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Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America

Is it always true that decentralization reforms put more power in the hands of governors and mayors? In postdevelopmental Latin America, the surprising answer to this question is no. In fact, a variety of outcomes are possible, depending largely on who initiates the reforms, how they are initiated, and in what order they are introduced. Tulia G. Falleti draws on extensive fieldwork, in-depth interviews, archival records, and quantitative data to explain the trajectories of decentralization processes and their markedly different outcomes in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. In her analysis, she develops a sequential theory and method that are successful in explaining this counterintuitive result. Her research contributes to the literature on path dependence and institutional evolution and will be of interest to scholars of decentralization, federalism, subnational politics, inter-governmental relations, and Latin American politics.

Tulia G. Falleti is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. Her work on decentralization, federalism, and research methodology has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Publius*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Critique Internationale* (France), *Desarrollo Económico* (Argentina), *Política y Gobierno* (Mexico), and *Sociologías* (Brazil), as well as in edited volumes published in the United States, Argentina, and Brazil. She has received awards and fellowships from the Social Science Research Council; the United States Institute of Peace; the Killam Trusts; the Ford Foundation in conjunction with the Latin American Studies Association; and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Productive Innovation of Argentina, among other institutions. In 2006, she earned the Gregory Luebbert Award from the American Political Science Association for the best article in comparative politics for her article “A Sequential Theory of Decentralization: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective.”

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TULIA G. FALLETTI

University of Pennsylvania



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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521736350

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First published 2010

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Falleti, Tulia Gabriela.

Decentralization and subnational politics in Latin America / Tulia G. Falleti.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-51679-2 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-73635-0 (pbk.)

1. Decentralization in government – Latin America. 2. Central-local
government relations – Latin America. 3. Latin America – Politics and
government – 1980– I. Title.

JL959.5.D42F35 2010

320.8098–dc22 2009029364

ISBN 978-0-521-51679-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-73635-0 Paperback

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To Richard, Tomás, and Emma

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Acknowledgments

This book has been a long time in the making. It has been ten years since, in an interview with economist Fabio Sánchez at the National Department of Planning in Bogotá, Colombia, I became intrigued by the process of decentralization of government that Colombia was undergoing. In previous research with my undergraduate advisor Waldo Ansaldi at the University of Buenos Aires, I had studied the relationships between national centers and peripheral regions in the contexts of nation-state formation and consolidation. But it was not until the summer of 1998, after two years of graduate school and while doing pre-dissertation research in Colombia, that I realized that my interests in intergovernmental relations and subnational politics could be studied through the lens of the important transformations in the distribution of authority, resources, and responsibilities among levels of governments that were taking place in Colombia and, as I soon realized, in many other countries. I am most thankful to Waldo Ansaldi for introducing me to the intricacies of regional politics and historical sociological research, and to Fabio Sánchez for that enlightening initial conversation about decentralization reforms.

This book stems from my doctoral dissertation, which I completed at Northwestern University in 2003. At Northwestern, in the arduous process of narrowing down the research topic, specifying the tractable research questions, operationalizing the concepts, and shaping the main arguments, I had the privilege of being advised by three outstanding professors: Edward Gibson, Kathleen Thelen, and Ben Ross Schneider.

As my main graduate advisor and chair of my dissertation committee, Edward Gibson guided me through the process of researching and writing

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a dissertation. He read several drafts of my dissertation and later book chapters and provided excellent comments and probing suggestions for improvement. He pushed me to think about the political and empirical relevance of my research questions (the “big picture”) while at the same time stressing the importance of elegant and concise arguments. Ed’s passion for Argentine politics was both encouraging and refreshing – and it made it easier to be away from home. Ed also introduced me to Mexican politics and was instrumental in facilitating my fieldwork in Mexico City. But much more than all of that, throughout the twelve years I have known him, Edward Gibson has been my *mentor*. He introduced me to the profession of political science and to American academia. If today, as an Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, I am part of the American political science academic community, it is largely due to Ed’s guidance and mentoring, both at Northwestern and in the years since then. I am also thankful to Ed’s family for hosting me in Mexico City and on many occasions at their home in Wilmette.

Kathleen Thelen and Ben R. Schneider provided excellent guidance throughout the development of my research project and much support in the early stages of my professional career. They read and commented on several drafts of the dissertation and later on book chapters. While I was in graduate school, Ben recommended, on more than one occasion, that I introduce the case of Brazil into my dissertation. At the time, it seemed such a daunting task to understand the complexity of Brazil’s subnational politics that I simply could not do it if I was going to analyze other country cases as well. When revising the dissertation and writing this book, I appreciated how correct Ben’s recommendation was and I did finally embark on the daunting task of incorporating the Brazilian case into the comparative research design. Thus, even after I graduated from Northwestern, Ben’s research and contacts in Brazil were most helpful.

Kathleen Thelen’s research on historical institutionalism and institutional change greatly shaped the main argument advanced in this book. Early on in the definition of the research project, she introduced me to the work of Paul Pierson and his ideas on temporal effects and sequencing, which became a central piece for the solution of my research puzzle. Thanks to Kathleen, I also met Paul Pierson and had the pleasure of auditing his and Theda Skocpol’s course on “History, Institutions and Policies” at Harvard University. I took this course as I was writing the first drafts of the theory contained in Chapter 2, and I cannot stress enough how influential their course and ideas were on my own thinking about temporal effects, policy processes, and causal mechanisms.

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Doing extensive fieldwork in four countries (one of them my own native country of Argentina) has been fascinating. Undoubtedly, it has been the most enjoyable and rewarding portion of researching and writing this book. Nonetheless, being abroad, especially in Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia, away from loved persons and known places, was also challenging. In each country, I had the good fortune of being hosted by outstanding colleagues and institutions, whose help was instrumental in getting my research done. In Brazil, Celina Souza was essential to the successful completion of my research. She shared her knowledge of Brazil's federalism, public policy, and intergovernmental institutions; provided me with contacts in academia and government; and hosted me in Salvador, Bahia. Argelina Figueiredo taught me a great deal about Brazilian politics, facilitated contacts, and generously shared her office at the Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ). Marta Arretche taught me about policy reforms in Brazil and introduced me to the Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (CEBRAP) and to the Political Science Department at the University of São Paulo. In Mexico, I benefited from institutional affiliation with the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), where Professors Blanca Heredia, Joy Langston, Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, Yemile Mizrahi, Gabriel Negretto, and Allison Rowland provided excellent comments over afternoon lunches and coffees. Yemile Mizrahi also generously shared the transcripts of her interviews with PAN officials. In Colombia, Fabio Sánchez helped me establish contacts with key informants and, without knowing it himself, was extremely influential in my selection of a research topic. In my home country of Argentina, I benefited from institutional affiliations with the Fundación Gobierno y Sociedad and the Political Science Department at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella. Many friends and colleagues have welcomed me every time I have been back in Argentina, but particularly noteworthy to this book project were my ongoing conversations with Waldo Ansaldi, Silvia Senen González, Dora Orlansky, Catalina Smulovitz, Mariano Tommasi, and Enrique Zuleta Pucceiro. Maria del Carmen Feijoo not only granted me several hours of interviews but also a copy of all the archival materials (debates and proposals) of the 1994 Constitutional Convention. I am also extremely grateful to all those people who in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico generously agreed to give me an interview and shared their experience and knowledge with me. This book could not have been written had those people not agreed to answer my questions. Their names are listed in the Appendix.

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Acknowledgments

In the United States and Canada, a host of friends, colleagues, and students helped to improve this book. For their research assistance, I am thankful to the University of Pennsylvania undergraduate students Agustín Diniz, Tatiana Gumucio, Maria José Lamadrid, and Corinne Smith. Carly Weinreb skillfully and in a timely manner edited the whole manuscript (twice!), and Dan McIntosh helped with the last edits. For their comments on different parts of this book, I am indebted to Isabella Alcañiz, Dawn Brancati, Daniel Brinks, Katrina Burgess, Ernesto Calvo, Maxwell Cameron, Maria Escobar-Lemmon, John Gerring, Lucas González, Merilee Grindle, Patrick Heller, Anil Hira, Wendy Hunter, José Itzigsohn, Alan Jacobs, Georgia Kernell, Vidal Llerenas, James Mahoney, Alfred Montero, Ato Kwamena Onoma, Marco Palacios, Paul Pierson, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol, Benjamin Smith, Richard Snyder, Celina Souza, and Deborah Yashar. David Samuels and Matthew S. Shugart shared their legislative data on Brazil and Colombia, respectively, which I use in Table 2.6; and Amir Kahir generously shared his intergovernmental fiscal data on Brazil, which I use in Figure 5.2. Two anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press provided extensive and helpful comments, which guided the final revisions of the book manuscript, and a third reader presented challenging observations that led to further adjustments in Chapters 1 and 2. Margaret Levi's long-standing interest in the project was extremely helpful and appreciated. I am also grateful to Lew Bateman, who promptly turned the manuscript into this book and graciously accommodated my various requests. In this process I had the good fortune of working with Elise M. Oranges as my copy editor.

The Watson Institute for International Studies and the Center for Latin American Studies at Brown University, the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and the Liu Centre for Studies of Global Issues at the University of British Columbia, with which I was institutionally affiliated while working on this book, were stimulating environments to work and discuss my research. Since my arrival at the Political Science Department of the University of Pennsylvania, I have had the good fortune of having two excellent departmental chairs, Rogers Smith and Avery Goldstein, who have protected my time and supported my teaching and research endeavors. Besides them, a wonderful group of colleagues, among them Jennifer Amyx, Thomas Callaghy, Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, Marie Gottschalk, Nancy Hirschmann, Richard Johnston, Donald Kettl, Ian Lustick, Julia Lynch, Edward Mansfield, Gerald McDermott, Brendan O'Leary, Rudy

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Sil, Mary Summers, Henry Teune, and Robert Vitalis, provided – in their varied ways – much support and many insights.

A group of institutions supported this project with generous financial support. At Northwestern University, financial support from the Graduate School, the Center for Comparative and International Studies, and the Alumnae Association helped me to get a head start on the fieldwork in Argentina, Mexico, and Colombia. Fieldwork in those three countries was then extended with an International Dissertation Field Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council. Field research in Brazil was supported with a fellowship from the Christopher H. Browne Center for International Politics at the University of Pennsylvania. Further research and writing were conducted with financial support from a Peace Scholar Fellowship from the United States Institute of Peace; a Killam Fellowship; and fellowships and grants from the University of Pennsylvania Research Fund, the Trustees Council of Penn Women, and the Penn Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies. Some of the material in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 draw from an article that appeared in the *American Political Science Review* (copyright © 2005 by the American Political Science Association) and are reprinted here with permission.

Finally, the unconditional support of my family and friends was indispensable to complete this book. My dearest friend, Isabella Alcañiz, not only has given me helpful and timely substantive comments whenever solicited (and usually under short notice) but also has helped me cope with the stress and frustrations of graduate school, and, later, professional and family life. I terribly miss living in the same neighborhood as Isa and being just a few minutes away, as we were in graduate school. To my life-long friend, Marina Travacio, I owe a great debt for introducing me to partisan politics in the early years of Argentina's last transition to democracy. Since I left Buenos Aires, she has also been my *cable a tierra* in Argentina, for which I am very grateful. I am uncertain my parents Rosa and Brunello fully understand what I do, why I am passionate about it, and why it means so much to me. Nonetheless, through their example and education, they instilled in me an ethic of hard work and an aspiration to always realize one's full potential. Both these life lessons have been essential in my academic endeavors. In more concrete albeit equally instrumental ways, my parents and parents-in-law, Marion and Desmond Moore, have provided much good care and, over the last three years, many hours of grandparenting. My brother, Sergio, and my sister, Valeria, transcribed many hours of interviews and, Sergio, being the

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Acknowledgments

graphic designer in the family, helped with some figures. Finally, I owe a great deal to my husband, Richard O. Moore. Part of my debt could be counted in the many hours he single-handedly looked after our son, Tomás, and, more recently, also our daughter, Emma, so I could finish this book. But more importantly perhaps, his unwavering confidence that the project would be successfully completed was a source of reassurance through the tough patches of writing and revising the manuscript. And whereas this book will not make up for the many Saturdays and evenings that I had to spend away from Richard and Tomás, I nonetheless dedicate this book to them and to Emma, with all my love and gratitude.

List of Abbreviations

A	Administrative decentralization
AI-3	Ato Institucional No. 3 (Institutional Act Number 3), Brazil
ABM	Associação Brasileira de Municípios (Brazilian Association of Municipalities), Brazil
ABRASCO	Associação Brasileira de Pós-Graduação em Saúde Colectiva (Brazilian Graduate Association in Public Health), Brazil
AMMAC	Asociación de Municipios de México A.C. (Association of Mexican Municipalities), Mexico
ANAGO	Asociación Nacional de Gobernadores (National Association of Governors), Mexico
ANMEB	Acuerdo Nacional de Modernización de la Educación Básica y Normal (National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education), Mexico
ARENA	Aliança Renovadora Nacional (National Renovation Alliance), Brazil
CA	Constitutional Amendment
CEBES	Centro Brasileiro de Estudos de Saúde (Brazilian Center of Health Studies), Brazil
CEBRAP	Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (Brazilian Center of Analysis and Planning), Brazil
CEDEMUN	Centro de Desarrollo Municipal (Municipal Development Center), Mexico
CESEM	Centro de Servicios Municipales Heriberto Jara A.C. (Center of Municipal Services Heriberto Jara), Mexico

CFCE	Consejo Federal de Cultura y Educación (Federal Council of Culture and Education), Argentina
CFE	Consejo Federal de Educación (Federal Council of Education), Argentina
CFI	Consejo Federal de Inversiones (Federal Council of Investments), Argentina
CIDE	Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (Center for Economic Research and Teaching), Mexico
CNEM	Centro Nacional de Estudios Municipales (National Center for Municipal Studies), Mexico
CNM	Confederação Nacional de Municípios (National Confederation of Municipalities), Brazil
CNS	Conferência Nacional de Saúde (National Health Conference), Brazil
CNTE	Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación Nacional (Coordinating Committee of Education Workers), Mexico
CONAGO	Conferencia Nacional de Gobernadores (National Conference of Governors), Mexico
CONAMM	Conferencia Nacional de Municipios de México (National Conference of Mexican Municipalities), Mexico
CONASEMS	Conselho Nacional de Secretarias Municipais de Saúde (National Council of Municipal Secretaries of Health), Brazil
CONASS	Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Saúde (National Council of State Secretaries of Health), Brazil
CUD	Convenio Unico de Desarrollo (Development Agreement), Mexico
F	Fiscal decentralization
FAEB	Fondo de Aportaciones para la Educación Básica (Fund for Basic Education), Mexico
FAFOMUN	Fondo de Aportaciones para el Fortalecimiento de los Municipios y del Distrito Federal (Fund for the Strengthening of Municipalities and the Federal District), Mexico
FAM	Federación Argentina de Municipios (Argentine Federation of Municipalities), Argentina
FCM	Federación Colombiana de Municipios (Colombian Federation of Municipalities), Colombia
FECODE	Federación Colombiana de Educadores (Colombian Federation of Educators), Colombia

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FENAMM	Federación Nacional de Municipios de México (National Federation of Mexican Municipalities), Mexico
FER	Fondo Educativo Regional (Regional Educational Fund), Colombia
FG	Frente Grande (Big Front), Argentina
FGV	Fundação Getulio Vargas (Getulio Vargas Foundation), Brazil
FNP	Frente Nacional de Prefeitos (National Front of Mayors), Brazil
FONAVI	Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda (National Housing Fund), Argentina
FPE	Fundo de Participação dos Estados (States Revenue-Sharing Fund), Brazil
FPM	Fundo de Participação dos Municípios (Municipalities Revenue-Sharing Fund), Brazil
FUNDEB	Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação (Basic Education Development and Teacher Valorization Fund), Brazil
FUNDEF	Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento do Ensino Fundamental e de Valorização do Magistério (Elementary Education Development and Teacher Valorization Fund), Brazil
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAM	Instituto Federal de Asuntos Municipales (Federal Institute of Municipal Issues), Argentina
IFE	Instituto Federal Electoral (Federal Electoral Institute), Mexico
INAMPS	Instituto Nacional de Assistência Médica da Previdência Social (National Institute for Medical Assistance in Social Security), Brazil
IPEA	Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Institute of Applied Economic Research), Brazil
LCF	Ley de Coordinación Fiscal (Fiscal Coordination Law), Mexico
M-19	Movimiento 19 de Abril (Movement April 19), Colombia
MDB	Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Democratic Movement), Brazil
MODIN	Movimiento de Dignidad e Independencia, (Dignity and Independence Movement), Argentina

NOB	Normas Operacionais Básicas (Basic Operational Norms), Brazil
NR-SO	Mixed coalition of national-ruling and subnational-opposition actors
P	Political decentralization
PAL	Partido Autonomista Liberal (Autonomist Liberal Party), Argentina
PAN	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party), Mexico
PCB	Partido Comunista Brasileiro (Brazilian Communist Party), Brazil
PDP	Partido Democrático Progresista (Democratic Progressive Party), Argentina
PDS	Partido Democrático Social (Democratic Social Party), Brazil
PEC	Proposta de Emenda a Constituição (Constitutional Amendment Proposal), Brazil
PEMEX	Petróleos Mexicanos (Mexican Oils), Mexico
PFL	Partido da Frente Liberal (Party of the Liberal Front), Brazil
PJ	Partido Justicialista (Justicialist Party), Argentina
PMDB	Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), Brazil
PRD	Partido Revolucionario Democrático (Democratic Revolutionary Party), Mexico
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party), Mexico
PRONASOL	Programa Nacional Solidaridad (National Solidarity Program), Mexico
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers Party), Brazil
PTB	Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (Brazilian Labor Party), Brazil
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública (National Ministry of Education), Mexico
SHCP	Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (National Ministry of Finance), Mexico
SNCF	Sistema Nacional de Coordinación Fiscal (National System of Fiscal Coordination), Mexico
SNTE	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (National Union of Education Workers), Mexico
SR-NO	Mixed coalition of subnational-ruling and national-opposition actors

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SUS	Sistema Único de Saúde (Unified National Health System), Brazil
UCEDE	Unión del Centro Democrático (Union of the Democratic Center), Argentina
UCR	Union Cívica Radical (Radical Party), Argentina
USEDES	Unidades de Servicios Educativos a Descentralizar (Units of Educational Services to be Decentralized), Mexico