

From House to Home: Strategic Bill Drafting in Multilevel Systems with Non-Static Ambition

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Abstract: How do legislators behave in systems where pursuit of reelection is not the rule, and ambition is channeled through multiple levels of government? Is their legislative behavior biased towards their immediate career goals? In this paper, the Argentine case is analyzed in order to explore the link between political ambition and legislative performance in a multilevel setting where politicians have subnational executive positions as priorities, rather than stable legislative careerism. The piece demonstrates that legislators seeking mayoral positions tend to submit more district-level legislation than their peers. This finding contributes to the knowledge of strategic behavior in multilevel settings, and provides non-U.S. based evidence regarding the use of non-roll call position taking devices

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“The reason, of course, is that in a large class of legislative undertakings the electoral payment is for positions rather than for effects”

David Mayhew, *The Electoral Connection*, pp. 132.

Introduction

How do legislators behave in settings where ambition involves subnational executive positions, rather than stable legislative careerism? Are their congressional activities conditioned by these career goals? Multiple factors have been pointed out in the literature as predictors of legislative behavior, such as party pressures (Cox and Mc Cubbins 1993, 2005), policy preferences (Krehbiel 1991), convergence with voters' predilections (Miller and Stokes 1964) and the development of a *home style* (Fenno 1978). However, deeply inspired by the U.S. House model, a central factor has been highlighted to explain legislators' performance inside and outside Congress: political ambition. After Mayhew's seminal book in 1974, a substantive part of the literature devoted time and efforts to explain how an *electoral connection* between voters and representatives influences Congressmen's activities. This causal argument inspired a huge portion of the pieces on American legislative politics, but also framed numerous works in a comparative perspective. As most authors point out, an axiomatic assumption of the Mayhewian argument is that representatives pursue permanent reelection in the House across time. Once this supposition is relaxed, several behavioral expectations of the model may be revealed as erroneous (Geddes 2003; Carey 1996; Carroll and Shugart 2007). However, scholars also noted that a lack of static ambition does not equal absence of career aims in general (Schlesinger 1966). As several authors demonstrate, comparative experiences show patterns of movements across levels of government as leading career strategies, like in the cases

of Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and even the U.S. at the subnational level. In such settings, rational politicians should use all their available assets to improve their prospective electoral chances at each stage. With the exception of a few high quality works (Carey 1996, Ames 2001), there are very little comparative pieces that have paid attention to how legislators in office try to maximize their future perspectives using congressional resources. If there is a typical asset in legislators' hands, it is the ability of writing bills, and it is reasonable to expect that it will be used to create political capital. Even though studies recognized the relevance of bill drafting as a signaling device (Hill and Williams 1993; Schiller 1995; Highton and Rocca 2006; Rocca and Gordon 2010), and scholars have created huge datasets of legislation to test their hypotheses (Taylor-Robinson and Diaz 1999; Crisp et al. 2004; Molinas, Perez Linan and Saiegh 2004; Gamm and Kousser 2010); not many systematic studies beyond the U.S. Congress have analyzed legislative production as a function of career goals. This piece provides certainty about this relationship by exploring how a particular kind of progressive ambition creates incentives for the submission of locally-targeted bills in a multilevel environment: the Argentine federal system.

Exploring the Electoral Connection

Seminal scholarship on legislative behavior in the U.S. Congress emphasizes reelection as the main goal of current legislators. In an environment characterized by single-member districts, mandatory direct primaries (with minimal party control over candidate access to their primary ballot) as candidate selection mechanisms, and legislative careerism; individual incumbents try to get reelected and increase their power in the electoral arena, within their parties and also in the legislature. Even

though this path becomes the rule at the national legislative level, politicians usually start their careers at local spheres and climb up the political ladder. These patterns of progressive ambition (Schlesinger 1966, Squire 1988) tend to stop at the congressional level, where legislators' aims mostly become staticⁱ. Given the structure of opportunities and the distribution of power in the American systemⁱⁱ, this model explains U.S. politics well, but not necessarily other cases. If politicians were motivated by a diverse set of incentives and faced dissimilar constraints, the causal chain might differ, and legislators might be engaged in different dynamics of responsiveness, accountability and legislative activityⁱⁱⁱ.

Studies of presidential cases other than the U.S. show that reelection can still be the main goal of politicians in legislative office. Londregan (2002) and Carey (2002) work under that assumption in their studies of Chile, as do Crisp and Desposato (2004) and Botero (2008) in their analysis of the Colombian Senate and House, respectively. Carey (1996) shows the validity of the same claim for the *Punto Fijo Pact's* Venezuela. In contrast, other scholars reveal that legislators tend to pursue different goals along their careers. Taylor (1992) demonstrates that Costa Rican representatives expect further positions in the national executive, and therefore remain accountable to the perceived most successful presidential candidate of each of their parties. Samuels (1999, 2003) and Ames (2001) show that a substantive share of Brazilian deputies seek subnational executive positions, and thus submit budgetary amendments to redirect resources to their districts. Altman and Chasquetti (2005) point out that a 25% of legislators run for a mayoral spot in Uruguay after their term; in a similar vein, Chasquetti and Micozzi (2013) shows that these deputies with

subnational ambition tend to draft more local bills, especially if they belong to peripheral states. Jones et al. (2002) find that Argentinean legislators pursue and hold multiple offices across time, 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.

In any case, legislators in each of these 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 of their resources that can contribute to their political improvement. As stated in the literature on incumbency advantage in the U.S. (Gelman and King 1990; Cox and Katz 1996, 2002; Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002), 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 usually retire after serving one legislative term, we can safely assume that they prospectively use their current term in office to advance their future careers (Crisp and Desposato 2004). Following this reasoning, present legislative behavior is likely to be influenced by career perspectives. The question is how it is affected, and whether seeking specific offices fosters particular kinds of behavior.

In an environment like the American (a multilevel system), the mechanism is clear: representatives' legislative efforts are oriented towards targeting territorially bounded and (mostly) stable constituents. However, in other cases, subnational

executive positions concentrate more and better resources in order to become a powerful political actor. Scholars (Ames 2001, Benton 2002, Spiller and Tommasi 2007) have already pointed out how important governorships can be. Other contributions (Samuels 2003) have also highlighted that municipal executives can be profitable offices for ambitious politicians, even more than a position in the House. Compared with mayors of districts with a budget for public works, services, health and transportation, an ordinary seat in Congress may be considered a small prize. In consequence, it is reasonable that progressively ambitious legislators in these systems try to bias legislation towards their prospective targets to accumulate political capital. As aforementioned, these bills could be considered direct signals to voters, but also indirectly affect party elites and possible rivals in the elections. Once a representative with local ambition has increased her territorial presence via symbols and signals, other relevant actors may receive this position taking, consider it a credible challenge, and therefore develop defensive strategies, make support to other candidates explicit, or simply be deterred from running for the same office, among other likely reactions. If we believe that this mechanism is realistic, there is theoretical space to suppose that multilevel progressive ambition can play a role in bill drafting.

Multilevel Politics without Legislative Careerism: Argentina

This piece deals with the case of Argentina, a country where previous evidence depicts it as a multilevel system without static ambition. As shown by different authors (Jones 2002; Saiegh 2005; Calvo and Escolar 2005), Argentina is a strong federal country where many relevant political decisions are made at the provincial

level, such as candidate designation and selection (De Luca, Jones and Tula 2002; De Luca 2004), 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 (Remmer and Wibbels 2000; Eaton 2002; Remmer and Gelineau 2003). It is significant that every elected office^{iv} with the only exception of the presidency is chosen at the provincial (or lower) level in Argentina. In parallel, appointed offices like provincial or municipal ministers, secretaries or advisors obviously involve subnational decisions. Hence, such a distribution of political and economic power is likely to increase the influence of subnational actors over federal politics. In addition, given the components of the electoral rules (proportional representation with closed party lists), the theoretical literature would predict considerable levels of party discipline in Argentina- a claim verified by empirical pieces (Mustapic 1998, Jones 2002, Calvo 2007). Leaders controlling a small set of fixed positions in party ballots are likely to have influence of candidates' expected future behavior. Electoral thresholds (3% of registered voters) and small district magnitudes (only four districts choose more than five seats per election) also reduce the incentives for running outside the party. All these rules reinforce the strength of subnational leaders and their control over current national legislators, concomitantly decreasing the 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%) are reelected; current representatives need to act prospectively if they want to secure their political fates^v. It

seems reasonable to suppose that politicians are likely to be more competitive for any future position if they can build a personal political capital^{vi}. However, as mentioned above, available resources in the hands of legislators tend to be scarce in this case. In such a context, if legislation is recognized as a device for enhancing individual reputation (Mayhew 1974, Gamm and Kousser 2010), and we take into consideration that most positions have subnational ties; we will conclude that legislators have incentives to write, push, and submit bills in order to communicate responsiveness to local voters, consolidate their public image for future campaigns, send credible signals to comrades of their districts and, therefore, improve their prospective chances in further races. This should be particularly salient in the case of subjects with subnational executive ambition, given the (by definition) personalized characteristics of these offices. Empirically speaking, we should be able to recognize these patterns of bill drafting, given that 30% of the legislators in the period have occupied a gubernatorial or mayoral spot, or have run for those positions from the House (“subnational executive link”), a larger share than those pursuing legislative reelection. As a consequence, even though, theoretically, the characteristics of electoral institutions would not foresee high levels of personalization, mixed incentives emerge from the structures of electoral federalism and the patterns of political progression.

So far, the most influential empirical pieces on Argentine legislative politics (Jones and Hwang 2005; Calvo 2007, 2013) have used a particular theoretical approach that is centered on leadership’s control and enforcement: cartel party. Their findings support the notion that the majority coalition and the governors exert strong

controls over legislative behavior through positive and negative agenda setting powers, and also via control of the future of individual political careers. Thus, for the conventional literature, there is almost no space for personalization from congressional activity. 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 distinction among the five different kinds of legislation that can be introduced: presidential decrees, laws ("*proyectos de ley*"), declarations, resolutions, and communications. Presidential decrees are basically procedural and involve requests of agreement to appoint ambassadors or judges, and announcements of vetoes^{vii}. Law projects mostly involve major and general topics (i.e. budget, civil and penal law, regulations, or military decisions), and have been the source of conventional empirical analyses^{viii}. Lastly, declarations, resolutions, and communications have a more limited scope, especially regarding the topics involved and the enforcement of their mandates^{ix}. Specifically, these projects are recommendations to the other branches to do something specified in the bill. Any single legislator can ask the executive to "*allocate two millions of pesos in order to finish the road of Route 40*". However, its approval does not automatically imply the disbursement of the funds, which should be bargained with the Minister of Infrastructure. They are, basically, position takings regarding an issue judged relevant by a legislator. Another common use has to do with targeting places or activities of different interest (i.e. "*Declare the city of Ushuaia the 'National Capital of snow sculpture'*", or "*Repudiate the military coup in Honduras*"), in line with how House and Senate Resolutions are used in the American Congress. However, just a static

comparison illustrates how much more relevant they are in the South American case: while U.S. Congressmen (535 per period) submitted less than 9,000 resolutions between 1984 and 2007; their Argentine colleagues (N=329 per session) wrote more than 127,000 of these bills in the same period, more than 70% of their whole production (see Table 1). Such an overwhelming predominance of symbolic legislation bolsters the expectation that they can be strategically used for several political goals^x.

However, it must be clarified that the notion of instrumental utilization of legislation involves a conjecture: bill drafting is a good itself. Far from denying the (obvious) importance of final passage, this piece follows the literature on non-roll call position taking (Hill and Williams 1993, Schiller 1995, Highton and Rocca 2006, Rocca and Gordon 2010) that recognizes that bill submission (individual decision) can be considered an asset to further individual-level benefits. In particular, given the aforementioned enormous amounts of bills drafted, there is space to consider these projects as a personal political resource in hands of Argentine legislators. This notion is similar to Ames' (2001) description of how Brazilian deputies campaign town by town showing the so called *avulsos* (tickets certifying the submission of a bill) as evidence of constituency service. Following this argument, it makes sense to utilize bill introduction as a proxy of personalization efforts by legislators with subnational executive career ambition.

Usually overlooked by the literature, this symbolic legislation has been excluded from all previous analyses. Jones and Hwang's mentioned study is based on estimations of roll call votes, with a sample of 473 bills between 1989 and 2003. In Calvo's piece, only the set of presidential bills (N=2,969) are used to test his

hypotheses, which equal 1.5% of the whole legislation introduced. The use of all legislation can be useful for several goals. First, it avoids any kind of selection bias in the choice of the sample. Second, an omission of such a majority of bills would clearly undermine the validity of generalizations. Third, holding the assumption that legislators use these bills as individual-level signals; it becomes possible to comprehensively test whether party-based and individually-motivated approaches can be complemented, and create an integral explanation of Argentine congressional behavior. Descriptive statistics show some preliminary support for this supposition. Table 1 demonstrates that a much higher share of declarations, resolutions and communications have a provincial and municipal content, compared with law projects. That distribution boosts the expectation of a strategic use of these bills as means of creating a territorially targeted political capital at the individual level.

****Table 1 here****

Hypotheses, Measurement and Estimations

Recapitulating, if the literature on the electoral connection is right, ambitious legislators seeking the support of territorially delimited bases, or interested in demonstrating leaders that they are increasingly popular, should submit more policies focused on their territories of reference. Following these speculations, legislators expecting a subnational executive position at $t+1$ should be more likely to write targeted legislation. It is presumed that this effect is consistent for congressmen interested in both a gubernatorial and a municipal spot.

H1: Legislators running for a mayoral position are more likely to submit legislation targeted to their home municipality

H2: Legislators running for a gubernatorial position are more likely submit legislation targeted to their provinces

To test these hypotheses, the paper relies on an original database containing information about the 177,058 bills introduced in Congress between 1983 and 2007^{xi}. The database includes detailed information at the bill level, including sponsor, period introduced, committees that treated the piece, kind of bill, and, very important, a one-paragraph summary of the content of the project. This last piece of information was crucial to create the two dependent variables. In order to distinguish whether each bill has a territorial target (and which one, if they do), a key-word analysis over the description of the legislation was conducted, which recognized which (if any) of the 24 provinces or 2,191 municipalities was mentioned in each bill. Over that basis, the variables “municipal target” and “provincial target” were coded as one if the name of the home municipality or province of the sponsor, respectively, was mentioned in the bill content or zero otherwise. Several rounds of revision polished the results of the coding scheme^{xii}.

Even though it can be subject to discussions, the most reliable strategy to recognize subnational ambition in this case was the effective candidacy in a general election. It is clear that, of course, not only individuals that competed for the spot on the Election Day may have aspired to get it; other subjects might have lost a primary or stepped down in early stages. However, given the high degree of variation in candidate selection mechanisms (ranging from primaries and party conventions to no

competition and the creation of new parties) and the lack of systematic information, the most conservative strategy ended up being preferable^{xiii}. Over these bases, two main covariates capturing whether a legislator was a mayoral or a gubernatorial candidate immediately after her legislative mandate, respectively, have been created. This was the trickiest part of the project, as, unlike systems with single member districts, it is not possible to automatically link every legislator with her home municipality^{xiv}. For those representatives that have ever competed for mayoral office, it was a matter of collecting career data. To do so, the creation of a database of every single governor and mayor of the 24 provinces and 2,191 municipalities of Argentina in the mentioned period was accomplished. This information was complemented with an ample map of candidacies to governorships and mayoral offices. However, as mentioned, only a 30% of legislators have had a subnational executive link. Thus, in order to recognize the municipal origin of the remaining 70%, the piece relies on *Directorio Legislativo*, a publication that systematically keeps record of legislators' backgrounds, and complemented it with interviews, journalistic articles, phone calls, and even internet searches. This strategy made the identification of the districts of a 97% of the legislators in the period viable.

Several control variables are incorporated in the right hand side of the equations. First, a covariate measuring district size is specified, which should play a relevant role in strategic bill production. The reasoning is straightforward: more symbolic pieces may be needed to reach a broader audience, in contrast with smaller environments. Following this simple thought, congressmen expecting to become executives of provinces and municipalities with higher shares of population should be

more likely to draft local bills. Information on the share of inhabitants of each province and municipality was taken from the 1980, 1991 and 2001 census. The covariate was maintained as a share, instead of positive numbers (or their logs), given that municipal population enormously varies across and within provinces. Otherwise, as an example, a district with half the population of the Province of Tierra del Fuego would rank similar to a medium-low municipality in Buenos Aires. Clearly, the relevance of each of these districts in their provincial context is extremely different.

Committee chairmanship is also specified, expecting a negative relationship, given that these powerful members have advantages in managing the legislative agenda and getting their bills passed. Given that they could claim credit through these more effective devices, they should be less likely to invest time drafting bills. Tenure in the House is an indicator of longevity in Congress. Following the literature, representatives in advanced years of their mandates tend to submit more legislation. However, in this setting, permanence in Congress may mean that politicians want to pursue a legislative career, which might decrease their expectations of becoming mayors or governors, and would therefore make them less likely to draft targeted bills. Hence, this control is incorporated without a clear expected direction. The absolute distance to the majority party median ideal point (Aleman et al 2009) is included as a proxy of closeness to those actors with most chances of passing legislation. The higher the distance, the higher the needs of forging capital through other means, and hence the higher the chances of drafting local bills. An inverse result is speculated for legislators of the governor's party in the province, given that, as suggested by Jones and Hwang (2005), they should care more about getting their

principal's bills passed, and less about submitting symbolic pieces. The whole number of bills submitted by a legislator k in each period is also specified, in order to control for the impact of subjects with high levels of legislative productivity overall, which might also affect the number of local bills drafted. In parallel, as an imperfect but best feasible way of assessing chances of electoral success (and therefore concentration of efforts in targeted signals), the tenure of the current mayor and governor is incorporated, which, as it increases, should lower the competitiveness of the district and thereby diminish challenger's legislative efforts. Both at the provincial and the municipal level, the model controls by a socioeconomic indicator taken from 1991 and 2001 census: the share of residents with completed high school. Intuition suggests that districts with better socioeconomic situations would be better recipients of symbolic signals; while poorer units might expect tangible benefits. Therefore, this covariate is expected to perform positively. Another variable measuring the membership to a territorially concentrated family is specified. Legislators who occupy relevant places in the ballots because of their family ties may have individual career ambitions; however, their futures may rely more on their relatives' decisions^{xv} (or their health, indeed) than on individual behavior in the legislature. Therefore, they should to be less inclined towards the development of locally targeted bills. In order to code the membership to a territorially bounded family, *Directorio Legislativo* is also used, complemented with information of the House webpage. Spouses, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins and relatives in law of current (or former) governors, mayors and party bosses have been

coded as one, or zero otherwise. Finally, dummies for the main blocs (Peronist party, Radical party, center-leftist FrePaso, and district parties^{xvi}) are included.

For this piece, the decision was to concentrate the analysis on the House, given substantial differences that suggest the convenience of a separate analysis for representatives and senators. Specifically, Upper House members were appointed by state legislatures until 2001, when direct elections have been released. These patterns of chamber composition made the profile of the median senator (mostly former governors or relatives of local leaders) very different from the median deputy. Also, mandates used to last nine years in the Senate, and just four for deputies. As a consequence, career perspectives substantially differed^{xvii}. Based on this decision, those bills submitted by senators were dropped, along with those written by the executive, leaving a sample of 117,085 observations. Over this new subset of bills, legislation submitted by representatives of the Federal Capital (about 16,000 drafts) is not included in the mayoral models, as no municipal structure exists. In addition, bills written by legislators whose district was not recognized have also been excluded, ending up with a sample of 84,410 pieces of legislation submitted by 1,067 deputies in 24 years. Collapsed at the legislator/Congress level, observations equal 2,665^{xviii}.

Hypotheses are tested at two different levels of aggregation, replicating the strategy developed by Crisp et al (2004). For the first set of estimations, every observation is a bill i submitted at time t by a legislator k that may have subnational executive ambition. These models calculate the probability of a submitted bill having a territorial content, as a function of the mentioned covariates. The second set of

estimations utilizes event count models to calculate the predicted number of targeted bills submitted by an ambitious legislator per Congress.

Different statistical models are utilized to test the hypotheses, starting with those that use the municipal content of each bill as dependent variable. First, a simple pooled logistic model with errors clustered at the legislator-Congress level is run, in order to take the dependency among bills submitted by the same congressman/period into account. In the second model, a random effects logistic model that weights individual bill drafting propensities by state is utilized. By doing so, it is assessed whether the main effects of ambition are general, or basically driven by a subset of districts. Second, after collapsing the information at the legislator/congress level, two negative binomial models are utilized (one pooled and another with random effects) to compute the number of bills that ambitious legislators are likely to write. These four models are reported in Table 2.

As it can be observed, empirical analyses provide strong and robust support for the first hypothesis. In all four models, the coefficient of the main covariate is positive and significant, confirming that legislators with mayoral expectations are more likely to draft bills targeting their home municipalities. For the first pair of models, setting continuous parameters to the mean and binary variables to zero, the marginal difference in the probabilities of submitting a local bill by legislators who became mayoral candidates is about 50% compared to those who did not. Predictions closer to real world that include partisanship, committee membership and continuous variables set to the mean provide similar results, where a prospective mayor has a .064 (.001) chances of sending a local bill, compared to a .041 (.004) by colleagues

with other kind of ambition. Once the main control covariate, the municipal share of population, is included, effects are even clearer. In all three models, the population ratio of each municipality is positive and significant, and also substantively affects the delivery of local bills. As it can be viewed in Graph 1, the more citizens a district hosts, the higher the expectations of targeted bill drafting. However, ambitious legislators of small districts are even more likely to write local bills than a native of a huge district without progressive ambition. This reinforces the notion that career goals are the main determinant of this strategic behavior, something ratified by Models 3 and 4. The predicted number of local bills drafted by prospective mayors is always greater than those who do not; in parallel, legislators targeting huge districts are also more likely to write more symbolic pieces than those of small units. Their combined effect follows the enounced direction, and is reflected in Graph 2. As it can be viewed, municipal candidates' productivity outperforms that of those with different career goals, especially if they belong to considerably sized districts. Nonetheless, if targeted activity by legislators of the same unit but dissimilar career goals is compared, the confidence intervals of their predicted outcomes just barely overlap. Therefore, ambition does make the main difference over revealed congressional behavior of Argentinean legislators, at least in patterns of bill submission.

Regarding control covariates, several interesting findings become salient. First, the effects of tenure over bill drafting are minimal or insignificant. In other words, neither expertise nor longevity are substantive predictors of local bill drafting. Second, as expected, committee chairmanship drastically lowers the likelihood of targeted bill drafting. These results bolster the mentioned tradeoff between chances

of getting legislation passed and inflation of bill drafts. Regarding the education covariate, results are negative but minimal. Contrary to what was thought, socioeconomic characteristics of municipalities are not severely affecting targeted bill drafting in the way ambition and population does. Fourth, as expected, members of territorially concentrated families are less likely to draft local benefits for individual purposes. This finding also helps discard the latent idea that families might press their relatives in Congress to draft bills focused on their district. Finally, the relationship between overall bill drafting and the submission of local legislation, yet significant and with changing sign, is minimal and close to zero. This realization is interpreted as reinforcement of the strength of the model's main covariate: local bill drafting is, in fact, a strategic and prospective decision, regardless of variation in legislative productivity.

*****Table 2 here*****

*****Graph 1 here*****

*****Graph 2 here*****

The former estimations are replicated using the province-level targeted bills as dependent variable and replacing covariates with municipal scope with their equivalents at the provincial level. Contrary to theoretical speculations, gubernatorial ambition is an inconsistent predictor of targeted bill drafting. Table 3 reports the same four statistical models estimated above, and the covariate's performance is erratic in the direction and significance of coefficients. Interestingly, the most salient contrasts show up when pooled models are compared with random effects

estimations. Unlike Models 5 and 7, gubernatorial ambition has a negative sign in estimations 6 and 8. Such salient differences based on model specification suggest that something non-random is going on at the provincial level^{xix}. At this stage, it is hard to assess, as most expected sources of subnational variation (size, wealth, and competitiveness) are included in the models. As a reliability check, fixed effects models with the same specification (not reported) we run, showing robust negative and insignificant results for the main covariate, while several provinces' coefficients (without a clear pattern) are strongly negative. These results reinforce the idea that gubernatorial ambition does not systematically involve strategic bill drafting, and that there is space for further analysis of the district-level determinants of legislative behavior in national Congress.

In contrast, returning to the main models, the population covariate is negative in most estimations, suggesting that targeted bills might be useful just in small provincial environments. However, as mentioned, this seems to be totally independent from gubernatorial ambition, the piece's main theoretical concern. The fact that only other control variables such as committee chairmanship, tenure, and several party-level controls perform with robustness force us to reconsider the causal direction of the gubernatorial arguments. If ambitious prospective mayors have behaved strategically, especially those with bigger audiences, shouldn't we expect gubernatorial candidates to emulate their behavior? Or should our theoretical expectations be restricted to the lower level, given the different scope (and visibility) of a gubernatorial race? Should we suppose, extending the municipal and provincial-level findings, that targeted bill drafting should only be useful in small provinces with

a population size that is close to a big municipality? These questions need a whole different research project to be answered. What seems to be clear as one of the contributions of this piece is that prospective governors do not seem to utilize targeted legislation as a source of political capital for their prospective races, while mayoral candidates do.

*****Table 3 here*****

Discussion

Years of empirical research on Argentine politics had emphasized that political parties were the main determinant of legislative behavior; governors were the main source of congressional power; and clientelism and patronage were the engines of campaigns and career progress. This piece does not deny any of these conventional statements, but does not support the argument that legislators in office are mere agents or automatons. Rather, they have reasons to use the existing resources on their own advantage. This paper shows how legislators with progressive career goals tend to utilize the typical asset offered by congressional institutions: the ability to write bills. As results clearly show, this resource is systematically used by legislators seeking an executive spot at the municipal level, who tend to submit twice as many local bills as their colleagues with other kind of ambition. This effect tends to be stronger when deputies belong to a municipality with higher shares of provincial inhabitants. Conversely, no significant relationship could be found by prospective governors, which suggests that the pursuit of a gubernatorial office tends to be

boosted by other kinds of political assets. The robustness of findings across models reinforces the accuracy of the theoretical directions inquired in the piece.

Several contributions are added to the literature by this work. First, the personalization component has been incorporated to an environment where individual-level activity was completely left out. Second, rather than contradicting previous findings, this approach shows that strict party responsiveness can be compatible with individualization efforts, even in settings with institutions and practices that foster loyalty, discipline and multiple punishments for defectors. As argued, the compatibility between these goals can be better recognized in the literature if other empirical devices beyond final passage votes are taken into consideration. Along this line, the third contribution of this piece is the systematic analysis of non-roll call position taking devices in a comparative perspective. As mentioned in previous sections, the massive use of symbolic bills means clearly more than fireworks used to show that *“Congress is doing something”*. Fourth, the incorporation of the municipal arena to the study of Argentine congressional politics is a contribution to the literature in general. The false assumption that subnational politics equal gubernatorial-level interactions omits an important dimension of politics and even policy making. Lastly, this piece provides broader theoretical inquiry: can we reliably explain legislative behavior without looking at patterns of ambition in multilevel systems? Do institutional analyses based on electoral rules and candidate selection mechanisms capture the whole variance if they omit what lies *“at the heart of politics”*? Can we predict party discipline in Congress if we do not consider short-term individual-level goals at many tiers, regardless of how strict

national-level electoral rules are? This piece does not answer all these questions, but at least provides systematic evidence that, in the Argentine multilevel system with non-static ambition, personal goals matter; at least, at the moment of drafting legislation.

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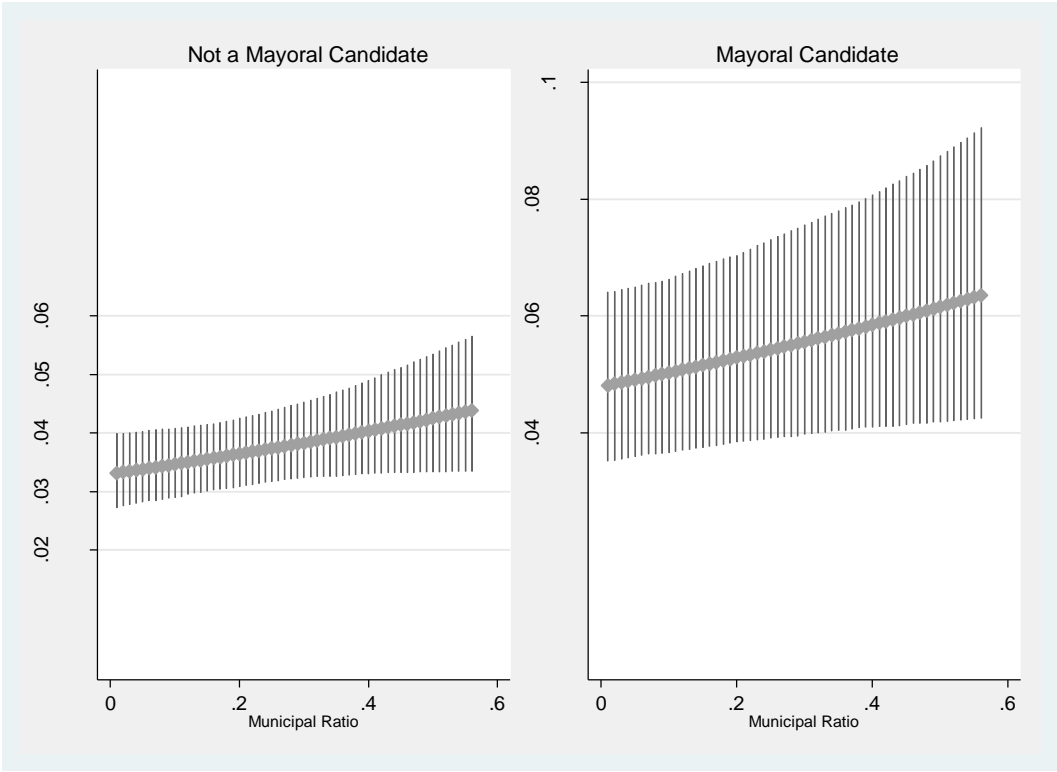
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Table 1: Bills submitted to the Congress, by Type and Share with a Territorial Target 1983-2007

Type	N	% Total	% Targeted
Executive Decrees	2392	1.35	13.55
Laws	48072	27.15	15.39
Declarations	49308	27.85	39.13
Communications	21180	11.96	38.4
Resolutions	56106	31.69	28.72
Total	177058	100	28.95

Source: Official Statistics of the Camara de Diputados

Graph 1: Predicted Probabilities of writing a Local Bill, by Mayoral Candidacy and District's Share of Municipal Population



Graph 2: Predicted Number of Local Bills, by Mayoral Candidacy and District's Size

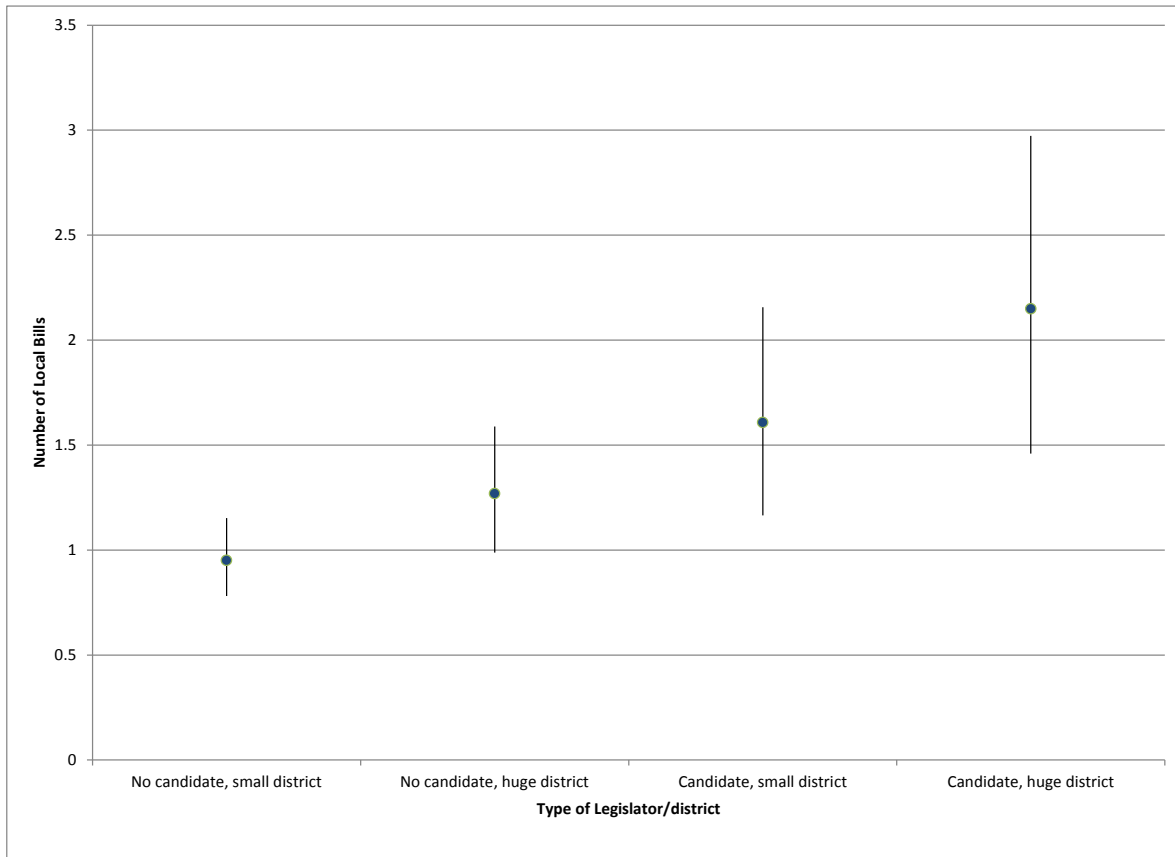


Table 2: Municipal Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Logistic	RE Logistic	Neg Binomial	RE Neg Binomial
Mayoral candidate	0.359** (0.150)	0.342*** (0.063)	0.514*** (0.134)	0.248** (0.105)
Population Ratio	0.541** (0.244)	0.433** (0.198)	0.508** (0.243)	1.308*** (0.257)
Committee chair	-0.406*** (0.120)	-0.473*** (0.063)	-0.499*** (0.106)	-0.344*** (0.090)
Distance Maj. Party median	-0.224** (0.092)	-0.263*** (0.045)	-0.0629 (0.087)	0.075 (0.067)
Peronist	0.625*** (0.155)	0.699*** (0.0819)	0.462*** (0.157)	0.402*** (0.127)
Provincial party	0.0512 (0.231)	0.403*** (0.133)	0.176 (0.215)	0.173 (0.177)
UCR	0.558*** (0.155)	0.675*** (0.0773)	0.394*** (0.149)	0.399*** (0.120)
Frepaso	0.067 (0.203)	0.217* (0.124)	-0.117 (0.222)	0.327* (0.188)
Member of governor's party	-0.037 (0.0892)	0.064 (0.045)	-0.0264 (0.0882)	0.0274 (0.0717)
Tenure	-0.0181 (0.014)	-0.017** (0.007)	-0.0228 (0.0151)	-0.013 (0.013)
Territorial family	-0.621** (0.271)	-0.589*** (0.186)	-0.531** (0.240)	-0.309 (0.256)
Municipal Completed HS	-0.01** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.009** (0.004)	-0.013*** (0.004)
Mayoral tenure	0.0282 (0.052)	-0.011 (0.026)	0.022 (0.056)	-0.071 (0.046)
N of bills submitted	-0.002*** (0.0001)	-0.002*** (0.001)	0.017*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)
Constant	-3.297*** (0.242)	-3.396*** (0.174)	-0.697*** (0.223)	-1.165*** (0.190)
Observations	84,410	84,410	2,543	2,543

Standard errors in parentheses

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

Table 3: Gubernatorial Models

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
	Logistic	RE Logistic	Neg Binomial	RE Neg Binomial
Gubernatorial candidate	0.128 (0.088)	-0.071** (0.034)	0.133* (0.070)	-0.046 (0.058)
Committee chair	-0.459*** (0.111)	-0.267*** (0.041)	-0.311*** (0.076)	-0.087 (0.064)
Distance Maj. Party median	-0.046 (0.089)	-0.065** (0.029)	-0.0164 (0.06)	0.254*** (0.048)
Peronist	0.329** (0.129)	0.299*** (0.054)	0.0977 (0.100)	-0.078 (0.087)
Provincial party	0.418*** (0.153)	0.344*** (0.068)	0.222* (0.124)	-0.198* (0.116)
UCR	0.170 (0.120)	0.321*** (0.047)	-0.071 (0.09)	-0.128* (0.077)
Frepaso	0.382** (0.177)	0.275*** (0.068)	0.110 (0.139)	0.354*** (0.107)
Member of governor's party	0.001 (0.080)	-0.025 (0.038)	-0.187*** (0.068)	0.0004 (0.059)
Tenure	-0.024** (0.01)	-0.028*** (0.005)	-0.009 (0.011)	-0.007 (0.009)
Territorial Family	-0.113 (0.266)	0.093 (0.104)	0.0577 (0.196)	0.0431 (0.165)
Provincial Completed HS	-0.011** (0.005)	-0.005 (0.035)	-0.006* (0.003)	-0.001 (0.006)
Population Ratio	-2.956*** (0.207)	-3.515 (4.474)	-3.016*** (0.166)	-1.775*** (0.309)
Gubernatorial Tenure	0.055 (0.043)	0.016 (0.017)	0.057 (.035)	0.719** (.030)
N of bills submitted	0.0001 (0.002)	0.0002 (0.004)	0.0196*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.0002)
Constant	-1.410*** (0.289)	-2.180 (2.059)	0.845*** (0.208)	0.00691 (0.346)
Observations	87,199	87,199	2,665	2,665

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

Appendix A: Examples of Bills

Content	Type
Ask the Executive a report on the contamination with nitrites of drinking water in Lomas de Zamora, Buenos Aires	Resolution
Ask the President to regulate Article 3 of Law 24698, which states special prices for gasoline in the frontier area of Corinda, Formosa	Declaration
Concede a subsidy of a million pesos to the community Vicaria Sagrado Corazon, Rosario, Santa Fe	Law
Construction of a bridge in Voladizo, by Route 11, Km. 790, in Reconquista, Santa Fe	Resolution
Declare of Congressional Interest the 1st Meeting of Agriculture and Stockbreeding that will take place in Esquel, Chubut, on April 25th 2005.	Resolution
Declare of National Interest the Third National Conference of Amateur Fishing in Resistencia, Province of Chaco, October 10-13, 1984	Resolution
Declare the city of Rosario the 'Hand-Made Ice Cream Capital'	Resolution
Declare the city of Zarate National Capital of Atomic Energy	Law
Declare the public utility of the national state-owned building at 2450 Peron, Rosario, Santa Fe	Law
Designate the city of San Fernando, Catamarca, as venue of the Basketball World Championship	Declaration
Express concerns for the abundance of rodents in the school area between 43th and 151st streets, city of La Plata	Declaration
Express concerns for the attack to the Jewish cultural center of November 8th, 2002, in La Plata, Buenos Aires	Declaration
Finish the maintenance works in the Technical School Nr. 3, San Rafael, Mendoza	Declaration
Give a subsidy of 15 millions of Australes to the School 504, Lanus, Buenos Aires	Law
Include in the 2001 budget the funds for the public works on the Route 9 in Escobar, Buenos Aires	Resolution
Incorporate the airport of P. Saenz Pena, province of Chaco, to the national airport system	Declaration
Provide drinking water and sewers to towns in San Rafael, Mendoza	Declaration
Speed up the approval of a fertilizer's plant in Bahia Blanca, Province of Buenos Aires	Declaration
Summon the Minister of Finance, Dr. Domingo Cavallo, and the Minister of Defense, Mr. Oscar Camilion, to the House	Law
Suspend the demotion to the second division of soccer teams for the 1983/84 season	Resolution

ⁱ Several scholars have discussed under what conditions may legislators seek higher office (Brace 1984), or even retire (Cox and Katz 2004). Nonetheless, it is conventional wisdom that most legislators seek continuous reelection in Congress.

ⁱⁱ A Congress that can actually change policy, where legislators have incentives to develop legislative careerism

ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, Kernell (1977), Carson and Engstrom (2005), and Carson, Engstrom and Roberts (2006) show that U.S. federal politics in the 19th century involved very different dynamics, more associated to parties and local bosses rather than personalized constituency activity.

^{iv} It includes councilmen, mayors, provincial deputies and senators, federal representatives, federal senators and governors.

^v It is worth to mention that, even though legislative reelection is not the goal of most congressmen in office, they would hardly be better off in their attempts of being re-nominated if they used local bill drafting. Reappointment in the party ballot is usually determined by governors and party bosses. Hence, it can be supposed that reelection seekers would enact other kinds of strategies to further their goal (loyalty, money, or other asset).

^{vi} The definition of political capital in this piece is broad, and encompasses every asset that could be useful for the progression of a political career, including symbolic and material resources. The emphasis on symbols does not deny the demonstrated role of clientelism and patronage over political success (Calvo and Murillo 2004, Brusco, Nazareno and Stokes 2005); rather, both approaches are complementary.

^{vii} 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.

^{viii} The word “mostly” is explicit because ordinary laws have oftentimes been used to highlight events and target places or groups, as if they were declarations or resolutions. In these cases, their effects are not as strict as changes in Penal Law, for example, nor do they imply mechanic disbursement of funds.

^{ix} Technically, resolutions are supposed to ask other branches and bureaucracies for reports, summon ministers and secretaries, or change internal rules. Declarations are supposed to highlight events, ask the Executive to do something specific, rename streets, create memorials, or take positions in general. Empirically, both kinds of bills have been used indistinctively for these roles. Communications have the particularity of being used just in the Senate, and their use does not differ from declarations and resolutions, either. Based on this conventional common use, they will be analyzed all together. See Appendix A for more examples of these symbolic bills.

^x It must be noted that, unlike the U.S. model, the allocation of material resources (*pork*) is not determined via congressional laws in Argentina. Legislators could pass tons of bills involving money or public works, but their further materialization would depend on other actors at the Executive branch.

^{xi} Material was collected from Congress’ website (www.hcdn.gov.ar).

^{xii} Revision was performed by the author, and it involved several rounds of examination of those bills coded as targeted. The most frequent task was the recodification of positive values incorrectly coded by the program, given that other organizations and characters have the same name as the districts listed in the keywords. As an example, seven municipalities of different provinces are called “San Martin”, which is also the name of a metropolitan line of railways, and that of a national hero that was honored multiple times in bills.

^{xiii} Every strategy has its tradeoffs. The use of non-systematic information of candidacies would add data at the expense of multiple omissions, therefore creating bias. Conversely, the use of mere public statements as proxies would add information at the expense of precision, as it could just be cheap talk, or a strategic message to improve bargaining power. Just as a try, an alternative estimation using a variable that includes non-systematic information about pursuit of the position in a primary was run. Results have not varied substantially in the estimations.

^{xiv} “Home municipality” is recognized over the basis of the legal address declared by the legislator at the moment of running for the legislative seat.

^{xv} If a governor retires, she is very likely to determine who her successor will be. A relative who is already in politics has a privileged position to be the recipient of the candidacy, more for her last name than for personal political merits, everything equal.

^{xvi} This is a typical category in federal countries, where several parties just run in one district. The most salient parties coded by this variable are Movimiento Popular Neuquino, Pacto Autonomista Liberal, Movimiento

Popular Fueguino, Movimiento Popular Jujeno, Partido Bloquista, Cruzada Renovadora, Fuerza Republicana, Partido Renovador Salteno and Partido Demócrata.

^{xvii} See Micozzi (2013) for an analysis of legislative performance in the Argentine Senate.

^{xviii} Several observations omitted in the municipal models for identification reasons are useful to compute provincial models. For this reason, the N is slightly smaller in the mayoral models.

^{xix} An anonymous reviewer is thanked for having raised this point