

The Subnational Connection in Unitary Regimes: Progressive Ambition and Legislative Behavior in Uruguay

Daniel Chasquetti

Universidad de la República

Juan Pablo Micozzi

Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM)

Accepted in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 39(2), May 2014

How do legislators develop reputations to further their individual goals in environments with limited space for personalization? In this piece, we evaluate congressional behavior by legislators with gubernatorial expectations in a unitary environment where parties control political activities and institutions hinder individualization. By analyzing the process of drafting bills in Uruguay, we demonstrate that deputies with subnational executive ambition tend to bias legislation towards their districts, especially those from small and peripheral units. Findings reinforce the importance of incorporating ambition to legislative studies, and open a new direction towards the analysis of multiple career patterns within a specific case

We thank Allyson Benton, Alejandro Bonvecchi, Daniel Buquet, Ernesto Calvo, Francisco Cantu, Royce Carroll, Colin Hannigan, Taeko Hiroi, Marina Lacalle, Eric Magar, Jillian Medeiros and Juan Andres Moraes for comments and suggestions.

Introduction

How do legislators with personalized career goals behave in systems that provide minimal spaces for individualization and are also controlled by strong parties and leaders? What can politicians do to further their own ambition in environments where there is little room for individualist maneuvers? Decades of literature on electoral rules, candidate selection mechanisms and party organization have shown that systems where parties have solid control over careers and political futures tend to generate a dependence of legislators on party elites. Given such constraints, individual legislators are likely to follow party mandates strictly; hence, strong discipline, low levels of deviation from the leadership's decisions, and activities centered on the party brand should be the most frequent observable actions. Broadly speaking, in environments where other individual and collective actors are the principals of the game, subjects with all kinds of aspirations are expected to satisfy their bosses' orders, and stay loyal as a main strategy in equilibrium. Taking the argument to the extreme, the traditional *dedazo* practice in Mexico should be representative of such a setting, where a single actor personally decides who the next candidate (and secure winner) for the highest position will be. Thus, everything equal, there is hardly a more rational attitude for an individual *i* than one that communicates to the current leader that her loyalty will endure even after the mandate has expired (Langston 2003).

However, it is also well known that, following Schlesinger (1966), *ambition lies at the heart of politics*. Individuals have varying kinds of goals at different career stages and perform multiple strategies to fulfill these objectives. Loyalty, clearly, can be a principal resource, but it is not the only one. In fact, following Langston (2006), we know that the

dedazo became obsolete after the emergence of genuine competition in Mexico, and individuals with all kinds of aspirations were forced to develop other kinds of strategies to pursue their personal goals. Moreover, even in contexts where leaders have ultimate veto power, or at least strong prerogatives to promote or delay somebody's progress; individuals can do multiple things to improve their prospective chances. The positive effects of loyalty could be boosted if an individual could demonstrate expertise, popularity, capabilities, charisma, or any valuable attribute. In any case, ambitious politicians are likely to try to maximize their future performance by using all those resources that are at their disposal. The question is what resources do they have, and how can they use them in their best interest.

An interesting theoretical dilemma emerges at this point. What patterns of behavior should prevail in an environment where leaders expect compliance with their mandates, and individuals need to stand out to improve their personal capital? Should rank and file legislators simply wait for their turn, and just stay loyal in the meantime? Can they engage in strategic activities that will improve their future goals without necessarily harming their party bosses, instead? This paper tries to solve this puzzle by looking at the behavior of legislators in a landmark case wherein individuals have increasingly shown patterns of subnational executive ambition, in spite of the importance of party and faction leadership roles: Uruguay. Based on conventional wisdom, eastern *rioplatense* politics are conceived of as totally controlled by parties, highlighting the strong role exerted by leaders and factions, with a highly structured party system that promotes consensus and moderation (Moraes et al. 2009). Furthermore, scholars agree that deputies, almost as party soldiers, tend to seek and maintain their seats in the House, unless they are convoked for the executive or have

the chance of jumping to the Senate. All these characteristics create a stable, organized, and predictable political system, providing another argument to support the nickname of the *Switzerland of the Americas*.

However, in recent decades, several institutional and political events (constitutional reform, decentralization, and temporal detachment of federal and subnational elections) affected the incentives that political actors face in making their career decisions. Even though the rates of reelection seekers have remained quite stable since the nineties (Altman and Chasqueti 2005), subnational executive posts (*intendentes* at the Department level, synonyms of state governors) became increasingly attractive public offices, creating opportunities and benefits for a new kind of career path: progressively ambitious legislators. The interesting question that comes out here is what the behavioral implications of increased subnational ambition are. Given that the aforementioned party- and faction-level constraints have remained, it is unclear whether the congressional activities of legislators with progressive goals should be different from every other colleague. Is there, in fact, a space for personalization in an environment where the institutions and practices would not foresee it?

In this piece, we analyze patterns of local bill drafting by Uruguayan deputies as a proxy for individualization efforts by subjects with executive aspirations at the state level. Through the analysis of about 30,000 bill sponsorship decisions, we observe that deputies with gubernatorial aspirations tend to systematically submit more legislation targeting their districts. This effect is particularly salient for deputies from peripheral states, where career goals are more parochially oriented, in contrast to the general policy orientations of metropolitan representatives. Such a finding opens another interesting theoretical line of

study for career choices within countries, and this allows us to advance in the development of a new concept with a strong comparative potential: *dual patterns* of political ambition inside a specific case.

Electoral Rules, Ambition and Legislative Behavior

Studies on ambition and legislative behavior are anything but new in contemporary political science. Starting with Mayhew's (1974) seminal work, many studies have linked patterns of political progression and the strategies developed to further these goals. Fundamental to the electoral connection framework is the consistent delivery of goods and services on a local level, in an attempt to gain favor in a setting where the personal vote is the norm. Multiple contributions have shown that personalization efforts tend to be stronger in environments where individuals are more relevant than parties for the continuation of a political career. The literature on American politics, where representatives and senators owe their seats primarily to their voters' confidence, recognizes the systematic provision of all kinds of material (Mayhew 1974; Shepsle and Weingast 1987; Stein and Bickers 1994; Canes-Wrone, Brady and Cogan 2002) and symbolic (Schiller 1995; Hill and Hurley 2002; Highton and Rocca 2004; Rocca 2007) resources to their constituents to grant reelection. Clearly, these patterns are not independent from the single member districts accounting for every federal legislative election, nor from the assumption of static ambition. Similar trends have been found by Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1982), who show that British MPs face incentives to do constituency service, in spite of party-level factors.

Beyond the typical link between single member districts and personalization, variation in electoral systems' designs can also affect patterns of individualization. In fact,

several components of electoral rules can create incentives for legislators to cultivate personal loyalties, and therefore pursue particularistic policies to serve their bounded constituencies (Carey and Shugart 1995; Wallack et al. 2003; Nielson 2003; Hallerberg and Marier 2004). In proportional representation systems, district magnitude is a central determinant of personalization efforts (Crisp et al 2005; Shugart, Suominen and Valdini 2005; Crisp, Jepsen and Shomer 2007). Whenever available legislative spots are limited (low district magnitude), individual reputation tends to play a substantive role, and therefore fosters the development of activities that increase personalization. Intuitions are bolstered by the evidence of mixed member systems, where legislators chosen in local districts tend to engage more in personalized activities than those elected in party lists (Klingemann and Wessels 2001; Crisp 2007). Other scholars have pointed out the relevance of candidacy. In particular, legislators are more prone to seek votes and increase personal reputations when they are elected using open lists (Ames 1995, 2001; Samuels 1999, 2002; Golden 2003; Golden and Picci 2007). Similar behavior is expected under other systems that favor vote seeking, such as the single non-transferable vote largely used in Japan (Cox and Thies 1998) or its Colombian counterpart (Crisp and Ingall 2002). Finally, candidate selection mechanisms have also been recognized as a factor affecting personalization efforts by acting legislators, with clear reduced propensities in settings where parties and leaders are the selectors (Bowler, Farrell and Katz 1999; Morgenstern and Siavelis 2007; Shomer 2009; Mejía Acosta, Perez Liñán and Saiegh 2009).

However, in most of these studies, political ambition was either considered static by default, or simply left out of the analyses. In other words, following this line of inquiry, institutional incentives should explain most of the variation in legislative performance

across cases, but nothing is mentioned about differences *within* legislative bodies. If ambition, effectively, lies at the heart of politics, it should be useful to assess variation in goals at the individual level, hence the focus on observed behavior in office. In fact, several contributions have already explained how varying short-term aims tend to make a difference over congressional activities in very dissimilar settings, including the U.S. Congress, the mecca of reelection seekers. Van der Slik and Pernacciaro (1993) and Schiller (1995) show that representatives tend to increase bill submission when they expect to jump to a higher career position. Treul (2009) demonstrates higher propensities for deviation from party mandates by senators who expect to run for the presidency. Victor (2011) affirms that legislators with progressive ambition tend to increase signals of policy expertise to voters. However, it must be noted that the direction of progress in the U.S. context (Schlesinger 1966; Squire 1988) involves a territorial hierarchy, where federal offices are preferable to state-level positions and, by transitivity, to local spots. Thus, the higher the expected position pursued from the House of Representatives, the broader the constituency to be targeted in strategic activities. Such classic territorial linearity of career improvement is also recognized in the literature of countries like Colombia (Crisp and Desposato 2005; Botero 2008), Chile (Londregan 2002; Crisp, Kanthak and Leijonhufvud 2004), and Venezuela (Carey 1996), where politicians also tend to feel better rewarded by having a say in national issues. In all these environments, pursuit of reelection in federal Congress largely surpasses the quest for other elected jobs.

Nonetheless, incentive structures can also differ. As well documented in the literature, several countries with entrenched federal structures tend to concentrate multiple policy decisions and spending duties in subnational units. In doing so, the

expected utility of an executive subnational spot may surpass that of a legislative seat at the national level. Studies on Mexico (Aparicio and Langston 2009, 2010; Langston 2010; Kerevel 2012), Argentina (Jones, Saiegh, Spiller and Tommasi 2002; Spiller and Tommasi 2007; Micozzi 2009) and Brazil (Ames 2001; Samuels 2003) have demonstrated that legislators at the national level have gubernatorial and mayoral positions as career references; and perform activities such as the submission of budget amendments to favor local constituents (Ames 2001), increases in local bill drafting (Micozzi 2014a) or more frequent cosponsorship with other ambitious legislators (Micozzi 2014b). Studies on unitary but strongly decentralized cases like Spain (Montero 2007) show similar multilevel career concerns. These findings, far from being surprising, make theoretical sense. There is no reason to think that national-subnational interactions, a central dimension of politics, should be absent from career improvement decisions and strategic calculations in systems that involve multiple tiers.

However, the puzzle becomes trickier when multilevel career tendencies increase in systems that, following conventional wisdom on institutions and practices, are not supposed to reflect personalized patterns of behavior. Specifically, theories would not forecast personalization efforts at all in unitary systems traditionally dominated by strong parties and factions, where patterns of ambition also tend to be mostly static. Thus, uncertainty is the norm at the moment while trying to predict the effects of upsurges in subnational executive ambition over legislative behavior in settings where opportunities for individualization seem, ex-ante, nonexistent. How should individuals behave in order to balance these seemingly contradictory incentives? In theoretical terms, a typical principal-agent problem might arise: one where individuals face the dilemma of increasing

personalization at the expense of deviating from the party line; a fact that, in party-based systems, might end up harming their own personal chances in the future. On the other hand, ambitious subjects could simply do nothing, which does not sound too compelling, knowing that the pursuit of a personalized position might require extra efforts for success. Can ambitious individuals engage in strategic behavior while still keeping a balance between their own goals and loyalty to party leadership? This is the central answer we seek to provide in this essay.

In order to provide empirical reliability to our theoretical speculations, we need suitable cases that match our theoretical notions. As mentioned, an alternative would be pre-2000 Mexico, as an extreme case of centralization and party control where subnational concerns have been widely recognized. However, following the literature about the case (Langston 2003, 2013), federalism is likely to be the key explanatory factor. Another interesting case could be the Punto Fijo Pact's Venezuela, depicted by Carroll and Shugart (2009) as "hypercentralized", where "*there was minimal incentive for legislators to pay attention to local or state interests, or to be active and known among local constituents*" (pp. 81). As documented by Carey (1996), the system performed as the literature would predict, fostering an *electoral disconnection* where legislators do not face incentives "*to cultivate personal reputations at the expense of party labels*" (pp. 21). As a consequence, neither personalized activities, nor multilevel career movements have been unfolded in academic contributions, in spite of the formal federalism ruling that country. Another case where the literature has recognized strong party leadership at a lower (faction) level is Uruguay. As a unitary system where parties and factions have historically ruled politics, no single contribution has ever analyzed personalization efforts. However, observed contemporary

increases in the pursuit of subnational executive positions suggest that new patterns of legislative activity might have been developed. How have ambitious deputies behaved, despite having such strong party constraints in mind? For such a question, an analysis of the Uruguayan experience can contribute to understanding legislators' personalized activities in scenarios where the party brand should prevail. As an implication, lessons from this case should add certainty to the general knowledge about the relationship between political ambition and legislative performance in changing environments.

Institutions and Party Politics in Uruguay

When scholars come to characterize Uruguayan politics, one of the best recognized attributes is the strength of its party system, which is considered among the most institutionalized in Latin America (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). In fact, studies demonstrate that the democratic development of the country was centered on political parties (Pérez et al. 1987; Lanzaro 2001), relying on a set of institutions that granted their core role in the decision making process and the monopoly of representation¹. With moderate levels of competition at the national level², Uruguay has historically hosted a particular type of fragmented party that contrasted with the traditional model of centralized organization developed in Europe. Party chiefs have conventionally emerged and ruled at the faction level, exercising control over the selection of candidates (Moraes 2008) and positions with agenda setting powers in the legislature (Buquet et al. 1998; Chasquetti 2011). This strong leadership has been reinforced by the use of closed lists alongside the faction, quite high district magnitudes³ and legislative internal rules that privilege party decisions over individual requests⁴. In such an environment, individual legislators' careers tend to be mostly oriented to the party rather than to voters. Therefore,

expectations forecasted strong patterns of discipline and cohesion on floor voting behavior at the party and the faction levels, facts verified by the empirical literature (Buquet et al. 1998; Morgenstern 2002; Zucco 2013). As an implication, the fates of individual ambition have historically been contingent on leaders' desires (Chasquetti 2010). Following these realizations, no single study has ever examined personalization and the pursuit of a personal vote in Uruguay.

Notwithstanding, this depiction is not at odds with the fact that individuals can also have personal goals. As mentioned, it was recognized that individual-level expectations have tended to meet parties' and factions' needs and requirements. Nonetheless, from the early nineties on, several *anomalous* behaviors unexplained by the literature started to take place in Uruguay. On the one hand, the number of reelection seekers in Congress has slightly diminished (Altman and Chasquetti 2005). On the other, the share of legislators who ran for non-congressional positions has steadily increased, until reaching 20% of the members of the House in 2010. A feasible explanation of these new trends is associated with the 1996 constitutional reform, which seemed to change several relevant incentives. One of the main innovations was the modification of the rules for choosing the president, along with the temporal sequence of the electoral cycle. Specifically, after the reform, the non-concurrence between national and gubernatorial elections became the norm. Between 1942 and 1994, Uruguay chose all its elected positions in just one poll⁵; thereafter, gubernatorial and local legislative elections have been set seven months after the federal process. Such a drastic change is likely to have altered several legislators' career calculations, by offering chances for strategic behaviors never presented before. As an example, a legislative candidate who won a substantial number of votes in the early

election could use this information as a proxy of personalized support and try to win the gubernatorial spot of her state several months later⁶. In parallel, the electoral detachment lowered the costs of running for the governorship, given that, ultimately, the legislative post acts as a backup in case of an eventual defeat. This way, opportunity structures have boosted the emergence of a new kind of career step that utilizes a seat in Congress as a springboard to reach a better public office.

Even though the new calendar provides a valid explanation for the strategic jumps, the increased relevance of a subnational spot has been the result of a longer and multivariate process. First, the constitutional reform of 1967 considerably reduced the powers of Congress⁷, making legislative activity less relevant to the policymaking process, and thereby diminishing the relative value of a legislative seat as a career target (Chasquetti 2011). Second, as reforms in state bureaucracies added transparency and simplicity to public procedures (Lanzaro 2004), legislators' roles as brokers declined. Consequently, many citizens ceased to contact representatives to initiate a retirement process, to get a phone line, or to apply for a pension. In addition, subsequent economic crises affected national budgets, prompting adjustments that curtailed the public resources traditionally used for clientelism, patronage and constituency service. Lastly, the administrative decentralization performed in the nineties transferred multiple duties and budgets to subnational units, making these offices more attractive (and richer) links in the chain of political ambition (Laurinaga and Guerrini 1994). All these reinforcing circumstances contribute to the recognition of the diminishing returns of a long tenure in office, thereby fostering attempts to jump to an executive state-level position.

Graph 1 shows how the number of deputies who ran for a gubernatorial position drastically increased overtime, especially from 1990 on. In fact, 20% of the last fading cohort of legislators decided to compete in the subnational executive elections of 2010. Moreover, other sources reinforce the perception of nascent patterns of progressive ambition. In a survey conducted by the Institute of Political Science of the Universidad de la República in 2007, legislators in office were asked about what position they would prefer to occupy in the next term. While 26% chose a gubernatorial spot and 23% opted for a Senatorial seat; less than a quarter of legislators revealed their preference for staying in the House, and a minimal share forecasted their retirement at the end of the mandate (see Table 1, last column). These statements do not only underline the idea that static ambition is not the *default* career preference anymore, but also that individuals find subnational executive spots as attractive alternatives.

****Graph 1 here****

However, these career decisions may not represent a general trend. Instead, patterns of ambition could vary depending on size, population, general policy orientations and the urban/rural condition of the districts. Uruguay has nineteen departments (states), two of which stand clearly out: Montevideo, the most populated (40% of the country) and metropolitan district that also hosts the homonymous capital city; and Canelones, home to 15% of *charruas*. None of the remaining seventeen departments exceeds 5% of the population. Such differences have several implications for political activity. On the one hand, as an apportioned legislature, district magnitude currently equals 40 for Montevideo, 15 for Canelones, and every other district chooses between two and four deputies. These asymmetries clearly affect patterns of competition and representation in each state, and

also reflect the importance of the two big provinces in every congressional decision. On the other hand, such a variation is likely to mirror differences in the political environment of these very dissimilar units. Populations from large metropolitan areas and small peripheral districts may have divergent preferences, priorities, urgencies, and demands for their representatives. Along this line, such differences are also likely to affect political perspectives and career goals. It seems reasonable to associate more district-based patterns of political progression with small and local environments, in contrast to more nationally-oriented career aims in urban areas where federal news tend to overshadow domestic issues.

Finally, the closed and blocked lists at the faction level, combined with a large district magnitude, give leaders greater powers over individual legislators in big states. Given that individuals' options are exhausted by a place in the House or Senate lists, or attempts to jump to the national executive (all activities controlled by leaders), cooperation is the main strategy in equilibrium. In contrast, leaders of small districts have more limited capabilities to influence the selection and order of the list; it must not be forgotten that even a successful faction is not likely to receive more than one or two seats in districts with very small district magnitudes. Therefore, any legislator may intensify territorial work, fortify her reputation and bargain for her renomination from a stronger position in an environment close to a zero-sum game. Consequently, leaders tend to tolerate subnational ambition as an exit decision, because they have other tools (internal rules) to discipline their state delegation in the House. In sum, the pursuit of local executive spots should be a frequent career move in peripheral districts, but not necessarily in more urban units. This

notion makes room for the theoretical consideration of a *dual pattern* of political ambition in Uruguay, with extensions to other comparative cases.

As a reliability check, re-analyzing the quoted survey, Table 1 breaks stated patterns of ambition into three district categories: large (Montevideo), medium (Canelones), and the remaining small units. Not surprisingly, legislators reporting subnational executive ambition exclusively belong to peripheral districts. Moreover, it is an empirical fact that not a single deputy from Montevideo ran for the governorship in the last three congressional periods; while almost every other district has witnessed at least one of their delegates attempting to become the local executive. On the flipside, empirical contributions (Chasquetti 2010) suggest that deputies from Montevideo tend to be concerned with broad policy issues, and develop legislative expertise to build a reputation based on skills to handle national concerns. It is not a minor fact that two thirds of the interviewees from this district expressed their goal of becoming president, a senator or a minister. In contrast, peripheral deputies report state governorships as fruitful career targets. As a reinforcement of this trend, public opinion information reveals different constituency perceptions vis-à-vis deputies of different districts. As seen in Table 2, a public opinion study of 2004 shows that 70% of voters in small districts know their representatives, dropping to 53% in the massive Montevideo. These dissimilarities are not restricted to (obvious) scale concerns. When asked about the policy goals for which voters know their representatives, 59% of metropolitan voters recognize their commitment to national issues, and 70% vote them for exactly this reason. In contrast, 65% of citizens in small districts recognize deputies for their work for the department, and 50% base their vote decisions on these local activities.

****Table 1 here****

****Table 2 here****

Recapitulating, it can be argued that the pursuit of the departmental governorship became a common career path for peripheral legislators, but not for politicians from Montevideo. These dual patterns of career progression make us speculate about the dissimilar policy propensities of deputies establishing individual reputations from their congressional seats. We will evaluate in the next section what activities these ambitious legislators have performed to further these goals, and the extent to which they avoid conflict with party and faction leaders.

Hypotheses, Measurement, Data and Estimations

If our depiction of the Uruguayan case is correct in light of the theory, we should see progressively ambitious deputies from peripheral departments increase their efforts towards personalization, improvement of individual reputations, and constituency service. In other words, they should be engaged in actions that contribute to the formation of an individual political capital *vis-à-vis* their voters. Multiple activities have been recognized in the literature as devices for enhancing personal reputations, such as delivery of public policies (Stein and Bickers 1994), amendments to the budget (Ames 2001) and relevant bills (Cook 1986; Hibbing 1986), public speeches (Highton and Rocca 2005; Rocca 2007), communication of policy expertise (Victor 2011), bill drafting (Cooper and Rybicki 2002; Crisp, Escobar-Lemmon et al 2004; Schiller 2006; Rocca and Gordon 2010; Gamm and Kousser 2010), and patterns of cosponsorship (Crisp, Kanthak and Leijonhufvud 2004; Aleman et al 2009; Magar and Moraes 2011). In this piece, we follow the approach

developed by Micozzi (2009, 2013, 2014a) and utilize the submission of bills targeting legislators' home states as a proxy for personalization efforts. We base this decision on the assumption that bill drafting indeed makes a difference for voters (Mayhew 1974; Hill and Williams 1993; Schiller 1995), and that legislators expect an electoral reward for these clearly directed signals. Targeted bills can be used as devices for communicating responsiveness to and genuine representation of local interests, beyond the collective decision involving final passage (largely out of the control of individual legislators). In addition, using bill drafting helps to solve a theoretical inquiry: how personalization efforts do not conflict with leaders' desires and preferences. As stated by Highton and Rocca (2005), bill drafting, as a non-roll call position taking, prevents sponsors from paying the costs of explicit manifestations, such as negative voting or abstentions. Doing so, unless extreme standpoints are communicated, or unreasonable policies are proposed, the process of drafting bills can be an equilibrium in which rank and file legislators win without harming their principals. As mentioned, this strategy was already utilized in the literature. Ames' (2001) depiction of Brazilian deputies campaigning with their *avulsos*⁸ in hand is representative of this strategic use. Based on this choice of dependent variable, we develop two main hypotheses:

H1: Deputies who expect to become governors in the next period tend to submit more bills targeted to their districts

H2: Deputies from peripheral states who expect to become governors in the next period tend to submit more bills targeted to their districts

In order to empirically assess our theoretical inquiries, we created an original database of legislation in Uruguay. We collected information on every single one of the 17,673 bills submitted by legislators to the House between the 44th and 46th Congresses (1995-2010). Information is official and was gathered from the Chamber's website (<http://www.diputados.gub.uy>). Every observation is a bill i submitted at year t from Congress c by legislator(s) l , who belong to the department(s) j . Bill-level information includes date of submission, sponsorship, committees that discussed it, and a sentence describing the content of the project. A particularly useful feature of this description is that, whenever a specific geographical location is involved in the bill, it appears at the beginning of the paragraph, with the respective department listed between brackets. This information is central to the operationalization of our dependent variable. We developed a code that created nineteen variables (one per department), where each one gets a value of one if the district of reference is mentioned in the bill description, or zero otherwise. We noticed in this way that 32% of bills introduced in the period had territorial content. Even though this static finding is interesting by itself⁹, it is still not a reliable proxy for strategic personalization. A deputy can send multiple bills targeting departments, but would hardly have an effect over her electoral prospects unless she targeted her own district¹⁰. Thus, we refined our criteria and decided to create a new variable capturing whether the bill i submitted by a legislator l actually mentioned her home department. However, a technical problem in the presentation of the information made this task harder. In Micozzi (2009, 2013, 2014a), credits for bill drafting were assigned to the main sponsor of each bill, leaving cosponsorship aside. Unfortunately, it is not possible to distinguish sponsorship from cosponsorship in Uruguay, as all legislators who sign a bill are listed alphabetically.

The only feasible strategy, then, is to consider each signature a sponsorship decision, as if each endorsement were a single bill. Although imperfect and subject to criticisms, there was no better solution to deal with this issue. Therefore, we expanded our dataset to include 29,345 observations. Of these endorsements, 8,900 (30.31%) have territorial content, while 5,712 (almost 20%) target the home department of the sponsor. As a final step, we collapsed the information at the legislator/year level, in order to utilize the number of bills (sponsorship decisions) targeting the home district of each deputy as dependent variable¹¹.

The main covariate in our estimations is the candidacy for a departmental executive position¹². We created this variable by collecting data on individual candidatures, based on Altman and Chasquetti (2005) and updates for recent elections. A covariate measuring the metropolitan/peripheral nature of departments is also specified. After evaluating tradeoffs, we decided to code every district but Montevideo as peripheral, based on the notion that, even though Canelones is medium-sized and more urban than the others, it is still too different from the main department. We also included other control variables on the right hand side of the equation, especially at the individual level. We expect powerful legislators to spend more time in opening and closing the gates to get their policies (and those of their party/faction) passed, rather than inflating the number of bills submitted. Therefore, our controls measuring committee chairmanship, and membership to a powerful committee (budget, foreign relations, constitutional laws, and economic affairs)¹³ should have a negative impact over the number of local bills drafted. Seniority in the House can have a dual interpretation. On the one hand, longer tenure should make congressmen more familiar with legislative procedures, thereby diminishing the costs of bill drafting and

increasing the expected number of bills. However, subjects who stay longer are more likely to develop a legislative careerism, lowering the likelihood of becoming governors and therefore decreasing the use of targeted bills as a prospective resource. Expectations, then, are unclear. Deputies in the last year of their mandates are more likely to care about their immediate futures rather than acting as legislators. Given that elections take place in October, and party decisions are made earlier in that year, politicians start traveling for their campaigns. For this reason, sessions are held less frequently, legislative activity contracts, and fewer local bills should therefore be drafted in the fifth year of the mandates. We also include alternating party controls to capture dissimilar strategies that depend on ideology/partisanship; and a covariate measuring the party in government, whose members should, everything equal, care more about getting bills passed than inflating the volume of legislative submission. Finally, we tried different proxies for district size, which are all collinear with metropolitan/peripheral characteristics: district magnitude, its logarithm, population, its logarithm, and the share of inhabitants. In all cases, their correlation is superior to 95%, a reason for which we report only estimations using district magnitude.

Given the aforementioned non-negative characteristic of our dependent variable, and considering that we are concerned with the number of bills submitted, we decided to utilize event count models. After running Poisson estimations and testing for overdispersion, we realized that negative binomial models fit better. In addition, a simple histogram of the distribution of our dependent variable shows that about 38% of the observations equal zero. In order to deal with the abundance of zeros, we decided that the complete distribution of the outcome needs to be calculated by mixing two component

distributions, one for the zero-outcome portion of the equation and another for the positive values. Thus, the zero-inflated negative binomial model (Atkins and Gallop 2007) is the most adequate for our data structure. Accordingly, we specify the total number of non-local bills submitted by legislator/year as an exogenous regressor to predict the non-positive outcomes.¹⁴

We ran multiple specifications of the models, and all results performed in the same direction. As it can be seen in Table 3, the first three models vary only with the replacement of fixed party controls (center-leftist Frente Amplio and center-right Partido Nacional, leaving Colorados on the baseline) with the party in government, and also with the inclusion of district magnitude in the third estimation. In all of them, both subnational ambition and the relationship to a peripheral district have positive and significant coefficients, which would preliminarily support our hypotheses. Regarding controls, expected decreases in productivity during the last year of mandates are clearly verified, with robust negative results across models. The model that includes party controls shows that Blancos and Frente Amplio members tend to be more productive than their Colorado colleagues, a fact that is indifferent of them being in the government or the opposition, as reflected in models 2 and 3. Finally, two of the estimations reflect significant effects of powerful committee members, who, as expected, are less involved with delivery of local bills. Regarding the prediction of the zero-outcomes, the coefficient is negative, suggesting that individuals with high productivity in non-targeted areas are less likely not to submit any local bill; rephrasing the statement, deputies who write more general legislation tend to draft more targeted projects, as well¹⁵.

However, given our emphasis on the proclivities of local legislative activities by ambitious members of small departments, we considered it essential to specify the interaction between local career perspectives and the peripheral component. We included the joint term in multiple estimations, and realized that the variable was dropped model after model, as it was perfectly collinear with the ambition covariate. The reason is simple: no single deputy from Montevideo has ever run for a gubernatorial position after the House in the analyzed period. Considering the size of its legislative delegation (41%) and its commensurate contribution to the universe of legislation written (40%), we deemed it necessary to clearly assess different local bill drafting propensities in Montevideo and the rest of the country. In addition, bearing in mind that ambition cannot be tested in this huge department, we needed a baseline to which we can compare local bill drafting in smaller districts, ambition absent. Therefore, as an alternative test, we ran the same models restricting the sample to peripheral deputies, which are reported in the last two columns of Table 3. The results ratify our theoretical intuitions. Once legislators from Montevideo (Model 4) and also Canelones (Model 5) have been removed from the sample, ambition becomes an even stronger predictor of local bill drafting. In fact, predicted values based on the exclusion of Montevideo show that, holding all other values to the median, a deputy with gubernatorial ambition tends to submit 11 local bills per year, while a peer with different prospects writes 6.5 in the same period. If Canelones is also excluded, ambitious deputies tend to write 16.5 local drafts, in contrast with the 8.2 of subjects with other goals. Graph 2 illustrates these differences, adding confidence intervals to the predictions. As shown, the figures of deputies with and without ambition never overlap in any of the samples, strengthening the empirical support for our hypotheses. As reinforcement, we

also computed the predicted number of bills submitted by metropolitan legislators, ambition absent, to verify whether our comparison based on careers and district size made any sense. Predictions show that, on average, a *montevideoano* writes .78 bills targeting her state. If Canelones were added, the forecast would equal 1.28 bills. Clearly, ambition and district size make a difference to local bill drafting strategies in the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies. All in all, our theoretical suppositions have found empirical support: progressive ambition does make a difference for the legislative activities of peripheral legislators.

Conclusion

In this piece, we explored the extent to which legislators facing new incentives followed strategies that might be counterintuitive to traditional expectations, as a function of frequent practices and ruling institutions. Even though not many scholars would have predicted vote-seeking activities from a congressional seat in a party-controlled system like that of Uruguay, we demonstrate that deputies looking for a subnational executive spot systematically utilize legislation as an asset for their personal political capital, especially in peripheral districts. These discoveries contribute to the knowledge of how progressive ambition can shape behavior even in systems where rules are not supposed to provide incentives for personalization, individualization, and the creation of single reputations. Such counterintuitive findings warn us about the dangers of making generalizations based on purely institutional inputs, without taking other actors' goals and calculations into account. Concrete extensions of this argument could be tested in cases like Chile (where mayors' powers have been increasing), Bolivia (which developed a deep

regionalism), or even the contemporary (especially the brand new) Venezuela, where personalization efforts are completely left out from the literature of legislative behavior.

Another interesting theoretical contribution of this piece is the understanding of how ambitious legislators can find ways of building personal capital without creating conflict with their faction-level bosses. In other words, how a potential principal-agent problem can be avoided. It must be noted that, empirically speaking, we never contended depictions of Uruguayan politics as organized, factionalized, party-based, and highly dependent upon leaders; nor did we forecast that legislators would break party discipline, create new parties, or even switch factions. Conversely, we center our argument in one dimension of political activities, bill drafting, where personalization can be forged while enjoying the collective good (party brand), and without making faction bosses angry. All in all, we align our piece with the growing literature on non-roll call position taking, which emphasizes the strategic use of legislative assets beyond the costlier final passage votes.

The comparative literature on political careers also benefits from this piece. Specifically, we realized that generalizations were likely to be flawed in assessing new patterns of ambition in the Uruguayan political system. We found out that progressive concerns were exclusively a peripheral phenomenon about which metropolitan deputies did not even care. Therefore, we would have been incurring in a severe *whole-nation bias* (Snyder 2001), had we not paid attention to the mentioned dual pattern of political ambition. Until now, scholarly work has not paid attention to differences in career goals within a given case, nor to the activities performed by dissimilar subsets of actors. This realization recognizes the need for creating an agenda to uncover how variation in goals across parties, factions, groups and even individuals shapes behavior in comparative

scenarios. Such a claim is not restricted to an urban/rural differentiation. Actually, variation in other dimensions such as wealth, education, or even ethnic composition of the districts may be affecting the career decisions made by individual and collective actors.

Finally, on the empirical side, we offer an innovative approach to Uruguayan politics. To date, for the aforementioned reasons, no single piece had linked subnational career concerns with legislative performance at the national level. This piece opens up a new analytical dimension to scholars used to relying on the conventional unitary and party-based axioms developed in the literature. This way, innovative analyses at the Uruguayan subnational level (Cardarello and Magri 2011) are complemented with broader multilevel concerns. We expect to contribute to further discussions in the literature about this case, where multiple extensions (i.e. activities developed by metropolitan deputies with national expectations, or senatorial performance, where the constituency is nationwide) can be developed following our theoretical approach.

In sum, we made use of the particularities of the Uruguayan system to discuss several theoretical prescriptions in the literatures of both institutional effects and legislative behavior. Our incorporation of multilevel political ambition forces us to relax several suppositions and reconsider some expected empirical implications of the interaction between institutions and personal goals. As demonstrated in this piece, rational approaches to political behavior need to take all kinds of incentives and restrictions into account to infer an expected performance. If we believe that ambition lies at the heart of politics, we cannot omit it in our analyses of activities performed by politicians guided by interest. In this piece, we provided an attempt to clarify the consequences of the interaction

between ambition and goals. The lessons learned from Uruguay will hopefully boost comparative approaches that will increase our further knowledge on the topic.

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Table 1: Reported Career Goals of ruling Deputies – By Size of District (2007)

Career Goal *	District						Total **	
	Small		Medium		Large			
President	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	1	2%
Department Governor	11	42%	0	0%	0	0%	11	26%
Senator	2	8%	4	80%	4	33%	10	23%
Minister	3	12%	0	0%	3	25%	6	14%
State Enterprise Director	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Deputy	6	23%	1	20%	3	25%	10	23%
Retirement	1	4%	0	0%	1	8%	2	5%
N/A	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
Total	26	100%	5	100%	12	100%	43	100%

* Question: What office would you like to occupy in the next period?

** The representative sample was built taking into account three variables: party/faction membership; magnitude district; and gender

Source: Data base of the Institute of Political Science – FCS – UdelaR

Table 2. Citizen knowledge of their representatives and reasons for the vote (September 2004)

Questions	Large district	Small districts
I know a representative of my department	53%	70%
I know her because she works for the department	17%	65%
I know her because she addresses important issues in the country	59%	8%
I know her because at some point she helped me personally	4%	6%
Dedication to the national issues	70%	36%
Dedication to the department issues	10%	48%
Dedication to the issues of their constituents	13%	10%

Question 1: "Do you know any of the representatives of your department?"

Question 2: "Could you tell me why you know the deputy?" Assisted response.

Question 3: "When you vote, what do you value most in a deputy?" Answer assisted.

Source: Grupo Radar.

Table 3. Negative Binomial Models of Targeted Bill Submission

	Model 1 Full Sample	Model 2 Full Sample	Model 3 Full Sample	Model 4 DM<45	Model 5 DM<15
Gubernatorial Candidate	0.372* (0.218)	0.476** (0.231)	0.435* (0.242)	0.520** (0.243)	0.697*** (0.241)
Last Year of Mandate	-0.754*** (0.0749)	-0.686*** (0.0824)	-0.693*** (0.0799)	-0.630*** (0.0905)	-0.551*** (0.109)
Tenure	-0.0217 (0.0876)	-0.0275 (0.0912)	-0.0201 (0.0901)	-0.0818 (0.135)	-0.144 (0.157)
Powerful Committee Member	-0.224 (0.170)	-0.326* (0.180)	-0.307* (0.177)	-0.709** (0.276)	-1.218*** (0.252)
Committee Chair	-0.145 (0.153)	-0.191 (0.164)	-0.184 (0.163)	-0.440* (0.225)	-0.434* (0.257)
Partido Nacional	0.511*** (0.177)				
Frente Amplio	0.678*** (0.167)				
Peripheral Department	1.919*** (0.160)	1.864*** (0.160)	1.374* (0.710)		
Party Government		-0.170 (0.154)	-0.172 (0.151)	-0.101 (0.211)	-0.178 (0.214)
District Magnitude			-0.0144 (0.0198)	-0.00580 (0.0199)	0.619*** (0.167)
Constant	-0.317 (0.239)	0.309 (0.194)	0.875 (0.831)	2.428*** (0.286)	0.823 (0.625)
Number of General Bills	-0.172*** (0.0536)	-0.174*** (0.0517)	-0.169*** (0.0498)	-0.217** (0.0883)	4.022*** (0.251)
Constant	-1.310** (0.524)	-1.255** (0.515)	-1.266** (0.515)	-1.723** (0.858)	-587.6*** (36.59)
Observations	1,429	1,429	1,429	799	597
Chi-Square Test	438.2	415.5	420.2	73.91	75.94

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 1. Deputies who ran for the Governorship at the End of their Terms (1946-2010)

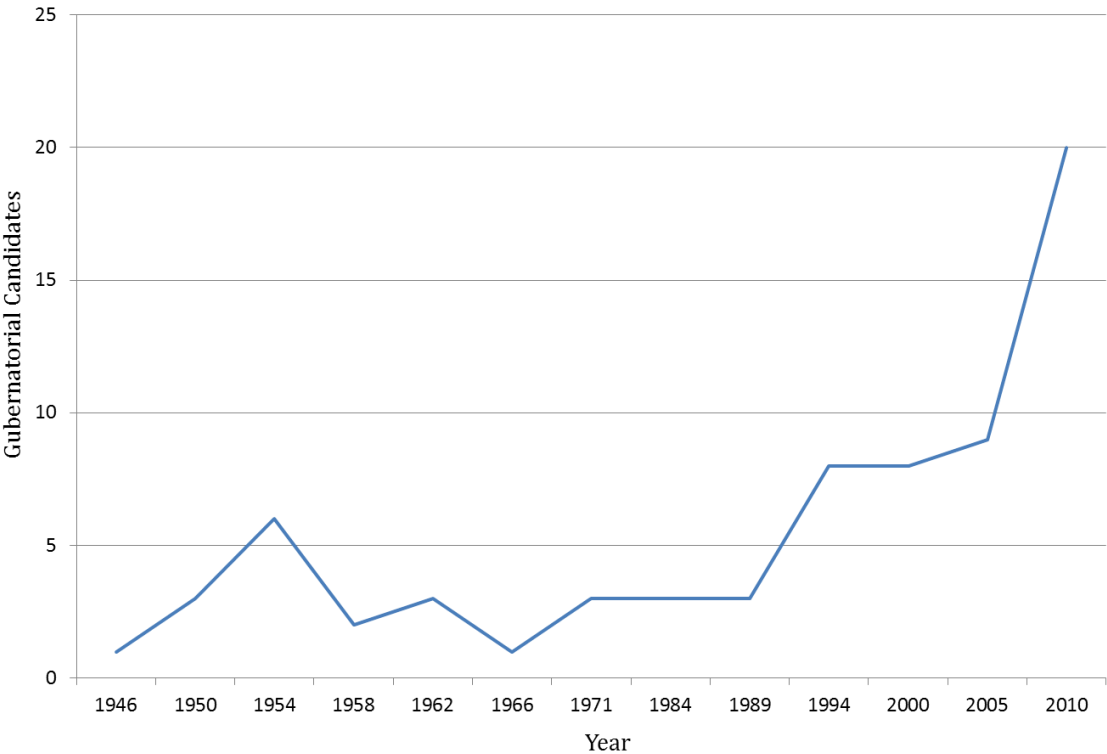
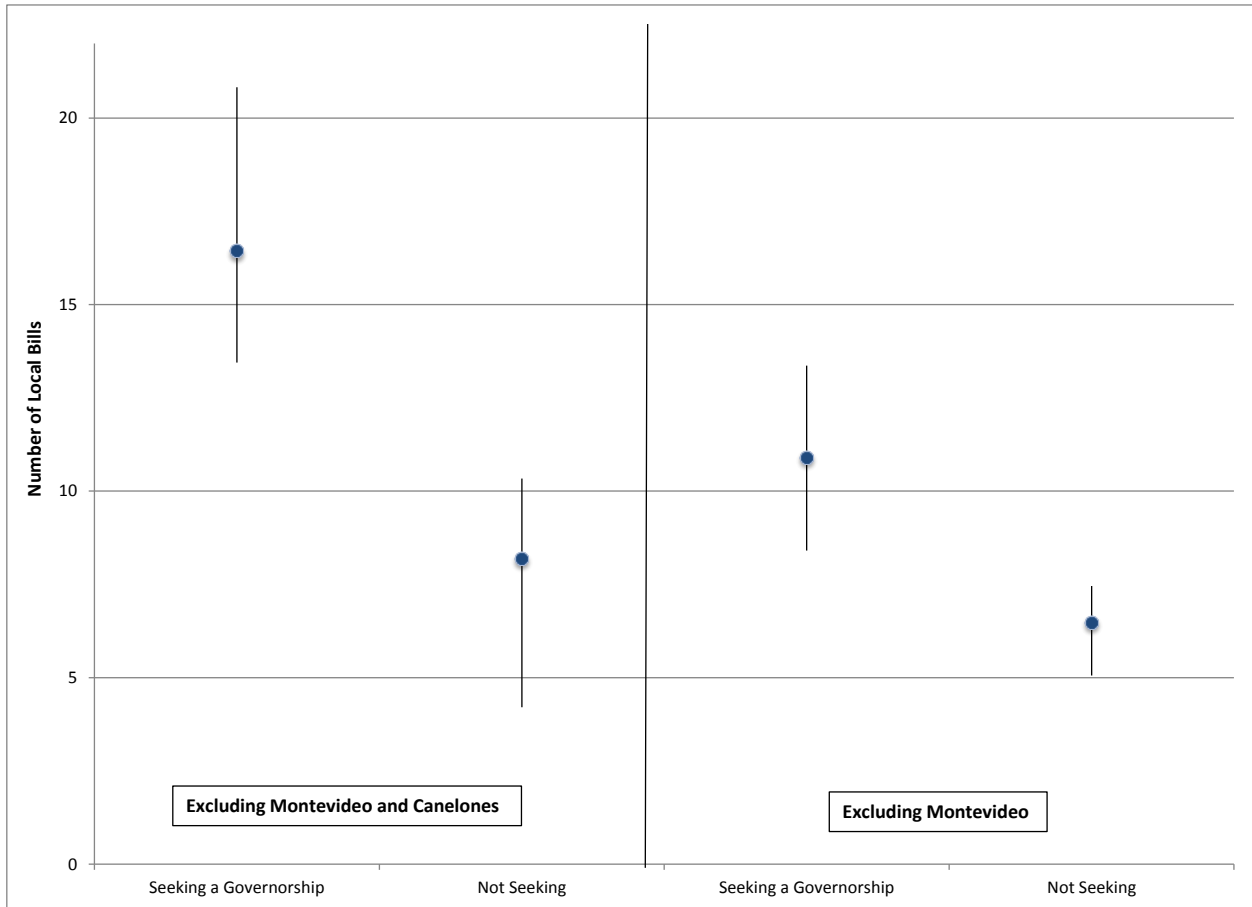


Figure 2. Predicted Number of Local Bills submitted by Deputies with and without Gubernatorial Ambition



¹The traditional electoral system allowed parties to run multiple candidates for all positions. Voters could cast their ballots primarily for a party and then for the candidate(s) of a faction. Each of these subgroups presented a presidential contender and its own list of candidates for the House and the Senate (*Triple Voto Simultáneo*). This singular set of rules was partially abandoned after the constitutional reform of 1996, setting majority runoff as the formula for the presidential election, along with mandatory party primaries (Buquet et al. 1998). Legislative elections are now concurrent with the presidential first round.

²Colorados and Nacionales have historically dominated the political scene, until the rise of Frente Amplio, a center-left coalescence, in the eighties and nineties.

³Uruguay has a bicameral Congress. Senators and Representatives are elected through a PR-closed list system for a five-year term with unrestricted reelection. The Senate has 30 members chosen in a single national district, plus the Vice-president. The House has 99 members elected in 19 multimember constituencies, whose district magnitudes vary according to their populations. While Montevideo, the capital, has chosen between 42 and 48 members across time; Canelones, the second district, elected between 11 and 14. The remaining 17 districts have selected between two and four seats. Thus, two thirds of legislators (senators, plus deputies of Montevideo) belong to constituencies with high district magnitude.

⁴The allocation of committee seats and chairmanships is proportional to party strength. Parties negotiate the delegation of positions for the whole Congress at the beginning of the term, and fill the spots following leaders' preferences (Chasquetti 2011).

⁵ Every faction presented two ballots, one for national positions (a list of candidates for the presidency, the House and the Senate) and another for subnational offices (governor and local legislators). It must be highlighted that both sets of positions use a block vote (split voting within each ballot was forbidden), and splits between ballots were restricted to the party level (i.e. a voter could choose different factions of the same party for the two lists, but never different parties).

⁶ Clearly, we think of this past performance as a likely intervening factor, not as a necessary condition.

⁷ Several innovations were included in the 1967 constitution in Uruguay. Most changes tended to strengthen the presidential branch at the expense of congressional power, such as increases in the areas where presidents have legislative initiation powers, the incorporation of special bills with urgent consideration, the

creation of specialized offices (budget, planning, civil service) at the executive level, and the creation of the central bank, dependent on the presidency.

⁸ Tickets confirming the reception of a bill by the front desk of the Brazilian Congress

⁹ No single previous contribution had explored the national/parochial patterns of bill drafting in Uruguay

¹⁰ Clearly, if a deputy was seeking the presidency or a spot in the Senate, this strategy might make sense. We will explore the implications of these patterns of ambition in further pieces.

¹¹ We kept in the sample only those deputies who were *titulares* (holders of the seat) and have served more than 80% of the period. As an implication, the behavior of *suplentes* (temporary substitutes) was not taken into consideration

¹² We are aware that other legislators who did not reach the candidacy for multiple reasons may have expected to compete for the post. However, we do not foresee multiple identification problems here, as the structure of the ballot and the faction-level candidacies simplify the process of running for the position. An alternative strategy could have been the inclusion of those deputies who publicly declared their intentions. However, such statements could have been cheap talk, or a strategy to get another position. We opted to adopt the most conservative yet reliable criterion.

¹³ Given the plethora of existing criteria to define a “powerful committee”, and also their sensitivity to each case, we opted for a more inductive approach, relying on a study quoted in Chasquetti (2010), where deputies were asked to identify the committees they perceive as more relevant. The “Finance Committee” and the “Constitution and Law Committee” were mentioned by 96% of respondents, and the “International Affairs Committee” and “Budget Committee” by 67%. The fifth most important was the “Labor Legislation Committee” with 46% of responses. We decided to include in our variable the four committees reported by a majority of legislators.

¹⁴This decision is based on Mejia Acosta, Perez Linan and Saiegh’s (2006) analogous choice.

¹⁵The direction of this reasoning, along with several interesting extensions, is beyond the goals of the current piece, and will be analyzed in further projects.