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The Past as Future: Prior Political Experience and Career Choices in Mexico, 1997-2006

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Abstract

Using an original dataset of the prior career paths and ex-post political positions of 1,400 federal deputies from three legislatures (1997-2000, 2000-2003 and 2003-2006), this paper presents the first systematic study of political career choices after the democratic transition in Mexico. We find that Mexico's federal system leads many professional politicians to begin their political careers in the municipal and state political arenas, and then return to their state when the single three-year term in the Chamber of Deputies concludes. The demands of electoral competition in a federal system with no consecutive reelection have strengthened the state and local political spheres because state political bosses control resources and jobs that ambitious Mexican politicians need to continue their political careers in a highly uncertain context. We find that whether deputies come from the sub-national or national level, her prior political experience has an impact on the future job she aspires to after leaving congress. Our evidence supports the argument that to understand career choices in federal systems with uncertainty because of weak or non-existent incumbency, one should take into account the prior career choices of rational politicians. These measures help capture the network of alliances, obligations and resource control that allow politicians to construct successful careers.

Resumen

Este documento presenta el primer estudio sistemático de las carreras políticas en México tras la transición democrática. A partir de una base de datos original sobre las carreras políticas de 1,400 diputados federales de tres legislaturas (1997, 2000 y 2003), encontramos que el sistema político mexicano induce a los políticos a comenzar sus carreras políticas en las arenas municipal y estatal y, posteriormente, regresar a sus estados al concluir su estancia en el congreso. La competencia electoral en un sistema federal sin reelección consecutiva ha reforzado la arena política estatal y/o local debido a que los líderes políticos locales controlan los recursos y los cargos que un político racional requiere para prolongar sus carreras políticas en un entorno de gran incertidumbre. Nuestra evidencia indica que, controlando por otros factores, la experiencia política previa, ya sea a nivel local o federal, tiene un efecto en el nivel del cargo al que los diputados aspiran al dejar el congreso. Esto sugiere que la experiencia política previa, usado como un proxy de las alianzas y redes políticas de un político exitoso, es clave para para comprender las carreras políticas en un sistema federal con alta incertidumbre.

Introduction

This paper examines the factors that help determine the future career choices of legislators in newly democratic Mexico. This question matters because examining where hundreds of politicians decide to take future posts helps illuminate the different areas of power and authority in a given political system (Hibbing, 1999; Norris, 1997; Scarrow, 1997), especially those with multiple levels of government (Montero and Samuels, 2003). The issue of where, or at which level of government politicians choose to take their next post can help show the nature of political authority in federal systems, which in turn has important effects on legislative behaviour and policy making and on state-federal bargaining (Filippov *et al.* 2004; Garman *et al.* 2001; Jones *et al.* 2000; Willis *et al.* 1999).

Other works on political recruitment in federal regimes have made important advances in understanding why politicians choose to stay in their congressional seat, retire, or compete for a higher post, by focusing on the role of federalism, electoral rules, and the nature of electoral competition (Barrie and Gibbins, 1989; Best, Hausmann and Schmitt, 2000; Holmes and Sharman, 1977; Jones *et al.* 2002; Leoni *et al.* 2004; Samuels, 2000, 2003). However, these works miss an important element of the story. We will show that in addition to institutional rules, prior political experience before arriving to the national assembly has a strong influence on politicians' next career choice. We find in the Mexican case, for example, that if the politician held political posts at the municipal arena before winning a congressional seat, it is highly likely she will not find a future job in national politics. And those representatives who had prior experience in national politics are unlikely to find a post at the sub-national level.

Politicians in many nations outside of the US move in a very uncertain political environment (which is itself determined by form of government and by electoral rules of representation). Unlike their American counterparts, many politicians depend on party leaders for access to a party's valuable label, for bureaucratic and patronage jobs and for campaign resources. One rarely finds the self-starting, self-selecting, fundraising legislators outside of the US House of Representatives. This difference in who controls the resources that are crucial to a politician's survival can have a profound influence on how rational politicians make constrained choices over a wide gamut of political posts in the party, in government bureaucracy, or in elected positions.

Prior political experience, especially as we measure it —both by specific post and by level of the experience— is an important explanatory element because it is a proxy for a politician's already existing political alliances. As Samuels has argued forcefully (2003), the identity of the political actors who

control the resources that matter to a politician's career success tell us much about how the individual politician moves within her specific political context. Prior political experience is a relatively simple measure that helps show which political actors the out-going deputy has already allied herself to in the past. This gives one an indication of which political leader she can depend on in the near future to help her find her next post. By using prior political alliances to continue one's political career, the politician is lowering the risk involved with constructing a successful political career in a highly uncertain electoral environment. While most nations do not share Mexico's constitutional prohibition against consecutive re-election,[1] many do have institutional and party rules that put the individual politician at the whim of party leaders.

Even while underscoring the importance of prior political experience, one of course cannot deny the importance of political institutions on career decisions. Federalism, electoral laws, and resource control (which is defined here as control over ballot access and bureaucratic posts, *c.f.* Samuels, 2003) all have important effects on how politicians behave. The Mexican case can be used fruitfully for this discussion because it is possible to compare the effects of prior political experience with the effects of electoral representation due to the nation's mixed electoral system (60% of the lower house is filled through plurality elections in single-member-districts (SMD) and 40% through closed list proportional representation (PR). One can expect that those deputies who won a SMD seat in the lower house (called the Chamber of Deputies) have closer ties to local voters and a greater ability to win a direct election, so they are more likely to return to their state or municipality to continue their career.

This paper will discuss how the rise in electoral competition during Mexico's transition to democracy (which lasted roughly from 1988 to 1997) caused both political and fiscal decentralization. This trend has given the state governors enormous discretionary control of both nominations and budgets, making them important patrons to vulnerable politicians. Therefore, one should expect that deputies with co-partisan governors would use this advantage and return to the sub-national arena for their future job. In terms of the number of political opportunities, the federal government offers thousands of posts in the bureaucracy to politicians who share the president's party label.

This paper will search for the causes that help explain which immediate future posts Mexican federal deputies competed for after leaving their single three-year term in the Chamber of Deputies, using representatives from the first three plural congresses (the 57th, which lasted from 1997 to 2000, the

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[1] Mexico's anti-reelection rule has been on the books since a 1933 constitutional reform was passed.

58th, from 2000 to 2003, and the 59th, from 2003 to 2006).[2] The future post is categorized by level —municipal, state or national— because it is extremely difficult to assign a specific value to posts in terms of their desirability.

We use the immediate future career choices of federal legislators from the three major parties in Mexico to understand political career structures more generally for several reasons. First, with information on more than 1,400 deputies,[3] one can find patterns of behavior; second, a seat in the Chamber is considered a mid-level post, and because of the constitutional prohibition of consecutive reelection, many different types of politicians hold a congressional seat at any one time. Less than 16% of deputies in these three legislatures had held a Chamber seat before returning for another term. Third, information both on prior and future posts was available, and almost 84% of future posts were found, which gives us some certainty in our findings. Using these data, this paper will run several individual level models to untangle the variable effects of institutions and prior experience, as well as personal characteristics that are used as control variables.

In the following pages, the paper will first discuss the theoretical approaches to understanding career paths as well as works that examine career choices in other federal, presidential democracies in Latin America. In this section, we will present our argument for why prior political experience is an important variable to use for understanding future career choices. Then, section 2 will examine Mexico's specific institutions that can have effects on the career decisions of its local and federal politicians. Section 3 presents the dataset and empirical strategy, followed by the resulting evidence. Finally, the paper will conclude with a discussion of the implications of these career strategies for the Mexican political system.

1. Review of the Theoretical Literature

In Schlesinger's seminal 1964 work, he argues that a politician's political motivations over career posts are structured by the availability of political opportunities, and that these opportunities themselves are structurally determined by the number of posts and their value. Black (1972), Levine and Hyde (1977), and Rohde (1979) later placed Schlesinger's central thesis on micro-foundations using a utility calculation: the rational office seeker will make her choice based on the benefit of achieving a certain post, given the probability of winning the post and costs of competing for it (Black, 1972: 146). Kiewiet and Zeng (1993: 930) update this calculation stating that

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[2] The PRI held overwhelming majorities in the lower and upper houses of congress until the 1990s. It did not lose the legislative majority in the Chamber of Deputies until 1997, when the PRI still held the presidency. The PAN defeated the PRI in the presidential elections in 2000.

[3] This paper does not consider the deputies from the minor parties, which is why the total number of cases considered does not sum to 1,500.

"...expected utility of running for reelection depends upon the probability of winning reelection, the cost of seeking reelection, and the value of a House seat relative to the value of retirement."

Our central question is very similar to Black's (1972: 146): what "factors cause the costs and rewards of running for office to vary? Several authors mention structural factors, such as the size of the legislator's home city and the degree of voter overlap between the district for a higher post and the current one (Rohde, 1979), the degree of electoral competition, and the presence of an incumbent running for the higher position as factors explaining candidate emergence, attainment of higher office, and retirement in the US case.

As useful as the works on American politics have been, the factors driving career decisions in the US institutional context are highly dependent on the assumption that the political party is absent in candidate selection (Hibbing, 1999; Norris, 1997). Furthermore, much less emphasis has been placed on the effects of different rules of electoral representation on both the number and value of posts and as well as electoral competition.

Hence, as Norris (1996 and 1997) has argued, comparative recruitment studies must take into account not only individual ambition and motivation, but also the institutional environment in which decisions are made, specifically, the electoral system and nomination rules and practices. The electoral system favors certain kinds of candidates over others: closed list PR rules do not allow the voter to decide among candidates, and the order of the names is determined by the party organization, making the politician's personal image as candidate relatively irrelevant. Thus, the ability of the candidate to win votes is not important, but rather her connections to party leaders who make the lists.

SMD candidates on the other hand, are usually the most closely linked to their voters because they must win a plurality of votes within a district to gain a legislative seat. Candidates in open list PR systems often behave in a similar fashion to those with SMD rules. Because voters can determine which candidates from the party's list win election, candidates have strong incentives to campaign to win votes from concentrated areas within the multi-member district (Ames, 1995). These rules affect the kinds of candidates who win nominations: under SMD or open list PR rules, candidate selection must take into account the potential candidate's ability to win votes in a bounded geographic area.

Candidate selection rules and practices are another fundamental piece of the career choice puzzle: those parties that control ballot access have far greater influence over the subsequent behaviour of their politicians than those that do not (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988). The second issue in candidate selection for those parties that control ballot access is: at what level of party organization are these decisions made? If national party leaders decide which

politician wins the right to represent the party, the rational politician must establish relations of authority with top leaders. However, in many federal polities, sub-national party and political leaders either control access to the party's label or share this control with other leaders. Therefore, politicians interested in constructing long-term careers will use their ties with state leaders to help them win the right to represent their party at election time (De Luca, 2003; Langston, 2001).

Finally, government form is a crucial determinant in career paths. Federal regimes with elected municipal, state, and federal executives (with their own bureaucracies and budgets) and local legislators provide not only a greater number of posts to which a politician can aspire, in many instances, federal regimes also provide fiscal resources with which they can promote the careers of their political allies. Samuels argues that because municipal and state posts are so rich in fiscal, policy, and politics terms, it makes more sense for many legislators (even in a system with consecutive re-election) to return to the state or municipal level to continue one's career than to remain in a national assembly seat.

Authors working on other federalist regimes in Latin America (primarily Brazil and Argentina) note that the electoral system, the level and type of electoral competition, plus the importance of resource control over nominations and bureaucratic and patronage posts matter most in determining whether politicians choose to remain in their congressional seats or run for another post (Jones *et al.* 2002; Jones and Samuels, 2005; Leoni *et al.* 2004; Samuels, 2000, 2003). Leoni *et al.* (2004) —the first to have run individual level models to explain future career choices— argue that internal chamber leadership posts and other legislative performance measures also help determine whether the Brazilian legislator decides to run for re-election or for better extra-legislative post (some at the municipal and state levels).

These works on legislative turn-over and political recruitment do not take in account the importance of a legislator's prior political experience as a major factor that could influence her future career decision. This paper argues that to gain a fuller understanding of career choice, one should include variables that measure the path of a politician to the legislature. Samuel's argument that federalism creates valuable posts at the sub-national level is crucial yet incomplete: not all politicians in federal polities are necessarily interested in sub-national careers. What helps decide whether they are or are not? We can use the in-nation variation in prior political experience in Mexico to examine how locally-oriented politicians behave differently than those who base their careers in national politics.

When actors take a post, they are creating links with other politicians, either of obligation or of authority. Governing or running a party headquarters or running a state bureaucracy allows one to make friends, creates networks, and serves to inform other politicians and voters about one's abilities. If this

career has been made in municipal and state politics (which are highly linked in Mexico because of budget control on the part of governors), then one would expect that this prior experience is in fact representing an entire universe of alliances, friends, obligations and authority that can be used in the future to find the next post.

2. The Mexican Context

This section will examine the political and party leaders who have influence over political resources that matter to politicians in Mexico. Since the downfall of PRI hegemony, state governors have become crucial actors in distributing state bureaucracy jobs and nominations for elected positions for municipal, state, and even some federal posts, like the Chamber of Deputies. The state executives also control millions of dollars in funds which they can distribute as they see fit, making them important patrons. Because of this control over resources in a federal system with no consecutive reelection, many politicians now base their political careers in state and local politics. On the other hand, national party leaders still control nominations for PR slots to the Chamber and Senate, as well as millions of pesos of public resources for party activities. Thus, one can expect rational politicians to construct successful careers from both the sub-national and national political arenas. As we will show, prior political experience is a key determinant of future posts in an uncertain political environment.

Mexico has a two-tiered electoral system, with 300 (60%) of the 500 member Chamber of Deputies filled through plurality races in SMDs and 200 (40%) through closed PR lists. Voters have only one ballot with which to choose their SMD deputies, and so do not participate directly in selecting deputies for the second tier (as in Germany). Thus, PR deputy candidates do not run electoral campaigns; if they are placed high enough on the closed list, they will enter the Chamber. The nation is divided into five circumscriptions (as the multi-member PR districts are called) each returning 50 deputies to the lower house based on each party's proportional share of the national vote (Molinar and Weldon 2001). Since the 1930s, legislators cannot run for the same post in the next elections (although they can return after sitting out at least one term). Governors and presidents can never be reelected to the same post again (although former governors can and sometimes do run for other elected posts).

Mexico has 31 states and a Federal District, which shares many of the attributes of a state. Mayors and local deputies are elected to single three-year periods. Most of the states elect mayors and local deputies together with the governor, and then again during the governor's six year term in a mid-term election. One set of federal deputies (in for three years) and senators (who last six years in office) are elected with the president, and a lower

house election is held half-way through the presidential term of six years. Gubernatorial elections are held throughout the president's sexenio (six year term), except for the second year. Only a few states hold concurrent gubernatorial and presidential elections, so most governors do not win office by riding on presidential coat-tails.

The Mexican political system has undergone radical changes during the transition to democracy, which lasted roughly between 1988 and 1997, including astonishing growth in electoral competition at all levels of government, a fiscal reorganization that has given the states and governors control over assured resources from the federal government, and in the case of the PRI, an organizational decentralization that devolved candidate selection to sub-national political leaders. These changes opened up opportunity structures for politicians from all parties.

The PRI's national vote for the senate fell from 84% in 1970 to 36.7% in 2000, when the once-hegemonic party no longer held the 64 seats necessary to control the upper house. The opposition parties did not win a gubernatorial race until 1989, yet by 2000, the former opposition parties, the PAN and the PRD, held 15 of the 32 states between them. Municipal and state assembly elections follow a similar pattern: PRI domination until the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, at which point, the former opposition parties began to make inroads until most states and localities became fully competitive by the late 1990s or into the new century.

Clearly, one of the most important effects of growing electoral competition is that opposition party members and leaders could begin to win elected posts that had been closed off to them because of the electoral dominance of the PRI. When it became apparent that running for office under an opposition party banner was not automatically equivalent to political death, more ambitious people began to join the opposition parties in a quest for an easier route to office than laboring in the PRI (Greene, 2007). The fact that the PRI could now lose elections also opened up career choices for members of the PRI by allowing them an exit option: if they were passed over in the nomination battle, they could leave the party and compete under another partisan label (Langston, 2001).

Electoral competition had profound effects on the fiscal agreement between the central government and the states. Garman *et al.* (2001) and Willis *et al.* (1999) show that Mexico was fiscally centralized through the end of the 1990s and argue that this was an outcome of the centralized party system under PRI domination. The budgets of state governments were financed mostly through unconditional federal transfers (called participaciones) that came from the federal government via the revenue-sharing agreement struck in the late 1970s during the oil boom (Diaz Cayeros, 2006). By the early 1980s, states raised only about 6% on average of their expenditures through state taxes. However, during the 1990s, two changes

shifted the relative balance of power between state and federation in the fiscal realm. First, the federal government devolved responsibility by sending earmarked resources (aportaciones) to the states so they could pay for education and health care in their respective entities —without giving them power to set policy in these two areas. Today, roughly 60% of what states receive from the federation comes in the form of the earmarked transfers (Flamand, 2006). Second, once opposition politicians began to win governorships beginning in 1989, they started pressuring the PRI federal government to assign non-earmarked transfers in a more transparent and less discretionary manner. In 1997, PRI president Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) set up a series of formulas that would determine how much each state would receive in funds designed to strengthen the states and municipalities (participaciones). During the first PAN presidency, new funds were generated to devolve even more resources to the states (Programa de apoyo de entidades federativas). Even though the governors must automatically spend millions of pesos of their budgets for teachers and doctors, the remaining 40% of their budgets is made up of millions of un-earmarked dollars per state per year (although of course, large rich states receive more than poor small states). In 2003, for example, the federation sent the 32 states approximately 24.5 billion dollars in earmarked funds; 20 billion in unearmarked resources (including participaciones and the Programa de apoyo de entidades federativas).[4] Diaz Cayeros (2004: 231) estimates that by 2004, just over 50% of federal budget (gasto público federal) was spent by the states.

To win a local elected post, one must first win a nomination, many of which are controlled by the state political bosses (particularly the governors), not the national party. The PRI governors have influence over candidate selection for both local and federal elected posts (except for the senate races). The PRI's state executives have always been able to place most of their party's mayoral and local deputy candidates, and now they have enormous influence over ballot access for plurality SMD federal deputies, as well as their successor in the governorship.[5] The PRI's national party leadership was forced to devolve candidate selection for SMD Chamber races because they needed their governors to support the congressional campaigns when electoral competition began to rise.

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[4] As Diaz Cayeros notes (2004) on the spending side, Mexico is now quite decentralized. On the taxing side, it continues to be extremely centralized because state taxes are so low.

[5] Article 25 of Chapter IV of the PRI's party statutes states: the process of candidate postulation will be decided by the Political Council of the level at which the election takes place, from among the following options: direct election by party militants, a convention of delegates, or "customs and usages" relevant only for indigenous areas. These rules are superseded when the party runs in an electoral coalition with another party, in which case, the CEN decides the candidates and must only send the lists of both majority and PR candidates to the National Political Council for an up-down vote, with no changes permitted.

The PAN and the PRD have traditionally used far more decentralized methods of choosing candidates (Bruhn, 1997; Mizrahi, 2003; Wuhs, 2006).[6] The federalized PAN organization uses constituency level conventions of party activists to choose all candidates except for the president. The PAN continues to use delegate conventions to choose plurality federal and local deputy candidates, while the national party leadership has more say in PR candidates for both houses of congress. Despite the formal rules of candidate selection, the PAN governors are important figures in selecting local candidates in their jurisdictions, in addition to candidates to the Chamber. The PRD uses primaries to choose its local and federal candidates, but the PRD governors are also very active in promoting their allies as candidates using resources to help sway the primaries.

Governors have great influence on political careers because they are able to distribute or at least influence who wins a spot in the Chamber and whether they find a job in the state at the end of each three-year term. Not only do governors control a good portion of the candidacies for SMD deputies, they also place thousands of state bureaucrats;[7] and they control millions of dollars in non-earmarked resources that they receive from the federal government. It could be asked why state executives choose to form such wide alliances if they are unable to seek reelection for the same post again. First, many governors now aim to win the presidential nomination of their respective parties and so must build strong support coalitions within their states; second, the state executives also seek to place an ally as their successors and so try to include as many potential allies in their coalitions as possible.

Because of the ability of the state executives to influence or control bureaucratic appointments and ballot access, they have become crucial actors in many politicians' political careers in a system with great uncertainty. However, they share resource control with national party and political leaders. For this reason, it is necessary to test how prior political experience plays into future career choices.

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[6] Gubernatorial candidates for the PAN can be chosen in a sort of closed primary. Plurality senatorial candidates follow the same state-wide party primary procedure, but only active members can vote. PR senate candidates are chosen in part by state conventions and in part by the national leadership. State party conventions choose candidates for PR local deputies. District conventions choose plurality candidates for both local and federal deputies; municipal conventions choose mayoral candidates. See the PAN's "Documentos," on their webpage, articles 37-42.

[7] Each governor controls roughly 6-8,000 state bureaucratic jobs.

2.1. Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: Deputies with municipal and state experience are less likely to take a future national post, while those with federal experience are less likely to take a sub-national position directly after leaving the Chamber.
- Hypothesis 2: Those deputies who won their seat in the Chamber in SMD plurality elections will be more likely return to a sub-national post (one at the municipal or state level), while the PR deputies will more likely return to a national level post.
- Hypothesis 3: Deputies who share a party leader with their state's governor are more likely to go to a municipal or state post.
- Hypothesis 4: Deputies from the party of the president will be more likely to go to national posts because of the greater number of job opportunities open to them. The center-right National Action Party (PAN) held the presidency during the course of our entire data set and so we expect them to be more likely than out-going representatives from the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) or Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI) to take a future post at the national level.

3. Data and Empirical Analysis

To measure some of the determinants of political career structures for members of the Mexican chamber of deputies, we estimate a series of maximum likelihood regression models of the following general form:

Pr(*FuturePost* = *y* | *X*) = f (type of seat, deputy personal features, prior positions, party label, governor's party, electoral calendar)

Our dependent variable is the level of post –municipal, state, or national– of the immediate future position obtained after the deputy leaves the chamber, which we code on two different ways. The future position level is first coded as a binary outcome, sub-national post, which equals 1 depending on whether or not the deputy aspired for a sub-national position (be it state or municipal), and zero if it was a national post. The second measure, future level, is a categorical outcome that focuses on the level of the position. The municipal posts are city council, municipal government, municipal party, and mayor, and are assigned into the first category (1). The state jobs are local deputy, state government, state party, and governor or gubernatorial candidate, and are assigned into the second category (2). The third category includes national positions such as senator, federal bureaucracy, and national

party (3).[8] Thus, a former deputy who becomes a mayor would be coded as a (1) for her municipal level position.

Models for the level of post as a binary outcome are estimated with logit or logistic regressions, whereas the categorical outcomes for future level post are estimated with multinomial logit regressions. We estimate multinomial models instead of ordinal ones because we do not want to impose (or assume) a hierarchical ordering among types of positions. Clearly, some municipal posts can be considered better than some state posts: for instance, a mayor of a medium or large city can be considered a higher post than a local deputy. Moreover, using multinomial models allows us to estimate a different set of parameters for each category of the dependent variable (relative to a comparison or base group), instead of restricting the estimation to one set of parameters being fixed for all categories of future positions.

Our dataset considers 1,080 federal deputies that were elected in 1997, 2000, and 2003 and that left the chamber in 2000, 2003, or 2006 respectively for whom future posts were found.[9] There are several coding issues that should be discussed. The immediate future posts after leaving the Chamber were found in newspapers and internet sources for a period ranging from three months before the end of the term in office to two years after the term expired. The future jobs are those that the politician aspired to win –not just those that she did achieve. Precise future posts were found for approximately 84% of the leaving deputies, and one can imagine that many of those who were not found were either non-political or municipal-types because of the difficulty in finding these type of information in newspapers and internet sources.

Table 1 below presents the descriptive statistics of our data on the career paths of Mexican federal deputies in the three legislatures from 1997 to 2006. As the table indicates, the average age at the end of their term is 45 years old; more than two thirds (69%) of them had a college degree and 21% had a graduate degree. As expected, 62% of the deputies in the sample come from plurality seats with an average margin of victory of 23%; 47% of our cases belong to the PRI, 33 to the PAN, and 19% to the PRD. At the end of their term, about 55% of them shared the same party affiliation as their respective state governors.

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[8] We excluded the non-political category from our current analysis although our results did not change significantly when we included them.

[9] We did not find future posts for 15% of the deputies, which explains why the number of cases in the regression is 1080, rather than 1,416 (the total number of PAN, PRD, and PRI deputies in these three legislatures).

TABLE 1
Political career structures of Mexican federal deputies, 1997-2006
Descriptive statistics

	Overall sample				PAN deputies		PRI deputies		PRD deputies	
	Mean	Std. dv.	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dv.	Mean	Std. dv.	Mean	Std. dv.
Level of future post										
Local post	0.69	0.46	0	1	0.63	0.48	0.69	0.46	0.81	0.40
Municipal post	0.18	0.38	0	1	0.22	0.42	0.14	0.34	0.20	0.40
State post	0.47	0.50	0	1	0.38	0.49	0.52	0.50	0.51	0.50
National post	0.29	0.45	0	1	0.35	0.48	0.29	0.45	0.17	0.38
Non-political post	0.06	0.24	0	1	0.04	0.21	0.06	0.23	0.12	0.32
Plurality seat	0.62	0.48	0	1	0.58	0.49	0.68	0.47	0.55	0.50
College degree	0.69	0.46	0	1	0.67	0.46	0.71	0.46	0.68	0.47
Graduate degree	0.21	0.41	0	1	0.26	0.44	0.20	0.40	0.19	0.39
Age	45.23	9.40	21	77	42.21	9.51	47.74	8.83	44.29	8.87
Female	0.18	0.38	0	1	0.17	0.38	0.15	0.36	0.26	0.44
Margin of victory	0.23	1.66	0	36.08	0.27	2.19	0.24	1.56	0.15	0.10
Months before next local election	12.01	9.85	1	33	10.11	9.74	13.51	9.38	11.57	10.57
Same governor's party	0.55	0.50	0	1	0.39	0.49	0.68	0.47	0.51	0.50
Prior positions										
Municipal govmt post	0.30	0.46	0	1	0.39	0.49	0.25	0.43	0.28	0.45
State govmt post	0.44	0.50	0	1	0.30	0.46	0.58	0.49	0.35	0.48
Federal govmt post	0.25	0.43	0	1	0.14	0.35	0.32	0.47	0.24	0.43
State deputy	0.35	0.48	0	1	0.33	0.47	0.41	0.49	0.21	0.41
City council	0.17	0.38	0	1	0.25	0.43	0.16	0.36	0.10	0.29
Municipal party committee	0.33	0.47	0	1	0.51	0.50	0.22	0.42	0.28	0.45
National party committee	0.13	0.34	0	1	0.08	0.27	0.17	0.37	0.14	0.35
Municipal experience	0.63	0.48	0	1	0.77	0.42	0.57	0.50	0.53	0.50
State experience	0.78	0.41	0	1	0.72	0.45	0.87	0.34	0.68	0.47
Federal experience	0.42	0.49	0	1	0.25	0.43	0.54	0.50	0.43	0.50
Term expired in 2003	0.33	0.47	0	1	0.44	0.50	0.31	0.46	0.19	0.39
Term expired in 2006	0.33	0.47	0	1	0.31	0.46	0.33	0.47	0.35	0.48
PRI deputy	0.47	0.50	0	1						
PAN deputy	0.33	0.47	0	1						
PRD deputy	0.19	0.39	0	1						
Number of observations	1,168				406		547		215	

Level of future post is coded as: 1 municipal, 2 state, 3 national, 4 non-political

The prior positions held by Mexican federal deputies are informative of the career paths that lead to a seat in congress. Forty four percent of deputies in our sample period had a state government post, 33% worked in their municipal party committee, and 35% were state deputies before becoming federal deputies. Only 25% of them had a prior position in the federal government. These figures vary by political party as well, as indicated by the differences in summary statistics when we split the sample by political party.

To explore the career paths that are more readily identifiable in our data, Table 2 below presents a cross tabulation of immediate prior and future posts of the Mexican deputies that left office between 2000 and 2006.

TABLE 2

Career paths of Mexican former deputies, 1997 - 2006

Past experience	Future level position				
	Municipal	**State**	**National**	**Nonpolitical**	**Total**
Municipal	**35**	**40**	**14**	**8**	**97**
%	*36.1*	*41.2*	*14.4*	*8.3*	*100*
%	*17.6*	*7.5*	*4.2*	*11.9*	*8.56*
State	**101**	**266**	**107**	**34**	**508**
%	*19.9*	*52.4*	*21.1*	*6.7*	*100*
%	*50.8*	*49.6*	*32.3*	*50.8*	*44.84*
Federal	**63**	**230**	**210**	**25**	**528**
%	*11.9*	*43.6*	*39.8*	*4.7*	*100*
%	*31.7*	*42.9*	*63.4*	*37.3*	*46.6*
Total	**199**	**536**	**331**	**67**	**1,133**
%	*17.6*	*47.3*	*29.2*	*5.9*	*100*
%	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

Chi square test p-value < 0.01

As the table indicates, almost 65% of the federal deputies aspired or won a state or municipal post at the end of their term. More than half of the 508 deputies with some sort of state level experience chose to return to their home states (52.4%), whereas 39.8% of those with prior federal expertise remained in a national level position. Most deputies with municipal experience remain in their states but 14% of them do find posts in the national arena after going through congress. On the other hand, 18% of former deputies go back to a municipal level position.

This paper examines the posts that politicians sought to win, and from these choices, we infer choice. However, one cannot infer pure preferences from observable choices: it is impossible to know which post the politician actually wanted, only the one she actively sought to win. To use an example: a politician might have desired to become a senator in that next term, but knew her possibilities were close to zero, and so chose to compete to be mayor of her home town. On the other hand, while all choices are constrained, they are still choices: the out-going deputy could have decided between a mayoral candidacy and running for a leadership post in her state party headquarters. This paper assumes that all deputies chose to compete for the best job available, given the constraints and risks associated with that post (Rohde, 1979).

We use three different categories of explanatory variables to understand which level of post a deputy will aspire to directly after leaving the Chamber: first, personal characteristics such as age, gender, and educational level (college or graduate degree); second, information on their careers prior to arriving at the chamber; and third, institutional factors that can affect their decisions over posts after leaving the chamber, especially whether the governor of their home state is from the same party, the date of the next election, and whether the legislator left the Chamber at the beginning of a presidential administration of in the middle of one.

When looking at age, one could expect that the younger the deputy, the less political experience; so younger politicians should take a future job in their municipality or state, rather than in national politics. Thus, we expect a negative relationship between age and local positions. We also expect less educated deputies to pursue municipal rather than national posts, and more educated ones to move up to national posts. We have no prior expectation on the relationship between gender and future positions.

The combination of no consecutive reelection and party control over candidacies creates a strong connection between party leaders and individual politicians. The risks associated with not winning a good post in the next round are great, so it is rational for an ambitious politician to return to her original level to seek her next job because she already enjoys established contacts which can help reduce the uncertainties and risks. Because local posts are plentiful and valuable (thanks to the federal institutions and fiscal decentralization) and because representatives of the former opposition parties can hope to win these elected posts (or go work for a co-partisan executive), many politicians can now return to their states to continue a successful career. Reducing uncertainty is an important career strategy for nationally-based politicians as well, and they would most likely take the path of least uncertainty back to the national level. As a result of this interaction between institutions and resource control, we should expect that high levels of uncertainty should lead the rational, yet ambitious candidate to follow her previous career path because this will lower the risks associated with running for a new post.

To test this proposition, we use prior experience in two different ways: first, we construct indicator variables out of many different types of jobs, so that if an out-going deputy had been a leader of her municipal party affiliate, she would be assigned a 1 on that variable and so on. Then, we aggregate variables of prior experience into three different levels of experience that are not mutually exclusive, so that even if a politician held prior municipal experience, she could also hold prior state experience as well. These different aggregated variables are not mutually exclusive. The first of these variables is "municipal experience", a category which includes having held a post in the municipal party, municipal government, or city council, and we expect to find

that deputies with this kind of experience will likely find a local post in the future. By the same token, if a deputy has held a prior post in the federal government or in the national party, constituting the "national experience" category, it should be more likely that the deputy would not have to take a job at the municipal level. State posts, such as state government, state party, and local deputies are aggregated into a "state experience" category. State positions of course lie between the municipal and national. One could expect to find that having held a prior post in the state political arena, that a deputy could move either to the national level or remain in her locality.

We test for institutional variables as well. Deputies who won their elections in plurality races should be closer to their local voters than those elected from the PR lists, so they should be more tied to the local and state sphere and therefore, take a future job in the local arena. Seen from a different angle, PR deputies have less of a chance to win posts at both the state and municipal levels, because they do not have as many contacts in a given locality or are more closely attached to national party leaders. If this is true, then one should expect a positive relationship between having won a plurality seat and finding a municipal or state post rather than a national one.

We should see those out-going federal deputies who have co-partisan governors be more likely to aspire to a local post as their governor would be more willing to help them win one. In terms of the electoral calendar, because of the availability of federal bureaucratic jobs at the beginning of any presidential administration, we should expect to see that those deputies whose three-year terms end at the beginning of an administration more likely to take a national post than those whose term ends in the middle of the six-year presidential term. These variables are labeled dummy 2000 and dummy 2003. The 1997 dummy will be used as a comparison group in our analysis. And if local election dates are closer, one could expect that the leaving deputy would attempt to win a local candidacy. Like Leoni *et al.* (2004), we test to see whether having held a leadership post in congress has an effect on future choices.

To identify possible differences in the average career paths of former deputies of different political parties or average differences between the three legislatures, we will use indicator variables for PAN or PRD deputies, and use the PRI deputies as the comparison group. We expect deputies from the PAN to be more likely than their PRI counterparts to find an immediate future post in the national political arena because of their party's control over the federal bureaucracy during our sample period. Finally, we control for each state's population and budget as a proxy for the number of political opportunities.

3.1. Empirical Results

Table 3 summarizes the estimation results for the full sample of deputies from the three major political parties (PAN, PRI, and PRD) in the 1997 to 2006 period. Models 1 and 4 estimate logit models for the binary outcome local post (municipal or state posts *vs.* national posts), whereas the remaining models estimate multinomial logit regressions for the future post categorical variable, which is coded as 1 municipal, 2 state and 3 national level post. Models 1 to 3 control for specific prior positions (bureaucratic, elected or party positions at all levels of government) while Models 4 to 6 only control for the three aggregate categories municipal, state or federal experience discussed above.

Model 1 in Table 3 indicates that, as expected, deputies from plurality districts are more likely to aspire to a local post after leaving the Chamber than a national one. The older a deputy (a proxy for more political experience), the more likely the deputy will attempt to win a national job.

It is important to note that the prior experience of the out-going deputies is an important element of the explanation. If the deputy had a municipal government post or worked for the municipal party committee, they are more likely to seek a future local position. Conversely, those with experience in a federal bureaucracy or in the national party committees are more likely to remain in the national level. State government experience does not seem to affect career choices in a single direction, that is to say, they are as likely to move up to a national arena as they are to return to a local position.

Partisan affinities matter: If the deputy is from the same party as her state's governor, she will also have a greater probability of finding a job at the local level. This finding shores up the argument that co-partisan governors find their deputies future posts. Despite the fact that local and federal elections are not concurrent in most states, we find no evidence of an electoral calendar effect: deputies facing local elections soon after their term end behave no differently than those facing elections 2 or more years away.

The indicator variables for the year the deputies' term expired are statistically significant. The deputies who left the Chamber in 2003, when the presidential term was half way over, were more likely to return to local posts than those who left office in 2000 —probably because many of the posts in federal government were already taken in 2003. On the other hand, those deputies who were looking for new jobs in 2006 were more likely than those elected in 1997 to take a national post. The PAN and PRD dummies are both significant, indicating that PAN deputies were more likely to get a national level post, and the PRD less likely, than those from the PRI. This result also suggests that it may be necessary to estimate separate models for each one of the three parties.

Models 2 and 3 in Table 3 that use multinomial logits to disaggregate the dependent variable into three different levels —municipal, state or national—

confirm these results but also provide new findings. Deputies with college or graduate studies are more likely to move to state posts than to national posts. Female deputies, however, are more likely to take a national than a municipal post. Shared partisanship with governors makes state posts more likely than national ones, but makes no difference for municipal positions.

Model 4 in Table 3 presents another logit specification with aggregated prior experience. If a deputy arrived to the Chamber with prior municipal experience, a local job is probably in her future. Prior state experience, however, is not significant, which is an interesting finding as it shows that those politicians who reach the Chamber with state experience are as likely to find a future post at the local level as they are to find one in the national arena. Those deputies with federal experience before arriving to the Chamber are less likely to attempt to win a future post at the local level, as is expected since we argue that prior experience helps act as an anchor.

TABLE 3
Political careers after leaving the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1997-2006
All major party deputies

	Local vs. national	Municipal vs. national	State vs. national	Local vs. national	Municipal vs. national	State vs. national
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**
	logit	mlogit	mlogit	logit	mlogit	mlogit
Plurality seat	0.966	1.254	0.869	0.904	1.13	0.822
	[0.218]***	[0.295]***	[0.236]***	[0.210]***	[0.281]***	[0.231]***
College degree	0.482	0.104	0.619	0.361	-0.051	0.505
	[0.273]*	[0.339]	[0.293]**	[0.268]	[0.336]	[0.289]*
Graduate degree	0.449	-0.097	0.633	0.319	-0.244	0.511
	[0.301]	[0.394]	[0.322]**	[0.295]	[0.388]	[0.315]
Age	-0.027	-0.036	-0.024	-0.026	-0.036	-0.022
	[0.008]***	[0.011]***	[0.009]***	[0.008]***	[0.011]***	[0.009]**
Female	-0.227	-0.657	-0.106	-0.256	-0.726	-0.123
	[0.196]	[0.283]**	[0.201]	[0.198]	[0.280]***	[0.205]
Municipal govt post	0.338	0.578	0.232			
	[0.171]**	[0.217]***	[0.179]			
State govt post	-0.023	-0.29	0.061			
	[0.163]	[0.218]	[0.169]			
Federal govt post	-0.622	-0.495	-0.671			
	[0.172]***	[0.240]**	[0.181]***			
State deputy	-0.071	-0.252	-0.009			
	[0.157]	[0.211]	[0.163]			
City council	0.302	0.489	0.222			
	[0.211]	[0.266]*	[0.221]			
Municipal party committee	0.555	0.692	0.502			
	[0.178]***	[0.223]***	[0.187]***			
National party committee	-0.443	-0.641	-0.415			
	[0.197]**	[0.322]**	[0.205]**			
Municipal experience				0.585	0.773	0.527
				[0.164]***	[0.234]***	[0.169]***
State experience				0.234	-0.264	0.475
				[0.182]	[0.233]	[0.197]**
Federal experience				-0.885	-1.015	-0.842
				[0.167]***	[0.229]***	[0.174]***
Same governor's party	0.329	0.353	0.338	0.348	0.384	0.351
	[0.155]**	[0.215]	[0.161]**	[0.155]**	[0.210]*	[0.161]**
Committee leader	-0.031	-0.162	0.019	-0.009	-0.137	0.04
	[0.150]	[0.196]	[0.156]	[0.149]	[0.196]	[0.156]
Margin of victory	0.326	0.118	0.433	0.295	0.115	0.397
	[0.424]	[0.545]	[0.477]	[0.408]	[0.511]	[0.471]
Time to next election	0.003	0.01	0.001	0.002	0.009	-0.001
	[0.008]	[0.010]	[0.008]	[0.008]	[0.010]	[0.008]

State revenues	-0.005	0.006	-0.009	-0.002	0.01	-0.006
	[0.004]	[0.005]	[0.005]*	[0.004]	[0.006]	[0.005]
Term expired in 2003	0.755	0.855	0.708	0.757	0.796	0.728
	[0.193]***	[0.254]***	[0.199]***	[0.192]***	[0.256]***	[0.199]***
Term expired in 2006	-0.299	0.021	-0.408	-0.337	0.001	-0.456
	[0.179]*	[0.240]	[0.187]**	[0.180]*	[0.240]	[0.189]**
PAN deputy	-0.794	-0.324	-0.95	-0.783	-0.299	-0.956
	[0.184]***	[0.260]	[0.193]***	[0.186]***	[0.259]	[0.194]***
PRD deputy	0.831	1.103	0.755	0.873	1.092	0.818
	[0.239]***	[0.308]***	[0.245]***	[0.239]***	[0.309]***	[0.247]***
Constant	0.968	-0.377	0.589	0.918	0.015	0.321
	[0.577]*	[0.752]	[0.620]	[0.596]	[0.776]	[0.643]
Observations	1,080	1,080	1,080	1,079	1,079	1,079
% correctly predicted	0.75	0.59	0.59	0.75	0.59	0.59
Adjusted count R2	0.19	0.17	0.17	0.20	0.19	0.19

Maximum likelihood estimates with robust standard errors in brackets.

* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

In logit models outcome equals 1 if deputies take a municipal or state position, and zero otherwise.

In multinomial logit models: 1=municipal, 2=state, and 3=national position.

In Model 6, a multinomial logit comparing future state to future national posts, one finds two interesting differences: first, college and graduate education can make a difference, with more education leading to a higher probability that the deputy will win a future state post. Second, and more importantly, the prior state experience variable comes out significant for the first time. Those deputies that had held state jobs before becoming deputies were more likely to win state versus national posts. To sum up, as expected, the deputy's prior level of experience is a strong indicator of where she will search for a new post in the future.

To further test the prior experience thesis, we split the sample into those deputies from the PAN and from the PRI. If PAN deputies —who belong to the president's party and therefore have access to the thousands of federal bureaucratic posts— follow the same paths as the politicians in the overall sample, then even for the group that has greater access to federal posts, one sees the weight of prior experience on future careers. We also test this hypothesis using the members of the PRI, who by and large no longer have access to federal bureaucratic posts. If priístas who come from national posts before they arrive to the Chamber manage to find future posts in the national arena (even though their party does not control the federal bureaucracy) then that too would support the prior experience argument.

Table 4 estimates similar models for PAN and PRI deputies, respectively, using aggregated prior experience variables. Model 1 in Table 4 indicates that most of the professional background explanatory variables act in similar ways. If the PAN deputy had past experience at the municipal level, then she was more likely to go to a local post. And if she had prior posts at the federal

level, then there was a higher probability of a future post in the national arena. As in the overall sample, deputies with prior experience in state posts are not any more likely to take a local versus national position.

Models 4 to 6 in Table 4 present logit and multinomial logit estimates for the sample of PRI deputies. Again, if the PRI deputies who came from the national arena before arriving to the Chamber were able to return to national posts despite losing access to the federal bureaucracy, this would support the claim that prior experience acts as an anchor for future career choices. The PRI deputies with prior federal experience are far more likely to go to a future national post than they are to find one in the local arena, as one would expect (the sign is negative and strongly significant). Once again, there is a good deal of support for the prior experience hypothesis.

TABLE 4
Political careers after leaving the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1997-2006
PAN and PRI deputies

	PAN			PRI		
	Local vs. national	Municipal vs. national	State vs. national	Local vs. national	Municipal vs. national	State vs. national
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**
	logit	mlogit	mlogit	logit	mlogit	mlogit
Plurality seat	**1.63**	**2.029**	**1.484**	**0.987**	**1.379**	**0.886**
	[0.860]*	[0.935]**	[0.890]*	[0.250]***	[0.498]***	[0.255]***
College degree	**0.2**	**-0.44**	**0.67**	**0.495**	**0.438**	**0.546**
	[0.491]	[0.571]	[0.596]	[0.390]	[0.513]	[0.421]
Graduate degree	**-0.159**	**-1.193**	**0.435**	**0.814**	**0.866**	**0.838**
	[0.521]	[0.635]*	[0.623]	[0.450]*	[0.604]	[0.480]*
Age	**-0.016**	**-0.034**	**-0.006**	**-0.022**	**-0.021**	**-0.023**
	[0.013]	[0.016]**	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.020]	[0.015]
Female	**-0.491**	**-0.901**	**-0.316**	**-0.239**	**-0.93**	**-0.138**
	[0.324]	[0.486]*	[0.339]	[0.333]	[0.567]	[0.333]
Municipal experience	**0.739**	**0.379**	**0.926**	**0.64**	**1.454**	**0.476**
	[0.283]***	[0.362]	[0.322]***	[0.239]***	[0.401]***	[0.242]**
State experience	**0.19**	**-0.134**	**0.431**	**0.714**	**-0.656**	**1.148**
	[0.304]	[0.351]	[0.344]	[0.290]**	[0.434]	[0.351]***
Federal experience	**-0.769**	**-0.539**	**-0.871**	**-0.847**	**-0.973**	**-0.781**
	[0.274]***	[0.351]	[0.313]***	[0.269]***	[0.379]**	[0.274]***
Same governor's party	**0.872**	**1.386**	**0.661**	**0.309**	**0.325**	**0.324**
	[0.303]***	[0.402]***	[0.327]**	[0.257]	[0.378]	[0.263]
Committee leader	**-0.153**	**-0.222**	**-0.144**	**-0.135**	**-0.551**	**-0.045**
	[0.246]	[0.305]	[0.271]	[0.227]	[0.332]*	[0.234]
Margin of victory	**2.446**	**2.351**	**2.618**	**0.128**	**-0.052**	**0.138**
	[2.157]	[2.234]	[2.232]	[0.067]*	[0.851]	[0.071]*
Time to next election	**0.039**	**0.07**	**0.023**	**-0.017**	**-0.028**	**-0.014**
	[0.014]***	[0.019]***	[0.016]	[0.014]	[0.019]	[0.014]
State revenues	**0.01**	**0.022**	**0.005**	**-0.002**	**-0.004**	**-0.001**
	[0.008]	[0.011]**	[0.009]	[0.007]	[0.011]	[0.007]
Term expired in 2003	**0.517**	**0.416**	**0.607**	**1.188**	**1.834**	**1.08**
	[0.314]*	[0.383]	[0.341]*	[0.290]***	[0.468]***	[0.294]***
Term expired in 2006	**-0.595**	**-0.498**	**-0.614**	**0.16**	**1.209**	**-0.064**
	[0.317]*	[0.417]	[0.352]*	[0.269]	[0.429]***	[0.276]
Constant	**-1.746**	**-1.927**	**-3.08**	**0.086**	**-1.378**	**-0.438**
	[1.299]	[1.453]	[1.465]**	[0.929]	[1.360]	[0.994]
Observations	385	385	385	507	507	507
% correctly predicted	0.75	0.56	0.56	0.77	0.64	0.64
Adjusted count R2	0.32	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.20	0.20

Maximum likelihood estimates with robust standard errors in brackets.

* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

In logit models outcome equals 1 if deputies take a municipal or state position, and zero otherwise.

In multinomial logit models: 1=municipal, 2=state, and 3=national position.

3.2. Predicted Probabilities and Marginal Effects

The results mentioned so far clearly indicate the sign and statistical significance of the association between key explanatory variables and our dependent variable, while controlling for a number of factors. Since multinomial logit models are nonlinear in their parameters, a more precise estimation of the magnitude of these effects requires further calculations of the predicted probabilities, and changes in probability, departing from a baseline scenario. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the marginal impact of selected covariates, which were previously found to be statistically significant, on the predicted probabilities of future position at different levels.

For simplicity, our baseline for the overall sample is an average or median legislator: a 44 years old PRI deputy with a college degree who was elected in a plurality seat in 2000. He shares the party label of his home state governor and has state government expertise but lacks any municipal or federal level experience. Our baseline scenario yields the following predicted probabilities for the future post: municipal level 20%, state 59% and national 21%. Figure 1 depicts the marginal effect of several covariates on this benchmark, and Table 5 provides the specific estimates of these marginal effects. For instance, plurality deputies are 8% more likely than PR deputies to get a municipal level office, whereas they are 18% less likely to obtain a national post. The oldest deputies are 24% more likely to move to a national office, whereas they are 8% less likely to get a state level post. On the other hand, those with prior federal expertise are 18% more likely to get a national level position and 12% less likely to seek a state job, than those without similar expertise. Regarding partisan differences, PAN deputies are 21% less likely to get a state level position and 15% more likely to get a national office, than our baseline PRI deputy. Finally, deputies whose term expired in 2003 are 10% less likely to remain in a national position than those who left office in 2000.

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATED EFFECT OF SELECTED COVARIATES IN FUTURE POST OF FORMER DEPUTIES
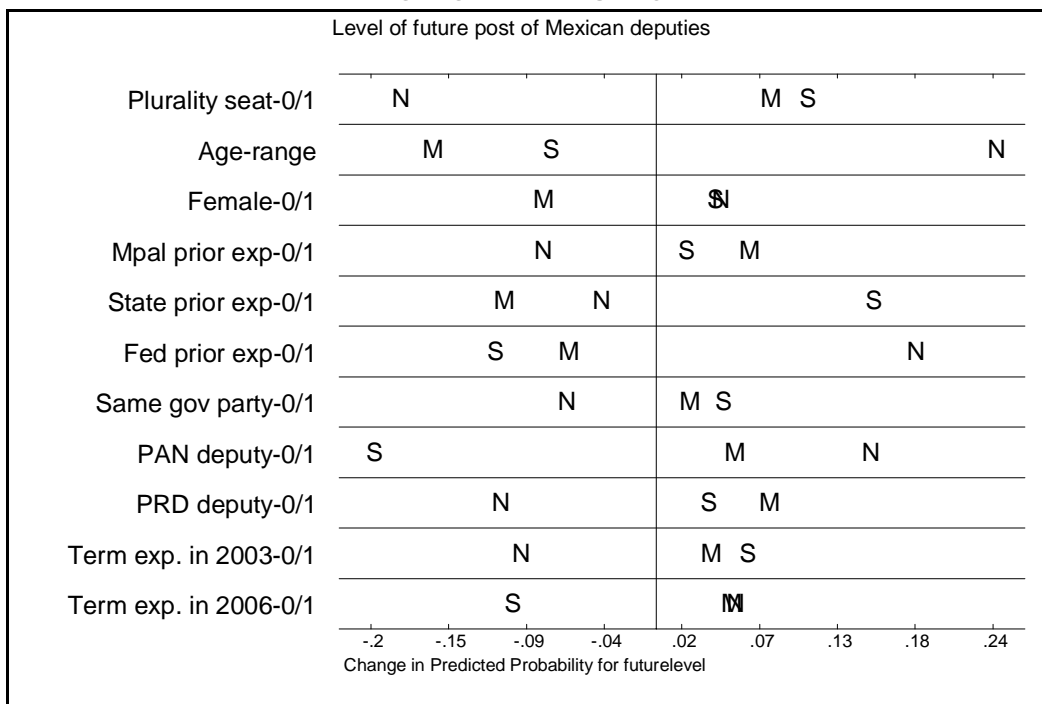
Estimated change in predicted probabilities for each level of future post (Municipal, State or National) for a 44 year old PRI deputy with a college degree, elected in 2003 in a plurality seat, partisan affinity with his governor, and prior state experience. The baseline probabilities are: municipal 20%, state level 59%, and national 21%. Estimates based on Table 3, models 2 and 3.

Table 5

Estimated effect of selected covariates in future post level

	Change in predicted probability		
	Municipal	State	National
Plurality seat	0.08	0.11	-0.18
Age (range)	-0.16	-0.08	0.24
Female	-0.08	0.04	0.04
Mpal prior experience	0.06	0.02	-0.08
State prior experience	-0.11	0.15	-0.04
Federal prior experience	-0.06	-0.12	0.18
Same governor's party	0.02	0.04	-0.07
PAN deputy	0.05	-0.20	0.15
PRD deputy	0.08	0.03	-0.11
Term expired in 2003	0.04	0.06	-0.10
Term expired in 2006	0.05	-0.10	0.05
Baseline simulated deputy	0.20	0.59	0.21

Estimated change in predicted probabilities for each level of future post (Municipal, State or National) for a 44 year old PRI deputy with a college degree, elected in 2003 in a plurality seat, partisan affinity with his governor, and prior state experience. Estimates based on Table 3, models 2 and 3.

Finally, Figure 2 reproduces a similar exercise but this time based on the estimates from the sample of PAN deputies from models 2 and 3, Table 4. Now the baseline is a 41 year old PAN deputy with a college degree, elected in 2003 in a plurality seat, with no partisan affinity with his governor, and prior state experience. The baseline probabilities for this typical panista are: municipal 25%, state level 30%, and national 45%. PAN plurality deputies are 21% more likely than PR deputies to get a municipal level office, whereas they are 37% less likely to obtain a national post. The oldest deputies are 25% more likely to move to a national office, whereas they are 6% more likely to get a state level post. On the other hand, those with prior federal expertise are 15% more likely to get a national level position and 12% less likely to seek a state job, than those without similar expertise. Finally, PAN deputies whose term expired in 2006 are 13% more likely to remain in a national position than those who left office in 2000.

To the extent that PAN deputies behave similarly to those in the overall sample is indicative of the strength of the deputies' prior experience on their future choices. Some estimated effects are larger for PAN deputies than in other parties, such as the effect of plurality seats, electoral calendar or party affinity with governors. However, some other effects are roughly similar among parties, such as the effect of age, federal or municipal experience, or the year of their expiration term. As our evidence indicates, even members of the president's party are likely to return to the same political arena prior to reaching the Chamber of Deputies. In Mexico, political futures depend heavily on past career choices.

FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED EFFECT OF SELECTED COVARIATES IN FUTURE POST OF PAN DEPUTIES
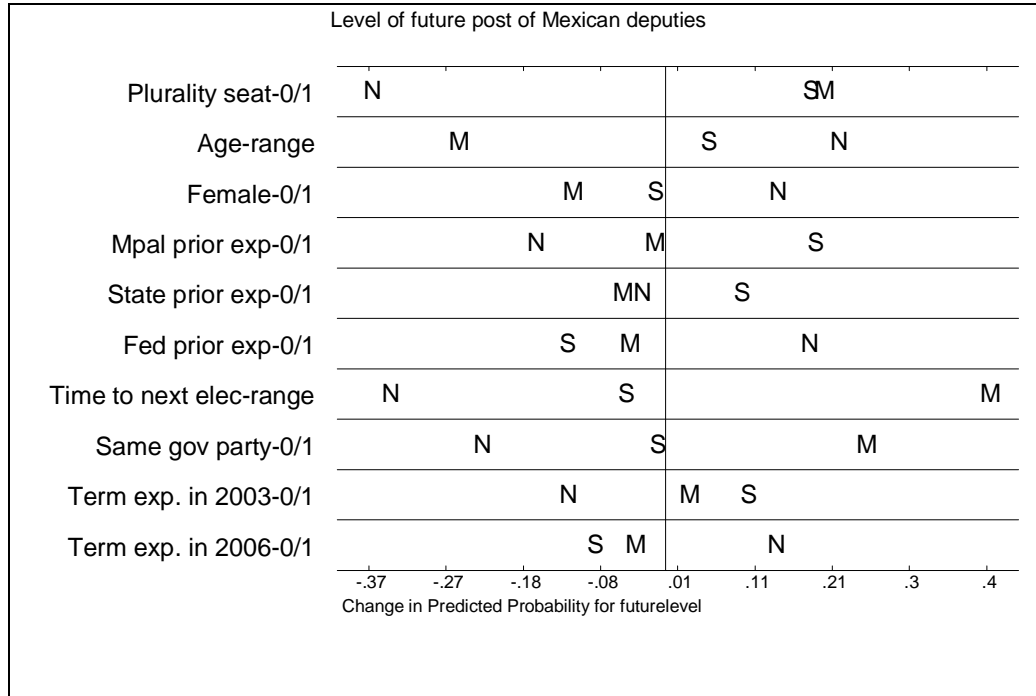
Estimated change in predicted probabilities for each level of future post (Municipal, State or National) for a 41 year old PAN deputy with a college degree, elected in 2003 in a plurality seat, without partisan affinity with his governor, and prior state experience. The baseline probabilities are: municipal 25%, state level 30%, and national 45%. Estimates based on Table 4, models 2 and 3.

Table 6
Estimated effect of selected covariates in future post level

	Change in predicted probability		
	Municipal	State	National
Plurality seat	0.19	0.17	-0.37
Age (range)	-0.26	0.05	0.21
Female	-0.12	-0.02	0.13
Mpal prior experience	-0.02	0.18	-0.16
State prior experience	-0.06	0.09	-0.03
Federal prior experience	-0.05	-0.12	0.17
Time to next election	0.40	-0.05	-0.34
Same governor's party	0.24	-0.01	-0.23
Term expired in 2003	0.03	0.10	-0.12
Term expired in 2006	-0.04	-0.09	0.13
Baseline simulated deputy	0.25	0.30	0.45

Estimated change in predicted probabilities for each level of future post (Municipal, State or National) for a 41 year old PAN deputy with a college degree, elected in 2003 in a plurality seat, without partisan affinity with his governor, and prior state experience. Estimates based on Table 4, models 2 and 3.

Conclusions

Using an original dataset of the prior career paths and ex-post political positions of 1,400 federal deputies from three legislatures (1997-2000, 2000-2003 and 2003-2006), this paper presents the first systematic study of political career choices after the democratic transition in Mexico. We find that Mexico's federal system —constrained by the nation's formal rules and informal relations— leads many professional politicians to begin their political careers in the municipal and state political arenas, and then return to their state when the single three-year term in the Chamber of Deputies concludes. The demands of electoral competition in a federal system with no consecutive reelection have strengthened the state and local political spheres because state political bosses (particularly governors) control resources and jobs that ambitious Mexican politicians need to continue their political careers in a highly uncertain context. At the same time, national party control over candidate selection for the closed PR lists have allowed the national leaders a way to continue to win entry into the legislature and maintain their leadership role. Whether the out-going deputy comes from the sub-national or national level, her prior political experience has an impact on the future job she aspires to after her single three-year terms in congress ends.

Our empirical analysis estimates the effect of deputies' personal features, prior positions, district types, party labels, and the local electoral calendar on the level (municipal, state or national) of the post that deputies seek after their term comes to an end. Based on estimates of multinomial regression models, our results indicate that experience in local or national positions correspondingly leads to future positions in the same political arenas. Partisan affinity with state governors affects the likelihood of winning a local post, whereas local election calendars affect the future level only for the PAN deputies. Because so many of the party politicians who win a post in the national assembly come from municipal or state posts, this also means that many of the leaving deputies return to their localities to continue their political careers.

The empirical analysis presented in this paper helps support the argument that to understand career choices in federal systems with uncertainty because of weak or non-existent incumbency, one should take into account the prior career decisions of rational politicians. These measures help capture the web of alliances, obligations, and resource control that allow politicians to construct successful careers.

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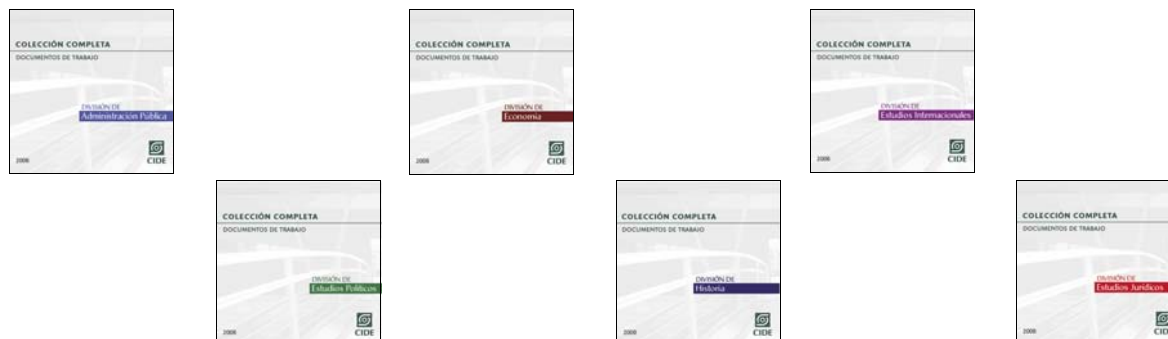
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