The Personal Vote in Mexico: Separating Incumbency and Campaign Effects with Survey Evidence*

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Abstract

We investigate candidate name recognition in races for the state of Coahuila assembly in 2017. Name familiarity has been associated with efforts by representatives to cultivate a personal vote among constituents towards reelection. We exploit redistricting prior to these races to distinctly identify differentials in name familiarity attributable to incumbency, but not to campaigns—which also effect name familiarity and occur simultaneously. Despite our instrument's failure, due to few incumbents on the ballot, to include sufficient sampling points for a full separation of these effects, we detect significant shifts in name recognition in accordance with theoretical expectations. Survey evidence of the first election held after Mexico recently dropped single-term limits suggests that static ambitious lawmakers solidified their electoral connection.

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1 Introduction

Is reelection the cornerstone of responsive government? This is a central premise of much democratic theory. In what Riker (1978:9) calls the liberal–Madisonian democratic ideal, "the function of voting is to control officials, and no more." In Schumpeter's (1942) account, democracy is a procedure giving voters a periodic opportunity of accepting or refusing those who are to rule them, and anticipation of voter retribution keeps rulers in check. Yet much behavioral research puts retrospective accountability in serious doubt (Achen and Bartels 2016).

We investigate voters' familiarity with state assembly representatives in the state of Coahuila, in northern Mexico. Name familiarity is the standard approach to measure what Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1987:9) call the personal vote, "that portion of a candidate's electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record." Recent removal of single-term limits in Mexico offers a unique opportunity to investigate institutional change. Prior to the reform, incumbents across the board were constitutionally forced to retire (Magar 2017). The manuscript joins the few investigations of consecutive reelection in Mexico. Such studies focus on plenary speech. Motolinia (2021) uncovers a substantial inter-term surge in plenary time devoted to particularistic legislation in post-reform state assemblies relative to the rest. In the federal Congress, Magar (2021) finds that single-member district deputies freed of single-term limits made significantly more and longer speeches than the rest, even after controlling for other correlates such as the member's party size and majority status, seniority, and the position in the chamber hierarchy. We contribute by studying the reform from the perspective of public opinion.

Campaigns are another short-term force shaping district electoral outcomes (Downs 1957, Jacobson 1990, Popkin 1991). Simultaneous campaigns raise an obstacle to gauge the importance of the personal vote: unless the seat is open, which removes the incumbency effect, challengers campaign to unseat an incumbent, with effects in name familiarity likely. We propose a research design that exploits redistricting to separate these simultaneous ef-

fects. Periodic changes in district boundary delimitation, which also took place in Coahuila prior to state assembly races we study, migrate some groups from one district to another. Even if the former incumbent ran again for office, these voters will not find her on the ballot, nor will they be geographically exposed to the incumbent's campaign.

We added items to tap attitudes towards reelection—including name recognition—among respondents to a pre-election survey in Coahuila's state races in 2017, the first post-reform ballot. Identifying precincts that mapmakers moved across district lines, we test expectations of differentials in the degree of name recognition in clear and distinct geographical areas. While our empirical strategy has drawbacks preventing a test of the relative sizes of campaign vs. incumbency effects, survey evidence uncovers patterns of name familiarity consistent with the personal vote. Voters in the district are more familiar with their representative than those outside. Familiarity is strongest in areas that remained within the district after the map was redrawn. And a hint of name recognition, attributable to a remnant of incumbency from the old map, is detectable in areas that migrated to the next district, albeit with much noise.

The paper proceeds thus. Section 1 elaborates the electoral connection and notions of static and non-static ambition among politicians. Section 2 describes the Mexican 2014 reform, highlighting institutional limitations that could conceivably render reelection meaningless. Section 3 develops the procedure to identify incumbency effects, separating them from campaign effects by means of redistricting. Section 4 introduces the survey and estimates a multivariate model of name recognition. Section 5 concludes.

2   Political ambition and democracy

Mayhew's *Electoral Connection* (1974) set a research program on congressional politics in motion. At the core is a model of purposive lawmakers. The crucial premise is motivational, stylizing members of the U.S. Congress as automatons with a unique, all-

encompassing goal: reelection for another term in office. Mayhew does not deny that other worries might deny members a good night sleep—turning a prioritary program into law, climbing the chamber's hierarchy, her/his legacy are just some examples. But none of that would be achieved if the member fails to reelect.

Another premise is instrumental: reelection is a function of the member's reputation for delivering goods to the district. Team production of legislation, where each member's effort is not immediately evident, puts obstacles for reputation building. And problems of ascription equate credit claiming for delivery to cheap talk. Members' preference for particularistic goods follows. Their distinguishing trait is that production and/or delivery depends on the member's personal effort (Haggard and McCubbins 2001). Two instances of particularistic goods are constituency service, such as staff offering help tracking down lost federal senior citizen entitlement paychecks, and pork-barrel legislation, such as spending and jobs earmarked for the district (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987). The 2022 U.S. federal budget offers has thousands of examples. "I'm glad and proud of them," said Senator Richard C. Shelby of Alabama, claiming credit for $551 million covering 16 earmarks in the $1.5 trillion spending signed by President Biden (quoted in Broadwater et al. 2022). "Mr. Shelby [is] a legendary pork-barreler who has no fewer than seven buildings named after him in Alabama. The latest spending package adds another, renaming a federal building and courthouse in Tuscaloosa for him."

Carey and Shugart (1995) generalize the argument, identifying features of electoral systems affecting incentives to campaign on personal or on a party reputation. Members in personalistic systems have good reason to direct pork where the political logic indicates, creating a responsibility link. Delivery need not involve every constituent in the district. Groups jeopardizing reelection by dropping support are much more important than others. Cox and McCubbins (1986) call them *core constituents*. Other things constant, it is rational (and less risky) to work in preserving a coalition that made you win in the past, by delivering to core constituents, rather than attempting to build a new one from scratch.

Cultivating a personal vote by nurturing a reputation for delivering breeds visibility. Survey evidence establishes this connection, measuring visibility with name familiarity (Abramowitz 1975). Compared to those who did not, and other things constant, respondents who met their representative personally were twice as likely in the U.S., and 1.5 times as likely in the U.K., to correctly recall their name (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987:34). The same goes for respondents who heard the member speak and those who talked to staff. We rely on name familiarity below to gauge the personal vote in the analysis.

3 A Minimal Effects Hypothesis

It is far from evident that the North American electoral connection model extends to democracies in general (Jones, Saiegh, Spiller and Tommasi 2002, Samuels 2003), and to Mexico in particular. Skeptics feed on two lines of argument, the party lock and a lack of interest for reelection.

3.1 The party lock

Mexican reformers gave the right of reelection not to the representative but to her party. Incumbents can run for reelection if, and only if, the party that elected them to office nominates them again. Pundits dubbed this the "party lock," granting the apparatchik a veto on the representative's renomination. More often than not in competitive systems, parties let national leaders deny candidates the use of the party label if they choose to run (Ranney 1981:85).[1] The party lock is more formidable still. Unless she jumped ship in the first half of the term, once blocked by her party against renomination, a member cannot seek refuge in another party. Mexican party leaders can therefore veto an incumbent's renomination *even by other parties*.

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[1] Until the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional, Brazil's *candidato nato* clause imposed the reverse relationship between party and incumbent, giving the second power to override the leadership veto on renomination (Mainwaring 1991). Major parties in the United Kingdom rely on a mix, district parties selecting candidates that the national party can veto (Mikulska and Scarrow 2010).

As a consequence, a mayor or legislator sensing tension between core supporters' and party leaders' interests faces a predicament. Siding systematically with core supporters might expose her to the wrath of the leadership and, as retaliation, she may be excluded from the ballot—keeping the discipline mechanism of single-term limits (Weldon 1997) intact. In a blog article on the reform, Merino, Fierro and Zarkin (2013) warn that "we shall gain no political leverage over representatives, nor shall government be more responsive... with this pseudo-reelection." In other words, skeptics expect the incumbency effect in Mexico will be negligible, at best.[2]

The problem can also ne viewed as one of shades-of-gray rather than black-or-white. Canceling the electoral connection totally requires incumbents *fully* lacking resources to fend off leadership pressure. Some politicians are, no doubt, in such a position—freshmen, amateurs, personal appointees, and so forth. But any resource of this nature opens some room for negotiation between incumbent and party. This is the essence of legislative party theory (Aldrich and Rohde 2001, Cox and McCubbins 2007).

One resource is electoral competitiveness. Zaller (1998) models incumbents as prize fighters and the electoral arena as selection mechanism: winners demonstrate their "natural advantage" by defeating challengers. Personal electoral machines, political dynasties, or outstanding charisma are among elements feeding incumbents' natural advantage. From this perspective, the party can stubbornly prevent a prize fighter's attempts to be on the ballot, but does so at the peril of losing the district. The party lock may prevent the incumbent from entering the race, but she retains the option of moving her machinery and competitive

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[2]Draining member independence was in the minds of lawmakers. The reform bill's summary (*exposición de motivos*) does not even mention the party lock, but leaders' fear of losing their firm grip upon elected officeholders transpired in floor debate. The debate diary for the December 3rd, 2013 session, when the reported bill was considered and approved, registers Sen. Javier Corral's (PAN–Chihuahua) intervention in favor of the report. He mentioned legislators' opportunism against their party: "I would have preferred a direct reelection" he said, "but also believe that this report mitigates... political turncoats" Later on in the session, introducing a failed amendment to delete the party lock, Sen. Armando Ríos Piter (PRD–Guerrero) further elaborated: "it is important to drop [the lock]", he argued, "[b]ecause if we wish the evaluation be made by citizens we cannot let it depend on a political party" whom, in roll calls, will be watchful that the "legislator does not escape the sheepfold." See `http://www.diputados.gob.mx/sedia/biblio/prog_leg/135_DOF_10feb14.pdf`.

resources to another campaign, ensuring that her party is beaten.

Some notation should clarify. The vote share in the district or municipality can be sketched as the sum of three components: $I + P + O = 100$. Here I is the vote that the incumbent can mobilize personally, P is the party's expected vote percentage without the incumbent's machine, and O is the opposition's expected vote. Any candidate controlling $I \geq |P - O|$ votes is in a position to impose her re-nomination to party leaders.[3] The resourceful should therefore negotiate with the party without removing the electoral connection completely.

3.2 The lack of interest

Pessimism also feeds on reelection apathy, which would further dilute incumbency effects. Disinterest by Latin American politicians for reelecting to the assembly is well-established, and leads Morgenstern (2002) to distinguish between static and non-static ambitions. A look towards reelection rates in a handful of the continent's cases makes the need for Schlesinger's (1966) original intuition plain.

Consider three indicators in Table 1. Column *a* reports the percentage of lawmakers who ran again for the same office at the end of their terms, capturing the notion of static ambition: politicians pursuing a congressional career by trying to repeat in office. Variation is notable. If 9 out of 10 U.S. incumbents regularly manifest static ambition, a bare quarter did in Argentina since the return to democracy, and about half in Mexico and Colombia. Static ambition progressively rises in Uruguay, Brazil, and Chile, none really approaching the rate of the U.S. Congress.

Desire requires ability for achievement, and columns *b* and *c* also report the conditional success rate (the percentage of renominated incumbents reelected) and the rate of return (the percentage of all members returning to the chamber in the consecutive term),

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[3]Alternation in many states, districts, and municipalities since 1989 has, in fact, been the result of such defections and party splits. See Garrido de Sierra (2014) and Díaz Cayeros, Estévez and Magaloni (2016).

| | Incumbents (%) who | | |
Case	sought reelection (a)	reelected (b)	returned (c = a × b/100)
United States 1990–2010	91	94	86
Chile 1993–2000	71	83	59
Brazil 1994–2002	75	66	50
Uruguay 1985–1999	61	56	34
Colombia 1994–2002	53	65	34
Mexico 2021-2024	47	72	34
Argentina 1983–2001	25	76	19

Table 1: The willing and the able to return to Congress in seven democracies. Column (a) reports the percentage of incumbents in the lower chamber that were renominated, column (b) the percentage of those renominated who won reelection for a consecutive term, and column (c) the return rate. Sources: Jones et al. (2002:658) for Argentina; Botero and Rennó (2007) for Brazil and Colombia; Navia (2000) for Chile; `https://emagar.github.io/2021-06-25-reeleccion-dipfed-6-jun.html` for Mexico (single-member-district deputies only); Altman and Chasquetti (2005) for Uruguay; `https://www.opensecrets.org/overview/reelect.php` for the U.S.

respectively. The U.S. strikes the eye again, where 94 percent fulfilled their ambition, for a 20-year average return rate of 86 percent. With the exception of Uruguay, whose short sample overlaps the collapse of two-party dominance, conditional success rates are decently high. Compounding them with the low prevalence of static ambition, however, yields remarkably low rates of return south of the Río Bravo. Brazil and Chile, with rates between 50 and 60 percent, still remained distant from the U.S. Return rates drop to one-third in Mexico, Colombia, and Uruguay, and below 20 percent in Argentina (despite the second highest conditional success rate in the region).

The Mexican indicators in Table 1 are for the 2021 race only, when federal term limits were dropped (and exclude party-appointed members elected in the proportional representation tier of the mixed system from the counts). It stands second to last. Is static ambition in Mexico doomed to remain at near-Argentine levels? History suggests otherwise. Table 2 reports the return rate of federal deputies observed in the years prior to the adoption of single-term limits in 1934. At 18 percent, the return rate upon adoption of the Revolu-

Year	% returned
1916 (Constitutional Congress)	—
1917	18
1918	25
1920	15
1922	26
1924	25
1926	30
1928	40
1930 (Congress size nearly halved)	42
1932	27
1934 (single-term limits effective)	0

Table 2: Reelection in the post-Revolutionary Chamber of Deputies up to 1934. Source: Godoy Rueda (2014).

tionary constitution is almost indistinguishable from present-day Argentina. But it grew at rapid pace in the mid-1920s, doubling by 1928 to 40 percent, *en route* to meet present-day Brazil. Progress was arrested in 1930 when, setting the stage for the centralization of authority under the PRI, reformers removed 128 of the 281 seats Congress had had, 46 percent of all, cunningly targeting opponents of *Jefe Máximo* Calles (see Godoy Rueda 2014:23). A stable return rate that year despite a sharp denominator drop implies that the apportionment *blitz* was orthogonal to static ambition.

4   Redistricting as source of hypotheses

Whether or not the shades-of-gray approach is correct and whether or not static ambition crystallizes as it did in the 1920s can be resolved empirically. We examine name recognition in Coahuila for this task. Detecting a degree of name recognition among voters in the district unseen outside the district, it still would not fully answer the empirical question: as argue in section 1, the finding is attributable to the personal vote, but voter familiarity is also attributable to the campaign itself, another effort at candidate name promotion. How can the simultaneous effects be separated?

We see three approaches to improve the answer.

1. Compare name familiarity in districts with an incumbent in the ballot to districts without. A systematic difference is attributable to incumbency.

2. Compare name familiarity in each district early in the campaign and then towards the end. Systematic differences are attributable to campaigns.

3. Use redistricting to compare name familiarity among geographical groups of voters who either moved into, moved out of, or remained in the district (see McKee 2008).

We describe the third.

Coahuila state legislators had single-term limits lifted in 2017 and their legislative district boundaries redrawn prior to the race (our focus is the sixteen single-member plurality districts, leaving the proportional representation lists of the mixed electoral system at the hind).[4] We exploit this coincidence to generate falsifiable hypotheses. The idea is simple. Incumbents who sought to return to office competed in districts more or less different from those they erstwhile represented. We expect the degree of dissimilarity in their constituents to reveal geographically differentiated patterns of name recognition.

For this purpose, we begin by identifying 'father' and 'son' districts. We construe district genealogy as Cox and Katz (2002) do. One-by-one, we compare districts in the new map (the offspring) to those in the old map, in order to identify the district it shares the most voters with. This is the district's father. Figure 1 pictures a Venn diagram of one father (from the 2014 map) and son (from the 2017 map) pair. Ovals are simplified versions of district boundaries (minus geographic accidents typical of real-world maps). Four terrains can be distinguished. Intersection r is land (and the voters who live there) that the son has

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[4]The northern state of Coahuila, which shares a border with Texas in the United States, was the first instance where politicians could reelect consecutively after the 2014 electoral reform. As part of the same reform, state electoral boards were stripped of redistricting authority. The new national election board, the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE) was put in charge of periodically redrawing state district lines, and was obliged to produce new maps for the first post-reform legislative elections. See Trelles, Altman, Magar and McDonald (2016) and Magar (2017).
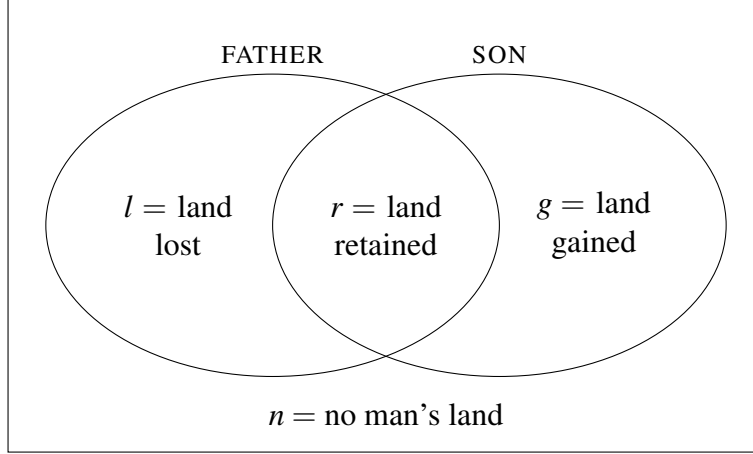
Figure 1: Four clear and distinct lands arise from redistricting. FATHER and SON represent 2014 and 2017 map districts, respectively.

retained from its father. By construction, r is never empty (else the district would be an orphan). To the left is land l that the son has lost from the father by the redistricting, and to the right lies land g that the son has gained from one or more other old-map districts. Lands l and g represent change in the map, and one, the other, or both could be empty. Land n not belonging to any of the ovals is no man's land, with no interest whatsoever for the incumbent at hand.

The approach quantifies the degree of change in any member's electorate brought by redistricting. Comparing the land father and son share in common with land lost and won yields an index of district similarity S_i for district i. If $\texttt{father}_i$ and $\texttt{son}_i$ denote, respectively, voters in the father and son districts, then $S_i = \frac{\texttt{father}_i \cap \texttt{son}_i}{\texttt{father}_i \cup \texttt{son}_i} = \frac{r}{l+r+g}$. The index reaches maximum value $S_j = 1$ when father and son are identical (i.e., $l = g = \varnothing$), dropping gradually as intersection r shrinks relative to $l + g$. Index S tends to zero when father and son intersect minimally (as r is never empty, zero is not reached).

Table 3 reports Coahuila's district similarity in 2017. We operationalize S with electoral *secciones* an not voters directly.[5] Our survey identifies secciones where respondents

[5]Data is from INE's official election returns and redistricting archives, available at www.ine.mx. *Secciones electorales* are analogous to U.S. census tracts (median sección population in the 2010 census was 1,280, with a maximum at 79,232; median tract population in the 2010 census was 3,995, with a maximum at 37,452). Secciones are the basic building blocks for district cartography. The old (called here 2014 for clarity, but inaugurated in 2011) and new (2017) maps relate 1,710 secciones in the state to 16 legisla-

Son district (2017)	Father district (2014)	S	Incumbent deputy	Revealed ambition	Margin
XII-Ramos Arizpe	V-Ramos Arizpe	1.000	Lily Gutiérrez Burciaga	**static**	+14
I-Acuña	XV-Acuña	.798	Gina Cano Torralva	**static**	−17
II-Piedras Negras	XVI-Piedras Negras	.791	Sonia Villarreal Pérez	progressive	+12
X-Matamoros	VII-Torreón	.705	Shamir Fernández Hernández	none	
XIV-Saltillo	I-Saltillo	.700	Javier Díaz González	**static**	−12
IX-Torreón	VIII-Torreón	.650	Irma Castaño Orozco	none	
VII-Matamoros	VI-Torreón	.618	Verónica Martínez García	none	
XVI-Saltillo	II-Saltillo	.553	Francisco Tobías Hernández	none	
III-Sabinas	XIII-Múzquiz	.551	Antonio Nerio Maltos	none	
XIII-Saltillo	IV-Saltillo	.459	Martha Garay Cadena	none	
IV-San Pedro	X-San Pedro	.444	Ana Isabel Durán Piña	progressive	+3
V-Monclova	XII-Monclova	.408	Melchor Sánchez de la Fuente	none	
VI-Frontera	XI-Frontera	.377	Lencho Siller Linaje	progressive	+8
XIII-Saltillo	III-Saltillo	.236	José María Frausto Siller	none	
IX-Torreón	IX-Torreón	.204	Luis Gurza Jaidar	none	
III-Sabinas	XIV-Sabinas	.197	Martha Morales Iribarrén	none	

Table 3: District similarity index S in the state of Coahuila. Mexican legislative districts rely on Roman numerals for identification, hyphenated in the Table with the district's administrative seat (*cabecera distrital*.) All members were from the PRI (opposition deputies entered via proportional representation only). The margin is the percentage difference between the winner and runner-up in the subsequent race, positive if the incumbent won, negative otherwise.

registered for voting, so this suffices for the test. The median, located between districts XVI and III, shares just 55 percent secciones when reunited with its father. Similarity looks scant: if the member ran for consecutive reelection and knew personally every voter she represented during the term that is expiring, she would recognize only a bit over half of her new constituents. S's inter-quartile range is .4–.7.

From the electoral connection's perspective, changes this big in district geography should discourage static ambition, pushing incumbents to retirement. And so it did. We lack evidence to support that redistricting, and not something else, forced thirteen of sixteen SMD incumbents to not seek reelection. But the fact is that the three who did represented

tive districts (available at `https://github.com/emagar/mxDistritos/blob/master/mapasComparados/loc/coaLoc.csv`.) With our operationalization, S's value is the share of secciones shared by father and son share vis-à-vis secciones in any of them. If electoral secciones all had identical populations, our operationalization would be identical to Cox and Katz's, who rely on shared population instead. As population heterogeneity rises, so do discrepancies between both versions of S across districts. Electoral secciones have relatively homogeneous populations nationwide: 99 percent had between 100 and 5,700 inhabitants in the 2010 census.

	Campaign effect	Incumbency effect	Total effect
1	$r = g$	$r > g$	$r > g$
2	$r > l$	$r = l$	$r > l$
3	$r > n$	$r > n$	$r > n$
4	$l < g$	$l > g$	$l \, ? \, g$
5	$l = n$	$l > n$	$l > n$
6	$g > n$	$g > n$	$g > n$

Table 4: Incumbency and campaign effects in name recognition hypotheses. Cells give expected relations in name recognition in the areas defined in Figure 1. Thus, row 1 indicates that incumbency causes higher name recognition among voters in land retained than among voters in land gained, a difference not caused by the campaign effect; combining them gives the reported total effect.

districts with much higher similarity indexes (the right-most column in the table reports incumbents' revealed ambition), which is consistent with this interpretation. Lily Gutiérrez Burciaga's constituents in Ramos Arizpe in fact changed nothing at all (she ran in the only district with $S = 1$). Georgina Cano Torralva from Acuña and Javier Díaz González from Saltillo retained 8 and 7 of every 10 voters, respectively.

With simple logic, we distinguish effects of campaigns and incumbency on name familiarity in lands l, r, g, and n. The more redistricting changed the son from its father, the more different the "battlefield" ahead will appear to a member in office and to a candidate on the campaign trail. Election campaigns know the precise limits of the new district where effort must be focalized (the son)—billboards and wall paintings, printed flier distribution and robocalls, meetings with neighbors alone or in the company of candidates higher in the ticket, vote-buying with construction material and debit cards, and so forth (Langston n.d.). Constituency service, however, has a less distinct perspective, at least until the new district map is published. At that point, incumbents discover that mapmakers turned past constituency service in lost land l into sunk cost, as it will not pay off towards reelection. And while retained land r remains well-treaded, they also must advance into uncharted territory g that was gained.

This generates somewhat different predictions summarized in Table 4. The quantity of interest is the expected probability that a respondent picked at random among voters registered in one of the four lands is familiar with the candidate's name. Campaign effects in name familiarity, if any, occur throughout the district (i.e., the son $r \cup g$), with negligible spillover beyond its borders. There is therefore no ground to expect a difference in name familiarity inside the district (which the table reports as $r = g$), but there is ground to expect such difference between the district and the rest. Expectations from the table's campaign column boil down to $l = n < r = g$.

Incumbent name familiarity, if any, takes place in the reunion of father and son district areas—with varying intensities. While retained land r experienced a full three-year term of constituency service, gained land g only received the member's attention with knowledge that it would be part of the new district. Cultivating a personal vote requires time, so we expect higher name familiarity in land r than in land g ($r > g$ in the table). Likewise, the incumbent with finite effort stopped servicing land l when it became certain it would be lost to redistricting. But the investment made in lost land does not wear off immediately, so we expect $r = l$. And with the period between new map publication and the next election small relative to the time the incumbent spent servicing the parent district, we also expect $l > g$ in name familiarity. Expectations from the incumbency column in the table boil down to $n < g < l = r$.

Note that in table rows 3 and 6 campaign and incumbency expectations on name familiarity are identical. Comparison of land areas in those rows offers no element to separate effects: detecting a signal, it must me attributed to the total effect, reported in the third column. But expectations in rows 1, 2, 4, and 5 are contradictory, so an empirical relationship discriminates theoretical effects. Row 4 is the starkest: observing $l < g$ among respondents implies a campaign effect in name recognition larger than the incumbency effect; observing $l > g$, an incumbency larger in relative size.

Since Coahuila offered few members with static ambition, we extend exploration to

members with progressive ambition too. These are three deputies who sought municipal office. The trick for analysis is to make the target municipality's territory into a counterfactual son district. Identifying the corresponding l, r, g, and n distinct lands is trivial. But the important element of surprise in redistricting is absent: members know what "son district" (i.e., municipality) their progressive ambition points towards, and can therefore cultivate a personal vote *ex-ante* (Lucardi and Micozzi 2016). Comparability with static ambition is thus not ideal, but offers additional perspective.

5 The survey

We study the mass component of the personal vote with an original, face-to-face pre-election survey in Coahuila, two weeks ahead of polling for state deputies (concurrent with a gubernatorial and municipal races).[6] The survey includes a battery of questions on name familiarity inspired from Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1987). We coded indicators for six single-member district representatives listed in Table 3.

We instrumented name familiarity as name *recognition*. We relied on close-ended questions mentioning the state deputies' names—along those of three unanalyzed proportional-representation lawmakers running for municipal office, see questionnaire item #25 in the appendix. Interviewees were asked how much they remembered each name. We thus coded six dichotomous dependent variables, one per ambitious member. Respondents had four possible answers: the name is 'well-known' (*muy conocido*), 'somewhat known' (*algo conocido*), 'little known' (*poco conocido*), and 'unknown' (*nada conocido*). A member's name familiarity indicator recognize$_i$ takes value 1 if respondent i gave a somewhat-known or a well-known answer; 0 otherwise. (An alternative coding, indicating recognition

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[6]The survey was commissioned to Alejandro Moreno by *El Financiero* newspaper (interviews were conducted from between May 19–21, 2017, published May 25, Moreno 2017). A sample of 1,008 registered voters was interviewed in person in households. Urban/rural electoral secciones were stratified, then a random sample taken to select 72 points throughout the state, obtaining 14 randomly-selected interviews in each. The 95-percent confidence interval of inferences has a ±3.1% error. The non-response rate was 32%, which is standard across public opinion studies.

| | District/ | Respondents | | | | Mean `recognize` | | |
Incumbent	municipio	l	r	g	n	statewide	father	son
A. Static ambition								
Javier Díaz González	Saltillo	14	56	0	938	0.082	0.286	0.304
Lily Gutiérrez Burciaga	R. Arispe	0	56	0	952	0.076	0.393	0.393
Gina Cano Torralva	Acuña	0	70	0	938	0.085	0.729	0.729
B. Progressive ambition								
Lencho Siller	Frontera	42	28	0	938	0.066	0.300	0.500
Sonia Villarreal Pérez	P. Negras	0	56	0	952	0.082	0.518	0.518
Ana Isabel Durán Piña	San Pedro	14	42	0	952	0.068	0.589	0.738

Table 5: Incumbents and their terrain. Deputies with static ambition sought reelection to the state assembly. Deputies with progressive ambition sought election to a municipal government. Columns *l*, *r*, *g*, and *n* report the number of respondents sampled (out of 1,008) in each terrain category. Dependent variable means are for all respondents (statewide), for respondents in the pre-redistricting constituency (father) only, and for respondents in the post-redistricting constituency (son) only.

in any degree, was also analyzed with similar results.) Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina also rely on name recall—the respondent's capacity to say the deputy's name correctly when prompted—which we excluded due to questionnaire size constraint. We intend explore recall too in future studies.

At about 7 to 8 out of 100 interviewees, statewide name recognition averages are both low and invariant across members (the right columns of Table 5 report dependent variables' means). But restricting attention to respondents in members' districts only brings a striking hike in name recognition, of at least 3.5 times higher than statewide for Javier Díaz González, and as much as 11 times higher than statewide for Ana Isabel Durán Piña (in the municipality to which her progressive ambition pointed to). Is this an incumbency effect?

Since secciones electorales were used as stratified sampling points, producing geographic indicators to identify members' four redistricting areas of theoretical interest is trivial. As Table 5 reports in middle columns, no sampling took place in land areas gained by any district whose incumbent ran for reelection (column *g* reports zeroes only). This is unfortunate and an obstacle to our empirical study: excluding respondents in district areas gained by incumbent on the ballot precludes observing two of four separation scenar-

ios in Table 4. And among unobserved scenarios is the strongest prediction divergence—predictions in row 4 point in opposite directions. The extremely low prevalence of static ambition in Coahuila 2017 constitutes this obstacle. More prevalent static ambition, as indeed happened across the board in 2018 and 2021, will overcome this limitation with more ease.

We analyze predictors of name recognition with equation

$$\text{logit}(\texttt{recognize}_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \texttt{lost}_i + \beta_2 \texttt{retained}_i$$
$$+ \beta_3 \texttt{delivered}_i + \beta_4 \texttt{interested}_i + \beta_5 \texttt{smartphone}_i$$
$$+ \beta_6 \texttt{panista}_i + \beta_7 \texttt{priista}_i + \beta_8 \texttt{morenista}_i + \text{error}_i.$$

The model includes two geographic indicators: $\texttt{retained}_i$ equals 1 if respondent i is a voter registered in area r, 0 otherwise; and $\texttt{lost}_i$ equals 1 if respondent i is a registered voter in area l, 0 otherwise. These dummies are mutually-exclusive but not exhaustive. With area g out of the study's empirical reach, the omitted category is respondents in area n, so for geographic regressors' coefficients are interpreted against no-man's land. The model also includes indicators for incumbent responsiveness ($\texttt{delivered}_i$ equals 1 if the respondent said the deputy did something for the district, 0 otherwise), for interest in politics ($\texttt{interested}_i$ equals 1 if the respondent expressed interest in politics, 0 otherwise), for socioeconomic status ($\texttt{smartphone}_i$ equals 1 if the respondent said owning such device, 0 otherwise), and controls for partisanship ($\texttt{panista}_i$, $\texttt{priista}_i$, and $\texttt{morenista}_i$ equal 1 if the respondent self-identified with the party in question, 0 otherwise).

We code all dichotomous variables in the model to indicate responses in the affirmative. In this way, the (few) nulls among respondents' answers are among non-indicated values, and we do not lose any subject, keeping all $N = 1,008$ interviewees in the estimation.[7] The Appendix formally defines variables and reports frequencies for all survey questions.

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[7]So, for instance, we interpret five non-respondents to the $\texttt{smartphone}$ question #30 as not owning such device, coding it zero. We do likewise for dummies $\texttt{delivered}$ (twelve non-responses to question #22) and $\texttt{interested}$ (two to question #2). There were no non-responses to the party identification questions.

	Hypotheses		
	total effect $r > n$	incumbency effect $l > n$	incumbency effect $r = l$
Member	(one-tailed)	(one-tailed)	(two-tailed)
Static ambition			
1 Javier Díaz González	< .001	.029	.442
2 Lily Gutiérrez Burciaga	< .001	—	—
3 Gina Cano Torralva	< .001	—	—
Progressive ambition			
4 Lencho Siller	< .001	.003	.002
5 Sonia Villarreal Pérez	< .001	—	—
6 Ana Isabel Durán Piña	< .001	.036	< .001

Table 6: Hypothesis tests. Cells report p-values. Columns 1 and 2 respectively test that coefficients for `retained` and `lost` are positive, column 3 that `retained`'s coefficient equals `lost`'s (a likelihood-ratio test). Green indicates statistical evidence for incumbency effects, red lack thereof—note that column 3's incumbency hypothesis involves equality, so the aim here is to *not* reject.

Geographic controls test hypotheses. We have three expectations: that $lost_i$'s regression coefficient is positive ($\beta_1 > 0$, testing $l > n$); that $retained_i$'s is positive too ($\beta_2 > 0$, testing $r > n$); and that the latter is larger than the former ($\beta_2 > \beta_1$, testing $r > l$). Predictions $r > n$ and $r > l$, common to both effects in Table 4, test total effects. Owing to incumbency only, confirmation that $lost_i$ gets a positive coefficient, is separating evidence. The Appendix reports full regression estimates. We here summarize relevant hypothesis tests only in Table 6.

We discuss static ambition members first. Column 1 reports total effects tests. Members clear all tests at standard levels of statistical confidence. Columns 2 and 3 report incumbency effects hypothesis tests. Only Javier Díaz González, with respondents in lost area, is candidate for the separating tests, clearing both at standard levels. Note that the incumbency test in column 3 involves *not* rejecting the (usually null) hypothesis that $r = l$. With a p-value of .442, it is not rejectable at standard levels of confidence. While greater in area that the district lost (and, per column 1, in area retained) compared to area that was never in the district, name familiarity is statistically indistinguishable in areas l and r, as expected

by the personal vote.

Progressive ambition tests further illuminate. Tests about retained and lost land relative to no-man's land clear the hurdle. But the expectation that name recognition in r and l be equal is not fulfilled. Keep in mind that retained land, in this case, is the municipality where the member eventually ran for office—which intersects the father district without exception. As said, if nomination was possibly uncertain (unlike static ambition types), members who aimed at municipal office knew ex-ante where they had to cultivate a personal vote. And indeed the hypothesis that name recognition in the "retained" municipality and lost land is equal can be statistically rejected (cf. Lucardi and Micozzi 2016). These results must be taken with a grain of salt, but evidence adds favorably for incumbency effects.

Simulations in Figure 2 reveal effects neatly. The curves are posterior probabilities of name recognition from a Bayesian re-estimation of the logit models. Colored densities manipulate redistricting area dummies with other predictors constant. A gap is expected, and observed across the board, between the violet and pink densities, corresponding respectively to voters in low-probability area n and higher-probability area r. Incumbency hypothesis expects the green density, for voters in area l, to overlap with the right-side density; campaign hypothesis with the left-side density. Plots show how separation is not as clear cut as statistically significant results might otherwise suggest. There is substantive overlap of green and pink in Javier Díaz González's case, but the green–violet overlap is important too. Plots also reveal that, among the progressively ambitious, green overlaps much more with violet than pink. Throughout their terms, State Deputies Lencho Siller and Ana Isabel Durán Piña seem to have devoted a good deal of effort servicing the municipalities they ran in—the "retained" parts—hence the name recognition hike relative to district "lost".
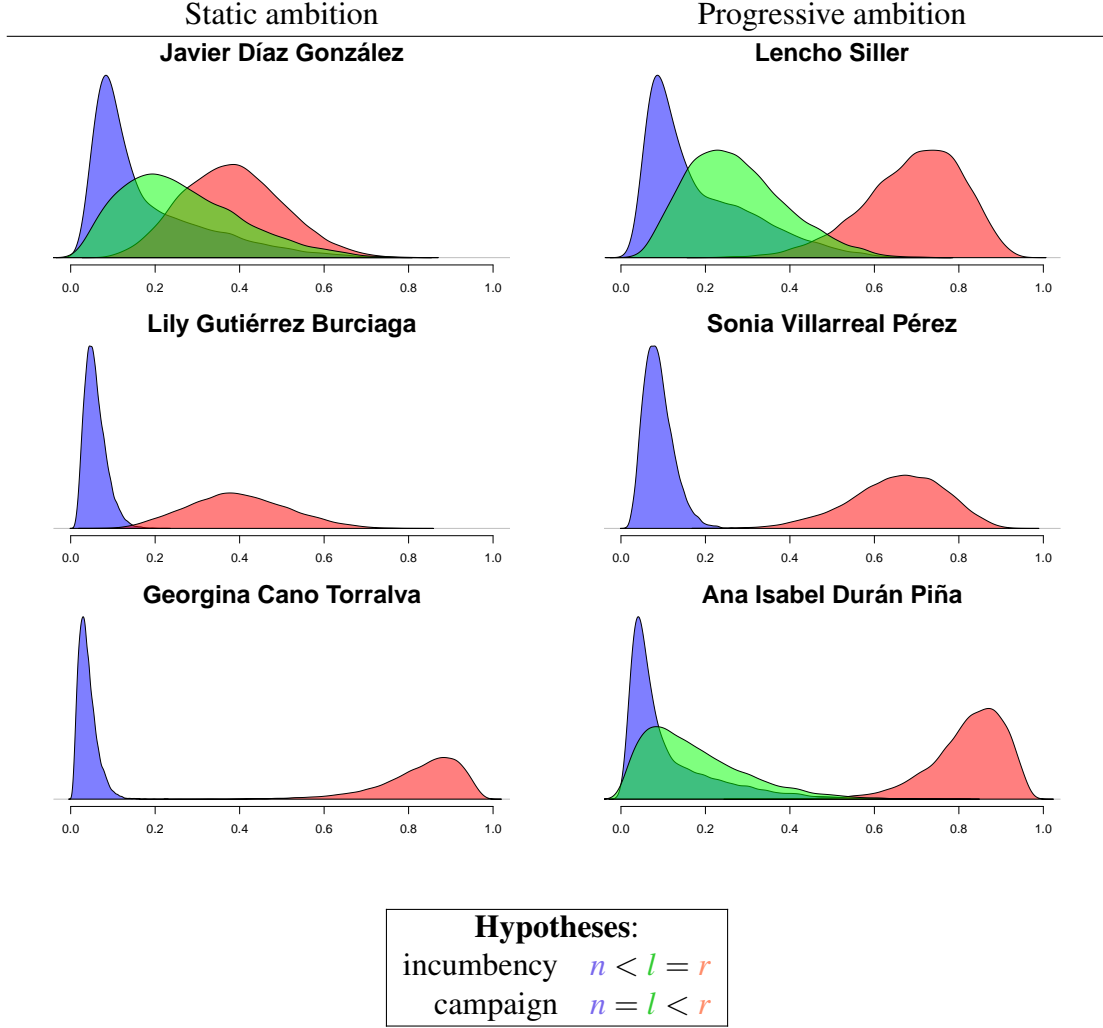
Figure 2: The probability of name recognition (x-axis). Simulations generated with Bayesian estimations of regression models. The violet density is for respondents in area *n*, the green (when applicable) for respondents in area *l*, and the pink for respondents in area *r*. Incumbency leads to expect the purple to lie to the left, the pink to the right, the green between them, with clear gaps between them. All other controls held constant to represent a PAN-identifier with a smartphone, who said the incumbent has delivered but is uninterested in politics.

6 Conclusion

Our investigation of name familiarity in Coahuila has achieved a number of things. We discussed how the electoral connection, by inducing politicians with static ambition to cultivate a personal vote by trading in particularistic goods, should heighten levels of name recognition among constituents. We also saw admonitions (skeptics' warning) of minimal effects in Mexico, as reformers chose to keep parties' firm grip on nominations in place and politicians in Latin America have proverbial lack of static ambition. So are there signs of an electoral connection in Coahuila's 2017 state legislative races, where incumbents were allowed to seek consecutive reelection for the first time in over eight decades? On top of admonitions (warnings), differentials in name familiarity could be due to campaigns, not the personal vote.

The research design can overcome this obstacle by exploiting redistricting. Changes in the electoral geography are means to separate incumbency from campaign effects in name recognition. We set forth resolving these issues empirically with an original pre-election survey in the state. If unable to totally rule out the effect of campaigns, the public opinion evidence we produce does reveal statistically significant and substantive total effects in name recognition consistent with the personal vote. This is a noteworthy and important finding for several reasons.

It paves the way for an in-depth study of reelection in Mexico. Patterns uncovered by our study of the first opportunity for consecutive reelection despite serious limitations announce a promising research agenda ahead. Room has opened. One out of three SMD lawmakers returned to Congress in the 2021 midterm races, nearly three-quarters of those who ran again succeeding. And the return rate in nearly 2,800 municipal races without term limits between 2018 and 2021 was 22 percent, 54 percent of those who sought reelection achieving it. It will be interesting to verify if the removal of single-term limits may have attenuated, or perhaps reverted, the negative inter-election swings that incumbent parties systematically suffered in Mexican municipal races (Lucardi and Rosas 2016). If small in

scope, our study constitutes a rare attempt to measure the mass component of the personal vote outside the United States. We hope to persuade pollsters to verify patterns of recall and name recognition in races where static ambition is prevalent. Finally, the procedure to distinguish incumbency from campaign effects generalizes to systems where district lines are re-drawn periodically. It constitutes another tool for testing models of incentives to cultivate a personal vote with comparative data.

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