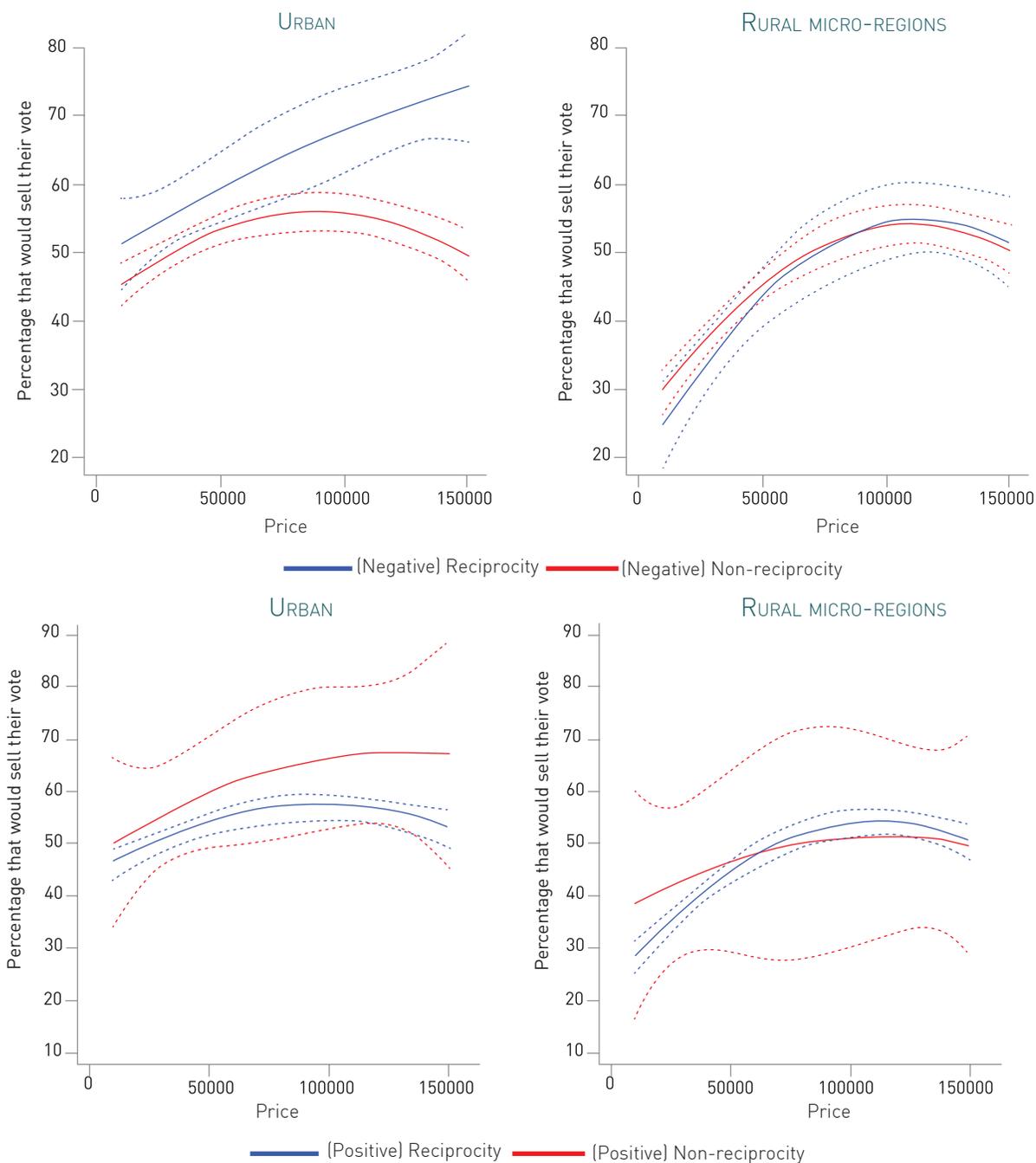
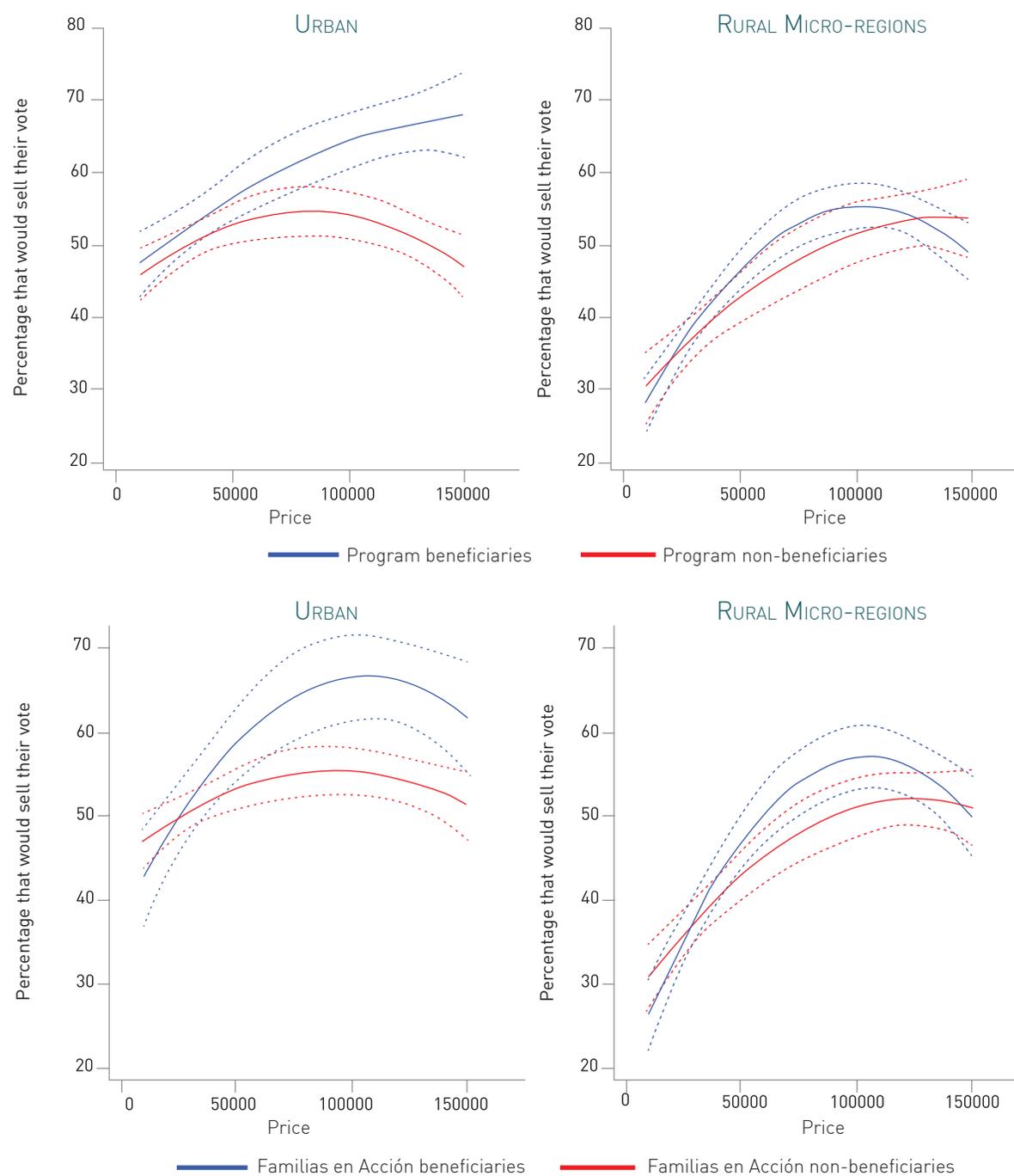*Source:* Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

Another potentially important aspect for deter-
mining the ease with which the citizens sell their
votes has to do with their relationship with the
State. For example, one may think that those in-
dividuals who have a more direct relationship with
the State would be more interested in express-
ing their political preferences. Or, alternatively,
that this closeness leads citizens to expect more
direct benefits from the politicians or candidates,
positively influencing the ease with which they ex-
change their vote. The latter is perhaps particularly
important in conditional cash transfer programs,
where the relationship with the State is direct and
works with monetary benefits. Figure 6.12 shows
the vote offer curves in the rural and urban areas
differentiating whether the household participates
in some governmental program (the upper panel)
and whether it participates in Familias en Acción,
its main conditional cash transfer program (lower
panel). Although these differences do not always
seem statistically significant, in general, the effect
points out that individuals with benefits from State
programs tend to sell their vote more easily than
those who are non-beneficiaries. Of course, this
cannot be interpreted as definitive evidence that
State programs exacerbate clientelism, among
other reasons, because we know that in some ar-
eas, the poorest households (probably, at the same
time, recipients of some form of State help) tend
to sell their vote more easily. However, it would be
interesting to study the possible impact of these
State programs on the political attitudes of the citi-
zens in more detail.

→ Each month, Carmen Santander receives 120 grocery packs, which she gives out to 120 disaster-affected families in Gramalote. She also helps out in her family store.

Figure 6.12.

The vote offer curve in accordance with the access to governmental programs by area (percentage of people).
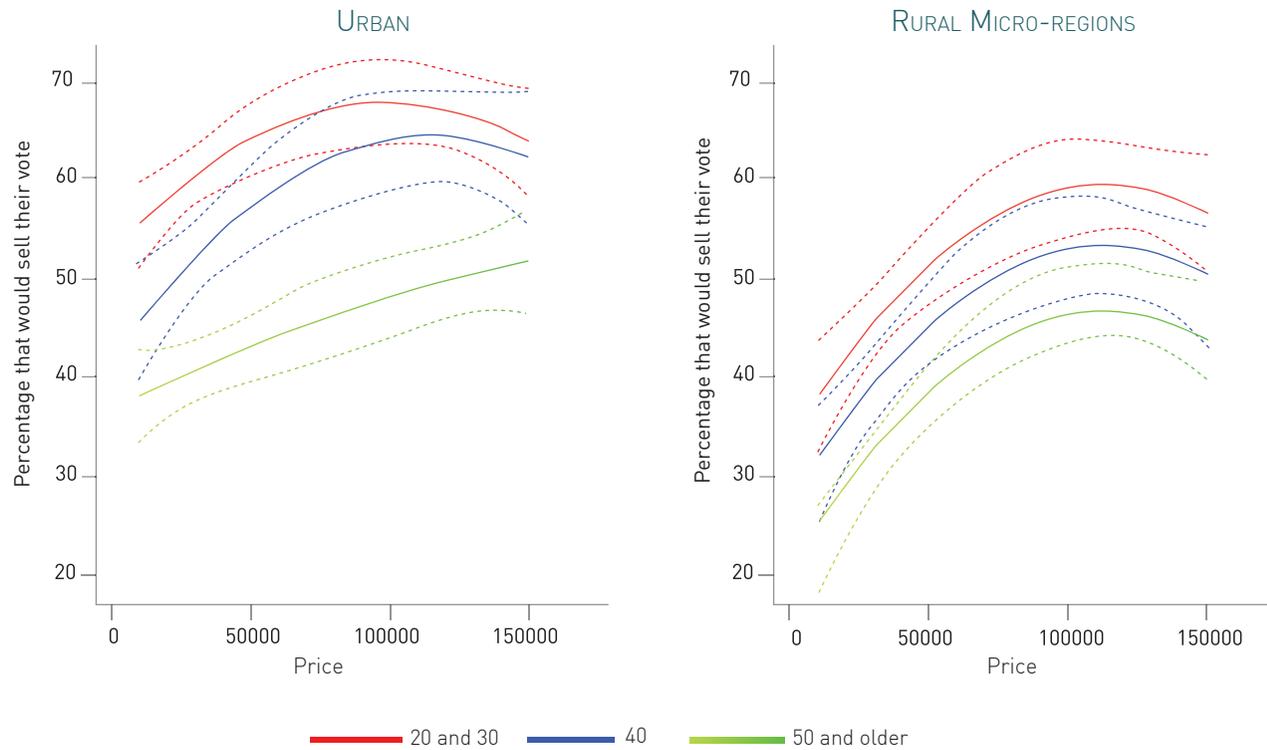
Source: Calculations created by authors based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. The upper panel shows the differentiated adjustment if the homes report being beneficiaries of some of the following governmental programs in the last twelve months prior to the survey: Familias en Acción, programs for senior citizens, SENA, Red Unidos, ICBF, aid for displaced people, wasteland and farmland allocation, the Ley de Víctimas, Agro Ingreso Seguro, Desarrollo Rural con Equidad, Oportunidades Rurales and Familias Guardabosques. The lower panel differentiates between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of Familias en Acción in 2012. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

FIGURE 6.13.
THE VOTE OFFER CURVE BY AGE AND BY AREA (PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE).

URBAN

RURAL MICRO-REGIONS

20 and 30   40   50 and older

The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. The age ranges are defined as follows: 20 and 30 for individuals between 18 and 39 years of age, 40 for individuals between 40 and 49 years of age; and 50 and older for people who are 50 years of age or over. This corresponds approximately to the three terciles of age among the participants in the politics module. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

*Source:* Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

Finally, a crucial question has to do with the evolution of this phenomenon over time. Even though there are no comparable questions from the past, it is possible to compare the response of the individuals in accordance with age. In Figure 6.13, it is evident that to the extent that the average age of the participants increases, the percentage of people selling their votes decreases. It is possible that youths, in general, are more willing to sell their votes (or consider that their peers are more likely to do so), but this pattern can also reflect an increase over time in the willingness to sell votes, which makes the new generations more likely to accept the phenomenon as something 'normal.'

Figure 6.14.
The vote offer curve by level of education and by area (percentage of people).
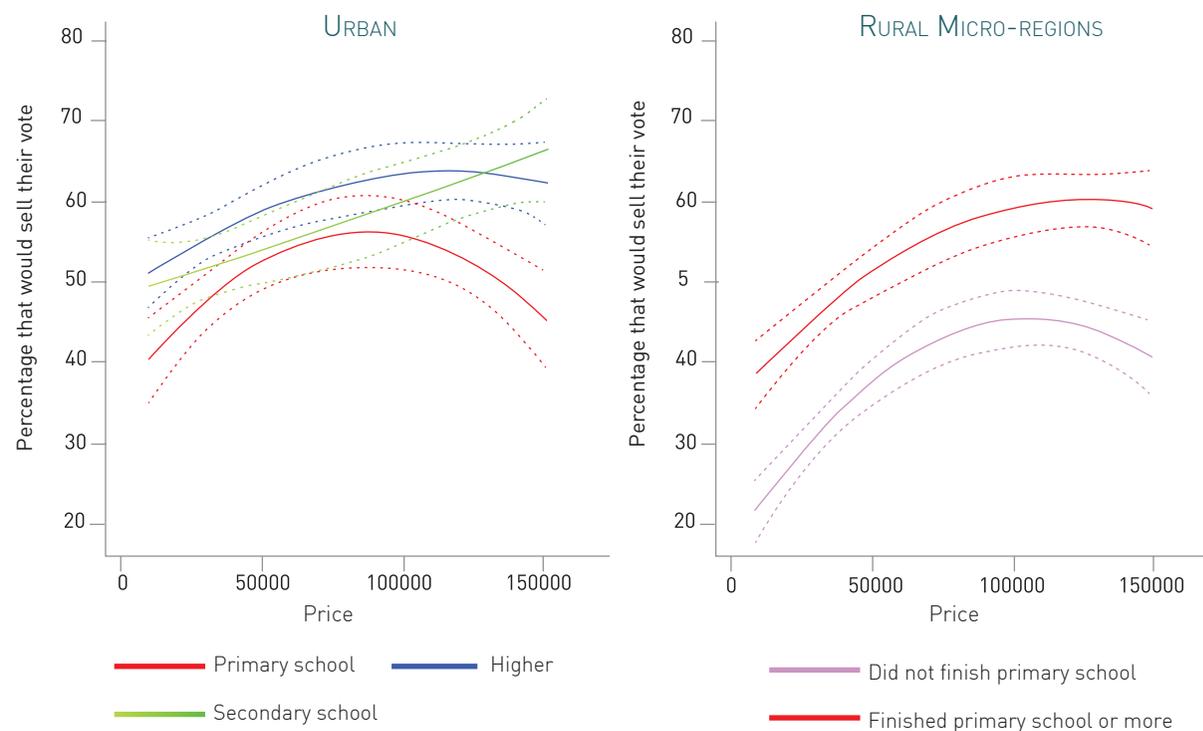
The solid lines show the best adjustment with the quadratic function of the percentage of people that would sell their vote at 10, 30, 50, 100 and 150 thousand pesos differentiated by the participants' level of education. The dotted lines show the 95% confidence intervals. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

These comparisons, in addition to shedding some light on the mitigating circumstances of clientelism and its possible causes, show that the phenomenon is generalized. What can be done? Beyond strengthening the measures of control and the electoral institutions, perhaps the most obvious solution to such a problem —where clientelism is accompanied by illegality— is education. Figure 6.14 shows the vote offer curves in accordance with the level of education. In the urban area, the only clear conclusion is that those with a higher level of education have a flatter offer curve, whereby each additional peso produces a lower increase in the proportion of people willing to sell their votes. But, for everything else the relationship between education and the frequency of selling votes is not simple: it depends on the price of the vote and, even when, on average, the individuals with higher levels

of education sell fewer votes than other groups, the frequency of selling votes is higher among those who completed either a few grades or the whole of secondary school than for those with a primary education or less. In the case of the rural area, education does not seem to be a clear mitigating factor; on the contrary, the vote offer curve for individuals with primary education or more is above that of those with incomplete primary education or less.

In sum, and to compare the statistical significance of the determining factors of vote selling examined in this section, Table 6.1 presents the results of running a regression for the sale of votes where the explicative variables are, in addition to the offered price, each of the variables described in the rows.[9] We summarize the bivariate regression results which include, in addition to offered price, only one determinant at a time, as well as the multivariate regressions results where all the determinants simultaneously enter into the regression, allowing the "control" of various factors that influence vote selling. The table allows us to glimpse at the principal findings of this section. In particular, we can highlight the following:

1. Even though in the rural area we surprisingly found that the wealthiest individuals are more willing to sell their votes, the evidence for the urban area as well as the findings in the two areas with respect to the influence of shocks suggest that it is the most vulnerable individuals that are willing to sell their votes.

2. The negative relationship between the probability of vote selling and the belief that votes are confidential is very convincing and robust.

3. Even though the results are not convincing, the evidence between reciprocating individuals, especially for the negative reciprocity in the urban area, suggests that vote buying is more common among individuals who agree with the idea that "what goes around, comes around."

4. The beneficiaries of government programs, especially in the urban area, seem more willing to sell their vote, even after controlling for other characteristics of the household such as income.

5. Younger individuals are more willing to sell their votes.

6. The relationship between formal education and the probability of answering affirmatively to the question regarding vote selling, even when controlling for other determinants, is contradictory at first sight. Educated individuals report a greater probability of vote selling, which can, in part, reflect the skepticism with which they evaluate their peers and not only their own disposition to sell.

→ *La Esperanza*, the Álvarez Tapia family store in Chinú, Córdoba, provides their main source of income. They sell beer and have a billiard table and card games.

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9. More specifically, a probit model is estimated where the dependent variable is a binary variable that is equal to one if the individual responds affirmatively to the question regarding vote buying and zero otherwise. The independent variables are the offered price and the respective determinants indicated in the rows.

TABLE 6.1.
DETERMINANTS OF VOTE SELLING

Area	Rural micro-regions		Urban regions	
Type of regression	Bivariate	Multivariate	Bivariate	Multivariate
Women	+	0	0	0
Medium income	-	0	0	0
High income	+	+	-	-
Affected by shock	+	+	+	0
Believe the vote is confidential	-	-	-	-
Reciprocity (negative)	0	0	+	+
Reciprocity (positive)	0	0	0	-
Beneficiary of some program	0	0	+	+
Familias en Acción beneficiary	0	0	+	0
40[a]	0	-	0	-
50[a]	-	-	-	-
Finished primary school or higher[b]	+	+		
Secondary[b] school			+	+
Higher[b]			0	+

Source: Authors' calculations based on ELCA 2010 and 2013

The + and – symbols indicate a significant statistical relationship (positive and negative, respectfully), between the probability of vote selling and the determinant considered in each row. The "0" indicates that the association found is not statistically significant. The results are obtained from the estimation of a probit model where the dependent variable is a binary variable equal to 1 if the individual answers affirmatively to the question regarding vote buying and zero otherwise, and the independent variables are the offered price and the determinants are indicated in the rows. The bivariate regressions include, in addition to the price of the vote, only one determinant at a time, while in the multivariates all the determinants enter simultaneously in the regression. a) The group of age comparison is of individuals between 20 and 30 years of age, and the fields with 40 and 50 are those which are interpreted as the level in which the probability of vote selling is compared, for these groups, with the youngest individuals. b) In the rural area, the educational comparison group includes those individuals with incomplete primary education or less and, in the urban area, the educational comparison group includes those individuals with primary education. For this reason, the row which says "Finished primary school or higher" in the rural area and those marked with "secondary school or higher" in the urban area are interpreted as the level in which the probability of vote selling is compared, for these groups, with the least educated individuals. The rural sample is only representative of the mid-Atlantic, Cundiboyacá, Coffee Region and Center-East micro-regions.

6.4. FINAL REFLECTIONS

Even though in Colombia there are individuals that are more interested in politics than others, this chapter confirms, based on the new ELCA politics module for 2013, that the general pattern is one of disinterest. Furthermore, the citizens do not seem drawn to political parties and politics. Rather, the focus is more self-oriented. This is a favorable scenario for the growth of clientelism, which is understood as the provision of direct, private and more or less immediate benefits provided by the candidates to the citizens in exchange for their electoral support. The result is expensive if the politicians dedicate their efforts to convince specific groups of citizens with these benefits instead of designing programs that will impact a wider set of individuals in society. For this reason, despite the module on politics allowing us to evaluate many other questions, this chapter concentrated on examining one of the clearest manifestations of this style of political exchange: vote buying.

The first thing that can be pointed out is that the phenomenon of vote buying is generalized. Additionally, some aspects such as education or greater income are not guarantees of a lower incidence of the phenomenon. However, it does seem that households in situations of vulnerability have a greater probability of entering into a political exchange of vote buying. This is a problem that deserves attention and must be studied in depth as it can foster a perverse logic. For the politicians, it is more attractive to buy individual votes from people with low economic resources in exchange for private and immediate benefits, while possibly putting public goods and programs for long-term welfare benefits at risk of detriment.

We also found that individuals that believe in voter confidentiality to a lesser degree would sell their vote more easily. This opens the possibility of lowering the incidence of vote buying/selling if the electoral institutions are strengthened and trust is built. Other messages are less optimistic: for example, formal education does not seem to be a simple solution to this situation. The most educated individuals do not seem to sell their votes less (on occasion quite the opposite). Nevertheless, there is international experience, which indicates that specific campaigns aimed at combating the sale of votes with educational messages on the value of freely exercising the right to vote can be effective (Vicente, 2014).

Despite the pessimistic interpretation of the results of this chapter, indicating that until the political arena in Colombia changes the citizens will not stop selling their votes, there is also another, more optimistic, interpretation: politicians are not indispensible in the fight against vote selling. Efforts can be made from the other side of the transaction by educating citizens so that they do not sell their votes. In fact, when the vote curve was examined against certain citizen beliefs, for example, their level of agreement with negative reciprocity ("what goes around comes around"), differences appeared in the vote offer curve. This gives us reasons to belief that if we can exercise influence on societal beliefs through educational campaigns, the incidence of vote buying and other manifestations of clientelism can change.

This chapter presents more questions than answers. It is worthwhile to emphasize that the conclusions presented here should be placed under closer scrutiny to fully take advantage of the richness of the survey. To conclude, it is also worth remembering that there are many other hypotheses which were left out but which make up part of the research agenda opened up by the new ELCA module on politics. The community now has a unique tool to continue constructing useful knowledge not only for academia but also for those interested in evaluating the problems of our political system and designing informed strategies to reach solutions.

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