

**RICE UNIVERSITY**

**The Electoral Connection in Multi-Level Systems with Non-Static Ambition:  
Linking Political Careers and Legislative Performance in Argentina**

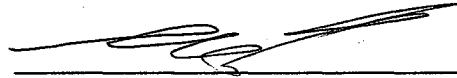
by

**Juan Pablo Micozzi**

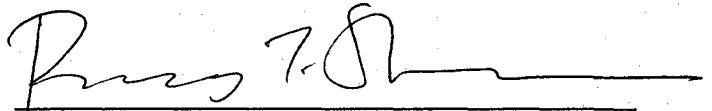
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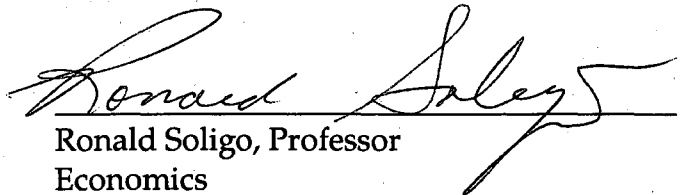
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## ABSTRACT

The Electoral Connection in Multi-Level Systems with Non-Static Ambition:

Linking Political Careers and Legislative Performance in Argentina

by

Juan Pablo Micozzi

Legislators who do not expect to be permanently reelected are not necessarily non-ambitious politicians. Whenever current legislators have different office goals in mind, it is likely that they try to use their available resources to further those aims. Thus, it can be expected that they bias the content of the bills they draft towards their prospective constituents. Through the analysis of 180,000 bills and an original database of candidacies in Argentina, I demonstrate that legislators who have subnational executive ambitions tend to submit more municipality-based legislation. This finding is substantive for the literature on electoral systems, political careers and representation in federal regimes; as well as the keystone towards the creation of a general theory of legislative performance in multilevel systems.

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## 1) Introduction

*"Ambition lies at the heart of politics"*

Joseph Schlesinger, 1966

*"I know that, after all this, I'm a political corpse"*

Deputy Agustin Rossi, 2008, leader of the Peronist majority, after backing a presidential bill rejected by most of his province's inhabitants

Ambition is one of the main engines of political activity. Broadly understood, every single subject must have had some degree of ambition as a motivation of, at least, some activity in life. People can be ambitious at pushing for economic improvement, at expecting a new job, at trying to be drafted by an NBA team or at trying to make a dissertation as good as possible. Attempts to attain a higher order-goal seem not only almost "natural" for individuals and groups, but also profitable. If expectations of improvement are almost a necessary condition for success in the modern (or postmodern?) era, why should they be absent in politics?

Politicians are not usually the most praised individuals in democratic societies. Thus, political ambition can often be understood as desires of becoming a king, a queen, an emperor, or simply a multi-billionaire. However, as much as the mentioned Schlesinger is recognized as a serious and honest scholar (as nobody has denied it), the concept of ambition must be understood as much more than mere latent corrupt tendencies. Ambitious politicians have goals in mind and act in consequence. As in life, sometimes their first preferences are attained (i.e. some individuals have become presidents or prime ministers); some other times, people fail in their attempts; or some other subjects may enact a suboptimal strategy, in order to avoid ending up without

anything. Also, other individuals may not aspire anything more than moving back to the private market or simply enjoying a well-deserved retirement. So, patterns of ambition are likely to differ not only across individuals and circumstances, but also across time and space.

Institutions affect behavior in a variety of ways. As most of the conventional literature has demonstrated (see North 1990), variation in institutional constraints is likely to exert different incentives over individual and collective action. Politicians facing specific limits and permits might act different from what they would do if some constraints were absent. Thus, particular rules and procedures can also shape ambition. As an evident example, Mexican deputies will not further a consecutive re-appointment in a party ballot after their current term, just because term limits do not permit them to run for reelection. In contrast, American representatives pursue consecutive reelection, often until retiring from politics. It is almost obvious that a set of dissimilar institutions, procedures, resources and punishments shapes their current activity and their prospective goals. However, the literature has usually overcome that variation and has highlighted the specificity of the American case as a device with a heuristic value. The "almost-axiomatic status" (Carey 1996) of the American causal mechanism linking institutions, practices and ambition has tainted part of the comparative research. There is life beyond the U.S., and there is also variation in terms of the existing institutional frameworks worldwide. Thus, patterns of ambition can also vary.

So, how to analyze patterns of ambition across the U.S. boundaries? First, full comprehension of the cases is a must-do. Second, the use of appropriate causal mechanisms is also a necessary condition. While most of the theoretical advancements in the topic have been performed for the American case, nothing forbids complete and

consistent analyses of comparative settings. One of the main components of the explanations for the permanent attempts to get reelected by U.S. House members is the notion of “electoral connection” (Mayhew 1974). Through the delivery of local policies to a set of (usually stable) delimited constituents, legislators expect their recognition every two years and their permanence in the seat. Therefore, the expectation (“the ambition”) is static, which means, they just stay where they are. What happens when those “conservative” goals are not necessarily the rule? How should we analyze ambition if the structure of incentives differs from the Mayhewian model?

As mentioned above, Mexican legislators (similar to their Costa Rican colleagues) do not have static ambition, just because they cannot seek reelection. Nevertheless, it is false to think that only politicians facing term limits might not try to keep their seat. What if other positions were more profitable for politicians’ political future? What if patterns of ambition involved multiple positions across political arenas and time? David Samuels (2004) showed that a substantive proportion of Brazilian Congressmen tend to look for subnational positions, instead of trying to renew their legislative mandate. However, as Lodola (2009) pointed out, about a 70% of Brazilian *Deputados* do pursue a new appointment in the party tickets. In a similar but also different fashion, Jones & (2002) explained that just a 15% of the Argentine legislators look for reelection. Given that the most of the remaining 85% do stay in politics but not in Congress, the questions about their future become salient. Here, the main point is not only where do they go, but also what do they do in order to reach those non-legislative ambitions.

As the specialized literature on Argentina (Benton 2003, Spiller and Tommasi 2007) highlighted, subnational executive positions are forceful references for every single ambitious politician. The ability of managing resources, sharing jobs, using public



goods and getting TV cameras is clearly higher than that of a dark office in Congress. In as much, local executives (namely, governors and mayors) are focal points for party power. Hence, politicians might devote most of their efforts in running for these positions and winning the spots. If we understand rationality as the use of the best strategy to attain a particular goal; we also need to observe what the actions of the agents pursuing that goal are. Specifically, a rational and ambitious politician should do whatever she can in order to attain her aims. Assuming that legislation is a valid good that might trigger politicians' recognition by voters, party leaders and interest groups; short-termed legislators should act strategically during their tenure. The intuition would suggest that current congressmen's subnational ambition might affect the legislation they submit. In as much, national legislators do not reach the House without any previous background. In fact, some of them do arrive after serving as governor or mayor. Regardless of the motivation of those jumps, we should expect that legislators will bias their bills towards their former constituents. In sum, career background and career further ambitions seem to be playing a role in shaping current legislation. I use a unique dataset of career information, legislative production and contextual institutional and political information, to test my main hypothesis: ambition shapes legislative production in Argentina.

The second chapter deals the different theoretical and empirical approaches to the concept of ambition. It also discusses the extent to which the notion of the "electoral connection" is restricted to personal-based electoral rules such as the ones in the U.S.

In the third chapter, I include some of the conventional statements about the effects of electoral rules over legislative behavior, by interacting them with notions of political ambition. The implications of the traditional views about the Argentine

Congress are therefore explored over that basis, and I discuss a new empirical strategy. I also evaluate issues of data and measurement here.

The fourth chapter describes the research strategy and the data gathering process employed to test the theoretical hypotheses.

The fifth chapter analyzes the relationship between previous career backgrounds and legislative production. The degree of submission of territorially-bounded legislation is an underlying dimension in the empirical model of this chapter.

In the sixth chapter, I test whether immediate subnational executive ambitions also shape bill-drafting. The intuition is that legislators who are seeking gubernatorial or mayoral offices will be more prone to submit local legislation that help them during future subnational campaigns.

In the seventh section, I evaluate whether proposing local-targeted bills affect the chances of winning subnational offices. I test the effects of the number (and the proportion) of local bills submitted on the electoral victory for gubernatorial or mayoral positions.

I discuss the overall findings and conclude the thesis in the eighth chapter, where I also point extensions and further lines of research out.

## Chapter 2: Ambition and Politics in Different Settings

### *Ambition and Legislative Performance in the US House*

When David Mayhew published his seminal piece “Congress: The Electoral Connection” in 1974, he may have expected a substantive influence in the field of American Politics. However, he might not have even imagined how influential his work would become, not only for explanations of the American Congress, but also for legislative studies in a comparative perspective.

A presumably simple causal relationship between institutions, goals and practices, and legislative behavior in a specific context (U.S. House) defined the literature in the topic from then on. Specifically, Mayhew explains legislative behavior in an institutional environment characterized by single-member districts, mandatory direct primaries (with minimal party control over candidate access to the primary ballot) as candidate selection mechanisms, and legislative careerism as the most common pattern. Individual incumbents try to get reelected and increase their power in the electoral arena, within their party and also within the legislature (Fenno 1978, Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). This theoretical model became a foundation of most legislative studies in different settings. However, the specificity of the American case is what made the model fit so well. The ability of the causal relationship to “travel” is more subject to doubts.

Part of the validity of the argument relies on an empirical proposition: The House is a central component of policymaking in the American political system (Shepsle 1978, Weingast and Moran 1983, Weingast and Marshall 1988, Krehbiel 1991). Therefore, staying in the legislature makes a representative a potentially powerful subject in the

decision making process. As many theories from different perspectives demonstrated (Shepsle and Weingast 1984, Krehbiel 1991, Cox 2006), the division of the labor in the House gives committees a preponderant role. Committee members have gatekeeping powers (Denzau and McKay 1983, Krehbiel 1987) over which policies will be sent to the floor. Regardless of the debate between party-based or preference-based behavior by committee members; it is clear that they play a key role in determining what policies are implemented. For this reason, the literature has recognized how important committee membership (and especially a chairmanship) is for politicians. Staying in the House within an area of policy specialization is likely to be a substantive source of resources to do politics (i.e. money, access to media, staff, or sponsorship of interest groups). This makes a long-lasting tenure as a representative a goal itself.

In fact, theories that understand congressional institutions as endogenous to legislators' preferences state that rules were designed to ensure the stability of its members (Shepsle 1978, Shepsle and Weingast 1987, Weingast and Marshall 1988). Scholars continually demonstrate empirical support for this goal. Congressmen do pursue permanent reelection, and succeed 90% of the time (Fowler and McClure 1990). The literature recognizes that incumbents are in a privileged position for running again and again for the same seat. The concept "incumbency advantage" refers to a process that feeds legislators' positive circle of success. Scholars have highlighted legislative resources such as legislative staff, franking privileges and other material resources (Fiorina 1989, Abramowitz 1991, Levitt and Wolfram 1997, Gelman and King 1990), campaigning visibility (Fiorina 1977, Mann and Wolfinger 1980, Mayhew 1974, Zaller 1998) and deterrence for potential challengers (Cox and Katz 1996, 2002, Erikson 1971a, Mann and Wolfinger 1980, Stone, Maisel and Maestas 2004) as predictors of incumbents'

continual success.

A main strategy legislators adopt to pursue permanent reelection is to deliver locally-based legislation that creates a link with their constituents (Fiorina 1977; Johannes 1984; Bond 1985). The underlying causal mechanism assumes some degrees of policy convergence between voters and representatives, which poses a whole strategic challenge for every ambitious legislator (Erikson and Wright 1980, 1997; Jacobson 1997, Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart 2000). Miller and Stokes (1963) understand this process as "policy agreement" or "congruence"; Achen (1983) terms it "responsiveness", while Fenno (1973) understands it as the development of a "home style" *vis-a-vis* legislators and voters. Voters get information about their representative's performance, evaluate whether "their interests" were translated into policies and then reward or punish the incumbent (Fiorina 1981). Since most incumbents get reelected, we might infer that patterns of representation are successful. All these practices tend to reinforce the conservative nature of the American system, fostering stability, professionalization, and specialization.

For all the mentioned evidence, ambition is considered static in the US House. However, every congressman must have run for election for the first time at some time point. Do they all enter the legislative race without any previous experience? Is the legislative poll their first and only attempt in public office? Not typically. Politicians usually start their political careers at the local level and climb up the political ladder. Before reaching the House, U.S. politicians show patterns of progressive ambition (Schlesinger 1966, Black 1972, Brace 1984, Squire 1988). Schlesinger's seminal book showed that politicians tend to pursue lower-level positions and enter into House races when the structure of opportunities is favorable for their victory. Thus, many

representatives have had a background as local legislators, local administrators, state legislators, governors, or members of subnational cabinets (Squire 1988, Berkman and Eisentein 1999). In as much, strong variation among politicians exists across states (Squire 1988, Francis and Kenny 1997, Maestas, Maisen and Stone 2005, Maestas, Fulton, Maisen and Stone 2006), by gender (Palmer and Simon 2003, Lawless and Fox 2005, Fulton, Maestas, Maisel and Stone 2006), and by race (Victor 2008). These factors also affect local politicians' decisions to compete in national races. As mentioned, once politicians are elected to the U.S. House, they have strong incentives to develop stable legislative careers; however, no uniform pattern should be assumed.

Following Schlesinger's assertions about how calculations affect strategies, it logically follows that if the structure of opportunities differs, and politicians are motivated by a diverse set of incentives, the causal chain might differ. Thus, legislators might be engaged in different dynamics of responsiveness, accountability, and legislative activity. This was, in fact, the case of the U.S. congressmen before the Progressive Era. As the literature shows, "*the conventional wisdom... is that the nineteenth century was far too different to accommodate a strong electoral linkage between individual representatives and their constituents (Formisano 1974, Huckabee 1989, Polsby 1968, Price 1975, Skeen 1986, Swift 1987-88). Most legislators were not interested in pursuing a career in Congress and therefore lacked incentives to heed the wishes of their constituents*" (Carson and Engstrom 2005). In fact, party controls of candidacies, predominance of executive elections, party strip ballots, and limited media outlets should have discouraged individual-based politics (Bensel 2003, Jacobson 1990, Kernell 1977). Therefore, many of the concepts, mechanisms, and implications involved in the Mayhewian model may not have been the rule in the early U.S. Nonetheless, some recent findings challenge these

assertions, stating that the electoral connection was actually earlier (Carson and Engstrom 2005) and that the incumbency advantage was also present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Carson, Engstrom and Roberts 2006, Carson and Roberts 2005). These contributions, far from denying the previous claims for caution before watching the world through a Mayhewian lens, help us highlight two convergent issues. First, different institutional contexts and norms can lead to very dissimilar patterns of behavior. Second, even though institutions and rules can differ, some processes might still be similar, but over the bases of different causal mechanisms. It would be false to state that the adoption of primaries and the Australian ballot did not make a difference in American Congressional politics; however, the recognition of the existence of an early “electoral connection” is not the same as stating that nothing has changed.

In sum, theories, concepts, and implications created for a particular setting can have very different outcomes if they are applied to a different environment. In as much, specific processes might be recognized in extremely different contexts, but they might be product of very different causal mechanisms. This forces us to think about the accuracy (and the particularities) of concepts such as electoral connection, political ambition, and legislative performance in a broader set of cases.

### *Ambition and Legislative Performance beyond the US House*

It is not a new finding to state that not all of the world’s legislatures operate under the same set of premises. In particular, in contrast to the U.S. model, many countries have institutional designs that do not foster the development of personal electoral reputations (e.g., systems with closed party lists and proportional representation), where candidates are not free from party constraints (national, regional, or local partisan

control of candidacies) and reelection is not necessarily the main goal (different political positions are considered more desirable). Given such differences, and their many possible combinations, the expected political outcomes are likely to vary from the Mayhewian model. In particular, legislative bodies where the reelection assumption can be relaxed are likely to foster different kinds of legislative activity.

Given the particular patterns of political progress, it seems reasonable to assume that legislators in parliamentary regimes try to get reelected (Strom 1997). Since membership to the Parliament is a necessary condition to become a minister (a recognized goal of most politicians in these regimes); it makes absolute sense that a politician would try to reach and keep a seat. A good example is Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina's book (1981), where they show how parliament members do constituency service to improve their reelection chances. For presidential regimes, the empirical evidence is manifold. For several studies of presidential cases other than the U.S., reelection can still be the main goal of politicians in federal legislative office. Navia (2000) and Carey (2002), worked under that assumption in their studies of Chile. Crisp and Desposato (2005) kept the same supposition in their analysis of the Colombian Senate, a claim verified by Botero (2008) in his study of the House. Carey (1996) shows that legislators in the pre-Chavez Venezuela had permanent reelection as their main goal. In contrast, other scholars reveal that legislators tend to pursue different goals along their careers. Taylor (1992) demonstrates that Costa Rican representatives expect higher positions in the federal executive, and therefore remain accountable to the perceived most successful presidential candidate of each of their parties. This behavior is triggered by term limits, but it is unclear whether it would be different, barriers absent. Mainwaring (1999) denies that Brazilian legislators are pure reelection seekers; in a



similar fashion, Samuels (1999, 2003) shows that Brazilian deputies usually seek subnational executive positions rather than staying in the House, in contrast to Ames' (1987) and Geddes' (1994) statements. Altman and Chasquetti (2005) show that significant proportions of legislators (30%) do not seek reelection in Uruguay. Instead, they look for municipal and cabinet positions. Jones et al. (2002) find that Argentinean legislators pursue and hold multiple offices and seldom develop stable legislative careers. In such frameworks, becoming a federal representative may be an important political position, but not necessarily the final stage of a political career. Finally, Langston and Aparicio (2008) find that most Mexican legislators had a previous subnational background and usually look for a state-level executive position after their term. In spite of term limits, the subnational connection seems to be a powerful source of political success.

In sum, variation in institutions, practices, and goals makes it tough to interpret every single legislature with a purely U.S.-based scheme. The use of the causal mechanisms developed for the American House is a valid research strategy for comparative research, but it requires extreme theoretical and empirical accuracy.

### *Ambition in Multi-level Systems*

The recognition that ambition must not necessarily be static adds another component to the analyses. In order to host some kind of progressive ambition, any political system must involve (by definition, and at least) more than one level of governance. How could progress be forged, otherwise? The first intuition is to think about federal countries, where different levels necessarily coexist; however, not every multi-tier system has to be federal (i.e. Colombia, Chile, Italy or Spain). Moreover, multi-

level structures can also involve supra-national designs such as the European Union.

Nevertheless, all that said, federal systems have specific characteristics that make analyses of multi-level political careers extremely interesting. The maintenance of separate yet interdependent arenas can lead to a variety of structures of incentives and opportunities that can also shape career paths. Coexistence of executive and legislative political positions at the federal, state, and municipal levels create a rich dynamic that must be carefully understood in order to unfold political actors' behavior. In particular, especially after all the decentralization process of the nineties (Haggard and Kaufman, 1992), subnational governments became actors with enormous relevance for central issues like the performance of the economy (Wibbels 2000), the provision of public goods (Qian and Roland 1998), the quality of government (Treisman 2002) and the balance of budgets (Rodden 2002). Governorships and mayoral positions have become, hence, offices with enormous responsibilities, but also extremely profitable political positions. Subnational executives of federal regimes (assuming that federalism is decently respected) execute budgets, appoint and remove bureaucrats and lower-level employees, enact public works, have a privileged access to media and collect some taxes, among other duties. All these activities can also become interesting tokens for campaigning and pushing for more power, vis-à-vis either voters or party mates. If this was the case, shouldn't politicians have those executive positions as career goals? Why not think that gubernatorial and mayoral positions might be the real locus of career ambition in multilevel systems?

The forceful reference for contradicting the aforementioned statement is quite intuitive: "look at the U.S., it doesn't work!" This is true...as true as the recognition of the central role of the U.S. House in the policymaking process. It should not be forgotten

that the American Congress is considered one of the strongest among those without confidence procedures (Polsby 1968). Therefore, the U.S. might be more the exception than the rule; the question of why is it not performing as a "typical" federal case must be answered somewhere else. Nevertheless, departing from the American perspective has a significant implication for the analysis of career ambition. Conceding that the federal legislative branch is not necessarily the end of careers and, therefore, people occupying a seat in Congress at a particular time point will not always (nor usually) seek consecutive reelection; the predicted direction of ambition might perfectly differ, and so might the expected activities performed by legislators during their tenure do. Thus, a theoretical adjustment becomes necessary before in order to understand how ambition, career paths, and legislative activities work in multilevel systems.

#### *The Electoral Connection in Multi-Level Systems with Non-Static Ambition*

As mentioned above, the coexistence of formally separate arenas of government make multilevel systems a very interesting setting to investigate political careers. In particular, the *de facto* interdependence of the different tiers makes politics likely to also be nested across levels. The underlying structure of incentives may allocate a specific value to each position at any of the levels of government. Thus, politicians are likely to have their own scale of preferences over office in different moments of their careers. If the distribution of material, symbolic and political resources in general is mostly concentrated in the executive positions; it is reasonable that politicians prioritize these offices to some others, even including legislative positions at the national level. In such a scenario, would the Mayhewian framework still be valid? Once the reelection assumption has been relaxed, the original model of the "electoral connection" becomes

inaccurate. This made scholars like Carey (1996) criticize the use of the "almost axiomatic status" of the U.S. based model. However, this erroneous appreciation does not necessarily imply that politicians do not care about their futures or that there is no electoral impact of their labor in office. It is also not necessarily true that, during their tenure, current legislators do not have an audience and do not write bills with a specific goal in mind.

In any case, legislators in each of these multilevel and non-static environments can be considered rational actors in that they try to keep and increase political power. In doing so, they are likely to use all the available resources that can contribute to their political improvement. As stated in the aforementioned literature on incumbency advantage in the U.S., legislators in office have some valuable goods to use in their favor: contracts, staff, media exposure, subsidies and, of course, legislation. By writing, pushing, and achieving the passage of bills, legislators affect the distribution of resources, highlight selected events, target groups, create a sense of responsiveness, and control other branches of power. As most legislators do not retire after serving one legislative term (i.e., discrete ambition), we can safely assume that legislators prospectively use their current term in office to advance their future careers (Crisp & Desposato 2004). Following this reasoning, current legislative behavior is likely to be affected by career backgrounds and perspectives. In that case, legislators have strong temptations to consider these further political positions at the moment of writing legislation. As a result, specific career goals are expected to make a difference in congressional performance.

In fact, this statement is not new for the literature in American politics: *"Running for higher office usually entails an appeal to a larger, more heterogeneous constituency, those*

*with progressive ambition should introduce larger amounts of legislation (measured as the number of public bills introduced by the member) and be more active on the floor (measured as the number of speeches and amendments offered relevant to public bills) to establish a record of concern and to garner needed media attention (Schlesinger 1966; Prewitt and Nowlin 1969; Van Der Slik and Pernacciaro 1979; Cook 1986; and Hibbing 1986). Furthermore, higher office-seekers desire media attention which can be garnered through floor activity and introducing legislation (Cook 1986, 1989)."* (Herrick and Moore 1993). More recently, Maestas (2003) shows that state legislators expecting higher office spend more time monitoring their voters' preferences. Victor (2005) finds that representatives running for the Senate tend to show "more specialization in their speech making behavior than their less ambitious counterparts, except during the term in which they campaign for higher office." Similarly, Treul (2008) recognizes that Senators expecting a jump to the presidency are more cohesive than the rest of their colleagues. Thus, the literature has taken the impact of progressive ambition over legislative performance into account, not only static ambition. However, as already mentioned, "progressive" means "moving up" in the American context. "Moving up" means jumping from a local to a state-level arena, and from a state-level to a federal position. A single legislator's progressive goal could be either to run for the Senate or directly for the presidency. Given that just three spots are available in these positions and those usually involve an incumbent and/or other strong candidates; pursuing continuous reelection is a good strategy in equilibrium.

How should a progressively ambitious legislator behave in a context where she expects an executive subnational position? The theoretical expectation suggests that she might try to bias part of her political and legislative activity towards signaling voters, party leaders, or any actor that might affect her chances of running and winning the

office. If the broad notion of “electoral connection” was right, a legislator that cares about her future should do any kind of constituency service in order to improve her reputations and bases of support. If the expectations were at the municipal level, most of the efforts should be directed to that district. If the goal was to become a governor, the province at large and/or multiple sub-constituencies should be the target. In this dissertation, I will focus on the empirical assessment of the theoretical intuitions described above. The underlying presumption is that ambitious politicians who have a subnational executive position as a reference should use legislation prospectively to further those ambitions. Thus far, no single scientific piece has dealt with the question of the impact ambition has on legislative activity beyond the U.S. In order to fill that gap, I plan to make both, a theoretical and empirical contribution. Specifically, I plan to develop an explanation for determinants of legislative activity in multilevel systems with progressive ambition.

### Chapter 3: Legislative Performance in a Multi-level System with Non-Static Ambition: The Case of Argentina

How do legislators perform in office when their ambition is non-static and subnational positions are almost necessary references? The empirical test of such a question requires a substantive conceptualization effort. Due to the nascent state of the literature, it is unclear how many cases can be put into the category “multi-level systems with progressive ambition”. As an additional constraint, I am interested in understanding how these characteristics affect politics in federal designs. The reason is straightforward: even though some unitary countries run elections to choose governors and/or mayors; the likelihood of these positions concentrating substantive shares of power is clearly lower than in well established federal regimes. The interaction of the “home rule” (local original pertinence) and the “shared rule” (coexistence of different units in a national arena) gives subnational units a significant degree of autonomy in federal regimes<sup>1</sup>. Even though a federal status is not a sufficient condition for subnational strength (countries can be federal *de jure*, but *de facto* unitary<sup>2</sup>), working with federal regimes is, nevertheless, the safest strategy to test a theory that requires relevance of subnational political units. As specified above, it is somewhat predictable that systems involving confidence procedures to appoint and dismiss cabinet members create incentives for legislators’ permanent reelection. Thus, working with presidential regimes is more accurate for analyses that relax the aforementioned Mayhewian assumption. So far, three cases do fit in the classification: Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

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<sup>1</sup> See Riker (1964), Elazar (1987) and Stepan (2001)

<sup>2</sup> The pre-1989 Venezuela and current Russia might be good examples. See Penfold-Becerra (2004) for the former and Remington (2008) for the latter cases.

Analyses of the Brazilian experience have shown that politics does involve multilevel behavior. In particular, subnational dynamics affect the patterns of campaigning (Ames 2000, Samuels 2003), the generation of alliances (the “reverse coattails effect”, Ames 1992), the timing of elections (Samuels 2003), the distribution of pork (Samuels 2001) and the direction of political ambition (Samuels 2003). Following Samuels’ assertion, “*about two-thirds of Brazilian politicians continue their careers at the subnational level after serving in the Chamber of Deputies*”. Related to political careers, *circa 70%* of ruling legislators seek reelection in the Brazilian House, but just two thirds of those (globally 50%) get it (Samuels 2003, Lodola 2009). In contrast, most of the remaining 30% seek a gubernatorial or mayoral position immediately after their legislative mandates, and several of those still in office run for subnational positions during their legislative tenure. This illustrates that Brazilian politicians pursue multi-tier careers, and that the modified direction of progressive ambition does also take place. However, given that 70% of incumbents are looking for reelection, the relative weight of the subnational ambition deserves some additional discussion, especially in comparative perspective. Samuels demonstrates that politicians in Brazil secure a legislative seat and then run for a subnational executive position. However, it is also reasonable to assume politicians may move in the opposite direction (e.g., mayors and governors jumping to Congress). Probably, only a natural experiment that unified the timing of elections would give the right answer.

Mexico has recently acquired its full democratic status after decades of PRI’s dominance. However, as stated in the literature, subnational democratization started earlier than the federal one, at least in terms of true electoral disputes (Hernandez Chavez 1994, Ochoa-Reza 2004, Gibson 2004). Increases in the competitiveness of



subnational races made governorships very attractive positions in order to obtain political power, backed by budgets that can foster the development of a successful career (Langston and Diaz-Cayeros 2007). Variation in institutional rules and patterns of competition have also shaped the different structures of opportunity for staying in the state or jumping to the national arena (Gonzalez 2009), thereby creating multiple sets of incentives to develop a multilevel career path. Given that one-period term limits are in effect in the Mexican House, legislators have to look for alternatives to continue their political careers. As Langston and Aparicio (2008) show, patterns of multilevel ambition are easily recognized in the Mexican setting, with politicians moving forth and back among municipal, provincial and federal arenas. Of course, term limits force non-discrete ambitious politicians to anticipate the end of their mandates and overcome the consequences of the "zero reelection rate". Hence, the pursuit of subnational positions in such environment is one of the typical movements any single legislator might consider.

Argentina is an intermediate case. Term limits are absent at the federal legislative level, but, indeed, the rate of incumbents seeking reelection is just about a 20%<sup>3</sup>. This is explained by the structures of opportunities and incentives, which make legislative office a not extremely valuable political position. However, as Jones et al. (2002) demonstrate, Argentine politicians are not amateurs. Instead, they continuously pursue other positions in different tiers and branches of government. Thus, ambition is clearly progressive in Argentina. As the data in Table 3.1 shows, about 23% of all legislators who have ever occupied a seat in the House have run for a subnational executive position at some point in their careers. Also, some politicians have served more than one

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<sup>3</sup> As Jones and Samuels (2004) show, only countries with term limits like Mexico and Costa Rica have lower reelection rates in Latin America.

period in Congress in different times of their career, and have also moved back and forth between the House and municipalities and/or governorships. Taking these multiple movements into account would increase the sample of individuals with subnational expectations over time.

**Table 3.1: Percentage of Legislators that ever run for a Subnational Executive Position**

<i>Subnational Link</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
0	1,159	77.22
1	342	22.78
Total	1,501	100

Given that a considerable portion of the sample of legislators in Argentina expected a spot in subnational executives, the original question about anticipation of the future becomes relevant again. Do patterns of legislative behavior differ between individuals with executive ambitions and those without them? No single scientific piece has ever dealt with that issue. As an addition, the degree of subnational variation in Argentina (electoral institutions, term limits, patterns of continuity in power, legislative structure) makes the case very rich for multilevel analyses. For all the reasons mentioned, Argentina is an excellent case to employ an empirical test of my hypotheses about legislative behavior in multilevel systems. In order to tackle this uncertainty, it is necessary to understand how the Argentine system works.

### *The Argentine Case*

Argentina is a presidential republic with a federal structure of government. It has a symmetric bicameral legislature, 24 provinces (more specifically, 23 provinces plus an autonomous capital city that functions similarly to a province) and about 2200 municipalities. After the discredit of the legalist views highlighting a unitary performance (Frias 1986, Bidart Campos 1993), it became common knowledge among scholars that Argentina is among the most federal countries in the world (Jones 2002; Benton, 2003; Saiegh 2005; Calvo and Escolar, 2005). In fact, many relevant political and economic decisions are made at the provincial level, such as candidate designation and selection (De Luca 2004; De Luca, Jones and Tula 2002), the design and reform of provincial institutions (Calvo and Micozzi, 2005), and the determination of the amount and destination of a majority of government spending (Eaton, 2002, 2004; Remmer and Wibbels, 2000, Remmer and Gelineau, 2003). For example, during the nineteen-nineties and the early XXI century, almost the same share of the distribution of expenditures was in the hands of the federal government and the provinces (Spiller and Tommasi 2005). For instance, *“a 52% of expenditures were carried out by the national government, 40% by the provincial governments, and 8% by the municipal governments in 2000”* (Tommasi 2002).

At the provincial level, most of these roles are concentrated in the hands of their principal actors: the governors. Given the aforementioned distribution of political and economic power, governors are likely to have considerable influence over federal politics. In the same line, it is a significant fact that almost every elected office is chosen at the provincial level in Argentina<sup>4</sup>. As Figure 3.1 shows, the territorial division of

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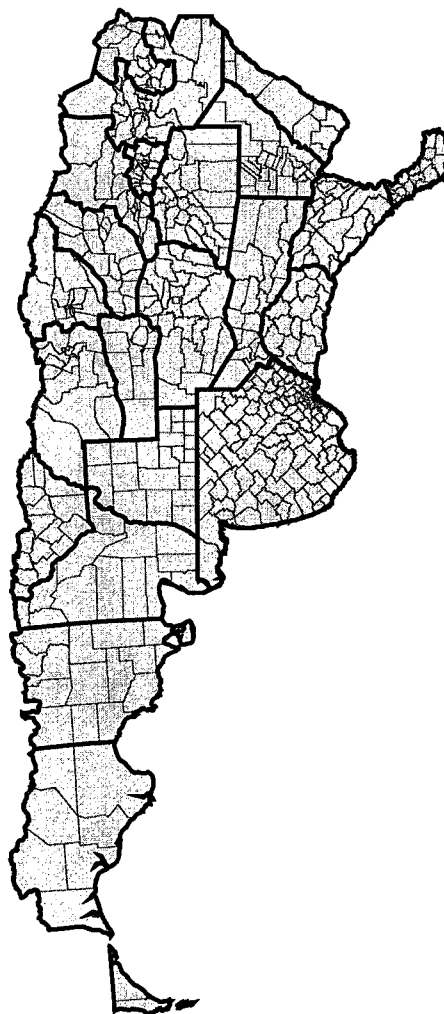
<sup>4</sup> Councilmen, mayors, provincial deputies and senators, federal representatives, federal senators and governors are chosen either at large or within the boundaries of each province.

elected offices is bounded by the provincial limits (dark perimeter). Only presidents are chosen at large in the country; any other federal positions (national Deputies and Senators) are elected by the citizens of each of the provinces at large. In parallel, the constituencies of provincial-level positions vary across provinces. While every province chooses its governor at-large, considerable variation in the *selectorates* for Provincial Deputies and Senators exist (see Figure 2)<sup>5</sup>. Municipal mayors, of course, are also elected in within-province constituencies. So, the core of the whole set of nationwide elected positions takes place at the provincial level. Appointed offices such as provincial or municipal ministers, secretaries or advisors also involve subnational dynamics. If, as stated, different levels of government are *de facto* politically linked, then territorial politics is likely to be a substantive concern for every career-seeking politician.

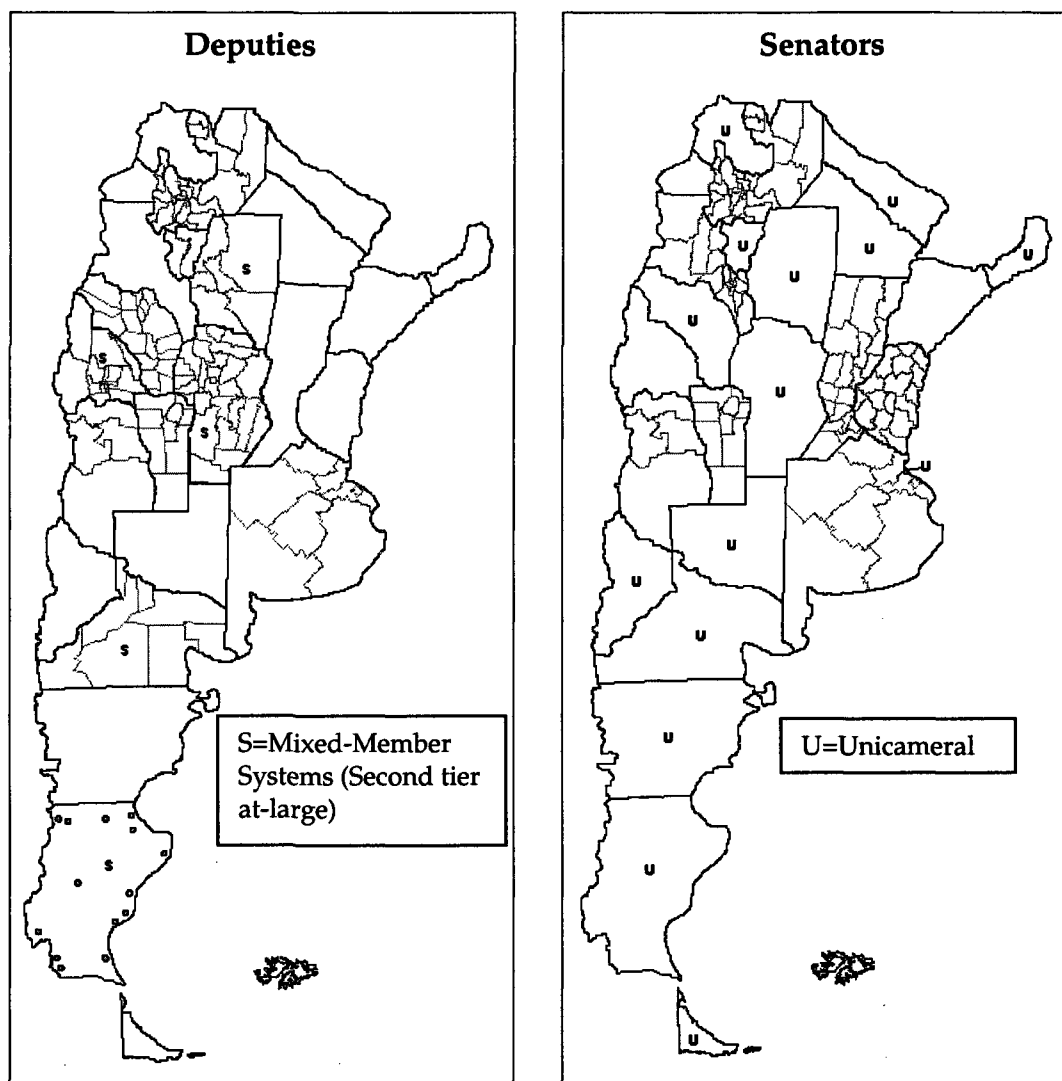
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<sup>5</sup> See Escolar & Calcagno (2003).

**Figure 3.1: Territorial Division of Argentina – Provinces and Departments**



**Figure 3.2: Territorial Division of Argentina – Constituencies for Provincial Deputies and Senators**



Source: Escolar and Calcagno (2003)

Like the U.S., careers usually start in a lower (provincial or municipal) level and continue in different offices (Jones et. al 2002). The first step in the electoral career of a typical politician in Argentina takes often place at the municipal level. Provincial politics are likely to be the next stage. Time, efforts, resources, and bargaining are required

before reaching the national arena<sup>6</sup>. Elected offices in Argentina are reached through parties, which have the monopoly of candidacies<sup>7</sup>. Even though politicians have not always pursued careers within the same party, they need to be enrolled in a party at each stage. Parties choose candidates, run internal elections, organize factions, make collective decisions, fire (or later forgive) cheaters and approve alliances. As mentioned, most of these intraparty activities take place at the provincial level. As a consequence of the almost necessary province-level political activity required to develop a typical career, national level politics is profoundly affected by subnational forces in Argentina.

### *The Theoretical Puzzle*

As the specialized literature demonstrated, subnational political strength is connected with legislative dynamics at the federal level. Candidate selection mechanisms are partisan but take place at the provincial level for different elected positions (De Luca & al. 2002, Jones 2008). Since subnational actors (i.e. governors or local bosses) generally determine legislators' futures, current federal representatives should be responsive to their leaders in equilibrium. Jones (1997), Morgenstern (2004) and Jones, Hwang and Micozzi (2009) point out that discipline and party unity are high in the House. Jones and Hwang (2005) find that provincial party machines delegate power in the leadership of the Chamber of Deputies to get their policies passed; implicit to this is the presence of strict party discipline, enforced both by the majority party

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<sup>6</sup> Jones (2002) shows that provincial deputy is the most common category help by politicians before getting a seat in the Federal House

<sup>7</sup> Recently, well-known outsiders (i.e. technocrats, social leaders or soccer club presidents) have created their own parties to run for elective positions. Nevertheless, this tendency is more typical of the City of Buenos Aires than representative of the whole country. Very popular outsiders decided to join already existing parties and developed national careers within those (i.e. Daniel Scioli, Ramon Ortega, Domingo Cavallo or Carlos Reutemann)

leadership and by the shadow of future careers<sup>8</sup>. Every time the principals (governors, local leaders) want a piece of legislation passed, the majority party should act as a Cartel (Jones and Hwang 2005)<sup>9</sup>. The price of defection would not only be the individuals' removal from positions of power within the House and the party; but also strong constraints for their careers' progression under the same subnational coalition of power. In sum, if it is true that current legislators care about the future of their careers, they should be responsive to the desires of their leaders during their legislative tenure.

Additionally, given the characteristics of the electoral rules (closed party lists, proportional representation, thresholds and moderate to low district magnitudes), most of the theoretical literature (Taagepera and Shugart 1989, Carey and Shugart 1995, Mainwaring and Shugart 1997, Crisp et al 2005) would predict considerable levels of party discipline in Argentina- a claim verified by the empirical literature on the Argentine Congress (Mustapic 1998, Jones 1997, 2002). Leaders controlling a small set of fixed positions in party ballots are likely to have control of candidates' expected future behavior; in contrast with the higher degrees of freedom of individuals chosen in open lists. Electoral thresholds and small district magnitudes also reduce the incentives for running outside the party. If parties matter (as no *serious* study in the literature has denied) and labels are cues for voters (Popkin 1991), running outside the party lowers the chances of winning a spot; which might be different if district magnitude was high and parties with minimal shares could get a seat. All these rules and dynamics reinforce the strength of subnational leaders and their control over current national legislators,

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<sup>8</sup> If legislators are likely to continue in politics, leaders can enforce discipline by punishing defectors at further stages of candidate selection or executive branch appointment process. Anticipating those future vetoes for their careers, legislators should stay responsive to the leaders in equilibrium.

<sup>9</sup> The question of how would a dispute among principals with different preferences be solved deserves a separate analysis.



concomitantly decreasing the pressures (and opportunities) for congressmen's personalization.

However, the same political and institutional constraints might create exactly opposite pressures. Given that just one in four (26%) deputies obtains a place on the ballot after four years in office, and only one in five (20%) is reelected; current representatives need to act prospectively if they want to secure their political futures. Even though their current position is likely to be the product of the leaders' conformity, legislators will not obtain desirable political positions in the future without developing a reputation appropriate to their career goals. It might be somehow unrealistic to think that current legislators would simply rely on their party superiors' benevolence. Governors and party leaders are not altruistic actors; rather, they also make calculations when allocating positions such as a place in party lists for different positions. Loyalty is a valid capital to be considered for a further position; however, politics usually involves more than mere consideration as "a nice guy". Politicians are more likely to be considered for future positions if they can show a *political capital* that makes them a relevant political actor. Political capital can be constructed in many ways: money, votes, reputation, recognition, or responsiveness, among others. So, if legislators care about their future, shouldn't they try to build credible political capital?

Considering that almost every elected office (and an overwhelming majority of appointed positions) is chosen within the provinces, legislators have clear incentives to create a reputation and support bases among certain groups of constituents. That capital might not only benefit a politician's electoral performance in the future, but would also signal party comrades. The question that becomes salient here is what (and how many) resources can a legislator count with to broaden her capital during her tenure. The

answer is conclusive: a single backbencher has very limited resources during her mandate. Her budget does not exceed several airline tickets to travel to her home province, the salaries of staff members and advisors (no more than four or five), some pensions and grants and, of course, a salary and some additional economic benefits. Nothing very impressive for creating, maintaining or increasing support networks in the provinces. This is probably one of the sources of the relatively poor role of Congress as a career step; and it may also partially explain the low reelection rates in Argentina. In contrast, occupying a subnational executive provides a more favorable set of incentives. Specifically, governorships- rather than representatives or senators- are considered the second most powerful position after the presidency (Benton 2003; Jones, Saiegh, Spiller and Tommasi 2007)<sup>10</sup>. With a higher degree of variation, something similar can be said about mayors. Even though they are far from being as powerful as province-level executives, municipal mayors may also handle more and better resources than a mere backbencher in the legislature. Compared to being the mayor of a district that has a budget for public works, services, health and transportation<sup>11</sup>, an ordinary seat in Congress seems to be just a small prize. Thus, it is a perfectly rational strategy for ambitious politicians to use Congress as a platform to become a municipal mayor<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> See also Samuels (2003) for the same depiction of the Brazilian case.

<sup>11</sup> Actually, there is an enormous degree of variation across provinces in terms of the municipal regime. This variation entails the number of municipalities, the degrees of autonomy, the population involved, the hierarchies, the powers for managing resources and the ability to design institutions, among others. For a good description of that variation, see Escolar and Calcagno (2003).

<sup>12</sup> Of course, not every municipality is as big or has as many resources as described. Nevertheless, municipal executives can be very influential actors for provincial politics, with high chances of having a national projection.

Even though no explicit hierarchy among political positions can be recognized<sup>13</sup>, strong incentives to think on subnational executive offices do exist in Argentina.

However, politicians do fill the 325 existing positions in the legislative branch. Once there, what can they do in order to improve their prospective positions? One of the best resources (and probably the prototypical asset) in the hands of a legislator is the obvious one: the ability to write legislation. By submitting bills, deputies and senators can target constituents and groups, highlight events, put issues and topics in the agenda and increase public knowledge of their *"hard work on behalf of the citizens"*. One of the likely targets is the set of voters that might choose to appoint or dismiss them in a future candidacy. Following this reasoning, if the *"shadow of the future"* (Powell 1999) is present in their minds, they should try to anticipate their fate, writing, pushing, and submitting bills in order to claim credit and improve their prospective positions. This is not a unique feature of the Argentine case. Desposato and Crisp (2005) show how Colombian Senators increase the amounts of flights to their provinces to bolster their future electoral support. The American literature states that delivery of pork has a prospective goal. So, why shouldn't an Argentine Congressman maximize her available resources?

If the ambition statements are right, legislation should reflect congressmen's future career goals. Thus, we should expect considerable efforts toward some forms of constituency service over the basis of the existing resources. Even though the characteristics of electoral institutions would not foresee high levels of personalization,

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<sup>13</sup> Mayors may withdraw from their positions to join a national legislative list. This may be even rational for the case of executives of big districts. Being at the top of a legislative list may mean that this politician became the principal political reference of the province, which may involve more benefits for a future career than sticking at the head of the municipality.

mixed incentives emerge from the structures of electoral federalism and the patterns of political progression.

*Towards and Integrated Understanding of Ambition and Legislative Performance in Argentina*

As mentioned, the most influential pieces on Argentine legislative politics have used a particular theoretical approach: cartel party theory<sup>14</sup>. Both Jones and Hwang (2005) and Calvo (2007) have demonstrated how the majority coalition and the governors use negative agenda controls to prevent any potentially harmful bill from reaching the floor. Therefore, the majority coalition's preferred policies should never be rolled on the floor. Their empirical evidence is conclusive and their findings have become standard knowledge. Therefore, at some point, their statements might work against my theoretical speculations. How would a cartelized, leadership-controlled behavior in Congress interact with the personalization requirements by rank-and-file members?

Following Cox & McCubbins, party enforcement and individual careerism are not contradictory in any way; in fact, collective action is performed to solve collective action problems for every member's benefit. This is true in an environment like the U.S. House, where individual legislators are the basic sources of power and have to renew their mandates every two years. However, would that be the case in a party-based system with closed lists and provincial control of candidacies? Following Carey & Shugart (1995), Heitshusen, Young & Wood (2005) and Crisp et al (2005), the answer would surely be "no": institutional rules that concentrate power in the hands of party

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<sup>14</sup> See Cox and McCubbins (1993, 2005).

leaders tend to decrease the incentives for legislators' individual credit claiming efforts. In addition, majoritarian internal rules such as a majority-controlled committee system (Aleman 2006, Aleman and Calvo 2008) would increase party controls over the flow of legislation traded.

Nonetheless, the characteristics of the Argentine legislative system provide an ideal scenario to try to match these apparently contradicting principles. This opportunity is based on the existing distinction among the different kinds of legislation that can be introduced and passed in the House and Senate. Five types of legislation can be considered by Congress: presidential decrees, national bills, declarations, resolutions, and communications.

Presidential decrees are mostly composed by requests of legislative agreement to appoint ambassadors or judges, and announcements of vetoes<sup>15</sup>.

National bills involve major and general topics (i.e. budget, civil and penal law, regulations, or military decisions), and deal with most of the economic resources. These proposals match the category of "public bills"<sup>16</sup> in the U.S. They can be submitted by the executive and by legislators, and are usually the sample used by scholars at the moment of explaining congressional performance. It is definitely true to state that legislators use most of the time in committees to discuss these bills and also that these pieces usually prompt the main struggles in legislative debates. However, without hindering their undeniable importance, they are not representative of the whole picture at the moment of speaking about the Argentine Congressional performance.

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<sup>15</sup> These decrees should not be confused with delegated decrees or constitutional decrees, which entail a different scope and salience. See Carey and Shugart (1998) and Negretto (2004) for a further discussion.

<sup>16</sup> See Stein and Bickers (1994, 1996).

On the other hand, declarations, resolutions, and communications are the remaining kinds of bills. Their scope is more limited than national bills, especially relating the enforcement of their mandates. Specifically, these projects are recommendations to the other branches of power to do something specified in the bill. As examples, any single legislator can ask the executive to *"allocate two million pesos in order to finish the road of Route 40"* or to *"give a \$500 subsidy to the Athletic Association Taruca Pampa, Province of Tucuman"*. Even if passed, the Executive does not have to mechanically submit the money; the road may be paved and the Club may get the subsidy anyways, but not as a product of the approval of the bill. No judge will tell the executive to sign the check at all, and everyone understands that. In as much, these bills can be used as devices of accountability. Legislators can summon members of the other branches (i.e. Ministers or Secretaries) to give explanations to the floor or to committees. Another common use is the target of activities of different interest. Bill contents such as *"Declare the City of Rosario the 'Hand-Made Ice Cream Capital'"*, *"Declare the agricultural emergency in the Province of Santa Fe"*, *"Declare of National Interest the Third National Conference of Environmental Protection"* or *"Suspend the demotion to the second division of soccer teams for the 1983/84 season"* are examples of how legislation is used to highlight groups, activities and places. Their nature is "private" (they do not attain major national goals), but their nature differs from the notion of private legislation used in American politics. Since the effects of submitting and having these pieces passed involves more signaling, targeting, and credit claiming for campaigns than "bringing home the bacon", they cannot technically be considered "pork"<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, I decided to call them "non-public bills".

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<sup>17</sup> The distribution of resources to provinces, districts and municipalities is channeled through negotiations

Usually overlooked by the literature<sup>18</sup>, declarations, resolutions and communications have not been included in the samples of most analyses. In fact, Jones & Hwang's analysis is based on estimations of roll call votes. No one doubts the relevance of roll call voting, but the sample of bills that actually goes to roll call is extremely low<sup>19</sup>. The mentioned piece has a sample of 473 bills between 1989 and 2003, while about 26,000 national bills have been treated and about 2,000 have been passed during that period. If declarations, resolutions and communications are also counted, the number of bills introduced reaches 78,000, and about 30,000 of these are approved. In Calvo's study, only the set of presidential bills are used to test his hypotheses. Even though the sample is fully adequate for his research goals (rate of presidential bills' approval), it only considers 2,969 of the 177,302 bills that have been submitted to the Argentine Congress between 1983 and 2007. Far from thinking that the choice of the samples invalids the findings of the aforementioned pieces; I do believe that a comprehensive depiction of the workings of the Argentine Congress requires an analysis that includes the full sample of legislation introduced in the period.

The use of all the kinds of legislation can be useful for several goals. First, looking at the *whole picture* can be better forged; in as much, it avoids any kind of selection bias in the choice of the sample. Second, it lets me reconcile the party-level arguments of the previous literature with an individual-level approach that has been overlooked until now. Analyzing all kinds of legislation will contribute to the understanding of congressional performance in a case where subjects are strongly

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between governors (and sometimes mayors) and officers of the executive branch (ministers or secretaries of Infrastructure, Finances or Internal Affairs). See Tommasi (2002) and Spiller and Tommasi (2007) for a good discussion.

<sup>18</sup> Calvo (2007) calls them "*minor bills with a symbolic value*"

<sup>19</sup> See Carubba et al (2006) for a good discussion about use of roll-call and selection biases.

constrained by external pressures, but where they also have to care about their individual futures. Thus, holding the assumption that legislators can use these pieces to improve their own reputation puts this piece in the big puzzle that has already demonstrated the existence of party controls, majoritarian legislative performance and subnational sources of federal power.

**Table 3.2: Composition of the Bills submitted to the Congress – 1983-2007  
By Kind of Bill**

Type	N	Percent
Executive Decrees	2,397	1.35
National Laws ("Public")	46,965	26.49
Communications	20,841	11.75
Declarations	49,194	27.75
Resolutions	57,865	32.64
"Non-Public Bills"	127,900	72.14
Total	177,302	100

Source: Official Statistics of the Camara the Diputados

### *Political Goals, Credit-Claiming and Legislative Activity*

It was stated above that declarations, resolutions, and communications are frequently used by rank-and-file legislators to create a political capital that helps them further their political goals. So, the expectation is that writing legislation might increase their chances of claiming credit *vis-a-vis* their constituents and also provincial party leaders. However, recalling the literature, agenda controls do exist (Aleman 2006). In fact, the rates of passage of these bills still remain low. As Table 3.3 shows, although their chances of approval are much higher than those of national bills; declarations and



resolutions are still around the 30% in their probabilities of passage. Communications, as it can be seen, have a substantively higher rate; nevertheless, they still are a small part of the sample. Considering that chances of getting a bill passed are not high overall; the question of why a legislator should submit these pieces becomes crucial. It has been stated that targeted pieces of legislation are likely to improve politicians' reputations and facilitate their career goals. But what happens if these politicians cannot systematically show any result to their constituents?

**Table 3.3: Rate of Passage of Legislation – 1983-2007  
By Kind of Bill**

Type of Bill	Passed	Not Passed	Total
Executive Decrees	869	1,528	2,397
	36.25	63.75	100
National Laws	3,049	43,916	46,965
	6.49	93.51	100
Communications	13,089	7,752	20,841
	62.8	37.2	100
Declarations	17,818	31,376	49,194
	36.22	63.78	100
Resolutions	17,115	40,750	57,865
	29.58	70.42	100
"Non-Public Bills"	48,022	79,878	127,900
	37.55	62.45	100
Total	51,940	125,322	177,262
	29.3	70.7	100

Source: Official Statistics of the Camara the Diputados

My intuition is that submission of that legislation does not necessarily imply an expectation of passage. Since no real barriers to the submission of bills do exist<sup>20</sup>, inflating the number of submitted bills give legislators some capital to show to their

<sup>20</sup> See Doring (1995) for an excellent review of the many restrictions for the introduction of private bills worldwide.

*selectorate*<sup>21</sup>. Ames (2001) shows a very similar pattern for the behavior of Brazilian deputies<sup>22</sup>. So, I will maintain the assumption that the mere submission of bills can contribute to the credit claiming of every individual legislator. In the next chapters, I will empirically assess to what extent targeted bill submission is linked with past career background, and also with further career ambitions.

### *Conclusion*

For its institutional and behavioral characteristics, Argentina is an excellent case to test hypotheses about multi-level career perspectives and legislative performance. Given the multi-tier structure of political careers and the subnational anchors of even federal politics; activities performed to create subnational support should be the expected outcome of political efforts in Argentina. Taking the lack of static ambition in Congress and the needs of keeping districts as references into account, legislative efforts should be devoted to targeting voters, groups and provincial leaders. In the next chapters, I will empirically assess the validity of this statement.

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<sup>21</sup> This intuition has been subject to empirical verification through in-depth interviews with Argentine legislators. Without expectations of generalization, the reasoning was consistent with most of representatives' revealed experiences.

<sup>22</sup> The so called "avulsos" (tickets proving the submission of a bill) are the evidence that legislators use to show responsiveness during campaigns.

## Chapter 4: Empirical Strategy

### *Introduction*

In this chapter, I describe the strategies I have used to create my variables of interest over the basis of the available information. Relevant measurement and operationalization challenges appeared during the process of coding and capturing the pieces of information I am interested in. For the sake of reliability, I have tried to use previous work in the discipline as a proxy for my own decisions.

### *Legislative Performance*

The main question of this project is how career decisions affect legislative performance. As mentioned in the previous chapters, this inquiry has been already posed for systems with different institutional settings. In the background of the literature in American politics, the notion of legislators delivering bills that target their current or prospective constituents is underlying. Different measures have been used as indicators of that behavior, such as the amounts of money transferred (Stein and Bickers 1994, 1995), the relative congruence of policy and opinion (Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993), the overall number of bills submitted (Schlesinger 1966; Prewitt and Nowlin 1969; Van Der Slik and Pernacciaro 1979), public position taking (Highton and Rocca 2005) and the number of speeches and amendments offered relevant to public bills (Cook 1986, Hibbing 1986). Over the basis of the single-member districts structure, it is quite easy to recognize the delivery of targeted policies by the delegate of the constituency.

Beyond the U.S. federal House, studies that have analyzed singular legislative outputs out of individuals' ambitions do not abound. However, interesting approaches

have dealt with variation in the kinds of legislation submitted. Taylor-Robinson and Diaz's (1999) foundational piece verifies that Honduran legislators do not submit particularistic bills to target constituents; rather, this activity is mostly performed by the president. This work entails a substantive contribution to the empirical analysis of legislative performance in presidential regimes, as the authors coded about 2.000 bills over the basis of the *level of aggregation* and *effect of the proposal*. Thereafter, different pieces have distinguished among kinds of bills. Crisp et al. (2004) distinguish between *targetable* and *non-targetable* bills to verify the effects of the *personal vote* in ten Latin American Chambers. Molinas, Perez Linan and Saiegh (2004) studied the different chances of passage depending on the bill's *intent* and *scope*. Mejia-Acosta, Perez Linan and Saiegh (2006) have analyzed the effects of different electoral rules over the submission of particularistic bills in Paraguay and Ecuador, differentiating proposals by *type of public policy* and *policy target*. More recently, Gamm and Kousser (2007) have created a database of 170.000 bills introduced in American State legislatures and distinguished them among *special* (local-particular), *general local* and *statewide* bills.

For this research project, the strategy I chose to deal with legislative production is similar to those of the aforementioned articles, but adding an innovation: rather than classifying the bills by their scope and aggregation<sup>23</sup>; I am interested in capturing the territorial destination of the content of the bill. In particular, I am not just trying to disentangle whether a single piece targets a province or a municipality. Rather, I will recognize what municipality (or municipalities) and/or what province (or provinces) are being mentioned in the content of a legislative project. This strategy demands huge efforts and seems extremely time consuming, but it is the most reliable approach I

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<sup>23</sup> I already conducted that strategy in Micozzi (2006)

figured out to deal with my research question. Once I have got that information, I will be able to recognize whether any legislator with territorial ambition has increased the delivery of bills targeting her prospective constituency<sup>24</sup>.

In order to discriminate these data, I had to gather the information about the bills. Fortunately, the complete records of legislative submission are publicly available in the webpage of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies ([www.hcdn.gov.ar](http://www.hcdn.gov.ar)). I was able to gather data of each of the 178.119 bills introduced in the House or the Senate between December 18<sup>th</sup> and October 9<sup>th</sup> 2007, which made it possible to work with the most complete existing database of the Argentine Congress<sup>25</sup>. Each observation (a bill) has information at different levels:

- *Bill-level*: it includes the date of submission, final status (stacked in Committees, half-sanction, withdrawn, rejected, or passed), date of passage (if approved) number of committees (House and Senate), number of sponsors, and also the title and description of the content.
- *Legislator-level*: information about the name, party membership, province, tenure, committee membership, committee chairmanship, membership to the president's party, the majority and/or her province's governor party, and Chamber's authority position are included
- *Province-level*: District magnitude for federal Deputies and Provincial Deputies, the effective number of competing parties for both categories, and information about provincial electoral systems are incorporated.

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<sup>24</sup> This strategy has some points in common with Carey's (1996) strategy to uncover legislators' bailiwicks in Costa Rica. However, the scope of my sample is clearly much bigger than the *partidas especiales* he analyzes.

<sup>25</sup> Ernesto Calvo deserves substantial credit for the creation of this database.

- *Congress-level*: Percentage of seats of the most relevant parties, percentage of provincial governors of the principal parties, divided government, honeymoon years and the effective number of blocs are part of the database.

This exhaustive data collection gave me material to test multiple assertions about the Argentine congress. However, for the sake of the improvement of controls at the individual-level, I decided to include the estimates of the first-dimension ideal points derived from cosponsorship<sup>26</sup>. This should exhaust the set of covariates I might put on the right side of my equations; and also let me generate my dependent variables in a correct manner.

### *Career Ambition*

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the origins of the most popular literature about political ambition lie in American politics. Not only have the theoretical notions been exported to comparative settings, but also the indicators and the approach to empirically assess hypotheses. The almost “natural” way of dealing with careerism has been simple and predictable for the U.S. Congress: look at the incumbent’s primary, regard the challenger party’s primary and then observe the patterns of continuity or disruption in the general election (Cox and Katz 2002). Once the sight was put over progressive ambition, it became forceful to track people’s trajectory in different offices, at different levels and in different time points. Of course, this made things harder. Even though data

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<sup>26</sup> Estimations are reported in Aleman, Calvo, Jones and Kaplan (2009). This paper also demonstrates that ideal points derived from roll-call analysis and cosponsorship don’t show any substantive difference for the Argentine case.

collection required time and precision, nothing prevented authors like Squire (1988) from getting the records about what positions lower-level politicians won in higher tiers.

However, there is a theoretical question that deserves substantial attention: how should ambition be measured? It is clear that a politician that won a spot in the Federal House and previously had a seat in a local council has had progressive ambition. The question is whether only those who succeeded in a higher office race should be considered ambitious. In other words, looking just at the winners might create a severe selection bias; had the runner up of that race been another councilman, it is doubtful that she would had been less ambitious than the new U.S. representative.

The other question posed has to do with the stage that should be looked at. Specifically, is just a contender in the general election ambitious? Would that same candidate have been less ambitious had he lost the primary? I suggest that explicit internal competition is a sufficient condition to recognize patterns of ambition in any politician. The discussion does not exhaust at that stage, anyways. A politician may really aspire to a particular spot and behave strategically in order to win it. However, different factors such as incumbency advantage, lack of money or information about expected poor performance may deter her from running for the position before the primary. Is that evidence of no ambition, or a realistic calculation about costs and benefits?

My criterion tries to reconcile precision and feasibility. Thus, I decided to include in the sample of ambitious politicians all those subjects who ran in an election for an executive position; also, subject to data availability, I thought considering those politicians who lost a primary for a mayoral or gubernatorial position as ambitious, too.

I also evaluated including public announcements about career intentions, but this measure is likely to be excessively subject to speculations and false statements that might over represent the sample.

Unfortunately, access to the data was not as easy as for legislative information. Unlike the case of Brazil, where Federal Courts organize elections and keep a unified record of candidates and officers (which let Samuels easily collect the data about subnational positions), province-level Judges are responsible for the organization and administration of elections. Therefore, information is spread out across multiple units that are not coordinated by a Federal agency. Thus, the consequence is predictable: no systematic official records actually exist, not only for candidates for subnational positions, but also for those elected. Believe it or not, the Argentine state does not have a list of the mayors and governors across time. Thus, the first challenge was to gather the information of those names. The second defy was to get the data about mayoral and gubernatorial candidates.

For the former goal, I combined information from the Direction of Municipal Affairs (Direccion de Asuntos Municipales) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with other secondary sources, such as documents from the archive of the National Electoral Direction, NGO's information (CIPPEC), and previous databases used in Jones et al (2002) and Cao (1999). Relying on these resources, and even recognizing that perfection has not been reached yet, I created the only existing database of governors and mayors between 1983 and 2008 in Argentina.

In order to fulfill the second goal, I pursued different strategies. First, I contacted the provincial Judges and asked them data about candidates. Just two provincial Courts positively answered and submitted the records to me (Buenos Aires and Santa Fe). For



the rest, I did not have alternatives: I had to take pictures of the ballots. The problem is that not every single ballot of the last 25 years is stored in one place. A substantive proportion of them (about a 60%) were available in the Archives of the National Electoral Courts, the office of the judicial branch that oversees that every candidate to national-level office fulfills all the legal requirements. Despite they do not rule over subnational positions, the structure of the ballot in Argentina made my task easier. As it can be seen in Figure 4.1, party ballots have candidacies for multiple offices attached when those elections are concurrent. Thus, the official records of the national legislative elections included a considerable proportion of the data I needed. I took about 12.000 pictures of these ballots and complemented the sample with pictures of ballots stored in the mentioned archive at the National Electoral Direction.

After having taken all the pictures, I still lacked data for several elections. In order to fill the blanks, I have browsed provincial newspapers in dates close to the elections. Doing so, I got most of the data I needed. For the remaining missing observations, I contacted specialists in the provinces, and also used Google. These complementary sources also helped me collect other kinds of useful data, such as the identification of relatives that have occupied the same executive position across time<sup>27</sup>. Four months after the starting date, I had gathered the information about a 100% of the gubernatorial candidates and a 90% of the mayoral candidates in Argentina between 1983 and 2008. Most of the missing information has to do with the existence of the so called "Ley de Lemas" (double simultaneous cumulative vote, see Tula 1998) in some provinces, where more than one candidate per party could run for a specific position.

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<sup>27</sup> It was necessary to confirm whether people with the same last name were actually relatives; in some other cases, spouses of past officers did not use the same last name as their couples, which involved an additional effort. Something similar can be said about uncles-nephews.

In addition to my own data, I could count with Miguel De Luca's (2004) database on candidate selection mechanisms for governors. However, given the temporal breaks of his analysis, I would have had to dismiss data after 2003. Since my idea is to test the whole democratic period between 1983 and 2007, I made the choice of not using this information, and just rely on data on effective candidacy in general elections as the proxy for ambition. Further stages of this project will collect the missing data to complete the sequence of subnational pre-candidacies.

Figure 4.1: Party Strip Ballot for the 1999 Elections – Province of Mendoza



### Measurement

Having collected all the required information, I still have to develop the right variables to test my theoretical questions. I am interested in unfolding legislative behavior conditional to political ambition, especially when it is linked to subnational executive positions. As mentioned, I have two variables (*title* and *description*) which include information about the content of each bill. Hence, in order to create my main covariates, I need to capture what territorial reference is being targeted in the legislative

proposals. To do so, I created one variable per province, and also one for each existing municipality. For the provincial level, I created 24 dummy variables, each of which equals 1 if the name of the district of interest is mentioned in the title or description of the bill, and 0 otherwise<sup>28</sup>. For the case of the municipalities, the number of variables equals 2,223, a quantity that keeps track of every single ever-existing municipality in Argentina for the last 25 years<sup>29</sup>. Some additional refinements have been necessary; since several municipalities have the same name (i.e. five are called "Hipolito Yrigoyen", "San Pedro" and "Santa Ana"), I needed to clearly specify other conditions to allow a correct discrimination. In as much, wording made the task complicated, as strings may be differently specified, or may include mistakes that make it hard to be recognized by Stata (as an example, if a district called "Saint John's" is spelled "St. John's", "St Johns", or "Saint Johns", the program will recognize three dissimilar districts). Thus, double, triple and quadruple checks became necessary.

The next step was to identify what legislators have had some kind of subnational ambition, either having won or having pursued a mayoral or a gubernatorial position. Over the basis of the two databases I created, I identified in what year a legislator ran for mayor or governor, and in what year she won it (if she did). Doing so, I could then verify whether it was before or after her congressional mandate. This let me also identify the home district of every legislator that ran for mayor, in order to link the content of the bills and the territorial target. Doing so, I also created a variable called "relative", where I identified whether the Congressman has a tie to any territorially concentrated power. Even though a legislator with that profile may not necessarily have the ambition of

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<sup>28</sup> Stata's command *strpos* was extremely useful for that task

<sup>29</sup> Municipal structure changed across time in Argentina. New districts have been created, some others have been split into two or more, and others were merged.

becoming a mayor; she might submit legislation to her district, with the goal of expanding the familiar local cluster of power.

### *Overcoming Selection Bias*

As mentioned, one of the challenges of the coding scheme is the identification of those bills submitted by a legislator *i* that target her district of reference. For the case of the province-level targets, the mechanism is straightforward: it is known in advance what province each legislator belongs to, and also for which one she has run or plans to compete. However, for municipal targets, things become more complicated. As already pointed out, American legislators, in as much as their British, Australian, Canadian, Zambian and Botswana's colleagues, are elected in single member districts. Even though legislative and municipal boundaries may not coincide, it would be easier to find out what the district of reference of each legislator might be. However, in countries where legislators are elected at large, or in states or provinces, home district identification is tougher. There is only one source of certainty and is limited to a particular group: by definition, those representatives who have run for a mayoral position can be attached to that district. However, what about the rest? It heavily relies on the availability of information of each case.

In Argentina, some politicians' territorial pertinence is public and clear; some others, even though they may have established closed ties with a particular district, may have not communicated it with a substantial emphasis. In parallel, a particular group of politicians do not have such a strong municipality-based attachment, either because they are purely national politicians, outsiders, technocrats, delegates of interest groups (i.e.

labor or agricultural unions), or simply belong to the City of Buenos Aires<sup>30</sup>. Thus, it is complicated to attach a specific legislator that has not run for a subnational spot to a particular municipality. Different sources such as newspapers, internet, speeches or campaign activities might serve as proxies; however, the reliability of the information is, at least, non-systematic, and it becomes harder to get as legislators' terms have taken place longer before. I attempted to follow this strategy with the Province of Buenos Aires, and about 30% of the sample remained blank. This province is the biggest and also the one where most newspapers and media coverage exist. Thinking on gathering this information in smaller, less urban and poorer districts seem to bring even less substantial results.

In as much, the coexistence of reliable information with other derived from diffuse sources is likely to add some kind of systematic noise. One alternative to that might be working only with those legislators that have run for a subnational position. However, this dependent variable-based choice would seriously bias the sample (King, Keohane and Verba 1994). Doing so, I would not be able to capture the expected effect of non-candidacy over legislative submission. Thus, the most feasible alternative I found was to make a strong assumption. Given that I identified whether a municipality is targeted in a bill, and I also know to that province this municipality belongs to; I coded the variable with a 1 if it mentioned a municipality of the province of the bill's sponsor. The strong assumption made is that targets to different municipalities of the province are normally distributed around the mean, which is where the home municipality is

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<sup>30</sup> The City of Buenos Aires used to be a federal district. Even though it does not have a full provincial status, it gained autonomy in 1996 and is now closer to a province than to a municipality. Nevertheless, it does not have any municipal structure yet. That does not mean that legislators from the City of Buenos Aires do not do territorial work in the neighborhoods; however, for the goals of this project, it is technically impossible to link them with a particular territorial unit.

located. I am aware that the strategy is not perfect, and that the optimal estimation would have to include the home district of every single legislator. However, this measure is the best available by now.

### *Sample Choice*

As frequently pointed out in the previous paragraphs, I gathered information about every single bill introduced in the Argentine Congress between 1983 and 2007. I also described the bicameral structure of that legislative branch, highlighting that it is symmetric and non-congruent. Many pieces in the literature have dealt with the dynamics in the House (Jones 1997, 2002; Mustapic 2002, Jones and Hwang 2005, Aleman 2006, Aleman and Calvo 2008, Jones, Hwang and Micozzi 2008), while the Senate remained comparatively poorly explored (Llanos 2003 and Kikuchi and Lodola 2009 are a few exceptions). Thus, the advantage of working with the House is that the expectations about patterns of functioning, the effects of internal rules and the basic legislative performance are, at some point, predictable. On the contrary, uncertainty is the rule in the Senate. Even though I do not deny what an important contribution the link between careers and legislative performance in a typically territorial Chamber would be <sup>31</sup>; I will limit the scope of the current project to the analysis of the House. Thus, I will not consider the observations of bills submitted by a Senator, which completely removes communications from the sample.

Similarly, I find nonsense to keep legislation submitted by the president in the sample. I do not care about the presidential delivery of targeted legislation for many reasons. First, I am looking at the impact of ambition over legislative performance. So

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<sup>31</sup> This analysis is a logical extension of this dissertation and will be surely developed in further years.

far, no president has had any kind of immediate subnational ambition after his tenure, with the exception of Carlos Menem in 2007, eight years after leaving the presidency. Second, in a clear difference with the aforementioned case of Honduras analyses by Taylor-Robinson and Diaz (1999), legislative submission does not involve the core of the budgetary resources. Instead, presidents and their ministers can allocate funds through other administrative channels. Hence, why should I look at non-public presidential bills for this project?

After debugging the sample, I maintained the remaining 117,249 national bills, declarations and resolutions submitted by legislators in the period. It is noteworthy to mention that 33,661 bills (a 28.7%) have some kind of territorial target. Consistent with the expectations mentioned in Chapter 3, declarations and resolutions have a much higher proportion of territorial targets. As it can be read in Table 4.1, just a 15% of national bills involve any kind of provincial or municipal reference. In contrast, resolutions target twice as much (almost a 30%), while four of each declarations makes an allusion to subnational units.

**Table 4.1: Percentage of Bills with a territorial Target – By Type of Bill**

Type	With Target	Without Target	Total
National Bills	4,752	28,365	33,117
	14.35	85.65	100
Resolutions	14,768	35,118	49,886
	29.6	70.4	100
Declarations	14,141	20,105	34,246
	41.29	58.71	100
Total	33,661	83,588	117,249
	28.71	71.29	100

### *Conclusion*

Along this section, I have discussed the criteria I followed to make several choices about concepts and measurement strategies. After having made these decisions, it is completely clear what the meaning of each theoretical term is, as well as the indicators employed to measure each of them. Over these bases, I will proceed to test my theoretical hypotheses in the next chapters.



## Chapter 5: How Career Background affects Legislative Performance

### *Securing the Past, securing the Future*

Along this dissertation, it was stated in several opportunities that a substantive part of the sources of political power in Argentina is subnational, even for national-level positions. In consequence, I posited that politicians have strong incentives to create ties with voters, groups and territorially delimited support bases if they want to secure a future in politics. Sometimes, the immediate political expectation involves an executive office, sometimes a legislative position, or maybe some other spot that does not directly depend on electoral votes (i.e. minister or advisor). However, even the pursuit of these non-elected positions is more likely to succeed if a politician can demonstrate a political capital at the bargaining stage.

Thus, ambition triggers the creation and improvement of local bases of support. However, conservation of what has been already won is also important. Nothing beats a politician who can show a bulletproof district when negotiating positions or threatening colleagues in an electoral race. For people with static ambition, the consequence of that strength should be permanent reelection. For progressively ambitious politicians, things get more complicated. Imagine, a prestigious mayor, who has been reelected several times, now aspires to become a governor. In order to take that step, she might need to demonstrate that her reputation exceeds her district's boundaries. Thus, she might accept the challenge of running in the first place of the Federal Deputies' party list in the midterm elections. Meanwhile, someone else has filled her municipal position: a person of her confidence, a co-partisan with personal interests, a member of a different faction or simply a rival. In any of these possibilities, the ambitious politician is likely not to

forget what the source of her original power was: her district. Therefore, it is entirely rational that she tries to increase her presence (real or virtual) in her home territory.

Once politicians have won an executive spot in a subnational unit, but still decide or have to move for any reason, they have strong incentives to act *defensively*. What is the meaning of defense? It simply refers to the ability to maintain the political capital created some time ago. It does not necessarily imply that the expectation must be to go back to the old spot; rather, it is a source that improves the chances of any kind of aspiration. Moving back might be one option, but not the only option. In any case, the strategic use of legislation sounds like a rational decision, following my theoretical perspective.

Consistent with the repeated affirmation that local politics affect almost every political position in Argentina, it is reasonable to infer that most legislators should deliver some kind of territorially targeted legislation during their mandates, regardless of their past background and immediate ambition. When subnational ambition is taken into consideration, the intuition is that legislators with a territorial background face incentives to deliver *even more* policies than their colleagues. Following the theoretical speculations, legislators that have been governors or mayors in previous periods should be particularly interested in targeting their constituents during their congressional tenure at time *t*.

#### *Governor or Mayor: Does it make a Difference?*

I have already pointed out that subnational executives usually manage more resources for political careers than a legislative position in the federal arena. I also stated that governorships are the second most relevant position on the scale of elected offices in

Argentina. Clearly, the potential amount of resources to do politics is bigger in a governorship, but so are the numbers of possible contenders. In as much, on the scale of elected officials, the efforts, money and salience of a gubernatorial race are significantly greater than in a municipal race. As an extension, another substantive difference exists: the median voter. The set of potential targets of campaigns, discourses, pork and symbolic activities is clearly smaller and (presumably) less diverse in a mayoral race. On the contrary, a gubernatorial contest do not only involve dealing with general province-level topics, but also probably with different "home styles" within the province. In sum, as a logical implication, a politician running for mayor is likely to face considerable different opportunities and pitfalls than a colleague pursuing a governorship. Following a similar logic, a gubernatorial background may also shape current legislators' behavior differently from that of former municipal executives.

If career ambition and political backgrounds affect legislative behavior, and dissimilar subnational positions also make a difference, legislative activity should differ depending on legislators' previous position. While current legislators with a mayoral background should care more about their past locally bounded voters; those representatives that have been provincial executives should be more interested in targeting the province as a whole. These defensive actions should be reflected in the kinds of legislation they submit during their tenure. However, the expected support to the theoretical expectations is likely to differ between categories. In other words, the profiles of the typical politicians occupying a seat after a governorship and after a mayoral position usually differ in the Argentine case.

Under what conditions should a mayor seek a legislative seat? As mentioned several earlier, the rationale behind a former mayor joining a legislative list might be

that she became the leader of the party at the provincial level and therefore occupies the top of the party list<sup>32</sup>. It can also be interpreted as the first step towards provincial-level recognition, consistent with gubernatorial expectations. Some other mayors may face intra-party challenges or credible threats in the general elections, and may strategically opt for a temporarily secure spot in the federal Congress. Another group of mayors may have been convoked by provincial leaders in order to create a *reverse coattails effect* with their presence (Ames 1992, Samuels 2001) and to increase the vote share of the party list. In any of the mentioned situations, that new legislator is still politically alive, since the upper bound of her career has not been reached yet.

However, why should a governor expect a legislative seat? Two main arguments seem reasonable here: first, term limits may have removed her from the spot and she needs a temporary shelter, in order to re-run for the governorship. Second, that politician may be a political corpse, and the legislative spot was given to send her away from the province and secure a sweet transition to retirement. Any other realistic explanation should highlight some psychological or idiosyncratic factors of particular governors, which is largely beyond the goals of this project. Thus, why should former governors act strategically during their congressional tenure? What is their prospective goal? Politicians that faced term limits may still have career ambitions, and might therefore use legislation strategically. However, the degree of public knowledge about someone that has been a governor is, presumably, very high. In as much, the relative contribution of symbolic politics to a possible gubernatorial candidacy in the future might not be as powerful as in other circumstances. Even though the policies submitted

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<sup>32</sup> This is a claim verified by Deputy Omar De Marchi, who revealed having had exactly that motivation when he moved from his municipality to the House. Of course, this statement does not allow automatic generalization, but it confirms that this is a feasible reason to take that step.

to the provincial level could help her further career prospects, it is doubtful that these policies will make a difference in terms of voters' recognition and, especially, for intra-party bargaining. For the rest of the former governors, I am doubtful about labeling them "ambitious politicians". Thus, overall, I do not expect the effect of previous governorships to be a very strong predictor of increments in the submission of provincially-targeted legislation.

On the contrary, I think that former mayors do need territorial targets, not only to remain in their voters' minds, but also as signals to party leaders. Unlike former governors, the scope of their previous territorial support is more concentrated and less widespread across the province. In order to improve further chances, those politicians should be interested in demonstrating that the linkage with "their people" is untouched. Thus, I expect those politicians to act strategically, especially since returning to a district-level position is a valid option for the future. For this reasons, the likelihood of submitted municipally-oriented legislation should increase if a legislator has had a municipal background.

### *Descriptive Information*

What is the distribution of former governors in Congress? As mentioned in Chapter 3, about 30% of legislators have pursued (and some of them won) a gubernatorial or mayoral position. However, this measure considers the House and the Senate together and does not take timing into account. When background prior to the arrival to the House of Deputies is considered, statistics look as shown in Tables 5.1 to 5.3. Fifty-six former Governors and Lieutenant Governors previously occupied a position in the Argentine House after serving their mandates, which is almost 4% of the

whole sample of legislators. Numbers change when I consider all provincial executive posts. Between 1983 and 2007, 324 positions for governor and vice-governor were elected. Given that some officers died, quit or have been impeached, the number of occupants<sup>33</sup> of the positions reaches 345. However, since people have been repeatedly reelected, the real number of individuals that have been governors or vice-governors equals 242. Depending on what denominator is chosen, the percentage of former provincial executives that have become Deputies ranges between 18% and 24%, as showed in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.1: Percentage of Legislators that have previously been Provincial Executives – 1983-2007**

Previous Governor	N	%
0	1,444	96.2
1	57	3.8
Total	1,501	100

**Table 5.2: Percentage of Provincial Executives that jumped to the House of Deputies – 1983-2007 (N=56)**

Denominator	N	%
Spots	324	0.18
Spots with Turnover	345	0.17
Individuals	242	0.24

In as much, it was stated that former governors facing term limits might behave different from those that did not face term limits. Thus, the relative proportion of these still (expected) active politicians over the whole sample is likely to make a difference for legislative activity. Looking at the distribution in Table 5.3, former governors who faced

<sup>33</sup> Each position *i* is a subject in one period.

term limits are less than a third of all of those who occupied a seat in the House. Thus, the aforementioned low expectation of substantive effects over congressional performance has more empirical arguments.

**Table 5.3: Percentage of Legislators that Jumped to the House immediately after being Term Limited – 1983-2007 (N=56)**

Term Limits		
No	Yes	Total
39	18	57
68.42	31.58	100

At the mayoral side, a higher proportion of legislators have previously been municipal executives. 132 politicians comprise almost 9% of the legislative sample. In contrast, taking these individuals as a proportion of the existing mayoral positions (11,781 in the period in my sample), just 1.2% of mayors have jumped to the House. If the individual politicians that have been mayors are considered, then 1.9% of these 7,118 have occupied a legislative spot in further periods. Of course, the sample of mayors is exponentially bigger than that of governors (2,210 vs. 24), which increases the static probability of any politician in the House having been a mayor rather than a governor.

**Table 5.4: Percentage of Legislators that have previously been Municipal Executives – 1983-2007**

Previous Mayor	Freq.	Percent
0	1,369	91.21
1	132	8.79
Total	1,501	100

**Table 5.5: Percentage of Municipal Executives that jumped to the House of Deputies – 1983-2007 (N=132)**

Denominator	N	%
Mayoral Spots	11,781	1.12
Individuals	7,118	1.85

In any case, 12% of politicians that have ever served as Deputies have held a subnational executive experience before reaching the House. Thus, the scenario provides an excellent opportunity to test the theoretical intuitions stated above. Do career backgrounds affect legislative behavior? Three main hypotheses can be drawn from the aforementioned reasoning:

5.1: Legislators that have occupied a municipal executive position before becoming congressmen tend to submit more municipality-level targeted bills than other legislators

5.2: Legislators that have been governors before becoming congressmen do not submit a substantive higher proportion of province-level targeted legislation than other legislators

5.3: Legislators that have been governors and became congressmen due to term limits do submit a higher proportion of province-level targeted legislation than other former governors

Other complementary hypotheses can be drawn over the basis of the control variables. One is linked with the expected effects of the (ideological) distance of a single legislator to the majority party. Inflation in the submission of bills can also be thought



as a strategy to bypass the low expectations of bill passage<sup>34</sup>. As shown in Aleman and Calvo (2008), members of majority party are more likely to have bills passed. Thus, members of parties in the opposition might also increase the chances of submitting local legislation.

5.4: The farther away is a legislator from the majority party median ideal point, the higher the chances of submitting locally-based legislation

Something similar can be thought about Committee Chairs. As Aleman (2006) and Aleman and Calvo (2008) find, agenda controls affect the probability that a bill reaches the floor, and therefore that it is passed. If chances of passage might depress the rate of submission, Committee chairmanship might also be negatively related to the chances of writing bills.

5.5: Committee Chairs are less likely to submit locally-based legislation

### *Data and Estimations*

In order to empirically assess the validity of the mentioned hypotheses, I run several statistical models. As explained in Chapter 4, I have gathered information at the bill, legislator and provincial level, where each observation is a bill  $i$  submitted by a legislator  $j$  at time  $t$ . This legislator belongs to the province  $k$ , which has its own particular characteristics. Over that basis, my dependent variable captures whether a submitted bill involves a provincial or a municipal target. For the municipal hypothesis, the variable equals "1" if a municipality of the sponsor's province is mentioned in the content of the bill, and "0" otherwise<sup>35</sup>. For the governorship-related hypotheses, the

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<sup>34</sup> As it can be remembered from Chapter 3, the overall chances of passage are 30%.

<sup>35</sup> I already discussed the pros and cons of this strategy in Chapter 4.

dependent variable equals "1" if the province of the sponsor is mentioned and "0" otherwise.

My principal covariates lie at different levels of aggregation. For the municipal model, the first set, including the main predictor, belongs to the legislator-level: background as a mayor, pertinence to the majority party, pertinence to the governor's party in her province, absolute distance from the median ideal point in the floor, member of the Peronist party and member of a Provincial party. At the province-level, I include a main covariate that differentiates districts well: district magnitude for Federal Deputies. Since variation across provinces is huge in many aspects (institutions, political patterns of continuity, turnout), and a specification including every single factor would deviate the analysis from the main focus of this study; I prefer to let the estimations vary by province. Thus, I run a random intercept multilevel model that captures the province-specific effects over the likelihood of progressively ambitious politicians submitting targeted legislation. Given that the structure of the dependent variable is binary, I will use a Bernoulli- logistic function in the systematic component of my equations. As an alternative estimation, I use an ordinary *logit* model with legislator-level clustered standard errors, in order to take individual-level variation into account. The clusters are made at the legislator-legislative period level (four years)<sup>36</sup>. The employment of these grouped errors lets me capture the legislator-to-legislator differences. Since I do not think that time makes any difference here (I am not theorizing any kind of learning process or a dependence of current values of past legislative activity), I am not including any time-series parameters.

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<sup>36</sup> I thank Brian Crisp for pointing out the importance of running a model like this.

I replicate the same strategy for the province-level analysis, using gubernatorial background and the same control variables of the previous hypothesis on the right hand of the equation. As an addition, I am including a covariate measuring whether the former governor was removed from office due to term limits, in order to assess hypothesis 3.

### *Results: Municipal Models*

Empirical tests provide a strong support to my first hypothesis. As Table 5.6 shows, having been a mayor before jumping to the House increases the probability of submitting municipality-based legislation in a positive and statistically significant manner. Additionally, this evidence is robust across models. I computed predicted probabilities over the clustered standard errors for different conventional prototypes of legislators. In all of the cases, the expected increase in the probability of submitting legislation targeting municipalities of the home province exceeds 40% when a legislator has had a mayoral background. Table 5.7 captures the relatively small difference in probabilities when continuous variables are held at the mean, while party membership and committee chairmanship are varying. The highest relative increases in the chances of submitting local legislation are in hands of non-Peronists and non-provincial party legislators (thus, mostly members of the Radical party), especially if they are committee chairs. In other words, whenever a Radical or a Socialist have a local background, they submit 43% more municipality-targeted bills than if they did not. Something similar happens for both Peronists and provincial party members. Overall, the effect is consistent across categories. All of this can be taken as positive evidence of the defensive strategic behavior performed by former mayors. Targeting bills to their former

constituents seems to be a main strategy to maintain their political capital and improve their career perspectives.

**Table 5.6: Results of the Estimations**

Variables	Clustered SE	Random Intercept
Previous Mayor	0.381*** (0.103)	0.240 *** (0.037)
Committee Chair	-0.336*** (0.089)	-0.304 *** (0.034)
Distance to Median	-0.438*** (0.090)	0.055 (0.05)
Distance to Majority Median	0.101 (0.128)	-0.322 *** (0.037)
PJ member	0.113 (0.071)	-0.017 (0.026)
Provincial Party Member	0.200 (0.131)	-0.078 (0.060)
District Magnitude	-0.002 (0.002)	0.027 *** (0.002)
Constant	-2.127*** (0.089)	-2.826 *** (0.49)
Observations	101533	101533
Random Intercept		5.637 (-2.374)
Pseudo-R2		0.010

**Table 5.7: Relative Changes in the Probabilities of submitting Local Bills if they have a Municipal Background**

Profiles	Probability
Other Parties, No Committee Chair	0.431
Other Parties, Committee Chair	0.423
PJ, Committee Chair	0.421
PJ, no Committee Chair	0.406
Provincial Party, no Committee Chair	0.401

Hypothesis 4 (ideological distance to the majority party) finds mixed results across models. The coefficient is negative and statistically significant for the clustered SE model, while it does not have any effect for the multilevel estimation. As a consequence, I do not find even a close support for my hypothesis, given that I expected a higher probability of strategic behavior as distance from majority party increased. A possible explanation may have to do with the fact that parties lying farther away from majority party tend to have weak territorial linkages (i.e. third forces from urban districts), and therefore do not concentrate so much time and effort in targeting local voters. However, further research will address this counter-intuitive point. The explanation of the differences across models may have to do with deep province-level effects that are affecting legislators with the same territorial origin together. In fact, taking a look at the reports of the random intercepts, they explain a substantive part of the variance of the model. As it becomes evident in Table 5.8, variation is the norm in terms of province-level effects. A very substantive finding is the strong and negative coefficient of the City of Buenos Aires. Given that it has no municipal structure yet, the expectation of a negative direction was clear, and it is confirmed now.

Looking at the coefficients for committee chairmanship, hypothesis 5 seems to be confirmed. Committee chairmen notoriously decrease the use of local legislation, also with a strong statistical significance. Everything else equal, committee chairs that have a municipal background reduce the chances of sending local bills by 21% compared to those that do not lead a committee. Similarly, deputies without a past as mayors but leading a committee are 26% less likely to submit local bills than those colleagues who are not a chair.

Table 5.8: Random Intercepts by Province

Province	Intercept
BUENOS AIRES	-0.23
CAP FEDERAL	-6.60
CATAMARCA	0.82
CHACO	0.42
CHUBUT	1.32
CORDOBA	0.67
CORRIENTES	0.99
ENTRE RIOS	1.31
FORMOSA	0.64
JUJUY	1.03
LA PAMPA	0.74
LA RIOJA	0.74
MENDOZA	-5.47
MISIONES	-5.19
NEUQUEN	0.99
RIO NEGRO	1.47
S DEL ESTERO	1.42
SALTA	0.96
SAN JUAN	0.15
SAN LUIS	1.48
SANTA CRUZ	1.25
SANTA FE	0.91
T DEL FUEGO	0.93
TUCUMAN	0.35

### *Gubernatorial Results*

Empirical tests of the gubernatorial hypotheses show that the intuition was globally correct, but without a notion of how powerful the effect was going to be. Namely, my expectation was not to find any statistical significance in the coefficient of previous governors. In the two estimated models, having a previous gubernatorial background is strongly negatively correlated with the chances of submitting province-

level bills. Predicted probabilities confirm the enounced direction. For non-committee chairs, the relative decrease in the submission of province-based legislation is 30%, while the rate for committee members diminishes to 30%. I let predicted probabilities vary by party, but the expected decrease equals thirty percent in every case overall. This finding forces a new interpretation of the role of these former provincial executives with a place in the House. What is, ultimately, their goal and *raison d'être*? What do they really care about during their tenure? Are they really political corpses? In order to state this, the term limits hypothesis should be checked, as a mean of verifying whether this lack of territorial target is general or just restricted to governors that left for other reasons than normative barriers.

As Table 5.9 shows, *term limits* is not a significant covariate to predict provincial bill submission in any of the models. While hypothesis 3 expected that, given their possible expectations to go back to the district, term limited deputies should behave more district-oriented; it is clear that this variable does not differentiate legislators in terms of their congressional activity. This finding casts even more doubts about the political vitality of former provincial executives in the House. Is the Chamber definitely a political geriatric, in that case? It is not easy to answer such a question categorically, given the available information. What seems to be clear is that these officers' behavior is far from reflecting what an ambitious politician should do. Another explanation might be beyond the current analysis: former governors with political aspirations need other kinds of resources that cannot be achieved in the Chamber of Deputies.

On the contrary, other covariates like Committee Chairmanship and the absolute distance to the majority party median legislator (in the clustered SE model) are negatively related to the submission of targeted legislation, as in the case of former

mayors. Thus, it seems that committee chairmen either do not need to act defensively, or they can use approved legislation as a capital to show.

**Table 5.9: Gubernatorial Models**

	Clustered SE	Random Intercept
Previous Governor	-0.30*** (-0.10)	-0.28 *** (0.06)
Committee Chair	-0.41*** (-0.06)	-0.31 *** -0.02
Distance to Median	-0.22*** (-0.08)	-0.05 (0.04)
Distance to Majority Median	-0.04 (-0.10)	-0.20 *** -0.03
PJ member	0.14** (0.06)	0.05 * -0.02
Provincial Party Member	0.20** (-0.10)	0.09 * -0.040
District Magnitude	-0.03*** (-0.01)	0.02 *** (0.00)
Term Limited	0.24 (0.17)	0.09 (0.11)
Constant	-0.89*** (-0.07)	-1.07 (0.11)
Observations	101,533	101,534
Random Intercept		0.27 (0.52)
Pseudo-R2	.03	0.07

### *Discussion*

In this chapter, I analyzed the relationship between previous background and legislative performance. I think that the main general finding is a fact that might become fundamental for future lines of research on subnational politics in Argentina: how different the strategies of former mayors and former governors in the House are. While previous mayors keep on feeding symbolically the voters of the municipalities of their



home provinces; no defensive activity can be seen by former governors. On the contrary, the statistical analysis suggests that, the likelihood of sending province-level bills decreases in their cases. Such a negative finding makes a reevaluation of the intuitions necessary. Does it mean that these previous winners of extremely relevant positions do not care about future perspectives anymore? Have they reached, in fact, the upper bounds of political ambition in Argentina, and nothing else deserves efforts? This would be true if the results of term limited former governors were different. Then, it would be easy to state that politicians who left their seats for non-normative reasons are just anticipating retirement. However, people that left office due to term limits are not necessarily political corpses. What would explain that they tend to write even less targeted pieces than any other single legislator? A feasible answer can be found in the literature of political communication (Popkin 1990, Zaller 1992). Specifically, former governors are so well known by voters that they do not need additional cues to remain at the top of provincial citizens' minds. If they expect a return to the head of the district, the governorship, they need money for campaigning and material goods to deliver, but not necessarily symbolic politics to their voters. If the expected revenue of bill drafting is low, in spite of its low cost, representatives might not even spend their time at doing this.

How and why should the expectation of former mayors differ? As stated, multiple goals could be forged from congressional office after serving as a municipal head. One of the options is to return to the district, and it does not necessarily imply a step back in a political career. Aside, such a politician could choose to jump to the provincial level, which implies a whole different challenge in terms of knowledge, advertisement, diffusion of ideas and creation of a support base. In order to do so, an

untouched reputation among former constituents can mean a lot to potential intra-party challengers, for future voters of other municipalities and also for leaders thinking whom they should support. With those perspectives in mind, it does seem rational that former mayors invest their time in targeted bill drafting. They can use the revenues of those activities for many further goals. Why should governors not emulate them? A reason might be that they would just consider going back to the governorship; a movement that is not only hard to pursue, but also poorly affected by symbolic politics.

## Chapter 6: How Further Career Ambitions affect Legislative Performance

### *The Future begins Today*

In the previous chapter, I analyzed the effects of subnational executive career backgrounds over legislative behavior. As theoretically expected, former mayors tend to act defensively, submitting additional amounts of legislation that target past municipal constituents. The causal mechanism posits that legislators tend to anticipate their future perspectives by keeping their home district's voters symbolically fed. For that analysis, present behavior is a function of the past. However, the past is undoubtedly related with immediate future. Non-ambitious politicians would hardly create systematic biases towards any territorial group, unless their goals exceeded political careers<sup>37</sup>. Whenever politicians have further expectations, and those involve some kind of territorial component, why shouldn't they try to use legislation on their favor?

Putting an eye over prospective constituents seems an almost logical step before entering an electoral race. If, as pointed out in Chapter 3, introducing legislation is not costly in Argentina and it can be useful for that goal; legislators might try to take advantage of one of the best available resources during their congressional tenure. Thus, legislators with further subnational ambition should bias legislation towards their future voters. The causal mechanism is slightly different from the one explained in chapter 5. Specifically, legislators are not trying to keep their past electoral support; rather, they are trying to create it. This does not imply the assumption that every legislator is in a *tabula*

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<sup>37</sup> Remington (2008) highlights that Russian deputies have discrete ambition, and all they want to do is to be rewarded by the interest groups they tend to benefit with legislation. Even in such an environment, assuming that IIGs are not territorially concentrated, there should not be any need of care about local preferences.

*rasa* position at the beginning of the congressional mandate. Of course, politicians have dissimilar backgrounds in many dimensions (former experience in office, tenure in politics, previous runs). Nonetheless, ambitious politicians with and without a previous background might try to anticipate their immediate goals. Progressive ambition implies expectations about performance in further (especially immediate) stages of political careers. Considering that, as stated, bill drafting is one of the few visible resources in the hands of representatives; we should expect a prospective behavior by those who seek a subnational executive position.

Challenger candidates for subnational executive positions face a plethora of deficits in terms of knowledge, diffusion, publicity of ideas and proposals, grassroots activities, finances, and recruitment of adherents to monitor the fairness of the elections. In parallel, incumbents for subnational executives have, in general, several advantages, similar to what is stated in the aforementioned literature in American politics for Congress, and also in studies of city councils (Krebs 1998, 1999, 2005, Krebs and Pelissero 2001). Even though no single piece has analyzed what makes Argentine subnational executives advantaged in their races<sup>38</sup>, there are several intuitions associated with the benefits of holding office. First, as repeatedly mentioned in previous chapters, knowledge of the current executive is consistently higher. Second, subjects in office can count with staff, contracts, money and other kinds of selective incentives. Those can be extremely useful for adding allies, doing territorial work, organizing the Election Day logistic, and, why not, even buying votes<sup>39</sup>. Third, incumbents with a well established political capital in the district can vertically bargain with candidates for other positions

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<sup>38</sup> This is a very preliminary parallel project I started working on.

<sup>39</sup> See Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes (2004) and Calvo and Murillo (2005) for a deep discussion on the topic

(i.e. president, deputy, or governor for the mayoral case) and attach their ballots to those of popular candidates. Such a strategy could be beneficial for both parties, as the recent experience shows<sup>40</sup>.

Considering the aforementioned favorable scenarios for incumbents, legislators with subnational executive ambitions should think very well about the structure of opportunities (Schlesinger 1968) before entering a race. At this stage, no one will doubt that becoming a governor or the mayor of a relevant city is a better spot than being a backbencher in Congress. However, when risks are high, seeking any other office might be Nash equilibrium for a politician at time  $t_k$ . Since some of these risks are associated with relative disadvantage *vis-a-vis* incumbents; deterrence from entering into the race should increase as the perceived incumbency advantage also rises.

### *Incumbency, Deterrence and Career Perspectives*

How does incumbency perform at the subnational level? Unlike just minor exceptions (De Luca 2008), the literature has overlooked the dynamics of subnational executive careerism in Argentina. In a system where, as stated, ambition is multilevel, it is almost mandatory to know how the structure of opportunities is shaped. Thus, a key component of the explanation is to know the extent to which static ambition is a valid assumption for governors and mayors.

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<sup>40</sup> The process of territorialization of politics (Gibson 2004, Calvo and Escobar 2005) made subnational actors even more powerful. Most presidential candidates sought the support of already established governors and mayors, in order to count with the votes that this reverse coattails effect might track to them. As a counterpart, the alignment with a presidential candidate might imply that other runner ups for the provincial or municipal position be removed by the higher office candidate; or that they decided to withdraw from the race, after losing the expected support by the presidential contender.

## *Governors*

Argentine governors are directly elected every four years. Polls mostly use plurality rule and there is a huge variation in the presence and the length of term limits. These differences are endogenously shaped by ambition; in fact, many territorial leaders have altered the rules of the game in their favor during their first periods, in order to remove pitfalls for staying in office (Calvo and Micozzi 2005). Overall, a tendency towards strengthening the power of the incumbent governor and/or coalition of power has been the rule in Argentina.

Between 1983 and 2007, 163 regular elections have taken place for the choice of governors and, in most districts, also vice-governors<sup>41</sup>. Since there have been some discontinuities, special elections and federal interventions, the total number of gubernatorial and vice-gubernatorial positions equals 345 in the period. 242 politicians occupied these positions, most politicians were elected, but some positions were filled by provincial legislators in the line of succession. In the original sample, 189 spots belonged to a governor, and they were occupied by 133 subjects. Given that governors in the first period (1983 for most provinces) did not have the chance of reelection before arriving to the seat, the number of possible incumbents drops to 165.

How have these governors behaved in career terms after their mandates? As it becomes evident in Tables 6.1 and 6.2, a huge number of governors (three quarters) have not been immediately reelected overall. The highest contribution to this group is provided by those unable to pursue reelection due to term limits (86 over 122, a 70%).

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<sup>41</sup> Some provincial constitutions did not include the figure of the vice-governor. All of those provinces reformed their rules and created this position no later than 1991.

Within the set of governors that did have the chance of seeking immediate reelection, more than a half (54%) got it.

**Table 6.1: Proportion of Governors seeking Reelection by Ability for seeking Reelection**

Have been reelected			
Can be reelected	No	Yes	Total
No	86	0	86
%	1	0	1
Yes	36	43	79
%	0.46	0.54	1
Total	122	43	165
	0.74	0.26	1

**Table 6.2: Proportion of Governors that can be reelected by those effectively seeking Reelection**

Have been reelected			
Can be reelected	No	Yes	Total
No	86	0	86
%	0.71	0	0.53
Yes	36	43	79
%	0.29	1	0.47
Total	122	43	165
	1	1	1

As Table 6.3 shows, just five of the 36 governors who were eligible to run for reelection, voluntarily withdrew from the competition. Three of them retired from politics all together (Felipe Sapag, at age 82, in 1999, Arnoldo Castillo, at 77, in 1999, and Carlos Verna in 2007), and two moved to the Senate, one in order to improve his party's performance (Oscar Castillo in 2003) and the other because he was deterred from running in the primary against former governor Angel Rozas (Roy Nikisch in 2007). Within the remaining 31 politicians, eight were defeated in open elections, three sought

presidential office, one lost the party primary (Jorge Sobisch in 1995), and the other 19 were not in favorable positions. Basically, nine of them left office early (impeachment, resignation, or federal intervention) and the ten remaining governors were vice-governors or legislators that took office temporarily. Thus, their chances of revalidating their mandates were almost null (for the former) or extremely limited (for the latter). In sum, at least from the static distribution, I can infer that governors in office *did not* seek reelection whenever they *could not* (could not legally seek office or were not politically viable). Otherwise, incumbents tend to seek reelection.

**Table 6.3: Reasons for Not Running for a Straight Gubernatorial Period, Term Limits Absent**

Not Reelected	N	%
Can but don't run	5	0.14
Higher office	3	0.08
Defeated in Elections	8	0.22
Defeated in a Primary	1	0.03
Early exit	9	0.25
Interim	10	0.28
Total	36	1.00

If, as stated, governors tend to stay in office unless legal barriers and structures of opportunity make it unlikely; legislators' chances of jumping to that spot decrease in a similar fashion. Over the basis of only 48 existing elected positions in the provincial executive branch, real chances for legislators to become governors are relatively low. However, the presence of executive term limits for all but two provinces (San Luis and



Catamarca) fosters prospective calculations. There is a relative certainty<sup>42</sup> about when a spot is likely to become open. Thus, strategic behavior is likely to be observed in those circumstances.

How often have representatives sought gubernatorial positions? Table 6.4 shows that almost 12% of representatives attempted to jump to the provincial executive. In contrast with the scarce 4% of former governors holding a position in the House, 179 representatives tried to reach the highest provincial position. Their rate of success is analyzed separately in Chapter 7.

**Table 6.4: Percentage of Representatives Immediately Seeking a Gubernatorial Position**

Gubernatorial Candidate	N	Percent
No	1,322	88.07
Yes	179	11.93
Total	1,501	100

### *Mayors*

At the mayoral level, things are more complicated for several reasons. First, even though I created the most comprehensive dataset of mayors and mayoral candidates, information is not balanced. Namely, the number of municipalities varies across time depending on data availability. Second, new municipalities were created over time, thereby altering the sample, too. Third, in more theoretical terms, variation in the municipal structure and in the institutional and behavioral features of each province

<sup>42</sup> Several governors have changed the constitutions, called to plebiscites or forced provincial Courts to reinterpret term limits in order to stay in power, even though the prohibition was explicit.

makes the static assumption more complicated to be held at the mayoral level. Thus, the proxies for understanding patterns of ambition are less precise. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe some tendencies. Taken all the periods and districts together, and based on the available data (11,789 observations for 2,238 municipalities between 1983 and 2007)<sup>43</sup>, I can compare the rate of effective incumbency across years. I am not considering candidacy here, but only whether the mayors have remained the same across time.

Using these data, sixty percent of mayors have not served more than one term, as showed in Table 6.5. While a quarter of the sample served two terms, just 14% stayed three periods or more. Such a distribution would suggest that ambition might not be as static as for the case of governors. However, as mentioned, missing observations abound for periods before 1991. Thus, the likelihood that longer careers are underrepresented is substantive, especially for smaller municipalities.

**Table 6.5: Tenure of Mayors**

Tenure	Freq.	Percent
1	4,294	59.78
2	1,763	24.54
3	756	10.52
4	251	3.49
5	93	1.29
6	22	0.31
7	4	0.06
Total	7,183	100

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<sup>43</sup> A naive calculation would consist in multiplying the N of municipalities (2238) by the seven time periods. If this was the theoretical sample, my sample would equal a 75.25% of the real data. However, as mentioned, districts have been created and merged across time. Thus, I think my data share is actually bigger than .75.

Looking at the shares of straight reelection of mayors, the net numbers show about a 40% rate, as Table 6.6 shows. In order to avoid the mentioned different-N bias, I checked the rates over different samples, calculating them for districts with information in more than three, four or five periods in the database. In all of the cases, variation did not exceed 2%. So, overall, effective reelection rates at the municipal level are about 40%. Considering that information about candidacies is still imprecise, but assuming that no single incumbent will automatically win; it can be thought that the rate of pursuit of reelection is higher than that 40%. In order to verify whether there is any first-sight variation in the reelection rates by municipality, a common intuition is to try to distinguish districts over the basis of their relevance. Many proxies could be useful to make that differentiation. Population is one of those. However, given the variations in inhabitants across provinces, and also the dissimilar municipal structures, population might over represent the effects of districts of bigger provinces. As alternatives, economic indicators such as budgets, public employment or financial autonomy vis-à-vis the province might be good measures of relevance, but they are not available. Thus, the best indicator I came up with is the percentage of provincial population living in a given municipality. I am aware that this proxy might be imprecise (municipalities of provinces with 10 units are likely to concentrate a higher share than those of provinces with 400 units), but it has been the most reliable measure I could find so far. As a proxy, I created a measure that could be called the *effective number of municipalities (enm)*. The mathematical formula is the same as that used by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) and

adjusts the number of municipal units by the relative weight of each one<sup>44</sup>. As it can be read in the second column of Table 6.7, the effective number of municipalities ranges between 2 and 35. Does it mean that provinces that are high in the rank provide more opportunity structures? This could be arithmetically true, but it is not a mechanic statement. Districts with multiple relevant municipalities may have strong and stable leaderships that prevent any seat to be open across time<sup>45</sup>. The third column in Table 6.7 shows that there is no clear relationship between the number of relevant municipalities and reelection rate. Moreover, the correlation coefficient among both is .42, so no simplistic association can be performed. In sum, opportunity structures seem to be highly contingent on political context, more than logically derived from the number of districts and the distribution of population across provinces. Nonetheless, district-level characteristics might play any role in the patterns of mayoral reelection.

**Table 6.6: Rate of Reelection of Mayors – 1983-2007**

Reelected	N	Percent
No	6,348	61.00
Yes	4,058	39.00
Total	10,406	100.00

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<sup>44</sup> The formula is  $\frac{1}{\sum_n (p_i)^2}$ , where  $p_i$  is the population share of each municipality of each province.

<sup>45</sup> In fact, the Province of Buenos Aires, the province with the largest *enm*, has long-lasting leaderships in most of its main municipalities.

**Table 6.7: Effective Number of Municipalities by Province, and Mayoral Reelection Rates – 1983-2007**

Province	ENM	Reelection
Buenos Aires	35.58	0.46
Cordoba	22.98	0.51
Misiones	11.80	0.48
Entre Rios	11.23	0.22
Rio Negro	11.18	0.28
Mendoza	10.75	0.43
Chaco	10.12	0.42
San Juan	8.70	0.24
Santa Fe	8.26	0.47
La Pampa	7.81	0.38
Corrientes	6.94	0.36
Jujuy	6.13	0.21
Tucuman	5.60	0.16
Catamarca	5.12	0.28
Salta	5.08	0.40
Chubut	4.87	0.39
Santiago del Estero	4.43	0.29
Neuquen	4.30	0.27
Santa Cruz	4.20	0.29
Formosa	3.80	0.27
La Rioja	3.71	0.48
San Luis	3.51	0.35
Tierra del Fuego	2.02	0.35
Total	8.26	0.39

In order to improve our knowledge about reelection rates, I distinguished municipalities in two groups over the basis of the median share of population, the upper 75% and finally the upper 90%. Rates of reelection tend to decrease as the percentile of population in municipalities increases. As it can be read in Table 6.8, the higher the threshold, the lower is the reelection rate in these groups. When the sample is divided 50-50, 36% of the mayors of the most populated half of municipalities was reelected.

When the upper 25% is taken, reelection rate drops to 34%, which diminishes to 30% if just the upper 10% is considered. This information does not mean anything by itself, but might give a broad intuition: the higher the population and the expected relevance of a municipality, the higher the levels of visibility, competitiveness and actors involved. This might also depress the rates of reelection and increase the incentives for legislators seeking that position.

So, how likely is it that legislators pursue mayoral positions? Table 6.9 shows that 6% of representatives in office have immediately sought a municipal executive spot. Intuitively, if availability of resources is a predictor of career success, politicians' interest in subnational positions should increase as the municipality becomes wealthier, more populated and has a bigger budget. However, people do not always choose where to live or where to start their careers. Thus, a pure rational choice self-selection argument for municipal positions is definitely not accurate. Politicians tend to seek a mayoral position in their home municipalities whenever the political opportunities are favorable. However, subjects having reached a national executive position would hardly expect to become mayors if their districts meant a political jail for them. So, it can be thought that these district-characteristics should also be a part of the opportunity structures for political careers. Analyzing the data, the population average of those districts that legislators have run for is .12. Clearly, the mean is much higher than the average of the full sample (.01). Thus, having seen that reelection rates diminish as districts become more relevant, and having realized that legislators in office tend to run mostly for relevant districts; an empirical realization of legislators' behavior whenever they pursue a mayor position becomes full of sense.

**Table 6.8: Rate of Reelection of Mayors in the 50%, 75% and 90% Intervals - 1983-2007**

Reelection	Upper 50%	Upper 75%	Upper 90%
No	3332	1825	726
	63.92	65.69	69.47
Yes	1881	953	319
	36.08	34.31	30.53
Total	5213	2778	1045
	100	100	100

**Table 6.9: Percentage of Legislators Immediately running for Mayoral Positions - 1983-2007**

Mayoral Candidate	N	Percent
0	1,408	93.8
1	93	6.2
Total	1,501	100

### *Hypotheses*

The goal of the present piece exceeds the (undoubtedly) interesting question about when would a legislator seek subnational positions. It is clear that the likelihood increases when the opportunities are perceived as favorable. However, I am interested in unfolding legislators' behavior when they decide to run for a subnational position. To do so, I will try to disentangle whether bill drafting foresees immediate subnational executive ambition.

Through the utilization of the database already described, I will use the immediate pursuit of a gubernatorial or a mayoral position as dependent variables of my estimations. The principal covariate will be whether each legislator is running for a

gubernatorial or mayoral position at the end of her current legislative mandate (one model per category). I will keep most of the controls of the previous models: pertinence to the majority party, pertinence to the governor's party in her province, absolute distance from the median ideal point in the floor, absolute distance from the median ideal point in the floor, member of the Peronist party and member of a Provincial party.

Two main hypotheses are stated:

6.1: Legislators seeking a gubernatorial position immediately after their congressional mandate tend to submit more province-level legislation than their colleagues who do not

6.2: Legislators expecting an immediate mayoral position tend to submit more legislation targeting the municipalities of their provinces than their complements.

As in Chapter 5, alternative hypotheses are derived from some of the principal control covariates:

6.3: The farther away a legislator is from the majority party median ideal point, the higher the chances of submitting locally-based legislation

6.4: Committee chairs are less likely to submit locally-based legislation

I run two models for each hypothesis, as I did in Chapter 5. First, I employ a multi-level approach that captures random intercepts at the provincial level. Then, I employ a Bernoulli-logistic model with clustered standard errors at each legislator's level. Doing so, I expect to assess the individual-level effects that, I think, are affecting legislative behavior.



## *Results*

As Table 6.10 shows, the empirical analysis provides strong support for my first hypothesis. The coefficient of the covariate of mayoral candidate is positive and very significant in both models. Once computed the expected increase in the likelihood of submitting local legislation, results become even more conclusive. Whenever a deputy was immediately seeking a mayoral position, the chances of local bill drafting increase between 39% and 42%, controlled at different values of the other relevant covariates. As in the previous chapter, variation in partisanship does not push predicted probabilities too far from each other. As well as the defensive hypothesis was supported in the previous chapter, it seems that municipal ambition also triggers strategic behavior towards constituents in the current models.

Findings concerning hypothesis 6.3 work against the predicted direction just in the clustered SE model, with a negative sign and statistical significance. Once again, as in the case of previous background, the evidence suggests that the enounced direction is not empirically verifiable. That negative finding deserves a separate analysis that links ideological position and legislative activity, which is not included in the goals of the current piece.

It is also noteworthy that chances of Committee chairs submitting local legislation are, on average, 28% less than for every single other legislator. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is empirically support for prospective municipal heads, as it was the case of former mayors. The previous analysis alike, a feasible explanation is given by the greater ability to get legislation passed that makes inflation of bills not as necessary. Another result that deserves attention is the importance of the provincial dimension in

the multilevel estimation. Further research will try to unfold these subnational mechanisms that explain so much variation in this model.

**Table 6.10: Results of the Mayoral Models**

	Clustered SE	Random Intercept
Mayoral Candidate	0.36*** (0.13)	0.30 *** (0.05)
Committee Chair	-0.35*** (0.09)	-0.32 *** (0.03)
Distance to Median	-0.43*** (0.09)	0.05 (0.05)
Distance to Majority Median	0.09 (0.13)	-0.32 *** (0.04)
PJ member	0.12* (0.07)	-0.00 (0.02)
Provincial Party Member	0.22 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.06)
District Magnitude	-0.00 (0.01)	0.03 *** (0.00)
Constant	-2.11*** (0.09)	-2.82 *** (0.49)
Observations	101,533	101,533
Random Intercept		5.636 (2.374)
Pseudo-R2	0.01	0.04

At the gubernatorial side, things also perform as expected. None of the models shows statistical significance for the main covariate of interest. Thus, gubernatorial expectations do not have any impact over expected behavior towards legislators' districts. The only covariate that is robust across estimations, and also consistent with its performance in the municipal model, is Committee chairmanship: the sign is always negative and statistically significant. In more theoretical terms, we would say that

ambitious legislators seeking a gubernatorial position may not perceive that territorial work and bases of reputation can be improved through the use of legislation; or that using bill drafting does not deserve efforts and dedication compared to the expected revenue in such a province-wide races.

**Table 6.11: Results of Gubernatorial Models**

	Clustered SE	Random Intercept
Gubernatorial Candidate	0.11 (0.08)	0.03 (0.02)
Committee Chair	-0.41*** (0.06)	-0.32 *** (0.02)
Distance to Median	-0.23*** (0.07)	0.00 (0.04)
Distance to Majority Median	-0.02 (0.10)	-0.21 *** (0.03)
PJ member	0.14** (0.05)	0.05 * (0.02)
Provincial Party Member	0.19* (0.10)	0.09 * (0.04)
District Magnitude	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.02 *** (0.00)
Constant	-0.92*** (0.06)	-1.08 *** (0.01)
Observations	101,533	101533
Random Intercept		0.47 (0.22)
Pseudo-R2	0.02	.04

### *Discussion*

At this stage, general support for the statement that politicians act strategically during their congressional tenure can be assessed. However, this inference cannot be made for every single legislator. Clearly, individuals with immediate municipal

ambition are more likely to use legislation as a political device, in order to further their goals. At the side of gubernatorial candidates, the use of legislation seems not to be a resource that deserves a strategic use. The apparent paradox is that, while a 20% of the 117,000 analyzed bills have the province of its sponsor as a target; just a 9% of these drafts refer the municipalities of the proposer's home province. Part of the explanation of this apparent contradiction might lie in the mentioned expectation of the default behavior. While targeting the home municipality has sense for most politicians; their careers would depend on these constituents' decisions just in the case they expected a municipal-level position. Whenever legislators try to defend their municipal reputation or increase it for further executive races, they tend to use bills strategically. On the contrary, politicians that do expect a province-level or even a national elected position (even legislative reelection!) need to show some capital in the home province. Hence, regardless of gubernatorial ambition, legislators tend to inflate the submission of provincial bills.

Thus, should I infer a selective use of legislative resources, depending on patterns of ambition? This seems a reasonable statement. If I had information similar to that gathered by Crisp and Desposato (2005) about the yearly miles flown by each candidate, I might discover that legislators that expect a gubernatorial candidacy travel more than prospective mayors. As the scope and complexity of the office change, strategic behavior is likely to do so as well.

## Chapter 7: How Bill Drafting affects Success

### *Making Bills Count*

Bill drafting is one of the easiest ways to contribute to the creation of a political capital in Argentina. Legislators (especially prospective mayoral candidates) use projects as devices to generate ties with voters and signal to party leaders that they are relevant actors. Following a rational choice perspective, an implication of this is that bill drafting should contribute to legislators' electoral success. If legislators pursuing a subnational position have strategically proposed legislation period after period, should success not be a frequent output? Otherwise, why would congressmen do it?

Despite that this logic sounds compelling, there are some counterintuitive issues at the stage of unfolding the causal mechanism. It is true that bill submission needs to involve some expected utility. However, it is not easy to assess what the impact of that activity is. If such a question becomes a whole empirical and methodological challenge for a social scientist; it is less clear how a single politician with other priorities would recognize and evaluate that influence. Legislators will hardly take time to observe how many local bills their colleagues have sent in the past and how those bills have affected their success in the electoral race. Such a calculation might be the norm in an environment where bill drafting implies large investments; yet, as mentioned, writing bills does not involve substantial costs. Thus, mere expectations (rather than evidence of concrete revenues) about the impact of bills should be persuasive enough for legislators' to strategically introduce legislation. Nonetheless, behavior is not fully dissociated from expectations of success. If mere inflation of locally-targeted pieces mechanically provided high revenues, almost every single legislator should be tempted to author

enormous amounts of locally-targeted legislation. As mentioned earlier, forceful subnational linkages in Argentine politics make it unlikely that the baseline be zero. In fact, as it can be seen in Table 7.1, about 90% of every single legislator in office has ever sent at least a bill regarding her home province; and *circa* 70% has done the same concerning the municipalities of the province. However, it is not true that every single legislator submits hundreds of local bills period after period. As shown in Table 7.2, on average, every representative submits 34 bills per congressional period (two years), which means 68 pieces for each 4-years mandate. Among those, fourteen bills (about 20%) involve a reference to the province, and six bills (*circa* 10%) target the municipalities of the province. Thus, territorial work is far (very far) from being the main duty of legislative activity.

**Table 7.1: Percentage of Legislators that have Submitted Bills with Provincial and Municipal Content**

	Home Province Bills		Home Province's Municipalities Bills	
	N		N	
Yes	1,337	89.07	1,038	69.15
No	164	10.93	463	30.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7.2: Average of Bills Submitted by Congressional Period – Full Sample, Provincially-Targeted and Municipality-Targeted**

Sample	Units	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Total Bills	3,453	33.96	45.7	1	586
Home Province	3,453	6.99	10.91	0	153
Home Province's Municipalities	3,453	3.06	5.56	0	64

Does this mean that bill-drafting is random and, as an implication, that this project is innocuous? I do not think that. As I have empirically assessed, politicians with immediate territorial expectations, especially at the mayoral level, strategically author extensive amounts of local legislation. However, the question of the impact is salient here again. Is there a positive relationship between local bill submission and electoral success? An affirmative answer would be the last link of the causal chain of this project. However, the task does not seem easy.

Multiple factors can affect electoral chances at multiple levels. The literature recognizes several predictors of success in executive elections, such as the performance of the economy (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981, 1978; Weatherford 1978; Fiorina 1978, 1981; Wildes 1976), popularity of the current president (Peltzman, 1987; Piereson, 1975; Simon, Ostrom, & Marra, 1991), campaigns (Petrocik 1996) and incumbent president's approval rating (Brody and Sigelman 1983). At the subnational level, different factors have been associated with executive electoral success, such as national economy (Gelineau and Remmer 2006), state economic perceptions (Stein 1990, Squire and Fastnow, 1994, Honwell and Vanderleeus 1990, Atkeson and Partin 1995, Niemi, Stanley and Vogel 1995), state tax increases (Jewell and Olson 1988) and degrees of isolation from national environments and economic performance (Chubb 1988), among others. As it can be seen, most of these factors are exogenous to individual candidates' actions. It is necessary to browse the literature of minority representation to see how individual-level factors such as race (Fraga 1988, Hero 1992, Pantoja, Nicholson and Segura 2006, Barreto 2007) or gender (Herrnson, Lay and Stokes 2003, Brians 2005, Palmer and Simon 2005) affect candidate's success. However, these personal attributes are constant across time and, therefore, not prone for strategic manipulation. Thus, it becomes also a theoretical

challenge to try to link individual legislative behavior with further success in subnational races.

Given that context, it is not easy to assess the extent to which success in subnational races is due to targeted performance in the legislature, combined with the aforementioned possible factors. However, there is no reason not to try to empirically assess this relationship. In this chapter, I evaluate whether different indicators of submission of targeted bills makes, at least, a positive difference in the likelihood of success in a subnational race.

### *Unfolding the Effect*

In order to be fully consistent with the literature, I should specify a model that takes the macro-level variables into account at the moment of making an electoral prediction. It is hard to cast doubts about the influence of the national level factors over subnational electoral results. In fact, the (scarce) literature about the Argentine case posits substantive effects of national economic conditions over support for candidates (Remmer and Gelineau 2003, Canton and Jorrat 2002, Seligson 2003, Gervasoni 1997, 1998, Gelineau 2002, Echegaray 2005, Singer and Rosas 2007). However, recent pieces have demonstrated how lower-level effects also make a difference for subnational actors' performance. Gelineau and Remmer (2006) find that subnational economic performance is a good predictor of subnational electoral success, along with the national economy. Similarly, Porto and Porto (2000) show that fiscal performance at the municipal level affected mayoral elections in the Province of Buenos Aires.

Nevertheless, my interest is to understand whether congressional activity, and especially bill drafting, makes a difference in electoral performance. Even if I wanted to



create a model including all the macro-factors specified above, I would hardly be able to do the analysis for the whole sequence. The argument is practical: data about economic performance may be available for the whole 1983-2007 sequence, but no comparable series with indicators of presidential popularity, perceptions about performance of the economy, state-level government or candidate evaluation, and even partisanship or ideological positions exist. Thus, I would have to either limit my analysis to an extremely short time period, or drop most of my observations due to missing values. That situation given, I prefer to take a different risk and evaluate how Congress-related covariates affect the chances of success in subnational executive races. Many observers might immediately point out that an omitted variable bias might be tainting results; nonetheless, nothing prevents the experiment of appraising whether even a small part of the variance can be explained by candidate-level strategic behavior. Ultimately, this project's goal is not to capture how the whole world performs, but simply to understand the relationship between political careers and legislative production in multilevel systems.

### *Empirical Strategy*

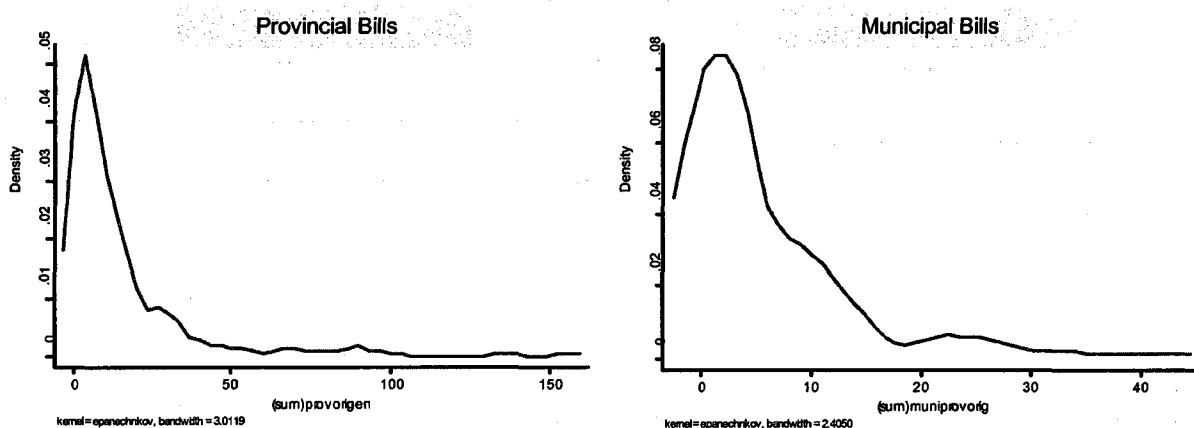
Empirical analyses of the effects of legislative submission over subnational success require some adjustments in the data. Given that success can only be evaluated over individuals that did run for an executive position, it is nonsense to include subjects without immediate subnational expectation in the sample. Thus, I decided to drop those observations. As a consequence, I created two separate samples, one of 198 gubernatorial candidates and another of 97 mayoral contenders. Since the goal is to evaluate how bill submission affects executive success, I decided to work with

information at the legislator-period level. In other words, each observation of the new samples is a legislator that ran for a gubernatorial or mayoral position at  $t+1$ . If she won the election, the variable *success* equals "1", zero otherwise. It must be remembered that the data used in chapters 5 and 6 were at the bill level, where individual legislators were the units of analysis. There, information was used at the maximum level of disaggregation. In this case, my equation tries to capture the accumulated activity of a Deputy during her congressional tenure immediately before running for a subnational spot. This makes it inaccurate to continue working with information at the bill level. As a consequence, I also collapsed the covariates of the right-hand side of the equation at the legislator-period level. Such a decision may have consequences on the structure of the variables, and might also affect the results. In order to avoid any kind of artificial effect due to measurement error, I prefer to estimate the models with different indicators. This is particularly salient for my principal covariate of the estimation, the legislative submission variable.

I chose to work with two different measures of targeted legislative activity. The first is the number of bills with territorial content submitted during the legislative period prior to the executive candidacy. This variable will always be positive and ranges between zero to 48 for municipal bills, and 0 to 156 for provincial legislation. The distribution is shown below in Figure 7.1, and it reflects a high degree of variation across individuals. A valid reason to explain these differences is linked with ambition, as will be further tested. However, other idiosyncratic factors (individual skills, professional background, or more money to hire additional staff members) could affect the global amount of local bills submitted. As an attempt to overcome these differences, I use the ratio of bills with a territorial content over the whole sample of bills submitted by a

legislator in time  $t$  as a second indicator. This variable ranges between zero and one and normalizes the differences among individuals that *de facto* have a dissimilar predisposition for bill drafting.

**Figure 7.1: Distribution of Provincial and Municipal Bills**



I also decided to use another of the main covariates of previous models: executive background. If, as stated, previous executive experience makes a difference in legislative activity, it might also affect electoral performance in the near future. Rephrasing the argument, a mayor that jumped to the House and expects to return for his old position may have attributes (knowledge of constituents' preferences, well established image) that make her likelihood of winning the spot different. Thus, I include this covariate in the right hand side of the equation. However, descriptive statistics show a very salient finding: only three former mayors and two former governors were able to return to their old spots after serving in a legislative mandate. Table 7.3 and 7.4 demonstrate how clear the distributions are. Thus, the expected effect of these covariates is likely to have a negative impact on the chances of winning, everything else equal.

**Table 7.3: Percentage of Former Governors that Won a Gubernatorial Race after a Congressional Period**

Previous Governor	Won the Race		
	0	1	Total
0	139	38	177
	78.53	21.47	100.00
1	20	1	21
	95.24	4.76	100.00
Total	159	39	198
	80.3	19.70	100

**Table 7.4: Percentage of Former Mayors that Won a Municipal Race after a Congressional Period**

Previous Mayor	Won the Spot		
	0	1	Total
0	43	25	68
	63.24	36.76	100.00
1	26	3	29
	89.66	10.34	100.00
Total	69	28	97
	71.13	28.87	100

Overall, the specification of the models includes most of the covariates used in previous chapters. I will analyze the effect of the number of locally and provincially targeted bills on the chances of winning an executive race, controlling for previous career background, distance to the majority party median position, distance to the floor median position, district magnitude, committee chairmanship and membership to the Peronist party. Additionally, I include a new pair of covariates that I judge appropriate for the current models. One is whether the candidate belongs to the outgoing executive's

party in the province. In this case, even though I do not have information about voters' perceptions of the former leader, the high rate of party reelection (see Cao 2000) increases the probability that the incumbent party's candidate will win. Aside, I include the percentage of population that the district of each candidate represents for the province. As mentioned in Chapter 5, bigger municipalities have lower reelection rates and therefore have increased the structures of opportunity for challengers. Thus, I expect this covariate to positively affect the chances of winning in the municipal model.

In order to obtain the correct estimates, based on the structure of the data, I opt to run a conventional pooled Bernoulli-logistic model. Even though province-level effects may play a role in shaping probabilities, not all the units are represented in the sample. Thus, a multilevel model or including fixed effects model would affect not only the degrees of freedom, but also capture just a part of the variance. Since I do not think that time is playing any role here, no temporal controls are included, either.

Overall, what should the expectations be, regarding previous chapters' findings? As mentioned, submission of province-level legislation is not affected by gubernatorial ambition; on the contrary, one of the models shows a negative and substantive effect on bill submission. Therefore, should a high number (or share) of targeted bills affect the chances of victory? Following the same reasoning, the answer should be negative. In as much, following the argument, positive effects should be found at the mayoral race level. Five theoretical hypotheses have been formulated for the current analysis:

8.1: Increases in the number (share) of province-based legislation do not affect success in a gubernatorial race

8.2: Increases in the number (share) of municipality-based legislation positively affects success in a mayoral race

8.3: Legislators that belong to the party of the outgoing governor (mayor) have higher chances of winning a subnational executive race

8.4: The higher the share of provincial inhabitants in a district, the greater the chances of municipal victory by a former legislator

8.5: Previous subnational executive experience negatively affects the chances of winning the same spot

### *Gubernatorial Results*

According to the results in Table 7.5, none of the covariates measuring bill submission are significant here, consistent with theoretical expectations. The standard errors largely exceed the coefficients, making it clear that substantive effects are not even a remote possibility. In as much, consistent with hypothesis 8.3's expectations, pertinence to the party of the outgoing governor has a positive and significant effect on the likelihood of electoral victory. While opposing parties' candidates have an average predicted probability of 8% of winning the race, everything else equal; incumbent party members have 34% of chances. In relative terms, the advantage makes a governing party candidate more than 300% more likely to win the gubernatorial spot.

Finally, also in the same line of that prescribed by the last hypothesis, previous gubernatorial experience is strongly correlated with negative chances of winning the race. Setting all the continuous variables to the median and simulating different scenarios of binary covariates, the average predicted probability of winning a spot for a legislator without previous gubernatorial experience is 35% ( $\pm 17\%$ ); when background

is included, probabilities descend to 13% ( $\pm 12\%$ ), which implies 77% less chances to reach the executive seat.

These results do not do anything but confirm the poor existing relationship between legislative activity and gubernatorial expectations. It is not only true that those legislators pursuing a provincial-level executive position do not act prospectively, but it also becomes evident that the Argentine House is not a very promising previous point for politicians with gubernatorial aspirations. This can be interpreted as evidence of the claim that a seat in Congress does not provide substantive resources to further a political career in Argentina. Material resources are scarce; symbolic resources are rarely used. Thus, as a conclusion, it should be well known that some other public office would surely be a better springboard to jump to a governorship.

**Table 7.5: Gubernatorial Models**

	Model 1	Model 2
% of Provincial Bills	0.46 -1.05	
N of Provincial Bills		0 (0.02)
Previous Governor	-1.55* (0.85)	-1.59* (0.85)
Distance to Median	0.02 (1.35)	0.00 (1.35)
Distance to Majority Median	0.49 (0.98)	0.46 (0.98)
Committee Chair	-0.38 (0.55)	-0.40 (0.55)
PJ member	0.75 (0.58)	0.70 (0.57)
Provincial Party Member	0.28 (0.86)	0.23 (0.86)
District Magnitude	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.024 (0.02)
Outgoing Governor's party	1.87*** (0.55)	1.90*** (0.54)
Constant	-2.68*** (0.82)	-2.47*** (0.68)
Observations	178	178
R2	0.20	0.24

**Table 7.6: Predicted Probabilities of Winning a Gubernatorial Race – By Party**

Party	Probability
Outgoing Governor's Party	0.34 (0.18)
Other Party	0.08 (0.06)



### *Municipal Models*

The first point that must be highlighted for this test is that the relatively small size of the sample (N=98) is likely to be slightly erratic. This does not imply that results will be biased, but it must be highlighted that it is not fair to expect extreme robustness from the data. Regarding hypothesis 7.2, results are mixed. While the covariate measuring legislative performance as a percentage of local bills is statistically insignificant; increases in the net number of bills appear to be harmful for an electoral victory. Contrary to the expectations, this barely significant finding casts some doubts about the true role of bill submission over municipal performance. Predicted probabilities show ridiculous and unrealistic percentages, forecasting an 88% of chances of victory for a legislator who submitted zero bills. Given the mentioned relative scarcity of data and the .10 significance (beyond the tolerable boundary of many researchers), I will not consider this coefficient to be indicator of a substantive effect, but as evidence of no effect. Such a finding forces a reevaluation of the scenario depicted in the theoretical discussion. Should bill submission really affect general elections' results, or should it just be influential at the stage of pursuit of the candidacy? This reasoning will be expanded in the discussion section.

Contrary to the evidence found in the gubernatorial model, hypothesis 8.3 is not supported by the municipal estimations. Following these results, party incumbency should not affect a legislator's success in her municipal race. Is a higher rate of party alternation a valid explanation? Cao's (2000) piece confirms that there is a huge variation in party reelection across time and provinces. This dimension is not a part of the purposes of this piece, but it is a substantive topic for further research.

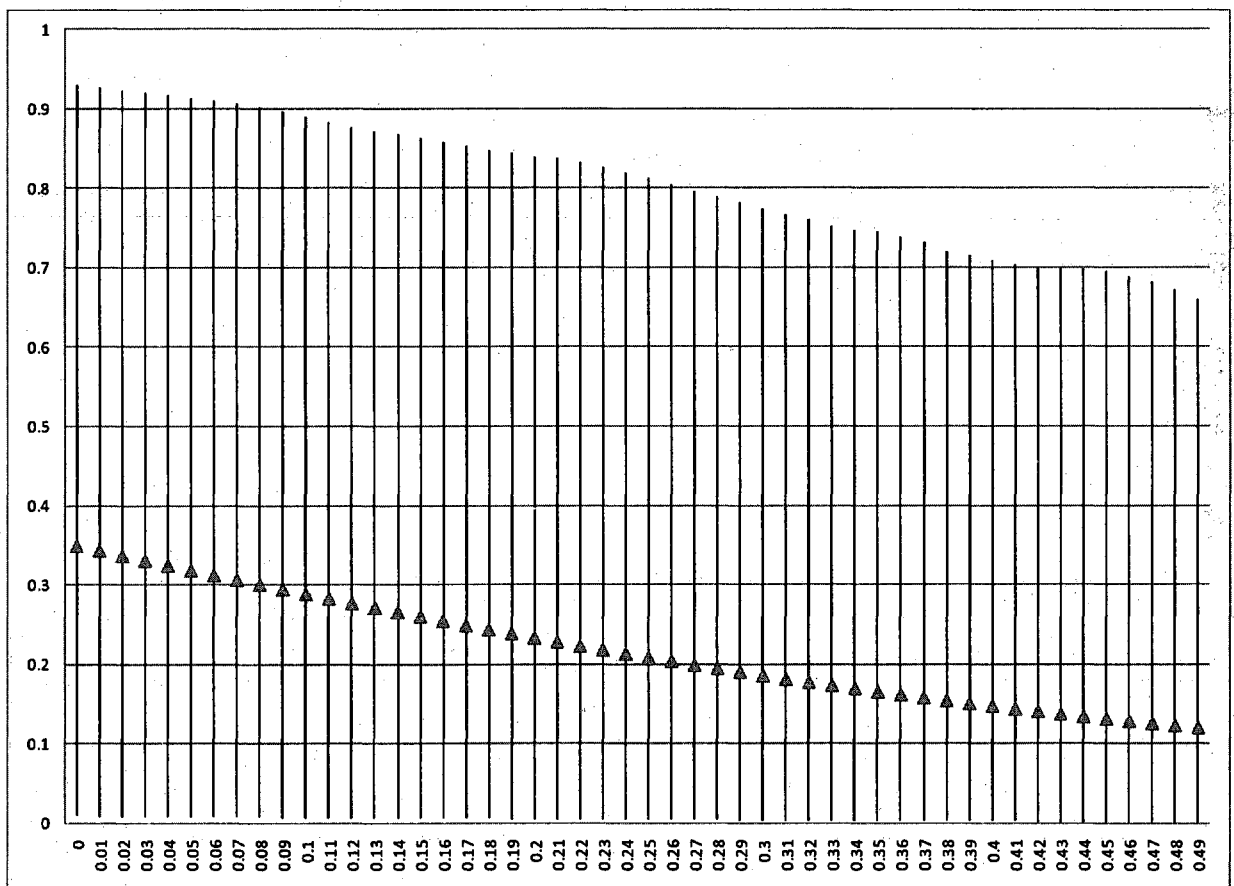
Table 7.7: Municipal Models

	Model 1	Model 2
% of Municipal Bills		-1.92 (1.78)
N of Municipal Bills	-0.08* (0.05)	
Previous Mayor	-3.34*** (1.04)	-3.09*** (0.99)
Distance to Median	-1.04 (1.82)	-1.60 (1.77)
Distance to Majority Median	-0.18 (1.43)	0.37 (1.37)
Committee Chair	-1.53* (0.79)	-1.48* (0.76)
PJ member	-0.29 (0.94)	-0.07 (0.94)
Provincial Party Member	-0.17 (1.24)	-0.04 (1.22)
District Magnitude	-0.06** (0.03)	-0.06** (0.03)
Outgoing Mayor's Party	1.07 (0.88)	0.97 (0.88)
Population Ratio	-4.79* (2.52)	-4.58* (2.43)
Constant	2.37* (1.25)	1.99* (1.20)
Observations	89	89
R2	0.20	0.21

Empirical evidence suggests that the direction stated in hypothesis 8.4 is definitely wrong. Contrary to the belief that bigger districts might have better opportunities structures and therefore improve legislators' prospective chances; better results have been obtained in smaller-scale municipalities. As it becomes visible in Figure 7.2, chances of winning range from 35% when districts are almost insignificant to 11% when municipalities comprise about half of the provincial population. Should this

verification be interpreted, again, as evidence that resources in hands of legislators do not let them aspire to relevant spots? Or should we think more on the concomitant increase in the competition for big municipalities' races, which demand more money, pork, advertisements and supporters? A combination of both might be a reasonable argument, which, in any case, deserves deeper future studies.

**Figure 7.2: Predicted Probability of Municipal Victory – By Share of Provincial Population**



Finally, and not surprisingly, hypothesis 8.5 is also verified in this model. As seen in the static distribution, former mayors are highly unlikely to recover their past positions when they attempt to do it from the House. In this case, even though former

mayors do use legislation both as a defensive and as a prospective strategy; it seems that it has not been a very successful decision, assuming that they expected increased electoral support through these activities.

### *Discussion*

The last sentence of the last paragraph restores a point already mentioned in the considerations of gubernatorial candidates' poor electoral performance. To what extent is it reasonable to suppose that bill drafting should affect general election results? Winning a subnational executive position involves two necessary steps: first, to get the candidacy; second, to win the race. Both processes are interdependent, but do not necessarily involve the same activities and targets. Depending on what the candidate selection mechanisms are, the median voter (or median principal) is likely to differ: in closed primaries, party adherents will be the selectorate. In open primaries, decision is more likely to be led by mobilized citizens, regardless of partisanship. For closed-caucus decisions, senior party delegates might be the relevant actors. On the contrary, in general races, the median voter of the whole constituency is likely to determine failure of success of any candidate. The central question here is whether strategic legislative activity is equally worth for both stages. Whom are legislators talking to at the moment of writing bills? I repeatedly stated that voters and party leaders are targets of bill drafting, as receivers of signals of a (pretended) powerful politician that deserves a relevant place. Co-partisans perceiving that strength might opt not to run a primary against that politician, or just put her in a secure spot of party lists. Voters perceiving responsiveness might be thankful to her, promising further electoral support and making it possible that the politician go to the media to show how popular she is. As a

feedback, leaders process that information, and the politician should be in a good position to get the party spot.

However, the general election is likely to be a different world. Campaigns are long, tough, extremely time and resource consuming and, sometimes, bloody. Does bill drafting make any difference in such a hard situation? The intuition is that it might contribute, but probably not that much as in the previous stage. For gubernatorial candidates, evidence shows that it does not matter at all. For municipal contenders, the expectation is alive, but it does not seem to make a huge difference in the electoral revenue. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there is a plethora of factors that can affect electoral performance. I am not including those macro-components in this analysis, but it is difficult to think that variables like economic performance or presidential perception do not affect even subnational choice. The interesting point at this stage is to wonder whether those macro-conditions also affect the previous stage of candidate selection. A bad juncture would for sure influence the chances of an incumbent or a copartisan of a ruling officer. However, this stage seems to be more prone for individual-level maneuver. Understanding strategic bill drafting as a mechanism that is more linked to position taking for a candidacy rather than for securing a general victory makes the findings of this dissertation not only more accurate, but also more realistic. Otherwise, most of the literature linking clientelism and patronage (Calvo and Murillo 2004, Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes 2005, Kemahlioglu 2007) with electoral performance would be overshadowed by the power of symbolic politics.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to fill a theoretical gap in the literatures of political ambition, political careers and legislative behavior in multi-level systems with progressive ambition. As well as the detailed scope of the universe would have predicted a relatively simple task; the complexity of the multiple interactions among actors, goals, institutions and political arenas foresaw how difficult this enterprise would be. Even though this project ended up being extremely time- and energy consuming, I feel it has been worth it to solve several empirical and theoretical questions, while raising new and more interesting questions.

The first contribution lies at the theoretical level. Throughout this dissertation, it was asked if politicians acting in an environment with well known constraints (low pursuit of reelection, multilevel ambition) had incentives for strategic anticipation of further goals. As the empirical tests have demonstrated, this statement can be judged true for the case under study. Current legislators having a subnational executive expectation face incentives to highlight aspects of their prospective constituents in the content of their bills, and so they do. This behavior has been particularly true in the case of Deputies who have mayoral expectations. As Schumacher (1973) said, "*Small is beautiful*", and that is the way these legislators seem to think at the moment of writing legislation. By targeting municipalities, ambitious politicians try to maximize their (relatively scarce) available resources associated with their office, and expect to improve their future perspectives. In sum, following rational choice statements, ambitious legislators have been doing the right things, considering their preferences over outcomes.

A second contribution of this project is also theoretical, and explores the links between two literatures that have barely spoken each other: political ambition and legislative performance. As stated repeated times, scholars in American politics have (almost tacitly) considered this relationship as a logical extension of their main causal mechanism. Statically ambitious legislators without many party constraints face multiple incentives towards individualization, construction of a personal capital and diffusion of their work in office. In this sense, political ambition and legislative performance are heads and tails of the same coin, at the same time. Conversely, studies of comparative settings with different frameworks and motivations from those of the U.S House have never analyzed how anticipation of multi-level career goals shapes current legislative activity. One of the reasons for this apparent lack of interest may be linked to the supposed marginal importance of legislatures in the policy making process in presidential regimes outside the U.S. Other sources of scientific apathy might have to do with one of the main discoveries of this dissertation for the Argentine case: individual-level attributes matter for legislative activity, something that has been overlooked by the literature in the area until these days. If legislator-level activity is assumed to be irrelevant, linking ambition and bill drafting is definitely a waste of time. After realizing that individual activity does make a difference, increasing efforts towards understanding the motivations behind bill drafting should be seen.

However, as several Americanists have highlighted in presentations of this project, the theoretical question should not be "*why look at bill drafting and ambition together?*", but "*why have ambition and bill drafting been always analyzed separately?*" Are they not interdependent? Scholarly research in European legislatures (Doring 1995) has explored how legislators try to submit private legislation that targets their constituents.

If such a behavior is visible in strongly party-based political regimes like parliamentary countries, why should it not also be characteristic of legislators in presidential systems? This was the question and the answer is “they do”, even in environments that would not predict its existence, such as the Argentine case. Nested analysis of drafted legislation and career goals are also likely to contribute to the advancement of studies on political recruitment, patterns of cabinet composition, agenda control and responsiveness, among others. Representative of this research line is the recent top-notch project led by Meserve, Pemstein and Bernhard (2009), where they collected information on the backgrounds of every member of the European Parliament. They explicitly discuss parties’ nomination strategies and individual-level predictors of getting a regional seat; and will extend their analysis to bill drafting and career decisions in the next months. Similar perspectives are likely to emerge for more comparable cases of multilevel systems such as the Mexican<sup>46</sup> case.

The third theoretical contribution of this project has to do with the expected effects of electoral systems. Even though the mayor theoretical findings of the literature have remained untouched (i.e. the effects of closed lists and proportional representation over legislators’ degrees of freedom), this project highlights how important the federal dimension can be. Systems including most of the predictors of no individual-level activity might fail accounting for how mixed incentives from territorial bases of support can affect legislators’ behavior. Parties can matter in many ways, including the prosecution of further offices. However, whenever loyalty and maintenance of bases of support struggle, predictions made at the institutional level can be flawed, and

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<sup>46</sup> As discussed with Joy Langston and Javier Aparicio, a replication of this analysis for the Mexican case is almost a must-do that might become subject of collaborative research in the short future.



individuals may opt for securing their personal sources of legitimacy and power. This does not imply any contradiction with the well established literature, but only a refinement that deserves additional in-depth research.

On the purely empirical side, this dissertation provides several contributions. In terms of the comparative literature, it considers a new relationship not covered by the conventional pieces. As mentioned, Samuels (2004) gave a fabulous insight about Brazilian legislative politics, but did not reach such a level of disaggregation to analyze politicians' congressional behavior over the basis of their career goals. A similar approach to that employed in this essay would substantially improve the knowledge of politicians' strategies and objectives in the Brazilian *Camara dos Deputados*; it would also simplify the evaluation of related topics such as campaign strategies, fundraising, coattails effects and vertical coalitions. Similar arguments could be applied to cases like Mexico (as mentioned) and Venezuela (both federal), or also to unitary yet multilevel settings such as Uruguay, Colombia or even Bolivia. Beyond Latin American presidential democracies, Montero (2006, 2007) shows that politicians in Spain also have multilevel shifts between the federal Parliament and the regional chambers. Extending his analysis to the levels of legislation introduced would surely enrich his conclusions and extensions.

Another relevant decision that may affect future perspectives has to do with the selection of the sample. As repeatedly mentioned throughout this dissertation, the use of the whole set of bills ever introduced in the Argentine Congress has strong implications over the findings. On the one hand, it overcomes any kind of selection bias, as it could perfectly happen with the use of roll call data or particular subsets of bills. However, such a decision is not totally free of problems. As well as many analysts of American

politics suggest just to analyze final passage votes; an attentive observer might criticize that the full sample could be full of irrelevant legislation that is not the core of political conflict. Rather, analyzing just public bills, or those involving most of the budget, might give a more accurate depiction of the political process in Argentina. Once again, as stated, no choice is perfect and free of problems; however, I still believe that looking at the whole picture is a more accurate strategy than just analyzing an arbitrarily cut sample of bills. What would be the impact of such a strategy on the findings of the existing literature? Would it help solve the controversies between party-free (Ames 1994, Samuels 2004) versus party-based (Limongi and Figueiredo 1998) behavior in the Brazilian House? Would it alter the patterns of inter- and intra-coalition voting behavior in Chile, in comparison to what Aleman and Saiegh (2007) found? What would be the impact on Crisp et al's (2005) conclusions about vote-seeking behavior in ten Latin American chambers? These questions recognize the relevance of previous findings, but also pose challenges to conventional knowledge, more on the side of data and measures than to the authors' substantive questions.

In terms of the contributions to the Argentina-based research, this dissertation fits well as a bridge among some of the best existing pieces in the literature. As pointed out in chapter 3, findings about congressional performance (Jones 1997, Mustapic 2000, Jones and Hwang 2005, Calvo 2007, Aleman and Calvo 2008, Jones, Hwang and Micozzi 2008), political careers (Jones et al 2002) and federalism (Benton 2003, Spiller and Tommasi 2007) have rarely been related. This study not only integrates the excellent empirical literature about careers and legislative activity, but also includes a dimension that was totally absent in previous research: individual-level behavior. However, as I clarified in previous sections, the goal is not to deny that parties and leaders are central

actors in Argentine politics, but to add individual calculations and strategies aside from collective determinants. Doing so, I forge a more comprehensive depiction of political activity.

Another relevant contribution of this project has to do with the collection and organization of basic information. Even though it can be hard to believe for the standards of information access in more developed countries; no centralized official records about public officers exist in Argentina. Considering that the list of governors, mayors and also candidates for these positions was a necessary condition for this project, I decided to collect the data by myself. As a consequence, researchers will be able to count with this information in the future and empirically test multiple hypotheses. In parallel, the creation of a comprehensive archive of ballots between 1983 and 2007 not only constructs a reliable primary source of information, but also generates a safeguard for the preservation of historical records. This data gathering process and the databases created as a consequence are substantive contributions themselves, especially in a so strong federal country as Argentina. Counting with this information, further research will be much easier for scholars in general, and for me in particular. Multiple extensions of the arguments of this piece can be tested. As an example, incumbency advantage at the mayoral level in multilevel settings can be tested. Similarly, comparisons between the House and the Senate in terms of goals and strategic use of bills can be also easily performed.

A substantial new direction with potential impacts on further research is related with a key distinction made in this project: governors and mayors are not the same. This differentiation helped opening the "*subnational black box*" that restricted most of the province-level analysis to gubernatorial dynamics. Even though it is true that governors

are keystones of power in Argentine politics, mayoral positions are also considerably strong. Moreover, some extremely powerful governors based their strength in a structure of loyal mayors that built up an almost invincible electoral machine. Thus, should legislators not enact strategies to become mayors? In this case, should these strategies not be different in scope, cost and degrees of competitiveness? As Chapter 5 and 6 demonstrate, when territorial boundaries of ambition change, prospective behavior does too. In as much, defensive strategies also change over the basis of past subnational experience. As a consequence, further work on subnational politics in Argentina should take into account the huge within-province variation, as well as the effects of municipal actors even on federal politics.

Finally, the distinction of the differential effect of strategic bill drafting on chances of winning the candidacy and general electoral victory makes also a substantive point for the future. Anticipation of further ambition involves maximizing currently available resources. However, the final outcome of the goal varies across time, subjects and circumstances. At the stage of defining who will have access to office, politics become a zero-sum game. Thus, not every single legislator who behaves strategically will end up winning the spot they desire. However, this does not imply that strategic use of legislation cannot be useful for the first step towards becoming a mayor or a governor. Territorial targets may act as signals to party leaders, comrades and party loyalists that vote in a primary. Success at this stage is not fully independent from future performance, but it differs from victory in a general election. In fact, as chapter 7 demonstrates, no substantive effect of legislative submission on success could be found. However, legislators keep on submitting targeted bills. Is this behavior just a way of wasting time, or is it the product of other intermediate steps for which bills could be

really useful? This rhetoric question anticipates further research lines empirically assessing the relationships between intra-party competition and legislative behavior.

In sum, this dissertation had several goals at different levels. After overcoming severe empirical challenges, it resulted in specific findings that contribute to the understanding of legislative behavior in multilevel systems. First, legislators can act strategically, and in fact they do it in the Argentine Congress. The use of legislation is a valuable resource for these non-reelection seekers and they effectively use these bills whenever they aspire a municipal position. This is true both for *defensive* (previous background) and *prospective* (further ambition) goals, but it does not seem to affect gubernatorial candidates from the House. These findings not only show that individual-level behavior is relevant for the comprehension of legislative politics in Argentina; but also reconciles the traditional party-based explanations with personalized strategic behavior. Doing so, it contributes to the creation of a theoretical artifact that has an enormous future for comparative research: a general theory of legislative behavior in multilevel systems with non-static ambition.

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## Interviews

### *Officers*

1. Christian Gribaudo, National Deputy
2. Liliana Gurdulich de Correa, former National Senator, former Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs
3. Federico Storani, former National Deputy, former Minister of Internal Affairs
4. Horacio Massaccesi, former Governor of Rio Negro, former National Deputy, former National Senator, former presidential candidate
5. Jose Octavio Bordon, former Governor of Mendoza, former National Deputy, former National Senator, former presidential candidate
6. Omar De Marchi, National Deputy, former Mayor of Lujan de Cuyo, Mendoza
7. Lidia Naim, National Deputy, wife of Ricardo Ivoskus, Mayor of San Martin, Buenos Aires
8. Agustín Rossi, National Deputy, Head of the Majority Party, former gubernatorial candidate, Santa Fe
9. Jose Maria Diaz Bancalari, National Deputy, former Mayor of San Nicolas, Buenos Aires
10. Patricia Fadel, National Deputy, former mayoral candidate of Tunuyan, Mendoza
11. Sergio Montiel, former Governor of Entre Rios, former National Deputy
12. Maria Elena Herzovich, former National Deputy
13. Ruperto Godoy, National Deputy
14. Juan Radonjic, former National Deputy, former Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs

15. Daniel Katz, National Deputy, former Mayor of General Pueyrredon, Buenos Aires

16. Mario Meoni, Mayor of Junin, Buenos Aires

*Staff Members*

1. Jorge Raul Fernandez, Chef of Advisors, Dep. Agustin Rossi
2. Diego Armesto, Parliamentary Secretary, Bloque Consenso Federal
3. Mariano Gervan, Parliamentary Secretary, Bloque PRO