Another nail in the coffin of Mexican exceptionalism

The removal of (most) single-term limits

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Nov. 2^{nd}, 2017

The ever moving Mexican electoral system

Continuous change in electoral institutions (Molinar 1991)

- 1950s centralization
- 1964 compensatory PR
- 1979 lower entry barriers
- 1994 PR in Senate
- 1997 independent Election Board
- ...

Constant: single-term limit across the board since 1934

Democratic accountability is more difficult

Term limits diminish external checks on politicians

- Severs the electoral connection (Mayhew 1973): collective reputation only
- Promoting personal vote $\rightarrow$ incumbent's name recognition (Cain, Ferejohn, Fiorina 1987)

Road map

1 Electoral reform

2 Relevance

3 Coahuila 2017

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The 2014 reform

Surprising removal of the consecutive reelection ban

- Fed. deputies can reelect up to 4 consecutive three-year terms
- Senators up to 2 consecutive six-year terms
- Incumbent must be re-nominated by same party
- Kick-off: 2021 mid-term

Costa Rica now alone

At the subnational level

Reformers gave states institutional discretion

- For state lawmakers: 2-, 3-, or 4-term limits
- For municipal officers: single- or 2-term limits
- Party clause mandatory
- Inapplicable to reformers themselves

Variable election calendars $\rightarrow$ incumbents on the ballot progressively

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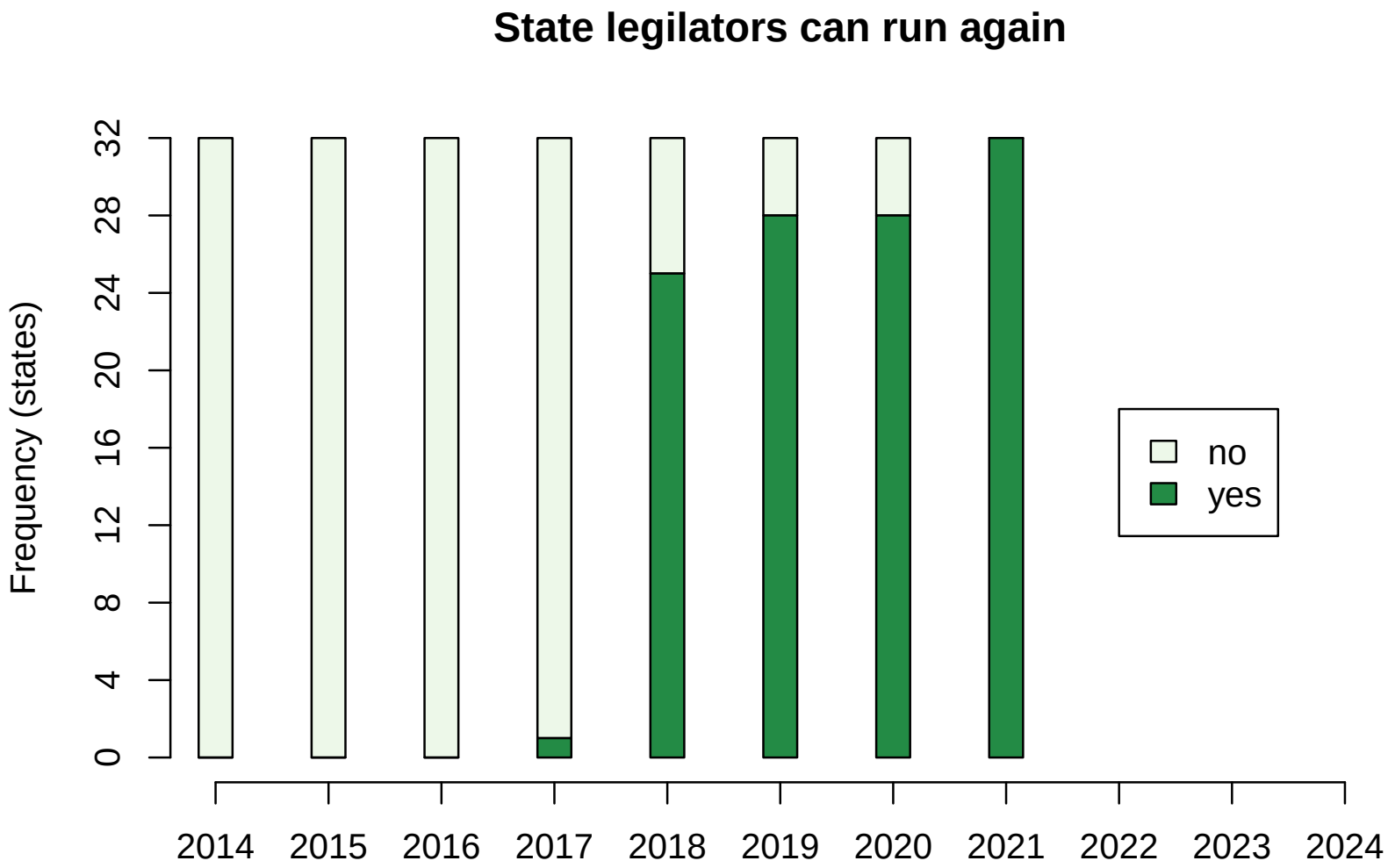
Gradual adoption in state legislative elections



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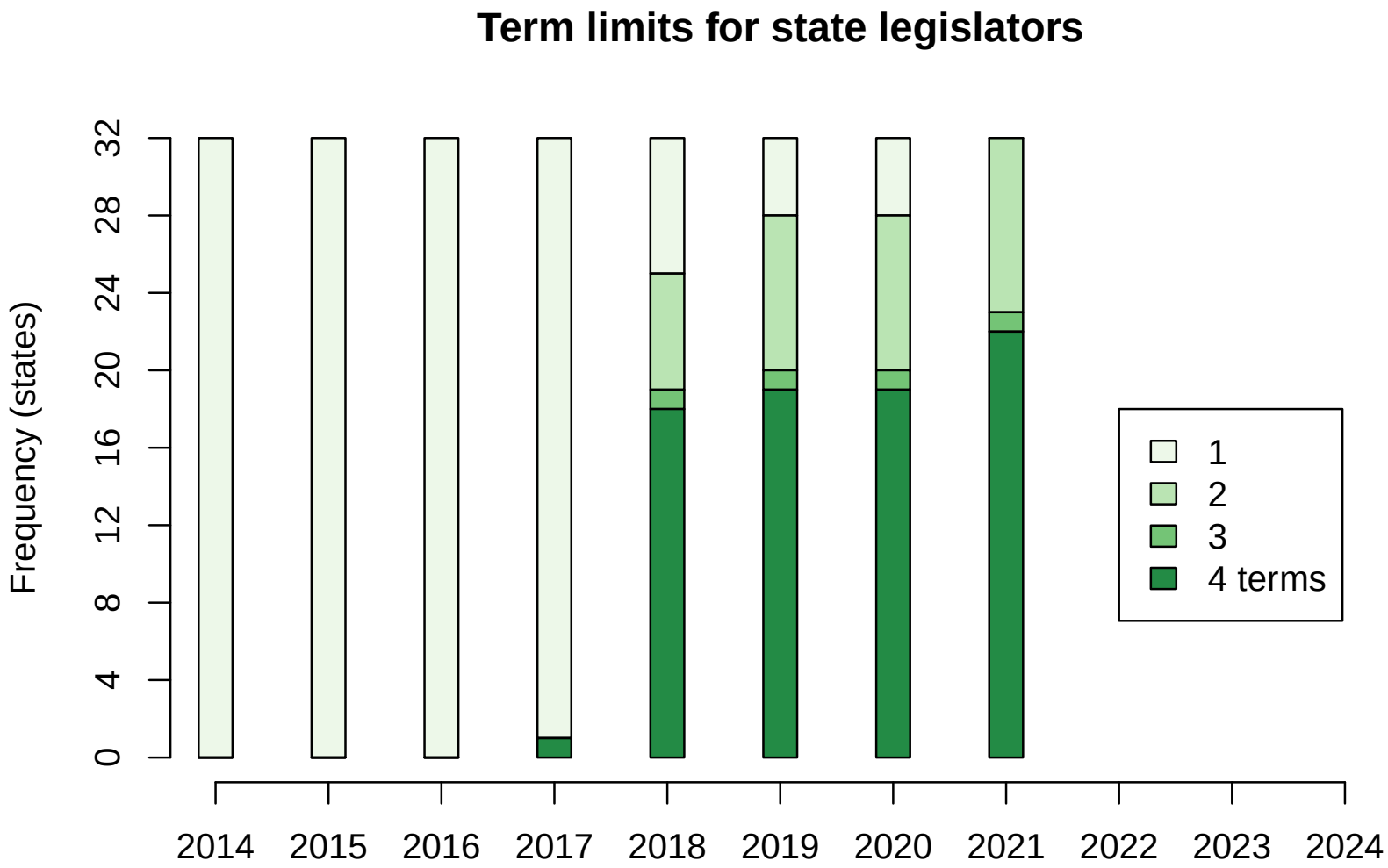
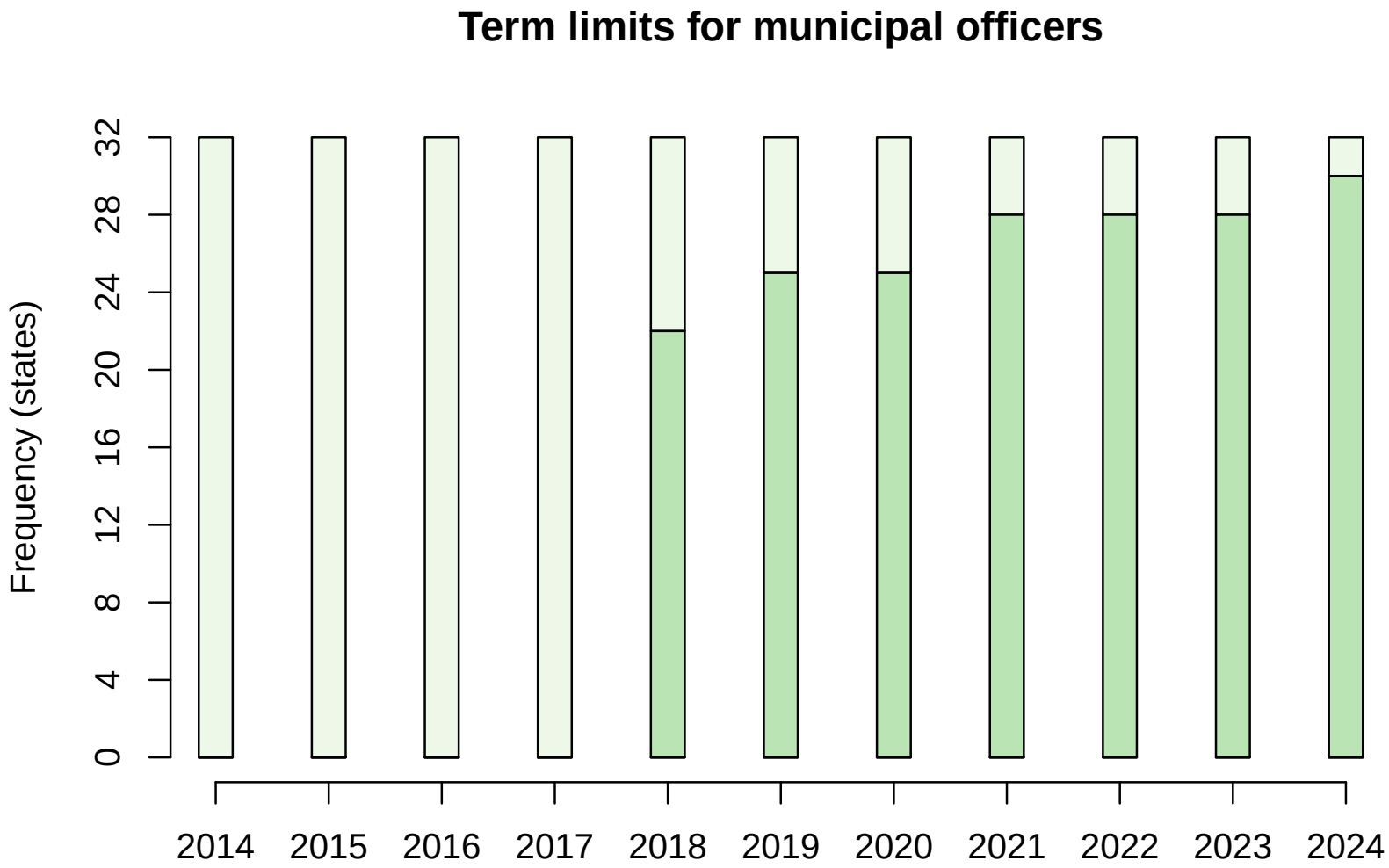


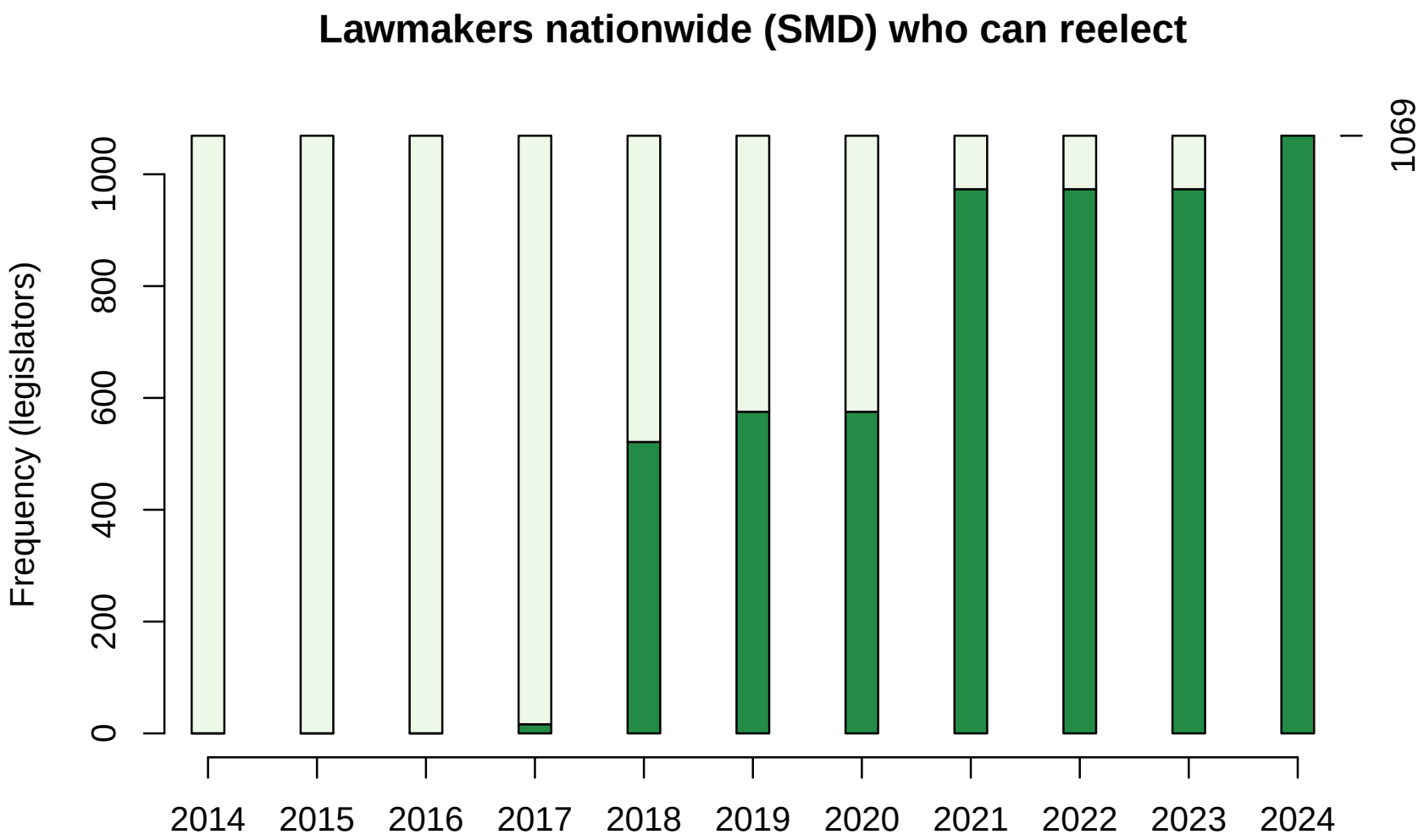
Gradual adoption in states' municipal elections



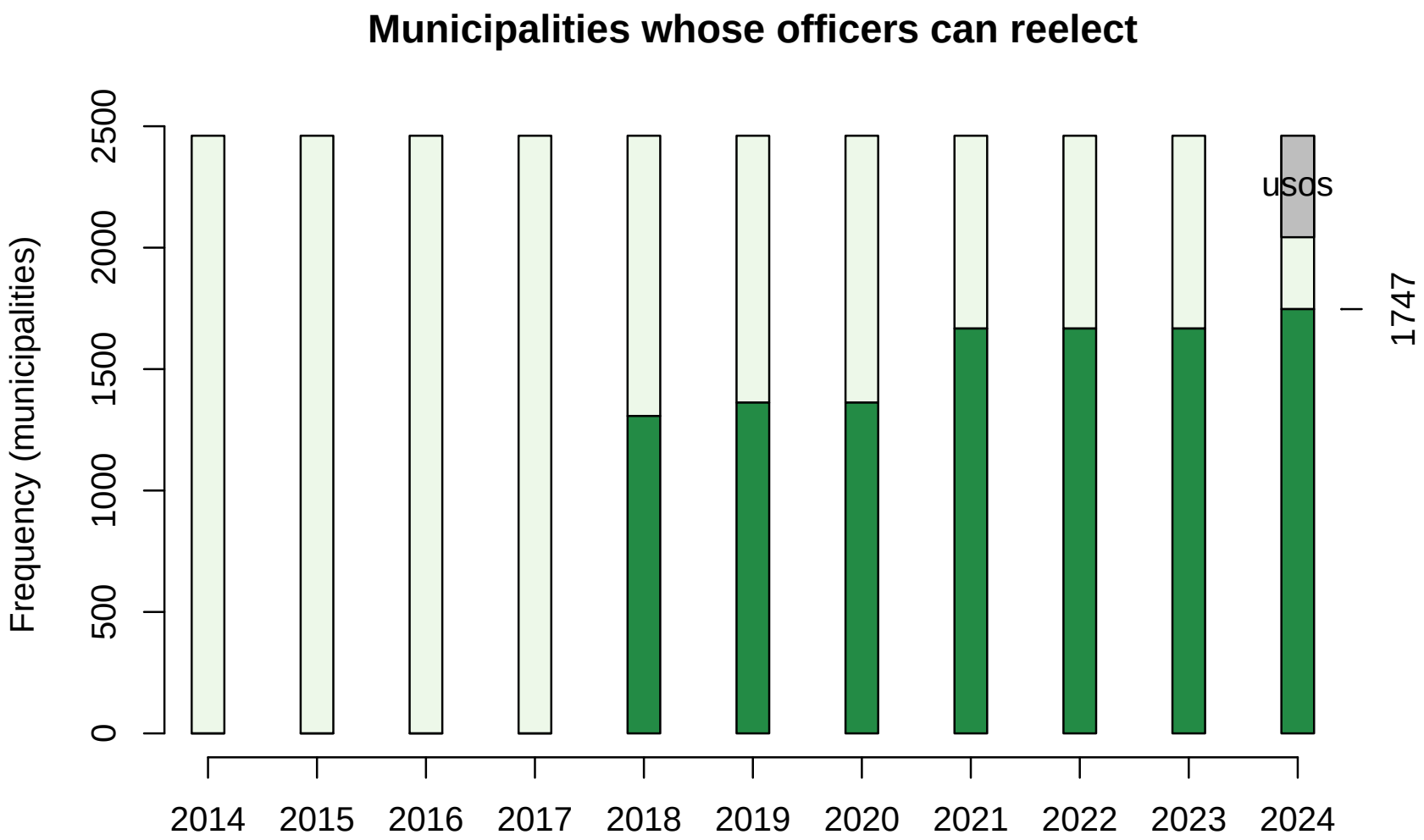
The case of Baja California

- State lawmakers subject to 4-term limits
- Municipal presidents and council members to 2-term limits
- First incumbents on the ballot in 2019

Elected officeholders with extended horizons



Municipalities with extended horizons



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Will all this matter?

Possible, but uncertain

High turnover in many democracies allowing reelection (Micozzi)

Argentine Congress, 1983–2001

Terms served	%	
1	85	(progressive ambition)
2	11	
3+	4	(static ambition)

	Incumbents and reelection		
	seek	succeed	return
Brazil	70	60	**42**
Chile	71	83	**59**
U.S.	95	91	**86**

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Some room for optimism (Godoy 2014)

Year	% returning
1917	18
1918	25
1920	15
1922	26
1924	25
1926	30
1928	40
1930	42
1932	27
1934	0

Another obstacle

Pessimists see party clause as undermining the electoral connection (Merino 2014)

May be room for maneuver, perhaps a good deal

- Two types of candidates: prize fighters and rest (Zaller)
- Party can arrest first type's ambition at its own peril
- Therefore the game is more complex, dual threats

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Coahuila public opinion study

First race with incumbents on the ballot since 1932

- 3 deputies re-nominated $\rightarrow$ static ambition
- 6 sought municipal presidencies $\rightarrow$ progressive ambition
- 16 retired $\rightarrow$ none

Moreno: questions on candidate name recognition in May's pre-election survey (Cain, Ferejohn, Fiorina 1987)

Incumbency *v* campaign effects

Better name recognition among voters

- Due to incumbent's constituency service and responsiveness?
- Or a result of the electoral campaign?

Three approaches:

1. compare districts with/without incumbent running
2. compare beginning/end of the campaign
3. take advantage of redistricting to compare voters within constiuency

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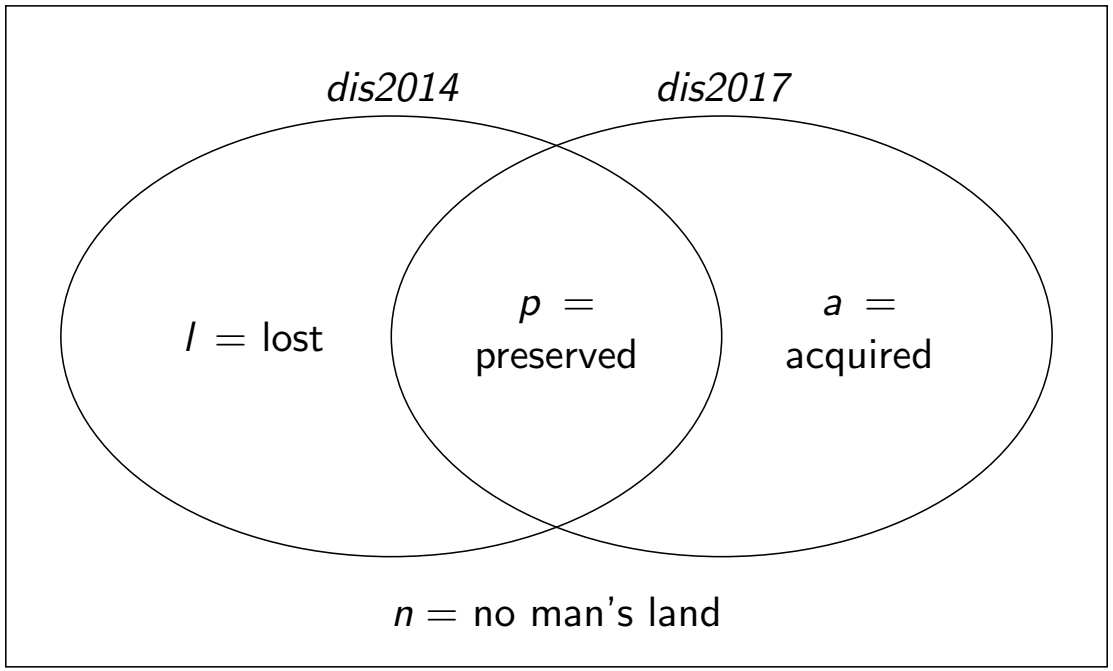
Using redistricting to separate incumbency effect



Expectations (name recognition)

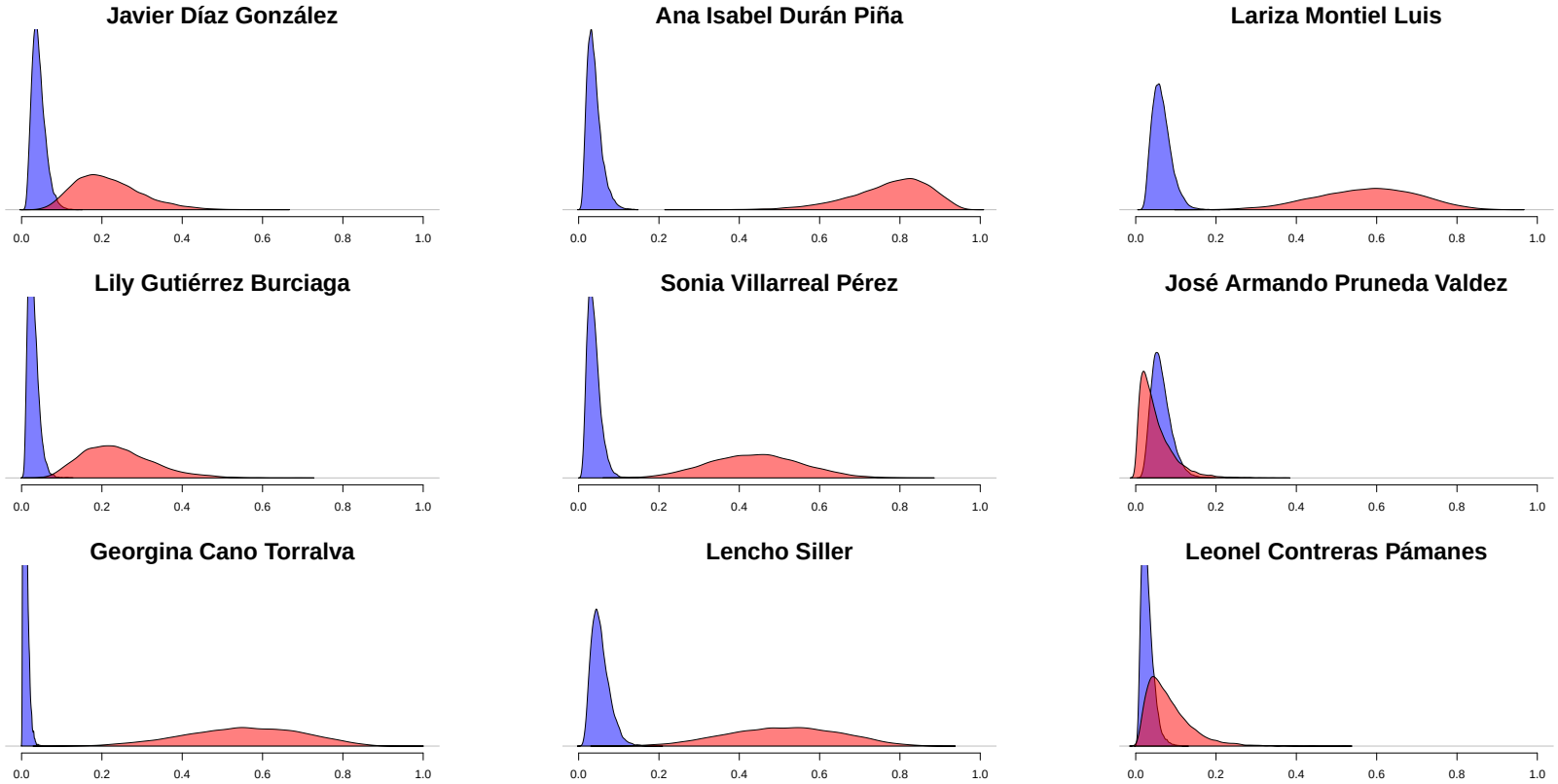
	Effect	
	incumbency	campaign
1	$p > a$	$p = a$
2	$p > l$	$p > l$
3	$p > n$	$p > n$
4	l ? a	$l < a$
5	$l > n$	$l = n$
6	$a > n$	$a > n$

The incumbents

	Incumbent	Ambition (cabecera)		margin	*l*	*p*	*a*	*n*	N
1	Javier–PRI	dist→dist	(Saltillo)	−12	0	56	0	952	1,008
2	Lily–PRI	dist→dist	(Ramos Arispe)	+14	0	56	0	952	1,008
3	Gina–PRI	dist→dist	(Acuña)	−17	0	70	0	938	1,008
4	AnaIsabel–PRI	dist→mun	(San Pedro)	+3	0	42	0	966	1,008
5	Sonia–PRI	dist→mun	(Piedras Negras)	+12	0	56	0	952	1,008
6	Lencho–PRI	dist→mun	(Frontera)	+8	0	28	0	980	1,008
7	Lariza–PAN	rp→mun	(Piedras Negras)	−12	0	42	0	966	1,008
8	Armando–PAN	rp→mun	(Frontera)	−8	0	42	0	966	1,008
9	Leonel–PPC	rp→mun	(Matamoros)	−7	0	42	0	966	1,008

Results (name recognition in x-axis)

estática	Ambición progresiva (MR)	progresiva (RP)



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Wrap-up

- Results substantial & consistent with incumbency effect, but can't rule out campaign
- Flaws guide for a better design in 2018
- Consecutive reelection has great potential to improve representation
- Whether or not the potential fulfilled = very promising research area in Mexican politics

Thank you!

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Thank you!

Nine regressions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
dconservado	1.813***	2.372***	4.912***	4.491***	3.021***	3.002***	-.220	1.104*	2.928***
dhaHecho	.868***	.764***	1.462***	.309	.926***	.465	.855***	.509	.264
dinteresaPol	.352	1.028***	1.342***	.750**	.524**	.864***	.275	.706**	.571*
dsmartPh	-.266	.371	-.180	-.045	.214	-.496*	.262	-.432	-.425
dpan	.147	-.110	-.034	.717	.015	1.199***	.336	.776*	1.145***
dpri	.351	.151	-.014	.635*	.175	-.180	.194	.432	.155
dmorena	-.104	.589	.257	-15.198	-1.171	.768	-1.006	-.255	.877
Constant	-2.994***	-3.820***	-4.445***	-3.878***	-3.487***	-3.387***	-3.291***	-3.872***	-3.582***
Observations	1,008	1,008	1,008	1,008	1,008	1,008	1,008	1,008	1,008
Log Likelihood	-264	-231	-170	-175	-235	-209	-230	-147	-183
Note:									*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01